The Term ἐνυπόστατον and its Theological Meaning

Hieromonk Methody (Zɪɴᴋᴏᴠsᴋʏ), Hieromonk Kirill (Zɪɴᴋᴏᴠsᴋʏ)
St. Petersburg Orthodox Theological Academy, Russia

Aʙsᴛʀᴀᴄᴛ

Modern theologians have expressed, and continue to suggest, different, sometimes contradictory, opinions regarding the historical usage of the term ἐνυπόστατον by various Church Fathers and more recent theologians. Touching on the history of the research works fulfilled in this field we concentrate on the main problem of the interpretation of the meaning of the term ἐνυπόστατον used by Leontius, John Grammaticus and St. John Damascene. The article analyses in detail St. John's definition of the term, his explanation of the inequality of the notions 'hypostasis' and 'enhypostatic', the correlation of the term 'hypostasis' with the notions of 'individuated nature' and πρόσωπον. It will be shown how the term ἐνυπόστατον acquired its new meaning in the Christological context. A qualitative difference between incarnation of the God the Word as a Person and incarnation by grace is discussed. The main idea of this article is that the term ἐνυπόστατον enables the description of both the real subsistence of one or several distinct natures in one hypostasis, and that of one nature in several hypostases. It is suggested that the term ἐνυπόστατον is fairly universal and can be applied efficiently almost in all areas of theology. Meanwhile the primary meaning of the term (in the sense of really existing, objective as opposed to illusory) retains its great value. It is shown how this primary meaning stops one from manipulating the term arbitrarily. The key characteristic of human likeness with God as hypostatic-natural unity is presented. It's argued that this unity of hypostasis and nature is defined most powerfully by the term ἐνυπόστατον.

Ἀλλ' ἐνούσιον μέν, τὴν ὑπόστασιν, ἐνυπόστατον δέ, τὴν οὐσίαν (PG 94, 1441)

The importance of accurate terminology in interpreting theology is well-acknowledged and beyond dispute. The creative, theo-philological syntheses of the Cappodocian Fathers already clarified the precise definition and expression of terms. Precise classification proved to be indispensable for the Christian mind, first, in order to articulate God's Revelation and secondly to protect Orthodox theology from different kinds of heretical distortions. The first notable terminological scrutiny of the 'universal teachers' was centred primarily on the core of theology, namely Triadology. Over time, with the settling of the Trinitarian disputes, the historical focus of theological attention shifted, as one might expect, to the sphere of Christology.

This present discourse occupies a position connecting theology *per se* (that is, Triadology) and various aspects of *oikonomia*, such as ecclesiology, sacramentology and anthropology. Whereas the fundamental Trinitarian terminological base had already been established, it took further significant effort and time to secure the Christological terms. The settlement of all arguments and controversies was, in the end, aided by a new, gradually crystallising meaning of the term ἐνυπόστατον within a familiar nomenclature but used in a different way.

Issues related to the historical usage and evolution of the term ἐνυπόστατον have increasingly been discussed by scholars over the last thirty years. Moreover, the term has been the focus of much close attention by researchers since the end of the 19th century. Modern theologians have expressed, and continue to propose, different, and occasionally contradictory, opinions about the historical implementation of ἐνυπόστατον by various Church Fathers and about its meaning specifically in Christology as well as in theology in general.

The term ἐνυπόστατον is Christian by its origin and is found in the works of Fathers and Church theologians from the time of St. Irenaeus of Lyons and Origen.[1] Later it appears in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus, St. Basil the Great, Didymus the Blind, St. John Chrysostom and St. Macarius of Egypt. At that time ἐνυπόστατον was applied mostly to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity but also to man's nature.

One can translate ἐνυπόστατον literally as 'being in a hypostasis', 'being in a hypostatic state' or 'possessing a hypostasis'.[2] Clearly, the theological meaning of the term directly depends on the content of the notion of ὑπόστασις. Throughout its history hypostasis could designate different notions but theologically it could mean:

a) real existence (possessing certain constancy), b) individual existence (possessing certain wholeness) or existence in itself or c) personal existence (within terminology equating hypostasis and prosopon).

Thus, ἐνυπόστατον can be understood as a state of a) real being, b) individual being or being 'in itself',[3] and, finally c) personal being. These three levels of

---

[1] PG 7B, 1240C; PG 17, 28B; 185B; 309D. B. Gleede thinks that Origen even could have 'coined' the term himself. B. Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος from Origen to John of Damascus* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), 15.

[2] See, for example the entry for 'ἐνυπόστατον' in Γ. Μπαμπινιώτη. Λεξικὸ τῆς Νέας Ελληνικῆς Γλώσσας (Αθήνα,1998). Some researchers claim, that there is no implication in early Christian texts that the prefix ἐν can be assigned a meaning identical to the English and German 'in', which reflects the relative dynamics of movement towards something or someone. Nevertheless there are serious arguments in favor of the opposite point of view. For example, even in Aristotle the prefix ἐν in ἐνυπόστατον proves to have localizing meaning. See U.M. Lang, 'Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy and Karl Barth', *JTS* 49 (1998), 630-57, 633, 654. See also B. Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος* (2012), 11.

[3] See also 'ἐνυπόστατον' in Ἀντιλεξικὸν ἢ Ὀνομαστικόν (Αθήνα, 2004).

understanding of the term's meaning reflect the development of the theological notion of hypostasis. At every new level the preceding meaning(s) is (are) in some sense incorporated.

In earlier Fathers employment of the term had to do with the two first of its possible meanings. For example, a text ascribed to Basil the Great,[4] has ἐνυπόστατον as opposed to ἀνυπόστατον, just as ἐνούσιος is the opposite of ἀνούσιος.[5] In this passage words beginning with the prefix ἐν denote natures 'possessing real existence' as opposed to 'illusory',[6] while those beginning with the negative prefix ἀν denote non-existing natures.[7] In St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus we find that ἐνυπόστατον is more often used in the second meaning; *i.e.*, possessing characteristics of individual existence, in order to describe the Logos and Holy Spirit as possessing self-activity alongside with His Father.[8]

Notwithstanding its pedigree, it is possible to say that, in the pre-Christological period, the term ἐνυπόστατον was employed either rarely or not often. When it was used it was precisely according to 'a' and 'b' of the above. But one should take note that when used to account for the compound human nature, the term did have an additional meaning of being 'included into'. Thus, St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the soul's parts as of ἐνυποστάτων πραγμάτων being an image of Trinity in us and St. Epiphanius of ἐνυπόστατος ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα[9] constituting one human hypostasis.

It can be said that after the emergence of Christological disputes the term can be understood to have acquired new theological sense corresponding to its third possible meaning. Already in the teaching of John Grammaticus,[10] the concept ἐνυπόστατον can be interpreted as 'having Hypostasis of the Logos' or even 'existing in Hypostasis of the Logos'. Grammaticus did apply the term to both natures of Christ and, despite philological intricacies of the literal meaning of ἐνυπόστατον itself, the two natures of Christ are perceived by him to

---

[4] The author of books IV and V from *Against Eunomius* is now accepted to be Didymus the Blind; see, however, F.-X. Risch, *Pseudo-Basilius, Adversus Eunomium IV-V. Einleitung, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1992) who suggests Apolinarius of Laodicea.

[5] PG 29, 749: Ἀνούσιον, καὶ ἀνυπόστατον, τὴν μὴ ὑπάρχουσαν μήτε οὖσαν ὅλως σημαίνει φύσιν. Τὸ δὲ ἐνούσιον καὶ ἐνυπόστατον λέγων τις, τὴν ἐνυπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν ἐδήλωσε.

[6] S. Govorun, 'On the History of the Term ἐνυπόστατον "Enhypostatic"', in *Leontius of Byzantium. A Collection of Research*, (*Говорун Сергий, диакон. К истории термина ἐνυπόστατον «воипостасное»*), ed. A.R. Fokin (Moscow, 2006), 656.

[7] See also, for example, the expression of St. John Chrysostom: ἀληθῆ καὶ ἐνυπόστατον ἀνάστασιν, PG 51, 107 and St. Epiphanius: οὔτε ἐνυπόστατον τὸ κακὸν ἐστιν, PG 41, 316.

[8] PG 33, 464, 976: ἀλλ' ἐνυπόστατον, λαλοῦν αὐτὸ καὶ ἐνεργοῦν; PG 45, 1321: Βασιλεία δὲ ζῶσα καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, PG 43, 25; PG 42, 21D, 28Cff.

[9] PG 44, 1340; PG 43, 161.

[10] John Grammaticus – the Orthodox opponent of Severus of Antioch, first quarter of the 6th century (not to be confused with John VII Grammaticus, 9th-century Patriarch of Constantinople).

be 'enhypostatic essences' co-existing in one hypostasis.[11] In his *Apologia Consilii Chalcedonsesis* Grammaticus employs an anthropological analogy saying that as man has two natures (οὐσίας) of soul and body contemplated in one hypostasis, in the same way we confess two natures in Christ and one particular Hypostasis. For, he argues, Divinity is His own and humanity through ἐνυποστάτον ἕνωσιν became his own.[12] According to Grammaticus:

> In one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, that is the Person of God the Word, He through union implements the salvation of all people. Incarnate, God the Word is comprehended in two natures or in two essences: because *He has* the essence of God, and also *has* now the essence of humanity.

Both natures (essences), therefore, are directly related to the Person of the Logos.[13] Having in mind the previously mentioned meaning of the term as 'being in a hypostasis' and Christological development of the term 'hypostasis' (IV Ecumenical Counsel) we can affirm that in Grammaticus ἐνυπόστατον can be said to imply natures existing in the Hypostasis of the Logos.

One of the key figures in the early Christological polemics and disputes was Leontius of Byzantium (6th century), whose identity and theological legacy is still subject to debate. There are several historically important figures from that period with the name Leontius: Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius the Scholastic (or Pseudo-Leontius), Leontius the monk of Jerusalem, Leontius presbyter of Constantinople and Leontius presbyter of Jerusalem.[14] A number of scholars focus particular attention on Leontius of Jerusalem whom they identify as separate from Leontius of Byzantium (for example, M. Rishar, 1944, as well as a number of contemporary patrologists, such as A. Grillmeier, M.J. Dowling and others). Leontius of Byzantium is sometimes considered to be a follower of the Origenist party or even a crypto-Origenist. Leontius of Jerusalem is credited with the innovation of the theological term ἐνυπόστατον. Other theologians assume that all of the writings attributed to the 6th-century Leontius are those of one person – Leontius of Byzantium (F. Loofs, 1887, V. Sokolov, 1916, I. Fracha, 1982). A number of western writers, including W. Rugamer, Junglas, and V. Grumel hold this view, following F. Loof. Others consider that 'it is impossible to determine conclusively the sameness or to draw a distinction between the two Leontiuses'.[15]

---

[11] *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici opera quae supersunt*, ed. M. Richard, CChr.SG (Turnhout, 1977), 55; see also O. Davydenkov, 'Enhypostatic Essence in the Theology of John Grammaticus', *Special Bulletin of PSTGU. Theology. Philosophy* (Давыденков О., прот. Воипостасная Сущность в Богословии Иоанна Грамматика), 2, 22 (2008),12.; U.M. Lang, 'Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos' (1998), 639-40.

[12] *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici opera quae supersunt* (1977), 55.

[13] Severus Antiochenus, *Oratio* 2. 26 in *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium Grammaticum*, ed. I. Lebon, CSCO 112 (Louvain, 1938), 169.

[14] Ed. A. Fokin, *Leontius of Byzantium* (2006), 6.

[15] S. Govorun, *On the History of the Term* ἐνυπόστατον *'Enhypostatic'* in *Leontius of Byzantium*, ed. A. Fokin (2006), 662.

The main issue here, however, is the interpretation of the term ἐνυπόστατον as used by Leontius. According to F. Loofs,[16] entrenched for a long time among Western researchers (Harnack, Junglas, H. Relton, P. Schoonenberg, Lampe, S. Otto), Leontius introduced a new Christological semantic element to the term and this assisted in the interpretation and affirmation of the Chalcedonian *oros* with theological accuracy. Other contemporary western researchers (B. Daley, 1978, M. Dowling, 1982, F. Schultz, 1996, and others)[17] observed philological and theo-philosophical errors in assigning this innovative Christological term to Leontius. Nevertheless many of them were ready to accept, albeit with some reservations, the possibility of using ἐνυπόστατον in a new, positive, theological sense. Among Russian thinkers there have been quite a few radical advocates who opposed classifying the term as synonymous with 'existing in a hypostasis', reasoning philologically that the prefix ἐν does not include a semantic element of inclusion in the being of some hypostasis but only emphasizes the uniqueness of the subject.[18]

Recent scholars, including A. Grillmeier, M. Dowling, R. Cross, K. Govorun, I. Fracha, and others all agree that while Leontius probably did not ascribe a brand new meaning to ἐνυπόστατον, he and other patristic writers (including the pre-Chalcedonian St. Cyril of Alexandria[19]), especially those of the 6th century (for example, John Grammaticus), gradually prepared the ground for formulating a new Christological understanding of the relationship between hypostasis and nature in Christology.[20]

And even if the literal meaning of the term ἐνυπόστατον is disputed till now, its theological application to describing the natures of Christ having or possessing their own being in the Hypostasis of the Logos is fully adequate.

---

[16] V. Sokolov, *Leontius of Byzantium: His Life and Literary Works*, in *ibid*. 307-8.

[17] In our opinion, the article by F.LeRon. Shults is of particular interest: 'A Dubious Christological Formula: From Leontius of Byzantium to Karl Barth', *Theological Studies* 57 (1996), 431-46. In this article the author analyses in detail one of the key texts by Leontius devoted to the meaning of the terms 'hypostasis' and ἐνυπόστατον, and draws a number of theologically important conclusions with regard to historical and theoretically possible meanings of the term.

[18] See, for example *Materials of the Annual Theological Conference of the St. Tikhon's Orthodox University*. Moscow. 2008 http://pstgu.ru/scientific/periodicals/conference/archives/.

[19] Thus, Marcel Richard, in 'L'introduction du mot 'hypostase' dans la théologie de l'incarnation', *MSR* 21 (1945), 5-32, 243-270, 252, argues that expression of St. Cyril 'union according to hypostasis' presented an anticipation of the Chalcedonean doctrine, although it was officially adopted into theological vocabulary much later, at the II Constantinople council.

[20] See, for example C. Dell'Osso, 'Still on the Concept of Enhypostaton' *Augustinianum* 43 (2003), 53-80, 69, where the author criticizes the position of F. LeRon Shults expressed in 'A Dubious Christological Formula' (1996) and argues that the term ἐνυπόστατον meant for Leontius of Byzantium not just 'real' or 'that which subsists' but also 'possessing essential qualities'. Besides, in *Contra Nestorianos* II 13, it is articulated that ἐνυπόστατον nature can subsist not just in its own hypostasis. B. Gleede argues that it was Leontius who 'issued' a new tradition of our term usage, 'according to which a translation as "enhypostasized" would be preferable'. B. Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος* (2012), 185.

In due course such derivatives of the term as 'enhypostasize' and 'enhyposta-
sizing' should be seen as its natural off-shoots. In spite of the fact that slight
tautology can be seen as intrinsic to this terminology,[21] we should note that by
repeating the root of the word 'hypostasis' in the verb 'enhypostasize' we empha-
size hypostatic ontological 'action' or 'initiative' when we speak about the Logos
consciously having adopted human nature.

St. Anastasios of Sinai in his turn speaks about two possible meanings of the
term ἐνυπόστατον. He says that firstly it means true existence (τὸ κατ᾿
ἀλήθειαν ὑπάρχον), but secondly it stands for the hypostatic properties (τὸ
ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ἰδίωμα) and gives a very clear example, considering the
hypostatic properties of the three Persons of the Trinity as being ἐνυπόστατον
to them.[22] Thus, the term designates here personal properties belonging to each
of the Hypostases of the Trinity.

The meaning of the term ἐνυπόστατον in Christology of St. Maximus
Confessor falls into the same theological path. St. Maximus speaks of the two
natures as being ἐνυπόστατον to God the Word and being His own via His
hypostasis.[23] One can say that according to Maximus 'the enhypostasization
proper to the Incarnation comprises a unity of being between Creator and crea-
ture in the sense that we find there one subsisting thing'[24] – the Logos. Within
the framework of the notion of the 'composite hypostasis' of Christ, proceeding
from ἐνυπόστατον mode of being of His human nature, Maximus speaks of
an assumption of this nature by the divine hypostasis of Logos.[25]

The meaning of the term ἐνυπόστατον in St. John Damascene, the principle
formulator of Orthodox theological thought, is multiple and covering all of the above
considered variants. St. John applies the term in Triadology, Christology and anthro-
pology. He transmits in his writings, inter alia, a definition for the term ἐνυπόστα-
τον and foremost, he repeatedly emphasises the inequality between the notions
hypostasis and *enhypostatic*. See, for example, his treatise 'Against the Jacobites':

ἐνυπόστατον is not ὑπόστασις, but being considered *within* ὑπόστασις[26] […] we do
not equate ἐνυπόστατον and ὑπόστασις, in the same way as we do not equate ἐνού-
σιος and οὐσία, but we understand their relationship in such a way that to be ἐνούσιος
belongs to ὑπόστασις and to be ἐνυπόστατον belongs to οὐσία.[27]

---

[21] Hypostasis gives foundation of being to natures it possesses. If we say that 'a hypostasis
enhypostasizes a nature' we imply the same idea. Maybe it would be philologically more correct
to say that 'a hypostasis gives a nature its being' or 'it realizes nature in itself'.

[22] τὸ ἐνυπόστατον, κατὰ δύο τρόπους λέγεται· ἢ τὸ κατ᾿ ἀλήθειαν ὑπάρχον, ἢ τὸ ἐν τῇ
ὑποστάσει ἰδίωμα, ὡς ἐν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ Πατρί, τὸ ἀγέννητον. Ἐν δὲ τῷ Υἱῷ, τὸ γεννητόν.
Ἐν δὲ τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, τὸ ἐκπορευτόν, PG 89, 61 B.

[23] *Ep*. 15, PG 91, 557D, 560B-C.

[24] N. Madden, 'Composite Hypostasis in Maximus Confessor', *SP* 27 (1991), 175-97, 190.

[25] C. Dell'Osso, 'Still on the Concept of Enhypostaton' (2003), 73.

[26] PG 94, 1441.

[27] *Ibid*.

According to the Damascene, the notion ἐνυπόστατον is universal and sometimes means essence contemplated *within* hypostasis and existing in its own right, sometimes elements contained *within* one hypostasis as in case of soul and body. Therefore, the divinity and humanity of Christ are 'enhypostatic' – for both have one common hypostasis. The Deity has it pre-eternally and everlastingly, while the animate and sentient flesh taken on by Him in latter days, attains existence in Him and acquires Him as Hypostasis.[28]

St. John refers to the notion of ἐνυπόστατον in its Christological context several times, as in his famous *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* when he affirms that 'the flesh of God the Word … became ἐνυπόστατος to the ὑπόστασις of God the Word'.[29]

Meanwhile, the term ἐνυπόστατον in St. John can be understood sometimes simply in the sense of possessing 'real' or 'individual' existence. From the definition of this term in *Philosophical Chapters*,[30] according to the two possible meanings of the term hypostasis, τὸ ἐνυπόστατον means either 'simply real essence' or 'real essence with its predicates', *i.e.* 'individual essence'. According to this vision Damascene speaks, for example, that evil has no real essence[31] and that soul and body, being 'ἐνυπόστατα' to human hypostasis, comprise single 'synthetic hypostasis'.[32]

St. John also frequently applies ἐνυπόστατος and ἐνυπόστατον to characterise Persons of the Holy Trinity. In such cases the term can be understood either as 'possessing being in itself' or as 'possessing personal being'.[33]

It is also important to emphasise that the convergence of the notions ὑπόστασις and πρόσωπον, first introduced by the Cappodocian Fathers in their Triadology, continued in Christology during the disputes over the manner of union of Christ's two natures. St. John more than once points out the differences in the meaning of ὑπόστασις in the corpus of the Church Fathers, noting that 'many of our men without distinction say that [in Christ] the union of natures or the union of hypostases occurred'.[34] St. John explains further that in using

---

[28] *Concerning the Composite Nature, Against the Acephalites*, PG 95, 120.

[29] τοῦ θεοῦ Λόγου σάρξ … ἐν αὐτῇ ὑποστᾶσα, ἐνυπόστατος, PG 94, 1017; ἐνυπόστατον εἶναί φαμεν τὴν φύσιν ἐκείνην, PG 94, 752; προσελάβετο ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Παρθένου σάρκα ἐνυπόστατον, PG 95, 189.

[30] Chapter 29. *On Hypostasis, Enhypostaton and Anhypostaton*, PG 94, 589.

[31] οὔτε ἐνυπόστατον φύσει τὸ κακόν, PG 96, 460.

[32] PG 94, 616AB.

[33] 'God as everlasting and perfect, will also possess the Word perfect and hypostatic (ἐνυπόστατος)', see PG 94, 804; 'Son of God, hypostatic Wisdom and Power of God Almighty' *ibid*. 985; '…we believe in one Holy Spirit… hypostatic ἐνυπόστατον, subsisting in His Own Hypostasis' *ibid*. 821; Πατὴρ ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἐνυπόστατος, καὶ Υἱὸς ἀληθινὸς ἐνυπόστατος, καὶ Πνεῦμα ἀληθινὸν ἐνυπόστατον, τρία ὄντα μία θεότης, μία οὐσία, *Sacra Parallela*, PG 95, 1076. See also on Trinitarian employment of the term by St. John: U.M. Lang, 'Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos' (1998), 653.

[34] *On One Hundred Heresies in Brief*, PG 94, 749.

the term in such a way the fathers equated ὑπόστασις with individuated nature. The same meaning can also be found in the *Philosophical Chapters*.[35] During the polemics with Nestorius and his followers, a different Christological understanding of the term ὑπόστασις had already crystallised. Specifically, it was identified with the term πρόσωπον: 'We say that the Person of Christ is one' using the word πρόσωπον interchangeably with ὑπόστασις 'as when we speak of the hypostasis of a man, for example, of Peter or Paul'.[36]

Considering the gradual development of the notion of hypostasis in Christology and anthropology and the preceding consideration of possible employments of ἐνυπόστατον, we can underline that the term can be and was used to describe the relationship between the person and nature in Trinitarian and Christological discourses as well as for anthropology.[37]

The unique event of God's incarnation, described in the Church as 'the mystery of Godliness' (1*Tim*. 3:16) and understood by the Fathers as the 'deification of our nature'[38] is defended by them as being exceptional and soteriologically inimitable in its essence and importance. It is the unparalleled hypostatic union of divine and human natures in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ that became the foundation for our salvation. It is not accidental that in his polemic St. John makes the God-revealed fact that human flesh became ἐνυπόστατος for God the Word the condition for the completion of God's economy, namely, the salvation of mankind. According to the Damascene, had this not occurred, 'we boast in vain, that through the incarnation of God the Word the deification of our nature was effected, because if incarnation meant the residence of one nature in another, then God experienced multiple incarnations'.[39] He continues: 'incarnation by grace' is not true and cannot be the foundation of the salvation of man.

On the Christological and terminological problems under discussion, the opinions of Russian émigré theologians of the 20th century, such as V. Lossky and Fr. G. Florovsky were highly influential. V. Lossky, in his outstanding work, *The Theological Notion of the Human Person*, is able to apply the term 'enhypostasize' very accurately and precisely to describe the relationship (a) between the Hypostasis of God the Word and the human nature assumed by Him at the Incarnation, and (b) between the human hypostasis and the corresponding human nature it possesses. In turn, G. Florovsky suggests that the new theological meaning of ἐνυπόστατον had been anticipated long before it

---

[35] 'The word ὑπόστασις has two meanings. Taken in a general sense, it means substance. Properly, ὑπόστασις means an individual, as well as any distinct person', *ibid*. 589.

[36] *Ibid*. 752.

[37] οὐσίαν τῆς ἁγίας θεότητος ἐνυπόστατον ἴσμεν· ἐν ταῖς τρισὶ γάρ ἐστιν ὑποστάσεσι, PG 94, 1441 D; Ἐνυπόστατον δέ φαμεν… ἐν τῇ τοῦ Λόγου ὑποστάσει ὑπάρξασαν, *ibid*. 1476 C.

[38] *Against the Jacobites*, *ibid*. 1477.

[39] *Ibid*.

was actually formulated in the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria.[40] In fact, this should have been expected in compliance with the principle of the Tradition of the Church, so long as the term ἐνυπόστατον was actually within its framework. Here is when we can speak of a natural development of a theological interpretation of a term, rather than forced theological constructs.

We can affirm that the term ἐνυπόστατον enables one to describe both the real subsistence of one or several distinct natures in one hypostasis, and that of one nature in several hypostases. There is good reason to assume that the term ἐνυπόστατον is quite universal and can be applied efficiently in almost all areas of theology.[41] First, the term is applicable to the description of subsistence in the Hypostasis of the Logos, of the individual human nature assumed by Him at the Incarnation, and also for a theological analysis of the interaction of the properties in the two natures in Christ (including, especially, the matter of Theopaschism). Secondly, the term can be applied to describe the existence of two and more natures in a hypostasis deemed to be 'natural' for them. For example, the coexistence of soul and body in one human hypostasis. This opens up the possibility of using the term to describe the deification of human nature by God's uncreated energies. Thirdly, the term ἐνυπόστατον is capable of describing the Triadological mystery of Three Persons existing in One Essence. In other words, the mystery of the 'enhypostatic' possession of one Essence by the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

However, the possibility of using the term ἐνυπόστατον widely does not permit theologians to manipulate it arbitrarily. For instance, in some modern theological periodicals an attempt has been made to use the term to describe the 'enhypostasizing' of the Eucharistic bread and wine by the Hypostasis of God the Son in the sacrament of Communion, which, it is alleged, occurs without actual transubstantiation of the nature of the elements into Christ's Flesh and Blood. The opinion that there is no transformation of the nature of the Eucharistic Gifts has been already expressed. The novelty we now face is to employ the term ἐνυπόστατον and its derivatives in order to prove the declared 'orthodox' nature of such a view. Within the framework of analyzing the conceptual meaning of ἐνυπόστατον, pursued in this article, we find it both possible and necessary to refute not only similar inadequate usages of the term and its derivatives in Eucharistology, but also to expose to criticism the theological opinion itself on the intransmutability of the nature of the Eucharistic bread and wine.

---

[40] For example, St. Cyril's expression ἐν προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ, where πρόσωπον corresponds to the ontological notion of person, can be considered as a forerunner of the final usage of the term ἐνυπόστατον. See, for example, Hans von Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria* (Leiden, 2009), 277-8.

[41] For example, it can be said that St. Maximus feels 'free to develop a coherent Trinitarian-Christological terminological system attributing to the term ἐνυπόστατος the same function in both theological contexts', B. Gleede, *The Development of the Term ἐνυπόστατος* (2012), 155.

In truth, the term ἐνυπόστατον cannot be artificially applied to any arbitrarily selected combinations of pairs of hypostasis with nature, but only to those which possess 'real existence'. Otherwise, we will reach such obvious nonsense as a human hypostasis 'enhypostisizing' the very essence of the divine nature! Such an absurd pairing cannot be permitted by informed theological thought for it is impossible for a human hypostasis to 'enhypostasize' not only the non-created energies of God in the process of deification, but more so, the Divine Essence itself.

The usage is more subtle in the case of the aforementioned Eucharistic pair: the Hypostasis of God the Word truly 'enhypostasizes' the Eucharistic Gifts. In this mysterious process, however, their natures inevitably become the human nature of Christ because, out of all created nature, it is man alone who was created in the image of God. Only human nature allows for the possibility of a hypostatic union either with a human hypostasis created in the image of the Divine Hypostasis, or with the Divine Hypostasis Itself; of which the latter transpired at the Incarnation of God and is actualised in every Eucharist. Conversely, it is not possible to say anything of this sort about the bread and wine, even if they are somehow specifically sanctified. Even in the context of the deification of all creation when, according to the Apostle Paul, God will be τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (1*Cor.* 15:28; *Eph.* 1:23), we should distinguish between deification by grace through the energies of God, and deification by means of hypostatic union. Otherwise, we will arrive at false conclusions about the final hypostatic union of the Logos and creation (including animate and inanimate nature: snails, worms, stones, sand and the like!). Obviously, true Christian theology, holding fast on the one hand to the distinction without division of the Three Hypostases and the One Essence in God, and on the other between the One Essence and the uncreated Energies, should also distinguish between created nature that can be, and was, taken into a hypostatic being and nature that principally cannot exist in a divine or human hypostasis.

Inanimate nature, such as stones, earth and other elements, will never intrinsically be included in the hypostatic beings either of human persons or, even more so, of the Divine Persons. Accepting such a speculation would, from a Christian perspective, mean a deviation towards pantheism. It is precisely this kind of pantheistic thinking (the deification of all creation) that led modern proponents to make improper use of ἐνυπόστατον. Despite their acknowledgement of recognized Orthodox theologians, who used the term 'enhypostasize' (a derivative of ἐνυπόστατον) in the context of Eucharistology,[42] their understanding

---

[42] Consider the classic formulation: 'The Bread of the Eucharist, available for man as food, is the flesh of Christ transubstantiated, however still coessential with human flesh, enhypostasized in the Logos and permeated by the Divine Energies'. St. Nicephorus of Constantinople, *Against Eusebius and Epiphanius*/*Contra Eusebium*, ed. J.B. Pitra, *Spicilegium Solesmense* 1 (Paris, 1928), 440.

of it is idiosyncratic. We find the following statements in their writings: 'The flesh of God the Word multiplies, encompassing gradually all creation'.[43] It is obvious that this conclusion can only be drawn from a consistent theological reflection that strayed when it accepted the possibility of literal 'enhypostasizing' – 'receiving of bread and wine into the Hypostasis of God the Word' – without a transformation of their nature. In accordance with the adherents of this new Eucharistological direction of thought, the 'Eucharistic Bread, being united with God, does not lose its nature, but acquires a new beginning of its existence, becoming Heavenly Bread, the Flesh of God Himself'[44] and, also: 'Holy Gifts, that, according to the Chalcedonean doctrine, are received by God the Word into the same unity with Himself as the flesh of the Virgin Mary, do not change their material nature but the mode of their existence in this world'.[45] The author can in this passage only be referring to what he conceives as a literal 'enhypostasizing' of the nature of bread and wine by God the Word.

But the truth is that 'enhypostasizing' is not possible for any nature, but solely for a nature that is capable, in accordance with the Creator's λόγος, of forming a pair together with a personal being. At this point it is worth remembering the first[46] of the above mentioned meanings of ἐνυπόστατον – 'possessing real existence'. The Church Fathers, understanding that hypostasis and nature comprise one living reality, distinguishing between them while not dividing them. They 'rooted personality in being and personalised ontology'[47] when they described in theological terms the personal being of God and of man created in His image and likeness. Consequently, it is evident that the term ἐνυπόστατον does not suggest artificial, unreal structures – paired hypostases and natures – such as: the hypostasis of the Son of God paired with the nature of bread, or the hypostasis of man paired with the Essence of God. Such purely speculative constructs can in theory be construed in our mind, but they have never possessed and will never possess real being, and consequently cannot actually describe existing phenomena and objects.

Equally inadequate is the argument, also in the contest of this polemic, that since man is often referred to as a microcosm in patristic literature, and because his nature includes almost all of the elements in the universe, it follows that

---

[43] A.R. Fokin, *Transubstantiation of the Holy Gifts in the Sacrament of the Eucharist according to the teaching of St. John Chrysostom*, in *Patristics. New Translations, Articles* (*Фокин А. Р. Преложение Святых Даров в таинстве Евхаристии по учению святителя Иоанна Златоуста / Патристика. Новые переводы, статьи*) (Nizhny Novgorod, 2001).

[44] A.A. Zaytsev, *Eucharistic Transubstantiation*, http://www.mpda.ru/site_pub/82304.html, note 44.

[45] A.I. Osipov, *Eucharist and Priesthood*, http://www.orthtexts.narod.ru/17 Evhar svyasch.htm.

[46] C. Dell'Osso, 'Still on the Concept of Enhypostaton' (2003), 68.

[47] V.N. Lossky, *Dogmatic Theology* (*Лосский В. Н. Догматическое Богословие*) *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church. Dogmatic Theology* (Moscow, 1991), 213.

man's deification provides for an equivalent *theosis* of all elements in the created world, both in character and extent. From this premise, it is derived that the 'enhypostasizing' of the Eucharistic bread and wine in the Hypostasis of the Son of God is only the initiation of the process of an 'enhypostasizing' by the Logos of all created elements: 'In the incarnation, God the Word forms a union not merely with a particular human nature, but through it and in it with any creature, with the entire creation as a whole, […] with all creation that is concentrated in a human nature from its inception'.[48]

This theological error is once more rooted in the failure of its supporters to discern two types of deification: (a) through energy (by grace); and (b) through hypostatic union. As such, the correct theological understanding of the term ἐνυπόστατον (and its derivatives) must become the foundation for theological reasoning within an anthropological context. Man, as a hypostatic-natural unity and profoundly distinct from all creation in that he was created in the image of God, can never in his compound nature be equated to the elements comprising his nature. Insofar as the human hypostasis is not comprehended outside of human nature, neither is human nature comprehended independently: in other words, outside or without the corresponding hypostasis. The elements of human nature, even in their entirety, do not constitute man as an individual, as a hypostatic being. In other words, our nature is not the sum of the elements that it comprises; it cannot be reduced to such a sum. The human hypostasis, 'enhypostasizing' its nature, gives it a special mode of existence, different from a 'non-enhypostasized' existence of the elements comprising it. This distinction of the mode of being of created nature received into the hypostatic being of man and the one that was never received will never be overcome just as the distance between God and His creation will never be overcome. This is why it is necessary from the theological viewpoint to draw a clear distinction between the deification of nature 'enhypostasized' in the human hypostatic being and the deification of the rest of creation through energies or by grace.

The uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of man as the sole image of God in the universe form the foundation of the Christian worldview. A pantheistic dissolution of the boundary between God the Creator and the created universe has never been asserted in Christian theology. Conversely, the incarnation of God the Word and His 'enhypostasizing' of human nature, so to speak, eternalized human uniqueness. In the patristic legacy there are various interpretations and levels of comprehension of the 'image of God' concept. According to Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition the uniqueness of the image of God in man is obvious in relation to the rest of the created universe. However, we would like to emphasize that the key characteristic of human common likeness with God

[48] A.A. Zaytsev, *The Body of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist*. Paper read at a seminar for the academic corps of the Moscow Spiritual Academy and Seminary entitled 'Holy Gifts in the Eucharistic Sacrament', mpda.ru: www.psevdo.net/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=44.

is the hypostatic-natural unity of the being of man. This unity of hypostasis and nature, which can be expressed by the words of St. Maximus that 'the state of being is contemplated in the essence and hypostasis',[49] is defined most powerfully by the term ἐνυπόστατον, according to which a hypostasis reveals itself via an 'enhypostaized' nature, while the same nature subsists in the hypostasis hypostasizing it.

---

[49] τῶν ὄντων σύστασις ἐν οὐσίᾳ καὶ ὑποστάσει θεωρεῖται, PG 91, 272B.