


A Reconstruction of John the Grammarian's Account of Substance in Terms of *Enhypostaton*

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ABSTRACT The concept of *enhypostaton* was introduced into theological discourse during the sixth-century Christological debates, and aimed to elucidate the orthodox doctrine of the unity of two natures in the singular hypostasis of Christ. In spite of the fact that the conceptual content of the term is recognized by contemporary scholarship as pertaining to the core of Christology, the notion of *enhypostaton* is often described as obscure and not clearly defined. The coining of the term is often ascribed to Leontius of Byzantium, whereas in fact he only followed and developed solutions already introduced into Christological discourse by John the Grammarian. The article aims to clarify the notion by offering a philosophical account of the meaning and theoretical origins of “enhypostaton,” as introduced by John the Grammarian in the context of his discussion of substance as en-hypostatical being. *Enhypostaton* emerges as the proper way of describing the ontological complements of a particular entity. This seems to be a significant development in the philosophical explanation of substance.

KEYWORDS *enhypostaton*; hypostasis; John the Grammarian of Caesarea; nature; substance

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INTRODUCTION

Within the field of theological studies, the concept of *enhypostaton* is known to have been coined in the Christological debates of the fifth and sixth centuries. It is seen as possessing considerable importance for Christology as an elucidation of the union of natures in the single hypostasis of Christ. Even so, in spite of its significance, it is often regarded as obscure and lacking any clear definition. At the same time, in the field of philosophy, this notion has not attracted much scholarly attention at all.¹ Still, the Christological elucidation it introduced consisted in its providing the possibility of conceptualizing the existence and unity of universal entities within a particular being. Just for this reason, it seems worthwhile to examine it in philosophical terms, focusing on both its ontological and its logical significance. In this paper, I will concentrate on making such an analysis against the background of the context furnished by the development of philosophical terminology in Christological discourse itself.

The first thing that needs to be mentioned before such an analysis can be attempted is that the term “ἐνυπόστατος” is not itself found in use until the second century AD. What is more, it not only first appears in works by Christian authors, but also does so in exclusively theological contexts.² Secondly, in spite of the fact that the coining of *enhyposta-*

1. There are quite extensive studies on the subject: see, for instance, Stephan Otto, *Person und Subsistenz. Die philosophische Anthropologie des Leontios von Byzanz; ein Beitrag zur Spätantiken Geistesgeschichte* (München: Fink, 1968); Benjamin Gleede, *The Development of the Term ‘enupostatos’ from Origen to John of Damascus*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 113 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), doi:10.1163/9789004227996; Carlo Dell’Osso, “Still on the Concept of *Enhypostaton*,” *Augustinianum* 43, no. 1 (2003), doi:10.5840/agstm20034314. Still, we should point out that the focus of those studies is theological, and this holds true even if one can find in them an attempt to draw parallels between the usage and understanding of “ἐνυπόστατος” in Christian authors and, for instance, philosophical elements of Neoplatonic thought. The point of view of those studies is exclusively one pertaining to the logic of theological discourse; philosophical issues, in the sense of matters of ontological structure and the grounding of individual being, etc., are not themselves the focal point.

2. In tracing this term I made use of the TLG database, taking into consideration the entire period predating John the Grammarian himself. Certainly, when using this particular tool while doing a search with a global reach, one must take into account that (a) not all ancient Greek works have already been digitalized, and (b) dubious and spurious works are lumped together by the database with authentic ones (unless each author is searched separately). Yet even with those deficiencies in play, the results seem fairly representative. I will be presenting here the conclusions of my analyses of the resulting statistics, which differ to some extent from those presented by Gleede. In part of his studies devoted to the usage of the term “ἐνυπόστατος” prior to the 6th century, that author mainly concentrates on the technical meaning of the term as used within a Trinitological context: i.e. to signify independent substantial existence. See Gleede, *The Development*, 11–41.

ton as a concept *sensu stricto* is often ascribed to Leontius of Byzantium, he was only following and developing solutions already introduced into Christological discourse by John the Grammarian, who had devoted his works to the defense of Chalcedonian Christological doctrine. As will be shown, John re-interpreted the polysemous term, creating a newly coherent—albeit still rather nascent—conception. Even if what he proposed was a conceptual tool aimed at serving the needs of Christology, his re-interpretation proved to be essentially philosophical in character, carrying as it did noteworthy implications of a philosophical kind that transgress the limits of purely theological discourse. His works, though, have only been incompletely preserved, with the extant fragments surviving partially in Greek, partially in Latin.³ Taking the latter fact into consideration, the present study will be oriented towards offering an interpretative reconstruction of his thought in philosophical terms that also takes into consideration the subsequent development of his ideas by his followers.

THE USAGE OF THE WORD “ΕΝΥΠΟΨΤΑΤΟΣ” IN THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE:

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOHN THE GRAMMARIAN AND HIS PREDECESSORS
The earliest possible instances of the word “ἐνυπόστατος” in the Greek corpus digitalized by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database, if one accepts as authentic a text usually considered to be spurious, are found in Irenaeus (one instance)⁴ and Origen (three instances, one of which is spurious).⁵ From the second century up to the time of John the Grammarian, i.e., the sixth century, the term occurs 236 times. The following authors use the term more than at least once: Origen, Pseudo Macarius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Didymus the Blind, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Caesarea, Socrates Scholasticus, Cyril of Alexandria, Nilus of Ancyra, Theodoretus of Cyrus, and Zacharias of Mitelene. In an absolute majority of cases, the term was used by authors of the period very sporadically, with two exceptions: Epiphanius of Salamina (75 instances) and Cyril of

3. See John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici Opera quae supersunt*, ed. Marcel Richard, Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977). Works of John the Grammarian are cited according to this edition.

4. Robert M. Grant, “The Fragments of the Greek Apologists and Irenaeus,” in *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*, ed. J. Neville Birdsall and R. W. Thomson (Freiberg; New York: Herder, 1963), 213; Gleede, *The Development*, 13.

5. Origen, *Adnotationes in Deuteronomium* 17.28.27–30; *Expositio in Proverbia* 17.185.15–20; the spurious is in *Scholia in Matthaeum* 17.309.52–53. See, on the spurious passage, Gleede, *The Development*, 14. n. 32.

Alexandria (38 instances).⁶ This comprises almost half the total number of instances of its use in the period.⁷

Although one can hardly claim that the term was clearly defined, its meaning can be deduced quite effectively through a study of its referential uses. An important characteristic of the usage of “ἐνυπόστατος,” from Irenaeus and Origen up to (but not including) John the Grammarian, is that it was employed in relation to the Logos (the Word of God), both as such and as incarnated (ἐνσαρκος), but not in regard to the nature or natures of the Logos. Also, it was used to refer to each member of the Holy Trinity. In most cases the term conveys the idea of the real and true existence of the Logos and/or each member of the Trinity, as opposed to some mere fantasy or thought, or simple utterance, concerning these. The Word of God is not like human knowledge, or phantasy, or just an utterance: rather, He really and truly exists.⁸

The second idea conveyed by the term is that of the separate constitution and completeness of that same really and truly existent Logos, or any other member of the Holy Trinity.⁹ In Chrysostomus it is underlined that something which is *enhypostaton* needs no addition or completion to its

6. According to Gleede, it occurs in Epiphanius 74 times, and in Cyril 51 times. Ibid., 35, 38.

7. One should also take into account the fact that because the lives of many authors fall across the chronological boundaries that define one particular century, time limits available in TLG queries do not always produce accurate results. Therefore the precise numbers pertaining to exactly defined centuries do not make real sense. According to the database, “ἐνυπόστατος” is used 216 times in the 4th century, and 86 times in the 5th century, but what is important for us is the frequency of usage of the term in particular authors from that period.

8. In this sense the term occurs in Origen, *Adnotationes in Deuteronomium* 17.28.27–30; *Expositio in Proverbia* 17.185.15–20; *Scholia in Matthaeum* 17.309.52–53; Didymus the Blind, *Commentarii in Zacchariam* 2.139.1–2; John Chrysostom, *In principium Actorum (homiliae 1–4)* 51.107.23–26; *In epistulam ad Romanos (homiliae 1–32)* 60.503.24–27; Epiphanius, *Panarion (Adversus haereses)* 3.7.29–32, 3.238.18–24, 3.254.7–12; Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium (libri 5)* 29.713.28–30, 772.44–46; Gregory of Nyssa, *In Ecclesiasten (homiliae 8)* 5.354.20–23; *Contra Eunomium* 3.6.17.8; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses ad illuminandos* 4.7.7–8, 17.5.18–27; Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Joannem* 2.714.16–17; *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali Trinitate* 75.80.39–40, 279.37–39, 321.47–49; Zacharias Mytilenaeus, *Ammonius sive De mundi opificio disputatio* 2.1102–104.

9. In this sense the term occurs in Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae spirituales* 50 4.168–69, 16.22–24; John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Hebraeos (homiliae 1–34)* 63.22.29–31; Epiphanius, *Panarion (Adversus haereses)* 2.392.2–396.1, 3.8.29–9.16; Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.23.50–52, 2.19.89–94; Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarii in Joannem* 2.510.3–4; *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali Trinitate* 75.105.7–12; Nilus Ancyranus, *Epistulae* 1.286.8–14; and Theodoretus of Cyrus, *Commentaria in Isaiaem* 5. 252–55; *Graecarum affectionum curatio* 2.110.1–7.

hypostasis in order to exist. Something *enhypostaton* exists actually and without needing anything else to exist.¹⁰ Not only does the Logos truly exist, but He is, alongside, separately constituted (*enhypostatos*) in relation to the Father, his own source and cause, who Himself, along with the Holy Spirit, is also *enhypostatos*.¹¹ In this sense, “ἐνυπόστατος” practically becomes a synonym in Epiphanius of “hypostasis.” The latter says that the Trinity is of one substance, but of three persons (πρόσωπα) and *enhypostata*.¹² Such identification of the term “ἐνυπόστατος” with “hypostasis” becomes stronger in Socrates Scholasticus and Cyril of Alexandria. Socrates describes the Logos as *enhypostatos* and “existing according to itself”: i.e. not as in something else. He also states that to deny that the Logos is hypostasis and *enhypostatos* is to deny that it really exists.¹³ In a similar way, Cyril describes the *enhypostatos* Logos as subsisting and as acknowledged in its proper existence “in and by himself” (καθ’ ἑαυτόν). He also states that something that is *an-hypostaton* has no existence in its own right.¹⁴

Yet another form of usage of the term “ἐνυπόστατος,” albeit in a different context, is highly noteworthy. Several authors, such as Pseudo-Macarius, Didymus the Blind, Epiphanius, and Basil of Caesarea, speaking about evil, strongly emphasized the thought that evil *sensu stricto* does not exist, so that it is itself “not *enhypostaton*.”¹⁵ It is hard, if not impossible, to claim that evil does not exist at all, yet it has no separate constitution that would make it possible for it to exist in its own right.

To conclude, it is possible to say that up until John the Grammarian the word “ἐνυπόστατος” was used to convey two meanings: (1) the true existence of an entity; (2) the existence of an entity having a separate and independent constitution, such that it exists in its own right (καθ’ ἑαυτό)—making the term in effect synonymous with “hypostasis,” construed as referring to individual beings.¹⁶

10. John Chrysostom, *In epistulam ad Hebraeos (homiliae 1–34)* 63.20.27–36.

11. John Chrysostom, *In Joannem (homiliae 1–88)* 59.47.25–30.

12. Epiphanius, *Panarion (Adversus haereses)* 3.266.3–8, 3.318.15–22 = *Ancoratus* 67.4.5; *Ancoratus* 10.5.3–6.1, cf. 77.5.1–6.2.

13. Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.32.65–69, 2.19.89–94.

14. Cyril of Alexandria, *De incarnatione Unigeniti* 687.4–8; *Commentarii in Joannem* 1.57.16–22.

15. See Pseudo-Macarius, *Homiliae spirituales* 50 16.11–13, 77–78; *Sermo* 46 1.2.4–5; Didymus the Blind, *Fragmenta in Psalmos* Fr. 26.1–2; Epiphanius, *Panarion (Adversus haereses)* 1.263.5–6; Basil of Caesarea, *Quod Deus non est auctor malorum* 31.341.25–30.

16. Those two meanings of “ἐνυπόστατος” were already clearly discerned and described by John of Damascus, when he declared that “ἐνυπόστατος” was used in the first sense to denote simple existence (ἀπλῶς ὑπαρξίς) and in the second to refer to the hypostasis in and by itself, i.e., to *individuum*. See John Damascene, *Dialectica* 45.2–7.

It is hard to find a description of “ἐνυπόστατος” in the works of John the Grammarian that could be regarded as functioning to define the term. Just as with his predecessors, though, its meaning can be effectively deduced through its referential employment on various occasions. Indeed, with regard to the latter, one thing immediately points to a significant difference between John and his predecessors: in contrast to the already-established tradition, John does not speak of the Logos as *enhypostatos*. In relation to ὁ θεὸς λόγος, he uses such terms as “nature” (ἡ φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου)¹⁷ and “hypostasis” (ἡ ὑπόστασις τοῦ λόγου).¹⁸ The principal epithet used to describe Logos is “incarnated” (λόγος σεσαρκωμένος)¹⁹—never *enhypostatos*. Instead, in John, cognates of the latter expression are applied either to some unity of natures (ἐνυπόστατος ἔνωσις) or to natures described as present enhypostatically (ἐνυποστάτως) in the Logos of God.²⁰ Thus, rather than imposing on the Grammarian’s text a rendering of the term “ἐνυπόστατος” based on previous forms of usage and dictionary entries, I propose to reconstruct its meaning through an analysis of his account of nature as *enhypostatos*.

JOHN THE GRAMMARIAN’S ACCOUNT OF NATURE/SUBSTANCE AS ENHYPOSTATOS

In John the Grammarian’s usage, “ἐνυπόστατος” becomes a technical term of Christocentric ontology, defined through its relation to a network of other terms employed to account for the ontologically unique case of Jesus Christ. Most important among them are “substance” (οὐσία / *substantia*) and “nature” (φύσις / *natura*), which are treated as synonyms and opposed to “hypostasis” (ὑπόστασις vel πρόσωπον / *persona*).²¹ The meaning of “ἐνυπόστατος” can be clarified only by explaining how John articulates this opposition.

It might seem that where his understanding of substance/nature and

17. John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Capitula XVII contra Monophysitas*, ed. Marcel Richard, 1.28–29, 2.30–31, 15.146, 16.153–54, 157–58. Hereafter cited in text as *CM*.

18. John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Apologia concilii Chalcedonensis (excerpta Graeca)*, ed. Marcel Richard, 5.237–38. Hereafter cited in text as *Apol. II*. Also *CM* 7.71–72.

19. *Apol. II* 5.237–38, 6.268–69; *CM* 1.14, 18, 27, 5.50, 54, 12.130, 15.147, 16.153–54, 157–58 (incarnated nature of Word of God); John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Adversus Aphthartodocetas*, ed. Marcel Richard, 4.21–22, 7.43–44.

20. *Apol. II* 4.3.181–82, 9.106–109; *CM* 6.65–67.

21. *Apol. II* 1.8–11; John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Apologia concilii Chalcedonensis (excerpta Latina)*, ed. Marcel Richard, 2.15–16, 6. Hereafter cited in text as *Apol. I*. Also *CM* 7.86–89.

hypostasis were concerned, John simply complied with the Cappadocian tradition for using these terms—one instigated to meet Trinitological needs, and which defined substance/nature as what is common, but hypostasis as what is particular.²² However, he also opted for a creative synthesis of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic interpretations of universal and particular substance.

John's treatment of substance and nature is in line with Porphyry's *Isagoge*. What is common is that which is perceived in many subjects / things, this being in each of them in an absolutely equal and complete manner.²³ In fact, John conveys through the terms "substance" and "nature" a conception corresponding to Porphyry's lowest species, understood as what is equally predicated in essence of individuals.²⁴ In turn, John describes the subjects in which substance and nature are observed, i.e., individuals of the same species, in Aristotelian terms, putting emphasis on their singularity.²⁵ It is to those individual entities that such terms as "hypostasis" and "person" are applied.²⁶ To be sure, hypostasis does not in essence differ in relation to substance as such, being perceived as sharing in commonality of substance (*Apol. II* 4.6.202–205; *Apol. I* 20.155–56). And yet hypostasis is a real entity of a certain species (*Apol. I* 20.156–9; *CM* 7.68), and this is what in fact differentiates hypostasis from substance. It is not that substance is only predicated in common, while hypostasis is what is predicated properly. The difference is not merely one with respect to the manner of speaking about the same subject. Hypostasis is not just some

22. He gives a literal quote from Basil of Caesarea on this subject, as pivotal testimony and justification for holding such a view on the subject. See *Apol. II* 2.20–22, citing Basil, *Epistula* 214.4.8–9: "ὅτι ὃν ἔχει λόγον τὸ κοινὸν πρὸς τὸ ἴδιον, τοῦτον ἔχει ἡ οὐσία πρὸς τὴν ὑπόστασιν." Also, similarly to the Cappadocians, he treated "substance" and "nature" as synonymous. See *Apol. II* 1.10–11: "Ἡ γὰρ φύσις, ὃ ἐστὶν οὐσία" ("nature that is substance"); *CM* 7.86–89: "φαμὲν τὴν οὐσίαν, ὃ ἐστὶ φύσιν" ("is called substance, that is, nature"); *Apol. I* 2.15–16, 1.1.6. For synonymous usage of "substance" and "nature" as both signifying the universal human, see Gregory of Nyssa, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus* 31.26–32.7; *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei* 40.20–21; *Epistula* 38.3.1; and regarding substance being the same as nature, see *Contra Eunomium* cap. 3.4.3, 3.5.42.5–43.1.

23. *Apol. I* 6; *Apol. II* 1.1–2, 9–10. Cf. the understanding of the five basic notions (i.e., genus, species, differentia etc.) as common in Porphyry, *Isagoge* 2.18–24, 13.10–17.

24. See Porphyry, *Isagoge* 4.11–12, 13.10–17, 21.5. The same relates to essential characteristics of individuals belonging to the same species. See *Apol. II* 2.22–25. Compare with *Isagoge* 7.23–8.1, 9.16–23.

25. *CM* 7.86–89, 9.99–100; *Apol. II* 2.17–19, 3.1.65–67, 4.2.125–30. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 1028a26–8, 1002b29–30; *De generatione animalium* 731b34.

26. According to John, "hypostasis" and "person" are synonymous. See *Apol. II* 3.2.73–74: "Ἡ γὰρ ὑπόστασις ἡ χαρακτηριστικὴ πρόσωπον δίδωσιν ἐννοεῖν"; *Apol. I* 5.35–40.

aspect of a substance, but rather a real singular substance itself. In this respect, John's hypostasis resembles the Aristotelian primary substance, which is a particular and complete entity of a certain kind.

It is within this context, and specifically in relation to hypostasis, that the idea of being *enhypostatos* emerges. John explicitly rejects any equivocation between “ἐνυπόστατος” on the one hand, and “hypostasis” or “being hypostasis” on the other. *Enhypostatos* is a kind of structural property associated with hypostasis, but attributed to substance. This is because both hypostasis and substance signify the existence of something: both a substance and a hypostasis are and exist (“ἔστι γὰρ καὶ ὑπάρχει,” *Apol. II* 4.6.200), are beings, and form an actual part of our world—but still they are not the same.

“Hypostasis,” in John's view, is a term that characterizes something that is in and of itself and as a person. It is also possible to say that “hypostasis” signifies a certain particular substance set apart from others by its own features and characteristics. It is an individual entity in its own right—one which does not exist in anything else. Substance, on the other hand, as what is common, is that which exists “according to subsistence” (καθὸ ὑφέστηκε): i.e. as something that “has become subsistent.” In other words, it does not exist as an individual being, but is *enhypostatos*—“en-subsistent” or “en-hypostasized.” “Ἐνυπόστατος,” used in this way, gains a new theoretical meaning. In turn, substance, which is not only said to be present “in a hypostasis” but also is characterized as *enhypostatic*, comes to be viewed as ontologically dependent on hypostasis. Saying that substance is *enhypostaton* does not deprive substance, or nature, of being, and neither is this to relegate substance to nonexistence. It, substance, is rather present and active within reality, subsisting as a constituent element of the hypostasis. On the one hand it does not exist in its own right, while on the other it makes a hypostasis to be a hypostasis of a certain kind (*Apol. II* 4.6.200–211, esp. 205–207). Therefore, in John the Grammarian “ἐνυπόστατος” signifies true existence, but not, as in his predecessors, the existence of a particular entity.

In speaking thus of a certain substance as *enhypostatos*, John does not mean to assert that this particular substance exists as an independent hypostasis and/or possesses an independent hypostasis. In the case of a human being, it possible to say that the substance of its body is *enhypostatic*—i.e. that it truly and really exists—but does not exist as a separate hypostasis of its own. Yet a certain human being as a particular substance of a human species is not just something that exists in general, but is a hypostasis in its own right.

CONSEQUENCES OF JOHN THE GRAMMARIAN'S CHARACTERIZATION
OF SUBSTANCE AS *ENHYPOSTATON*

John does not himself explore the metaphysical consequences of his conceptual solution. His choice of expressions makes it clear that he views the common and universal as ontologically dependent on the particular. Just how this might be so is explored only by his doctrinal successors. The importance of his ostensibly small terminological modification, and of his characterization of substance as *enhypostatic*, needs to be shown, therefore, through a comparison with the theory from which his statements stemmed: namely, the Aristotelian account of substance.

In particular, one has to ask here whether John's solutions differ from the plain Aristotelian distinction between secondary and primary substance introduced in the *Categories*. The answer is a clear "yes," precisely on account of the fact that John describes substance as *enhypostatos*. In accordance with the Aristotelian conception, the primary substance—i.e. a particular one, meaning one that exists in its own right—is that which it is thanks to its form (εἶδος). The latter is tantamount to secondary substance. Therefore there is no secondary substance without a particular one. Similarly, in accordance with the same rationale, there is no substance without hypostasis. Yet if one were to take into account Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, one would see that saying that "there is no particular substance without a secondary one," which is quite the opposite, is no less justified. In Aristotle, particular substance was recognized as substance in the most basic and primary sense. It was interpreted as "a certain something" (τὸδε τι) and not "a certain qualified something" (ποιόν τι). And yet it was enmattered form (εἶδος) that determined everything that the particular substance is—both its essential features and all the kinds of accident it can accept. Form-*eidos*, understood as the principle of being of any given individual substance, was explained as a qualified mode of being that is an essence, or being *such and such* substance: e.g. being equine, human, etc. A particular thing, or substance, can go through accidental changes, but will remain identical throughout thanks to its essence, since any essence is enmattered form-*eidos*.²⁷ Rephrasing this in the terms used by John the Grammarian, one would have to say not only that there is no substance without hypostasis, but also that there is no hypostasis without substance. This expression, furthermore, would have to be understood to mean that a substance is the ontological cause of all that which a hypostasis is. As

27. See Lambertus Marie de Rijk, *Aristotle: Semantics and Ontology*, *Philosophia antiqua* 91.2 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 2:244–301, doi:10.1163/9789004321151.

a result, hypostasis would emerge as a mere limitation of what being a substance is: it would consist in being this substance with such-and-such accidents, then and there. There would be no real difference between actually being a substance and a hypostasis, since all that a hypostasis would consist in would be being a given substance.

Such a conclusion, from a philosophical point of view, is absolutely sound, but it is not of much help if one feels compelled to explain the union of two different substances in one hypostasis. John the Grammarian, accepting an ontological reading of Aristotle's *Categories*, nonetheless quite clearly understood that its application to Christology necessarily engenders only two alternative readings of Chalcedonian doctrine: either there are in Christ two natures/substances, and thus two hypostases, or there is one hypostasis and so one nature/substance.²⁸

In order to break through this impasse, John pointed to the fact that there are numerous entities of different kinds that are completed by more than one nature. One of the most obvious examples of such entities is the human being, which is completed by two essentially different substances or natures: i.e. the soul and the body. But neither of them has its own hypostasis, as otherwise each of us would not be a unity but two particular and separate beings. Those natures are not separate particular entities (i.e., hypostases or persons) in themselves, but come together in each of us to complete a single entity of the human sort, being united with respect to composition as well as "enhypostatically" ("ἐν συνθέσει καὶ ἐνυποστάτως ἡνωμένων," *Apol. II* 4.2.130–45).²⁹ John is not thereby denying the premise that there is no substance or nature without a hypostasis or person. What he does say is that the nature of some entities is completed by more than one nature. In those cases the

28. *Apol. II* 4.1.105–108; 4.3.161–65; 5.225–28.

29. John's description of human nature, paralleling and illustrating his Christological formulation, was only superficially similar to the Neoplatonic account of the union of the soul and the body popularized in early Christian thought by Nemesius. Nemesius explains the unity of a human individual through the Neoplatonic model which presupposes the separate and independent existence of purely intelligible entities. A human is a unity of two essentially different substances, the soul and the body. The soul uses the body as a tool, yet remains unmixed with it due to the soul's intelligible nature. The unity is explained through the soul's specific nature. See Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 3. By contrast, John (1) recurs to the Stoic conception of *krasis* when clarifying and describing the unity of the human soul and body, while (2) his explanation as a whole nevertheless goes beyond Stoic or Neoplatonic conceptions of unity. He does not seek to explain it in terms of the essences of united natures, or through a specific and precisely defined kind of unity such as *krasis*. Instead, he explicates the human being through adverting to the way in which natures united in that being exist: i.e. as *enhypostata* (*Apol. II* 4.2.139–45).

natures are united enhypostatically: i.e. they do really subsist, but not as separate entities. Analogously, the substances or natures in one and the same Christ are not separate hypostases, but *enhypostata*: i.e. they really do subsist in one and the same particular subject (*Apol. II* 4.2.156–60).

The view of substance that emerges from John's proposal differs deeply both from Aristotle's doctrine of substance and the Neoplatonic interpretation of the same issue, especially if we turn to their respective metaphysical explanations of the very being and predicability of substance. In Aristotle, form determines substance to be what it is, and as a result is viewed as its cause—tantamount to the very being of an individual substance. In consequence, the form as abstracted by the mind can be predicated of an individual. Such a form, abstracted by the mind from matter, is given, within the logical approach, the designation of secondary substance, while the particular counts as a primary substance. Porphyry, in turn, although he declines to speak of deeper ontological issues in his *Isagoge* and *Commentary to the Categories*, does accept the existence of “en-mattered genus/*eidos*”—i.e. of a form which is associable with matter and corresponds to Aristotelian secondary substance. He even claims that intelligible substances are ontologically primary in relation to the sensible individuals that themselves also count as possessing primacy, but only in relation to our perception.³⁰

To be sure, John's attempt to clarify the philosophical terminology used in Christological discourse in order to avoid possible confusions between substance / nature and hypostasis can be read merely as a terminological reassignment, consisting in his merely attributing the term “hypostasis” to primary substance and allowing the name “substance” to be used exclusively in its then prevalent secondary meaning. However, the conclusions that can be drawn from John's proposal point in a quite different direction. In particular, his treatment of substance as *enhypostatos* leads to a divergent view of what substance itself is. He does not explore the metaphysical consequences of his proposal. Yet, for any inquisitive reader of his remarks, it becomes clear that substance emerges as a constitutive element of hypostasis, and as “existing-in” a hypostasis. Substance is enhypostatic, as it really exists, but does not exist as a particular entity and hypostasis. Seeing that hypostasis as such is not a matter that ought to be given a form in order to exist, but rather a particular entity, substance does not appear to be the formal cause that actualizes and thereby estab-

30. See Porphyry, *In Aristotelis Categorias* 91.7–17.

lishes a given hypostasis. Rather it seems to be a constitutive element, determining the essential content of a hypostasis.

Obviously, this statement about the relationship between substance and hypostasis leads to the question of what the principle of individual existence might be. It is quite difficult to explain the very being of hypostasis through one of its elements—even a constitutive one. The existence of a set of features within a larger whole, corresponding to something that is dependent on this whole in respect of its own being, cannot in turn explain the existence of the whole. Issues of this kind, however, were not important for John. What he was looking for was a Christologically oriented conceptual solution that would make it possible to avoid the pitfalls that ensued in the wake of the introduction of Aristotelian conceptions into Christological discourse. His proposals allowed one to claim that two different substances complete a single hypostasis. As they are not ontological principles of hypostasis, but complements of its essential content, they do not create a separate subject of existence, but exist *enhypostatically* in one and the same subject.

Even so, all these innovations did not amount to much more than a number of conceptual changes and factual statements about how things are. John did not pretend to offer any overall picture of substance and individual being. The metaphysical and anthropological consequences of his innovations were only to be explored by his follower, Leontius of Byzantium, whose conception will be the subject of investigation presented in the next volume of *Forum Philosophicum*.

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