

The Miaphysite and Neo-Chalcedonian Approaches to Understanding the Nature of the Individual Entity: Particular Essence vs. En-Hypostasized Essence¹

ANNA ZHYRKOVA*

In debates over the Christological doctrine proclaimed at the Council of Chalcedon, two different Christological stances took shape that in fact carried not only significant theological consequences, but also profound philosophical ones. In the present paper, I shall reflect upon the philosophical premises and arguments employed by both the defenders of Chalcedon and their adversaries. As I shall seek to show, both sides differed, among other things, in regard to their understanding of the individual entity as such. The Miaphysite adversaries of the Chalcedonian Horos adopted what was, from a philosophical point of view, a quite traditional elucidation of individual entities in terms of particular essence. On the other hand, the Neo-Chalcedonian defenders of the Horos developed an original interpretation of the individual entity as explicable in terms of its existence.

Keywords: John Philoponus, John Grammarian, Leontius of Byzantium, Neo-Chalcedonism, Miaphysitism, particular nature, enhypostaton, particular essence, enhypostasized essence

In debates over the Christological doctrine proclaimed at the Council of Chalcedon, one already encounters opinions to the effect that most of the theologians participating in the controversy had not really disagreed fundamentally, but rather only in respect of terminology.² Thus, it should not be surprising that similar views can be found in scholarly studies devoted to the Christological debates of the 5th to 6th centuries. For it seems quite tempting, and even more convenient, to present the struggle over the Council of

* Anna Zhyrkova, prof. dr hab., Institute of Philosophy, Jesuit University in Krakow. Akademia Ignatianum W Krakowie, ul. Kopernika 26, 31-501 Kraków, anna.zhyrkova@ignatianum.edu.pl.

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² An opinion to this effect was put forward, for instance, by as prominent an anti-Chalcedonian as John Philoponus, who pointed out that the agreement between such adversaries was patently manifested in their rejecting, with equal force, both Eutychian and Nestorian heretical conceptions. For more details, see: Philoponus, *Arbiter* [Arb.], Prol. 2, in: Uwe Michael Lang, *John Philoponus and the Controversies over Chalcedon in the Sixth Century: A Study and Translation of the Arbiter*, Leuven, Peeters 2001, p. 42-43, 175.

Chalcedon as the result of mere terminological misunderstanding – and, by so doing, to put stronger emphasis on what was common to both sides of the conflict. Yet it is also the case that during those debates it had already been noted that such seemingly merely terminological differences in fact carried profound theological consequences. For, as was pointed out by one of the most prominent defenders of Chalcedonian Christology, Leontius of Byzantium, when discussing doctrinal matters, the indiscriminate use of terms affected the very substance of the debate.³ Nevertheless, leaving aside the question of the possible theological consequences entailed by the received and accepted Christological visions, I would like to invite readers to reflect upon the philosophical premises and arguments employed by both the defenders of Chalcedon and their adversaries. As I shall seek to show, both sides differed not only in respect of the terminology they employed, but also – or even more significantly – in regard to their understanding of the individual entity as such. One faction adopted a conception that was traditional in both philosophical and theological terms, while representatives of the other developed an original interpretation of what the being of an individual entity should be taken to consist in. The former – i.e. the traditional conception, which was hardly alien to Greek philosophy more generally, and which had, by the time of the Christological debates, become fairly well accepted by the Church itself – pertains to the elucidation of individual entities in terms of particular essence. This conception was fully affirmed by the Miaphysite group. Meanwhile, those who supported Chalcedonian doctrine – who, at least from the point of view of their shared philosophical ideas, can be classified as representatives of Neo-Chalcedonism – introduced a quite innovative view of the individual as explicable in terms of its existence. In reality, their conception was not sanctioned either by any philosophical authority or by Church tradition, but rather had to be developed for the sake of defending the orthodoxy itself.

Allow me to begin with some clarifications. First of all, to avoid any possible misunderstandings, I should like to point out that in the present paper the Miaphysite and Neo-Chalcedonian stances are analyzed primarily and mainly from a philosophical perspective. Hence, the understanding of these (and especially the latter) that I invoke here in pursuing my particular intellectual goals and in the context of this philosophical perspective may well differ from what has come to be pretty much accepted within theological and historico-theological studies. Yet it is not that I disagree with or seek to reject traditionally accepted views on this subject. It is rather that the

³ Leontius of Byzantium, *Epilyseis* [Epil.] 3.282.10-15, in: Brian E. Daley (ed.), *Leontius of Byzantium, Complete Works*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2017.

philosophical orientation of this study has led me to wish to explore and advocate something distinct from such traditional interpretations – something that will, I believe, serve to enrich those popular and received scholarly views, even taking into consideration their essentially theological or historical character.

When speaking about the opponents of the Christology introduced thanks to Chalcedon, I shall refrain from referring to them in terms of the “Miaphysites” and “miaphysitism”, or the “Monophysites” and “monophysitism”. Those particular terms were coined in the 7th century, and originally had negative connotations. But what is of a greater importance is that they are in fact quite misleading and anachronistic. The opponents of Chalcedonian doctrine by no means associated themselves with either Eutyches or a radical one-subject Christology. Instead, they saw themselves as followers and defenders of Cyrilian orthodox doctrine, which can hardly be regarded as Monophysite in character. The recently invented term “miaphysitism”, together with its correlative label “Miaphysite”, although intended to be less negative in character, is nevertheless equally unsuitable, for the same reasons. Hence, it should rather only be used with an accompanying stipulation that it is intended to refer exclusively to critics and opponents of the particular Christological solutions proclaimed in the *Horos* of Chalcedon.

To be sure, the Council of Chalcedon did reject the extreme Nestorian and Eutychian approaches as being theologically heterodox and unacceptable. Yet, in the opinion of those who criticized the *Horos*, its core formulation (“Christ... acknowledged in two natures... coming together into one person and one hypostasis”) undermined the very unity of Christ that had been so greatly emphasized by Cyril. For a commitment to the two natures of Christ after their union would necessarily entail admitting the existence of two hypostases or persons.⁴ In other words, even while denouncing Nestorius, it could actually serve to bring his teaching in through the back door, and this was probably one of the main reasons why the teachings of Chalcedon in fact received so much opposition, such as ultimately gave rise to what we would now refer to as the Miaphysite position.

I shall refrain here from setting out the theological argumentation associated with the Miaphysite approach to our topic, which is well known

⁴ See: Severus, *Epistula 6 ad Maron*, in: Ernest Walter Brooks (ed. and transl.), Severus of Antioch, *A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch from Numerous Syriac Manuscripts*, PO 12.2, Turnhout, Brepols 1973, p. 196-198.; Philoponus, *Arb.* 7.27.24.19-25.4. Also see: Joseph Lebon, *Le monophysisme Sévérien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite au Concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite*, Leuven, Brill 1909, p. 247.

and has already been described in numerous studies. Instead, I propose to concentrate on the philosophical rationale for their stance, which is most often overlooked in scholarship. From a philosophical point of view, two of the main premises adopted by the Miaphysites were already established within Church tradition, and these served as cornerstones for their argumentation.

The first consisted in applying to Christology a terminological distinction between substance/nature and hypostasis that had been introduced by the Cappadocians within (and for the purposes of) their Trinitology. In this regard, substance and nature were construed as that which is common to and predicated of what is proper, while it was hypostasis and person that were actually themselves defined in terms of what is proper. Hypostasis refers to a thing/subject in which a certain nature subsists. Accordingly, the name “human” points to a certain common nature or substance, but does not indicate any given individual human being. Meanwhile, human hypostasis refers to a subsisting thing, which is revealed through its name; in other words, it refers to a certain Paul, Peter, etc.⁵ It is important, however, to note that the distinction was rather a logical one. The Cappadocians treated the term “hypostasis” as the name given to predications made in the mode of particularity, this being opposed to generic predications of such terms as “substance” or “nature”. In other words, they tried to define the terms in which one speaks about the Holy Trinity, but did not seek to define the very reality of God in the context of the hypostases thereof.

There can be no doubt that the second premise Miaphysites adopted was one which they managed to deduce from Cyril of Alexandria’s teaching. Cyril, in accordance with the Neoplatonic interpretation of Aristotle’s conception of primary and secondary substance, had understood “substance” as referring to both (1) a real entity, common to individuals of the same kind, and (2) to individuals of the lowest species.⁶ Also, like the Cappadocians, he had treated the term “substance” as synonymous with the term “nature”. In consequence, “nature” signified what is essential, common and universal with respect to individuals of the same kind, while simultaneously referring

⁵ See, for instance: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* [Or.] 21 (35.1124.44-47); Or. 39 (36.345.41-44); Basil, *Epistula* [Ep.] 214.4.6-15; Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* [C.Eun.] 205; Ep. 38.3, passim in *ad Ablabium*, *ad Graecos*. See: Joseph T. Lienhard, “Ousia and Hypostasis: The Cappadocian Settlement and the Theology of «One Hypostasis»”, in: Stephen T. Davis et al., *The Trinity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2002, p. 99–121; Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians*, London, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press 1995, p. 44.

⁶ We see it employed with a meaning close to the Neoplatonic interpretation of secondary substance in Cyril’s *De sancta trinitate dialogi* [Dial. Trin.] 1.407.18-20, 1.408.29-409.14, with the meaning of primary substance in *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* [Thes.] 36.19-22; 444.13-16, and to mean both in *Ibidem*. 316.12-38.

to those same individuals themselves. When applied to Christ, the very same term “nature” then indicated (a) the secondary substances of divinity and humanity and (b) the individual. In effect, it was possible for one to conclude that Cyril had been positing “individual natures” such as corresponded in their meaning to particular substances.⁷

The Miaphysites, for whom Cyril was an undeniable and ultimate authority in respect of Christology, treated his statements dogmatically, accepting no deviation from his formulations. And yet, his teaching was read through the lens of the Cappadocians’ terminological decisions, which were taken quite simplistically as referring explicitly to existing things, rather than to a manner of speaking about those things. The logical explanation of the terms “hypostasis” and “nature” that presented nature as what is common and manifested in what is particular and concrete, i.e. in hypostasis, was given an ontological reading. As a result, it was accepted that what is common – i.e. nature and substance – cannot exist separately from its particular subject, while what is particular, i.e. a hypostasis or a person, is the only kind of *really* existing entity. Such a reading quickly became binding within theological argumentation. At least where Philoponus was concerned, it was presented as a part of traditional ecclesiastical doctrine.⁸

Such a strong ontological premise was applied to Cyrilian teaching and issued forth in a conception of “particular nature” quite different from the idea, accepted within philosophy, of a universal nature particularized and exemplified in individuals. Given that in Cyril the term “nature” refers to both common and particular subjects, while what is common does not exist apart from what is particular, it was quite reasonable to conclude that only particular natures really existed. The “common nature” of some particular subject should not be viewed as a different kind of entity, but rather as being identical to everything that this subject is. So the expression “nature of a particular” will be equivalent to the expression “particular nature”. In other words, there will be no really existing natures except for particular ones. This

⁷ See, for instance: Cyril of Alexandria, *Thes.* 152.19-52, 485.38-41, 521.50-54; *Dial. Trin.* 1.411.4-5, 2.423.16-31, 6.587.1-23; *De incarnatione unigeniti* 690.31-691.4, 696.11-24. In those passages “nature” is just used to mean common or secondary substance, whereas in *Libri quinque contra Nestorium* [CN] II and III the term occurs in both meanings: as common and as individual nature (especially in the famous passage 2.33.6-9). The same can be said in relation to the *Second Letter to Nestorius*. See: Jürgen Hammerstaedt, “Das Aufkommen der philosophischen Hypostasisbedeutung”, in: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 35 (1992), p. 7-11; Jean-Marie Labelle, “Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie témoin de la langue et de la pensée philosophiques au Ve siècle”, in: *Revue des sciences religieuses* 53 (1979) p. 36-39; Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Leiden-Boston, Brill 2009, p. 127-137, 143-152, 178-179.

⁸ See: Philoponus, *Arb.* 7.21; 27.24.19-25.4.

rationale, when applied to Christology, meant that in the case of Christ's nature one can properly speak only of His particular nature. His or any other's particular nature can only ever be one as an entity. Therefore, if Christ is one entity, He is of one particular nature. Conversely, accepting that He exhibited two different natures would necessarily imply that there was more in play than just one single entity.

Nevertheless, it is one thing to proclaim that if we recognize Christ as a genuine singular entity, He must be of one particular nature, and quite another to explain in philosophical terms what such a singular and particular nature will amount to if we continue to affirm that it is a result of a union of Divine and human natures in one really existing entity. There is scant chance of meeting with such an explanation in Severus, Philoxenus, or any of the other Miaphysite theologians. Instead, we must turn to a truly professional Neoplatonic philosopher: John Philoponus. This thinker shared the view that held that the Chalcedonian teaching would ultimately engender a Nestorian reading of Christological doctrine,⁹ and so took upon himself the challenge of furnishing Miaphysite theology with a philosophically grounded justification.

Philoponus pointed out that one cannot accept the unity of two common natures in Christ. His point was that the assertion that the common nature of the Divinity – as recognized in the Trinity – has become incarnate leads one to the conclusion that the Incarnation also refers to the Father and the Holy Spirit. The common account of human nature could not be united with God the Logos, for that would mean that the entire human race had been united with the Logos both before and after His Incarnation. Consequently, the union of Divinity and humanity in Christ had to be a union of *particular* and not *common* natures. However, to just state that two particular natures were united in one hypostasis, in Philoponus' opinion, was worse than insufficient, as each particular nature necessarily had its own hypostasis. Thus, if one were to accept the union of natures in Christ, one ought to accept His possessing not two natures, but just one. Accordingly, in Christ the Divine nature that had become individualized *in* the hypostasis of the Logos was united with a particular human nature into a single composite nature proper to Jesus Christ.¹⁰

In order to support such a theological claim, Philoponus needed to be able to explain in philosophical terms (1) what a particular nature is in itself, and (2) how it could be that two particular natures that, because of their being particular, are nothing but individual entities, are nevertheless united into the single composite nature of one really existing individual entity.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 10.46.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 5.19; 7.23; 28; 10.46. See: U. M. Lang, *John Philoponus*, p. 60-72.

In his strictly philosophical works, Philoponus developed a conception of universal/common substance that seems to be a development of the views of his Neoplatonic teacher Ammonius while also resting heavily on the teaching of the Peripatetic philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias. Following Ammonius in his commentary on the *Categories*, Philoponus placed the emphasis on a relationship of ontological co-dependence obtaining between primary particular substance on the one hand, and secondary universal substance on the other, construing the latter in terms that took a universal to be “in the many” (i.e. an en-mattered species/form not existing apart from sensible substances and predicated of them in accordance with their natures), but also “after the many” (i.e. reflecting a conception of things customarily predicated of individuals).¹¹ He asserted that when it comes to universals “in the many” or “after the many”, those universals will disappear along with the elimination of the relevant particular substance, since there will be no subject in which they can be seen and of which they can be predicated.¹² Viewed in such terms, one is then able to say that particular substances can plausibly be considered primary in relation to secondary ones.

Nevertheless, in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Analytics*, Philoponus took up a more radical stance, which can be traced back to Alexander of Aphrodisias.¹³ Certainly, he still maintained the typical Neoplatonic position according to which universals are described as incorruptible and primary in relation to the lowest entities, i.e. particulars.¹⁴ However, like Alexander, he also claimed that particular substances are the only truly subsisting substances. Universal substances are observed and manifested in particulars, being inseparable from the latter. They only exist in individuals, and can only be considered beings insofar as they are defined by a common account and as a common characteristic shared by particulars.¹⁵

¹¹ Philoponus, *In Aristotelis analytica posteriora* [*In An.Post.*] 435.28-35, *In Aristotelis categorias* [*In Cat.*] 58.13-19. Here Philoponus uses the division of “universals” proposed by Proclus: “before the many” (τὰ πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν), “after the many” (τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς), “in the many” (τὰ ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς). See: Proclus, *In primum Euclidis*, 1.50.16-51.9, see also Ammonius *In Porphyrii Isagogen* [*In Isag.*] 41.17-20, 42.10-21, *In Cat.* 41.3-11. See also: Edward Booth, “John Philoponus, Christian and Aristotelian Conversion”, in: *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982), p. 408; idem, *Aristotelian aporetic ontology in Islamic and Christian thinkers*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1983, p. 58.

¹² Philoponus, *In Cat.* 58.10-59.1, 62.15-22.

¹³ With regard to Alexander’s views on universals, see: Martin M. Tweedale, “Alexander of Aphrodisias’ Views on Universals”, in: *Phronesis* 29 (3/1984), p. 279-303.

¹⁴ Philoponus, *In An. Post.* 278.3-12; 24-29.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 435.31-35; 273.3-20; idem, *In Aristotelis libros de anima* [*In de An.*] 307.33-308.1. See: Antony C. Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism*, Oxford-New York, Clarendon Press 1990, p. 71. On the subject of relations between particulars and universals, see

In his Christological work (i.e. *Arbiter*), Philoponus not only leaned towards Alexander's account of universals, but actually went much further, subjecting such an interpretation of universals to a development that was somewhat extreme: one which came into view in the context of his interpretation of what the nature of a given subject is.

For Philoponus, "nature" amounts to a common account of what things are in regard to their essence. As the common essential content of a given subject, it is the same for all things of the same kind, and seems to correspond to the species/eidos of those things. Such a nature, being one as far as *eidos* is concerned, is nevertheless instantiated in multiple subjects. So, while being one it also comes to be multiple, by virtue of existing in each subject completely, much as the design of a ring or the plan for constructing a ship attains multiplicity through being instantiated in numerous subjects. The particular rings and ships will together be numerically plural, while being united only in respect of their common species/eidos. However, their common and unifying element, in Philoponus' opinion, does not exist apart from particulars, except for having existence also in our thoughts. Philoponus stresses that neither nature nor other universals exist apart from particulars; it is *in* them that nature and other universals subsist and possess their hypostases.¹⁶ He maintains, in a quite traditional fashion, that entities of the same kind receive their name and definition from a nature of the kind in question just as every animal receives a name and definition of "animal". Natures, construed as instantiated in different particular subjects, do not differ from natures of the same kind, just as an animal is not different from any other animal taken *qua* animal. However, according to Philoponus, every nature or substance is a single item. (This follows quite clearly from his pre-supposition to the effect that universals do not exist separately and independently from hypostases.) Therefore, all those numerous and identical natures of the same kind must be particulars. In other words, nature is nothing else than a particular, an individual, and a singular.¹⁷

Up to this point, all of Philoponus' arguments had been broadly in line with Alexander's account of universals; yet he did not stop here, instead pushing this philosophical point of view significantly further. He stated that since particulars are multiplied and numerically different, the universals that are, in fact, identical with particulars must be numerically different as well.

also: Linos G. Benakis, "The problem of General Concepts in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Thought", in: Dominic J. O'Meara (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Christian thought*, Studies in Neoplatonism, vol. 3, Norfolk-Albany, State University of New York Press 1982, p. 83.

¹⁶ Philoponus, *Arb.* 4.16. (= John Damascene *Haeres.* 83 addit. 5-18).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 8.31.

He even asserted that essential and common characteristics of humankind such as are shared by all particular humans – e.g. “rational and mortal being” – will differ from one human being to the next: for, he would argue, “rational and mortal being” *in me* is different from “rational and mortal being” *in you*.¹⁸ The last claim deserves special attention, as it introduces a quite revolutionary idea into philosophy: namely, explaining, as Philoponus himself sought to do, what has traditionally been considered common to and shared equally by all individual entities of the same kind in terms of its in fact being different for each of them.

Philoponus glossed the term “nature” in twofold terms: (1) as the common account of each singular nature perceived as such, in the manner of a definition of, say, human nature or the nature of horses that, *per se*, does not exist in any individual, and (2) as the same common nature coming-to-be in individuals and assuming a particular existence in each of them of a kind appropriate, in each case, to just that one and no others.¹⁹ And yet he also reduced “nature” in the second meaning to “nature” in the first one: i.e. he interpreted “common nature” as just “common account” (ὁ κοινὸς λόγος), in the sense of something discerned as such through intellectual consideration (τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ) of the properties of each of the hypostases of the same species.²⁰ In this way, the ontological status of “nature”, “substance” and “species” as universal entities “*in the many*” are reduced to the status of universals “*after the many*” – i.e. mere conceptions of things.²¹ On the other hand, according to Philoponus, because nature is in the individual and is identical with the latter, it must be the *proper* nature of that individual, and so cannot be proper for any other individual of the same kind. This, we should note, assumes the particular existence of a given individual, with Philoponus himself even referring to it directly as “ἰδικωτάτη φύσις” (“most proper nature”). A most proper nature of this kind will not only be in a given particular, it will also be that given particular, while this also translates into a similar state of affairs where hypostasis is concerned, in that, according to him, the latter denotes the existence proper to each individual.²² As a matter of fact, “particular nature” for Philoponus is not different from the en-mattered universal nature/

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 4.16; 8.31.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 7.22 (=John Damascene, *Haeres.* 83 addit 59-65).

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 7.23 (=John Damascene, *Haeres.* 83, addit. 6-78).

²¹ In yet another work written in response to questions raised by and within Christological debates, Philoponus clearly states that genera and species only subsist in mental conceptions. See: John Philoponus, *A treatise concerning the whole and the parts*, trans. Daniel King, in: *On Aristotle Categories 1-5, with: A treatise concerning the whole and the parts*, London, Bloomsbury 2016, p. 84.6-8.

²² *Arb.* 7.24. (=John Damascene, *Haeres.* 83 addit. 96-106).

form/eidos particularized in a given individual, it being identical with an individual and a hypostasis. In other words, not only does he reduce universal entities to the status of being no more than conceptions, but he also claims universal conceptions to in fact be themselves particular, too. So one may say that in the *Arbiter*, he introduces quite a problematic and paradoxical notion of universals as not being particularized, but rather just being particular in themselves. For it is one thing to say that a universal is just a conception of sorts, and that what exists is only the particular, and quite another to claim that the universal as such is actually itself a particular.

Leaving aside any sort of analysis of the philosophical (in)coherence of the conception of a most proper and particular nature proposed by Philoponus, one can see why he decided to introduce such a conception, even though it was hardly likely to have been accepted as rational by the members of any philosophical school:²³ he thought that it would be possible to construct a Miaphysite Christology on the basis of nature understood this way. The result was that he consistently maintained and sought to substantiate this philosophically rather naïve idea of “particular nature” as set forth within Christological debates, pursuing it to the point of paradoxicality, to say the least.

Still, such a revolutionary explication of universals was accompanied by a highly traditional Platonic understanding of particular entities as mere collections of qualities.²⁴ Philoponus also shared the well-known Platonist

²³ We can readily observe that the conception of a most proper and particular nature does not hold up well even in the context of Philoponus’ own thought, given that he quite clearly stated that such thing as a universal particular is simply impossible. See: *In Cat.* 28.9-23.

²⁴ See, especially: Philoponus, *In Aristotelis physicorum [in Phys.]* 76.20-25. There, particulars are described in a highly traditional Platonic way in terms of “ἄθροισμά τι ἰδίων συμβεβηκότων ἐστὶ χαρακτηριστικόν” – i.e. collections of proper accidents and characteristics. It is worth mentioning that in *A Treatise Concerning the Whole and the Parts*, Philoponus gives an account of a whole, whether understood as a whole substance or an individual, according to which the whole is “in the composition and harmony” of all of its parts. See Philoponus, *A treatise*, p. 94. As regards Plato, Medioplatonic, and further Neoplatonic understanding of individual entity as something qualified and a collection of properties, see Plato, *Theatetus* 157b-c; *Timaeus* 49d-50c; *Republic* 433a-444a; Alcinoüs, *Didaskalikos* 4.7.8-12; Plotinus, *Enneades [Enn.]* 2.6.1.40-50. 6.3.8.16-30; Porphyrius, *Isag.* 7.19-8.2.

It hardly comes as a surprise that Philoponus held Platonic views on many subjects, including holding that the individual entity is an *athroisma* of properties, given that he was one of the most prominent representatives of the Neoplatonic tradition. One should rather marvel at the fact that he deviated from Neoplatonic orthodoxy in his account of universals. Nevertheless, the philosophically obvious Platonic roots of his conception of individual entity and/or sensible substance have only recently been noted in theological studies of his thought. See: Dirk Krausmüller, “Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae: Plotinus’ Definition of Sensible Substance and its Adaptation in John Philoponus’ *Arbiter*,” in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 73 (2/2019), p. 149-158.

view that particular entities *qua* particulars are not definable. In regard to some particular entity, the only thing that is possible is to furnish a description of it by invoking the accidents proper to it.²⁵ Nevertheless, besides some occasional remarks of a traditionally Neoplatonic character in this regard, Philoponus does not seem to be that interested in explaining and defining the particular entity as such. For him, an individual entity is nothing other than a particular nature: i.e. a particular essence combined out of substantial and non-substantial qualities, differences and characteristics. Hence, his questionable conception of a nature as a particular universal was, in some respects, rather less revolutionary within the framework of ancient philosophy than the conception of individuality introduced by his Neo-Chalcedonian adversaries as a putative solution to the Christological problem of the union of natures in one subject.

Before discussing the Neo-Chalcedonian account and how it differed from that of Philoponus, we must once again undertake some clarification as regards the very name used here to refer to some of the theological thinkers of the 6th century. First of all, we should note that the phenomenon known by the name “Neo-Chalcedonism,” where this term was introduced into scholarship by Lebon,²⁶ is not something that can be defined or described in any simple way. As a historical and theological phenomenon, “Neo-Chalcedonism” can hardly be regarded as a theological or philosophical school, although it can be classified as a movement born within the Church, involving several theologians loosely connected by their source of inspiration and

²⁵ Philoponus, *In Aristotelis libros de anima commentaria [in De Anima]* 28.23-26. Regarding the impossibility of defining individuals, see also: *In Phys.* 76.15-17; *In Cat.* 54.6-32. As regards the sources of this view, see: Porphyry, *Isag.* 6.12-16, which probably relies on Plato, *Philebus* 16c 5-18d 2.

²⁶ See mentioned above: J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme Sévérien*. However, the concept was further developed by Lebon's student Charles Moeller, “Le chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VI^e siècle”, in: Alois Grillmeier, Heinrich Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 1, Würzburg 1951, p. 637-720, as well as by Marcel Richard, “Le Néo-chalcédonisme”, in: *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 3 (1946), p. 156-161. Regarding the history of the conceptual development of the term, and its importance for the history of theology, see: A. Grillmeier, “Der Neu-Chalkedonismus. Um die Berechtigung eines neuen Kapitels in der Dogmengeschichte”, in: *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958) p. 151-166; Patrick T. R. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon in the East (451-553)*, Leiden, Brill 1979, p. 169-172; Kenneth Paul [Warren] Wesche, “The Defense of Chalcedon in the 6th Century: The Doctrine of «Hypostasis» and Deification in the Christology of Leontius of Jerusalem”, PhD thesis, Fordham University, New York 1986; and Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “Der Neuchalkedonismus als Vorbereitung des Monotheletismus. Ein Beitrag zum eigentlichen Anliegen des Neuchalkedonismus”, in: *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997), p. 373-413; idem, “Zur Rezeption des *Tomus Leonis* in und nach Chalkedon. Wider den dogmenhistorischen Begriff «strenger Chalkedonismus»”, in: *Studia Patristica* 34 (2001), p. 572-604.

awareness of the need to subject Chalcedonian Christological teachings to clarification. The Neo-Chalcedonians varied quite significantly in respect of their detailed commitments, but one may still discern several features that made the movement distinct, at least where the Christological debates of the 6th century were concerned.²⁷ The main feature that distinguished them as a group was their attempt to establish a clear body of terminology, on the basis of which it would then be possible to formulate a coherent Christology.²⁸ But the other common feature, which is of great relevance for our present studies, is their redefinition of substance and nature as what is en-hypostasized. Those who brought the most philosophically developed insights to the discourse were, at least in my view, John the Grammarian and Leontius of Byzantium. Having already studied the issues raised by the conception of “enhypostaton” present in John the Grammarian and Leontius of Byzantium, I came to realize that the latter had in fact continued and developed further the understanding and applications of this in the former.²⁹ For that very reason, I shall permit myself here to treat Leontius of Byzantium, at least for the purposes of the present study, as part of the Neo-Chalcedonian movement.

The other thing that demands some clarification on my part is the fact that the present paper is based on the results of my research into the ontology of the individual in the works of John the Grammarian, Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Jerusalem and the Scythian monks. Some of those

²⁷ Amongst other features common to the Neo-Chalcedonians, one may list the following: (1) they attempted to reconcile Chalcedon's doctrine with the entirety of Cyril's teaching and with Church tradition; (2) their approach towards tradition was characterized by a critical but inclusive treatment, showing the possibility of arriving at different interpretations of the texts apparently inconsistent with Chalcedonian teaching; (3) they consistently implemented Neoplatonic philosophical teaching as a tool for achieving clarification of the terminology used in Christological discourse. For more, see: Anna Zhyrkova, “The Council of Constantinople II: 553; A Christology Seeking Refinement and Subtlety”, in: Sergey Trostyanskiy (ed.), *Seven Icons of Christ: An introduction to the Oikoumenical Councils*, Piscataway, Gorgias Pr Llc 2016, p. 223-275.

²⁸ In contrast to the Neo-Chalcedonians, the majority of contemporaneous theologians also defending Chalcedonian teaching merely adhered to the doctrine of the duality of natures and its being in accord with Cyrilian teaching, without pursuing any further clarification of the Chalcedonian doctrine through explanation or (re)definition of the key terms and concepts. See: M. Richard, “Le Néo-chalcédonisme”; A. Grillmeier, “Der Neu-Chalkedonismus”; idem, *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*, trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen, London, Mowbray 1995, p. 230-270.

²⁹ See: A. Zhyrkova, “A Reconstruction of John the Grammarian's Account of Substance in Terms of *Enhypostaton*”, in: *Forum Philosophicum* 22 (1/2017), p. 51-63; idem, “Leontius of Byzantium and the Concept of *Enhypostaton*. A Critical Re-evaluation”, in: *Forum Philosophicum* 22 (2/2017), p. 193-218.

results are already published. Therefore, I refer readers of the present text to my previous studies of the conception of “enhypostaton”, where they will find a more in-depth explanation of how, and why, my interpretation differs from traditional accounts such as have gained a certain level of acceptance in the context of recent scholarship.³⁰

At a superficial glance, it might well seem that the Neo-Chalcedonians, when it came to the question of their understanding of substance and nature, were not really different from their Miaphysite opponents. For indeed, the Neo-Chalcedonians, just like the Miaphysites, accepted the Capadocian description of substance/nature as what is common. What, however, did differentiate them from the Miaphysite stance was their rejection of the idea of an ontological identification of substance/nature with hypostasis.

Both John the Grammarian and Leontius of Byzantium pointed to the incoherence of the argumentation employed by the Miaphysites that rested on the assumption that there is no such thing as a substance/nature that is an-hypostasized (ἀνυπόστατος).³¹ Although they agreed that there are no

³⁰ See my particular take on the conception of enhypostaton in papers mentioned in the previous note, as distinct from the accounts given by the following: Stephan Otto, *Person und Subsistenz. Die philosophische Anthropologie des Leontios von Byzanz; ein Beitrag zur Spätantiken Geistesgeschichte*, München, W. Fink 1968, p. 38; Benjamin Gleede, *The Development of the Term ‘enupostatatos’ from Origen to John of Damascus*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 113, Leiden – Boston, Brill 2012, p. 64-67; Carlo Dell’Osso, “Still on the Concept of Enhypostaton”, in: *Augustinianum* 43 (1/2003), p. 69.

³¹ Alongside some quite sporadic occurrences in the works of several other authors, we see the term “ἀνυπόστατος” being relatively extensively employed for philosophical purposes by Sextus Empiricus. According to a TLG search, we find 42 occurrences in Sextus, in comparison to 164 for all occurrences up to (but not including) Gregory of Nyssa, after whom the term starts to be utilized significantly more often. In Sextus, in most instances, the term occurs in the sense of what is non-existent, unreal or lacking in a foundation, but the term is not employed in connection with substance or nature. In one text, however, he states that what are known as attributes of substances, being not other than substances, are ἀνυπόστατά – i.e. non-existent. See: Sextus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, 10.238-239. In Christian theological texts prior to the Neo-Chalcedonians, the term “ἀνυπόστατος” was used by Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, Athanasius, and others. Mostly, it was used to mean what is non-existent and/or has no hypostasis of its own – i.e. that which is not a real entity. However, in Gregory of Nyssa, who himself used the term quite frequently (we find 80 occurrences), it shows up in a variety of senses: in addition to those meanings found in Sextus, and those typical for theology, he used it to describe fallacies of argumentation. He thus spoke about claims, arguments, statements, conclusions and accusations in term of their being anhypostata: i.e. their not being justified, proven or substantiated. Furthermore, Gregory spoke of real things that could be observed in hypostases, as opposed to mere names that were non-hypostasized and consisted in just the sound of a voice and/or the clicking of a tongue. Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* [*C.Eun.*] 2.1.27.3-8, see: *Oratio Catechetica*, 4.21-22, much as he sought to characterize movement, concepts and voids as an-hypostaton, as well, *C.Eun.* 1.1.323.5-6; 378.4-5; 2.1.76.9-11. It is hard to accept that names do not exist at all,

an-hypostasized substances or natures, they stressed that such an assumption need not entail that what is not an-hypostasized is itself then necessarily a hypostasis – or, in other words, that every nature is of necessity a hypostasis.

To be sure, one may claim that the Miaphysite line of argumentation seems logically well-founded, given that it is in accord with one of the rules of obversion. One might put it thus: no nature is an-hypostasized, so every nature must be a hypostasis (Se-P=SaP). However, Leontius points out that to be not an-hypostasized (τὸ μὴ ἀνυπόστατον) and to be a hypostasis are not the same. It is, in fact, an example of a paralogism (Se-P=SaM), no different from Leontius' example, according to which if there is no body without shape, then shape must be a body. Obviously, the conclusion that shape is a body is wrong, and the conclusion that nature or substance is identical with being a hypostasis is equally wrong.³² The Neo-Chalcedonians were certainly prepared to admit that hypostasis does not differ in being from substance. But they strongly emphasized that hypostasis, in contrast to substance *vel* nature, exists in its own right as a real entity, in which substance/nature, as what is common to hypostases, is perceived and present in an equal and complete manner. Thus, being a substance or nature cannot be treated as tantamount to being a hypostasis.³³

given that we can pronounce them and apply them to their respective subjects. Also, it is quite hard to deny any existence whatsoever to movement or concepts, even if they cannot be seen as possessing hypostases of their own. Therefore, the term does not signify non-existence *sensu stricto*, but is rather used to refer to entities that lack an independently existing subject. When John the Grammarian spoke about what he held to be a wrong identification of hypostasis with substance or nature, the term appeared in its basic meaning – i.e. that of something's having no hypostasis of its own. *Apologia concilii Chalcedonensis (excerpta Graeca)* [*Apol. II*] 4.3, in: M. Richard (ed.), John the Grammarian of Caesarea, *Iohannis Caesariensis presbyteri et grammatici Opera quae supersunt*, Turnhout, Brepols 1977, p. 49-58. But as with Sextus, John also considered qualities, quantity, and that which is relative (i.e. that which can be seen as an attribute of substance) to be examples of an an-hypostaton, *Adversus Manichaeos* (homilia 1) 40-43. Meanwhile, in a manner similar to Gregory's way of speaking about voids, he also referred to darkness as being an-hypostaton, too, *Adversus Manichaeos* (homilia 1) 165-168. In Leontius of Byzantium, the term in question seems to have been used in a fashion reminiscent of one of Gregory's uses, as referring to that which does not subsist either as a subject in its own right or in relation to some subject: *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos* [*CNE*] 1.132.27-134.5, in: B. Daley, Leontius of Byzantium, *Complete Works*, p. 126-267. In that sense, some accident (such as being white), an essential characteristic (such as being rational), or even a nature (such as the body and soul that exist only in a human hypostasis), can each be called "an-hypostaton", for none of the aforementioned entities exist on their own as subjects in their own right. Therefore, the term "an-hypostaton" cannot be treated as the contrary of "en-hypostaton", and the latter should not be regarded as a simple negation of the former. See A. Zhyrkova, "Leontius of Byzantium", p. 193-218.

³² See: John. Gram., *Apol. II*, 4.3; Leontius Byz., *CNE* 1.132.27-134.5.

³³ *Ibidem*, 4.148.10-15; *Epil.* 1.78.22-26.

So, in that case how, we may ask, can the nature of an individual/hypostasis be explained, if it is different from an individual/hypostasis of the very same nature? We can begin to answer this question by noting that the Neo-Chalcedonian treatment of substance and nature can be thought of as constructed upon a Neoplatonic interpretation of the Aristotelian conception of substance, according to which substance was treated as one of the highest genera, while nature was understood in accordance with a narrow construal of secondary substance as identifiable with the lowest species completed by constitutive and specific differences. Thus the term “nature” corresponds to *eidos* in both of its senses: to a logical construal of *eidos/species* that is predicated equally of both individual entities and the en-mattered *eidos/form* of individuals.³⁴ Conceiving of nature in such terms, Leontius of Byzantium incorporates into his analyses two different viewpoints: on the one hand, that which would see it as the lowest kind of universal, and on the other, that which regards it as a particular of that nature.

In Question 5 of *Contra Nestorianos et Eutichianos* (*CNE*), nature is explicated through the relation of the universal to the particular. Leontius states that those things that are particular exhibit a common sharing in universals, while those that are universal are predicated of particulars.³⁵ Thus, the commonality of individuals pertains to species in accordance with their nature, whereas the commonality of universals pertains to particulars in accordance with their appellation, so that a part can be called by the name of the whole.³⁶ For that reason, when “nature” is said of something, “the meaning of universal and species is predicated of what is particular and proper”.³⁷

Leontius, relying most probably on the Neoplatonic conception of universals that originates with Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, presents nature as a common species/form of individual subjects that on the one hand is shared by individuals, while on the other being also predicated of them.³⁸ A nature is a

³⁴ See: John. Gram., *Apol. II.* 2.22-25, Leontius Byz., *Epil.* 2.276.14-21; 3.276.28-278.12; 8.308.15-31; *CNE* 1.134.9-10; *Epaporemata* [*Epap.*] 2.314.7-10; 22.324.18-24; 23.324.25-326.5; 25.326.21-25. See: Porphyry, *Isag.* 4.11-12; 13.10-17; 21.5; 7.23-8.1; 9.16-17; 18-23. For more on John the Grammarian’s and Leontius of Byzantium’s understanding of substance and nature in relation to Neoplatonic philosophical teaching, see: A. Zhyrkova, “A Reconstruction of”, p. 51-63; idem, “Leontius of Byzantium”, p. 198-205.

³⁵ Leontius Byz., *CNE* 5.152.15-17; see also: 7.168.26-28.

³⁶ See: *Ibidem*, 5.152.15-20.

³⁷ See: *Ibidem*, 5.152.11-14.

³⁸ Leontius clearly identifies “nature” with “species/form”. He states that one can speak about one nature (μία φύσις) in three ways: either as a species, or as participating in the same species, or as being a species where this is completed by a “con-fusion” of different species that itself participates in them both, but is itself neither of them. See: Leontius Byz., *CNE* 5.154.5-8.

species in not only the logical but also the ontological sense. It is true *eidōs*/form that is participated in by individuals, and that, due to such participation, can be predicated of them. To an extent, Leontius differs from the logical approach of the Neoplatonists, as he is more focused on relations between universals and particulars understood as entities than on bare relations between universal appellations and their subjects.

Nature, construed as indicating a true form/species in both an ontological and a logical sense, represents the totality of individuals that share the species in question. This is relevant also in the case of human beings, who are considered to possess two natures: i.e. soul and body. Human nature, just like any other, is one in respect of its species/form.³⁹ As such, one nature represents the whole human species, as there is no individual that is such that sharing the same species/form would be different-in-substance. No individual human being can possess a species/form different from universal human nature. For this reason, Leontius states that the particular (τὸ μερικόν) is rightly referred to through the appellation of what is common.⁴⁰ A particular human, or a particular stone, are truly and completely a human and a stone, and not merely partial concretizations of a certain universal nature or substance, such as are not substances in their own right.

Even so, if a particular can rightly and justifiably be adverted to using the name of some universal nature *vel* species, we are surely entitled to wonder whether this implies that it can, in itself, be considered a “particular nature” – and, what is of even greater philosophical importance, whether this then entails a multiplying of that one nature *vel* species.

Leontius confirms that he does accept such a notion as “some nature” (τις φύσις), but only on condition that it is understood as being of the same species.⁴¹ However, since individuals are different in number (i.e. they are essentially many), the statement that there are particular natures can be taken to imply that one nature turns out to be multiple, becoming literally many in number. He himself seeks to address such an interpretation from a variety of different directions.⁴²

³⁹ See: *Ibidem*, 5.154.1-4.

⁴⁰ See: *Ibidem*, 5.152.20-24.

⁴¹ See: *idem*, *Epil.* 1.272.6-7.

⁴² The question of particular natures in Leontius, seen from the Christological point of view, is well described in Shchukin’s study: Timur Shchukin, “Identity in Difference: Substance and Nature in Leontius of Byzantium’s Writings”, in: *Scrinium* 12 (2016); see also: Oleg Davydenkov, “The Concept of an Individual Nature in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium”, in: *Vestnik Pravoslavnogo Svāto-Tihonovskogo Gumanitarnogo Universiteta Seria I: Bogoslovie* 47 (3/2013). Yet both of these treat the issue mainly from a theological perspective. There is also a much more widely known study by Richard Cross, “Individual Na-

Leontius reflects on the question of whether number may bring about division or differentiation of nature, where this leads him to state clearly that number represents the quantity of things, and not their qualities or nature. He stresses that number as such neither connects, nor differentiates, nor unites. Therefore, number is not responsible for difference between entities, or for their identity. It just points to the quantity of subjects, or to some difference between them, without actually causing their separation or difference. When number is applied to individuals, it only determines the quantity of those individuals. On the other hand, when number is applied to natures, but not in the sense of their quantity – as, for instance, two meters of silk – it represents things in regard to difference in genus and difference in species. In that sense, one can claim that horse, human and cow are three natures. Still, horse, human and cow do not differ from each other according to quantity, but according to species. What makes a certain nature different from others is the difference that specifies it, and certainly not a number. Thus, Leontius has it that number, applied to natures, points to the fact of their being different with respect to species, but neither divides nor separates them.⁴³

Even though number does not as such contribute anything to a division or differentiation as regards natures, there remains a problem concerning the multiplying of one and the same nature in particular natures of individuals that, while sharing the same nature, are different in number. Leontius addresses this important issue while seeking to give an answer to

tures in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium”, in: *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10 (2/2002). In my opinion, though, Cross seems to construe “individual natures” as nothing other than en-mattered universals there. In other words, he confuses the nature existing/ subsisting in an individual with individual nature. Still, even an en-mattered universal can hardly be thought of as *an* individual, though it can be regarded as individuated. I shall have more to say on that in some forthcoming work.

⁴³ See: Leontius Byz., *Epap* 8.316.18-23; *Epil.* 22.274.28-276.2. In *Epap.* 10.318.2-5, Leontius emphasizes that if numbers were capable of dividing subjects or natures, then even just counting the characteristics of the one nature of Christ would engender its division. See: Basil Lourié, “Leontius of Byzantium and His «Theory of Graphs» against John Philoponus”, in: Mikonja Knežević (ed.), *The ways of Byzantine philosophy*, Alhambra, Sebastian Press 2015, p. 143-170, where the author tries to show Leontius’ account of particular natures and hypostasis as emerging through their relation to number. Although the article brings several interesting and intriguing points of Leontius’ thought to our attention, as well as raising a question about whether he in fact addressed the anti-Chalcedonian critique put forward by John Philoponus, I find that I can hardly agree with the main claims put forward there. In my opinion, Lourié misses one of the core points of Leontius’ view regarding “particular nature” – namely, that what makes natures different is not number, but specific differences (*Epil.* 274.1-14; 276.14-21). It is rather possible to infer that for Leontius, numerical difference is neither a cause of essential differences between individual entities nor a principle of individuation. One can thus argue that in Leontius, numerical difference may be interpreted as an accompanying characteristic of discernibility.

the question of whether Christ took on human nature in the sense that pertains to the species, or in that of natures as encountered in individuals. He sees that the problem is not whether a certain nature in the species-defined sense is perceived in many or just in one individual, but rather whether nature in the sense of a universal species is identical with the nature of an individual belonging to this species.⁴⁴ In Leontius' view, the fact that nature is perceived (θεωρεῖσθαι) as one, or as many or in many, does not make this nature one or many, respectively. Nature, observed in one individual or in many, or taken as a species, corresponds to the very same account. In all cases, there is one and the same nature *simpliciter*. Also, for this reason, Leontius has no problem with accepting a notion such as that of "particular nature", for there is just one nature that can be considered as such, or perceived in one individual, or encountered in many particulars that are the same in respect of their species.⁴⁵ All the same, he cannot be said to have reduced nature, construed as a universal that is present in multiple particulars, to "particular nature", understood as identical to the individual entity and hypostasis.

Taking all of this into account, the question we are prompted to ask is the following: how did the Neo-Chalcedonians seek to explain the nature of a particular, if they rejected the idea – shared by representatives of the Miaphysite stance – of a particular nature as identical to a hypostasis? As we shall see, the answer we must give is that they did so by introducing a really quite innovative understanding of substance and nature: as what is en-hypostasized.

John the Grammarian claimed that substance, unlike hypostasis, does not exist as an individual entity in its own right, but is "en-substantiated" or "en-hypostasized". Substance subsists-in-hypostasis and is ontologically dependent on hypostasis. Stating that substance is *en-hypostasized* does not deprive substance, or nature, of being or existence. But it means that substance is present and active within the individual entity, subsisting as a constituent element of the hypostasis. On the one hand, it does not exist in its own right: it neither exists as an independent hypostasis, nor possesses an independent hypostasis. On the other, it makes a hypostasis a hypostasis of a

⁴⁴ Leontius Byz., *Epil.* 1.270.20-272.5.

⁴⁵ See: *Ibidem*, 1.272.6-7. In Leontius' opinion, even *sui generis* – i.e. unique – entities (τά μοναδικὰ), such as the sun, the moon, the morning star, etc., are not exceptions to the above rule. For the expression "the sun", along with others like it, does not actually denote the common characteristics that determine a certain subject, but rather its peculiarities. In other words, such expressions signify not a nature, but rather a hypostasis of a certain nature, and do so even when there is no other hypostasis of the same nature or species. See: *Epil.* 5.284.16-286.7.

certain species. To illustrate this, one can use the example of a concrete human being: in a human hypostasis, the substances of the soul and the body are en-hypostasized – they truly are and really exist, but not as separate entities with separate hypostases each of their own.⁴⁶

Leontius of Byzantium further developed the views of his predecessor, employing the relatively advanced framework of Neoplatonist philosophy. His conception of what is en-hypostasized can be presented in terms of five distinctive features. First of all, what it is to be en-hypostasized is different from what it is to be a hypostasis. Secondly, while “hypostasis” refers to a really existent and independent individual being of the kind in question, “en-hypostasized” refers to that very kind (i.e. that of the entity) itself, whose essence it determines – meaning that it reveals its essence, what it is, and that it is. Thirdly, what is en-hypostasized does not exist as a real entity by itself, but always in relation to hypostases, participating and existing in them. Fourthly, what is en-hypostasized is an element of a hypostasis, in the sense of being an element of the structure of an individual entity. Last but not least, what is en-hypostasized does not merely exist in the hypostasis, as in that case it would constitute no more than an accident: it is in fact distinguished from mere accidents, as completing and co-constituting the *hypostasis* itself.⁴⁷

Putting together all of the above-mentioned characteristics, we may conclude that this conception of what it is to be en-hypostasized aims to capture the manner of existence of real beings that, though not individual entities in themselves, do help to constitute and complete such entities. Elucidating substance and nature in these terms means that the substance *vel* nature of an individual entity will be a complete constituent of such an independently and actually existent entity. En-hypostasized substance *vel* nature does not exist by itself, but does really exist as a complete constituent of an individual entity, it being an ontological element of the structure of the latter. The substance *vel* nature of the individual entity completes and co-constitutes it, so that it can be what it is on its own account.

Taking the example of human beings once again, one can say that a human individual is a unity of two en-hypostasized natures that, for each and every human individual, are mutually complementary. The soul and the

⁴⁶ See: John. Gram., *Apol. II.* 4.6.200-211, esp. 205-207. See: A. Zhyrkova, “A Reconstruction”, p. 6-9.

⁴⁷ Leontius Byz., *CNE* 1.132.19-26. For a detailed reconstruction of Leontius’ conception of en-hypostasized substance/nature from a philosophical perspective, see: A. Zhyrkova, “Leontius of Byzantium”, p. 205-216.

body are complete elements that complete a given hypostasis so that it can be a hypostasis of the human sort. Neither soul nor body exist as individual entities or possess a hypostasis of their own, but they do exist as constituents of a human hypostasis, receiving their existence in and through their role as its ontological complements.

Certainly, it is possible to raise the question of whether Leontius' view as regards nature being what is en-hypostasized is different from that expressed by John Philoponus, who treated genera and species, as well as nature, as complete components of substances as these relate to each subject – ones that determine and reveal the essences of primary substances themselves.⁴⁸ The answer, however, is quite simple: in the case of Philoponus, natures are complete components of one most proper nature of a composite kind that, ontologically speaking, is identical to the individual.⁴⁹ In other words, they are complements of substance and not, as in the case of Leontius, of the individual, which is not ontologically equivalent to its substance.

It might well sound somewhat surprising, yet from a philosophical point of view, the Neo-Chalcedonian conception of substance and nature as what is en-hypostasized was significantly more revolutionary than Philoponus' paradoxical and logically contradictory idea of particular natures. Philoponus, in fact, reduced universal entities to the level of a mere conception, proclaiming the existence of particular essences only, and such an approach was not all that new for Hellenistic philosophy. For theological reasons, he simply took to an extreme the position of Alexander of Aphrodisia and his teacher Ammonius, producing a problematic conception of particular universals, but hardly going beyond this. In turn, the Neo-Chalcedonian approach to the subject differed profoundly, and even essentially, both from Aristotle's doctrine of substance and from the Neoplatonic interpretation of the same issue, as becomes especially clear when we attend to their respective metaphysical explanations of the very being and predictability of substance. For, according to the Neo-Chalcedonians, substance *vel* nature does not appear to be the formal cause that actualizes and thereby establishes a given hypostasis. Rather, it would seem to be a constitutive element, determining the essential content of a hypostasis, which receives its actualization in, and due to, the latter. Certainly, the Neo-Chalcedonian conception itself raises many serious philosophical questions, such as ought to be pursued and addressed in separate studies (e.g., what hypostasis amounts to as an entity, or whether a human substance can properly be

⁴⁸ Philoponus, *In Cat.* 34.13-15, 71.14-73.9, 61.27-30

⁴⁹ Idem, *Arb.* 7.23 (= John Damascene, *Haeres.* 83 addit. 74-95).

regarded as ontologically singular, to name just two). Yet for our purposes here, it will probably suffice to conclude that Philoponus (as a Miaphysite), together with the Neo-Chalcedonians, in seeking a way to explicate the very same Christological problem, and in devising their conceptions on the basis of the very same Neoplatonic teachings, came up with radically different ideas – ones that in both cases nevertheless exercised a significant influence on Western medieval thought as regards disputes concerning universals and the problem of individuation. That, though, is a subject for another study.