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THE ORIGIN OF THE DYOPHYSITE FORMULA IN THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON

Introduction

The dyophysite formula in the Definition of Chalcedon («*ένα καί τόν αὐτόν Χριστόν...ἐν δύο φύσεσιν...γνωριζόμενον*» – “One and the Same Christ...known... in two natures”)¹, which constitutes, as is well known, its most crucial and decisive expression, existed immediately after the Fourth Ecumenical Council a controversial point among its Orthodox supporters and

¹ The main dogmatic part of the Definition of Chalcedon, the so-called “Symbol of Chalcedon”, has in its verses as follows:

1. «Ἐπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν
2. ἕνα καί τόν ὁμολογεῖν υἱόν
3. τόν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν
4. συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν,
5. τέλειον τόν αὐτόν ἐν θεότητι
6. καί τέλειον τόν αὐτόν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι,
7. θεόν ἀληθῶς καί ἀνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τόν αὐτόν
8. ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καί σώματος,
9. ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί κατὰ τήν θεότητα
10. καί ὁμοούσιον ἡμῖν τόν αὐτόν κατὰ τήν ἀνθρωπότητα,
11. κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρίς ἁμαρτίας,
12. πρό αἰώνων μέν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα κατὰ τήν θεότητα,
13. ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων δέ τῶν ἡμερῶν τόν αὐτόν
14. δι’ ἡμᾶς καί διὰ τήν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν
15. ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου κατὰ τήν ἀνθρωπότητα,
16. ἕνα καί τόν αὐτόν Χριστόν υἱόν κύριον μονογενῆ,
17. ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαιρέτως ἀχωρίστως
γνωριζόμενον,
18. οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τήν ἔνωσιν,
19. σφριζομένης δέ μᾶλλον τῆς ιδιότητος ἐκατέρας φύσεως
20. καί εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καί μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης,
21. οὐκ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον,
22. ἀλλ’ ἕνα καί τόν αὐτόν υἱόν μονογενῆ
23. θεόν λόγον κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,
24. καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται περὶ αὐτοῦ
25. καί αὐτός ἡμᾶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστός ἐξεπαίδευσεν
26. καί τῷ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε σύμβολον» (Mansi [= J. D. Mansi,

Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio, Graz ²1969-1961] VII, 116; ACO [= E. Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, Berolini et Lipsiae 1927-1940] II,1,2, 129[325] f.).

their anti-Chalcedonian opponents. This fact is not unexplainable, because at first glance this formula does not have any connection to Cyril of Alexandria, who was considered by the anti-Chalcedonians as the sole and undisputable authority for the solution of the Christological problem; moreover, it seems and strikingly resembles some particular dyophysite expressions used by Nestorius.

However, as we will see in the development of our subject, the direct source of this dyophysite formula was not Nestorian, but, as proven more convincingly by modern research, is completely Orthodox, especially with a very clear Cyrillian character: it is the Confession formulated by Basil of Seleucia at the Endemousa Synod of 448, who generates this formula from the *Epistle* of Cyril to *John of Antioch*². In other words, this formula, before its use by Basil of Seleucia and the Fathers of Chalcedon, with its Orthodox, and of course with its Cyrillian meaning, had been understood and used by the very same Nestorius with a divisible Christological meaning.

Let us look into more detail at the concept, which was the formula used by Nestorius, and the concept which was used both by Basil of Seleucia in his above-mentioned Confession and by the Fathers of Chalcedon in the Definition of Faith they drafted.

a) The meaning of the dyophysite formula “One Christ or Son... known...in two natures” according to Nestorius and to Basil of Seleucia

As is already known, the dyophysite formula in the Definition of Chalcedon “one Christ or Son...known... in two natures” was expressed for the first time from an Orthodox

² See Th. Šagi-Bunić, «‘Duo perfecta’ et ‘duae naturae’ in definitionem dogmatica chalconensis», in *Laurentianum* 5(1964), p. 325; see also the same author, «*Deus perfectus et homo perfectus*» a Concilio Ephesino (a. 431) ad Chalcedonense (a. 451), Romae-Friburgi Brisg. - Barcinone 1965, p. 219 f.; M. van Parys, «L’évolution de la doctrine christologique de Basile de Séleucie», in *Irénikon* 44(1971), p. 405 f.; A. de Halleux, «La définition christologique à Chalcedoine», in *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 7(1976), p. 160; see also G. D. Martzelos, *Γένεση καί πηγές τοῦ Ὁρου τῆς Χαλκηδόνας. Συμβολή στήν ἱστοριοδογματική διερεύνηση τοῦ Ὁρου τῆς Δ’ Οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου*, P. Pournaras Pub., Thessaloniki 1986, p. 173.

viewpoint by Basil of Seleucia in his Confession at the Endemousa Synod of 448³. However, it is an indisputable fact that before the formula was used by Basil, it was used, perhaps not verbatim, but with a similar form, by Nestorius. At least two of Nestorius' sermons show that he must have been the architect of dyophysite expressions such as "one Son... known... in two natures" in the Antiochian Christological tradition. In an excerpt from one of his sermons, which refers to the Nativity of Christ, he writes characteristically: "We know therefore the humanity of the baby and the divinity, [we confess the difference of the natures...], we keep the oneness of the sonhood in the nature of humanity and divinity"⁴. Additionally, in an excerpt of one of his sermons *Concerning Faith*, which is saved in a Syriac translation, it is noted:

³ See G. D. Martzelos, op. cit., p. 172; see also the same author, *Ἡ Χριστολογία τοῦ Βασιλείου Σελευκείας καὶ ἡ οἰκουμενικὴ σημασία της*, P. Pournaras Pub., Thessaloniki 1990, pp. 119 f., 235. See also the Confession of Basil at the Endemousa Synod of 488 with the following verses:

1. «Τίς δύναται ταῖς τοῦ μακαρίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Κυρίλλου μέμψασθαι φωναῖς;
2. ὃς τὴν ἀσέβειαν Νεστορίου μέλλουσιν ἐπικλύζειν τὴν οἰκουμένην
3. ἐπέσχετο διὰ οἰκείας συνέσεως
4. κακεῖνου διαιροῦντος εἰς δύο πρόσωπα καὶ δύο υἱούς
5. τὸν ἕνα κύριον ἡμῶν καὶ θεόν καὶ σωτῆρα Χριστόν
6. αὐτὸς ἔδειξεν ἐπὶ ἐνὸς προσώπου καὶ υἱοῦ καὶ κυρίου καὶ δεσπότης τῆς κτίσεως
7. θεότητά τε γνωρίζομένην τελείαν καὶ ἀνθρωπότητα τελείαν.
8. ἀποδεχόμεθα τοίνυν πάντα τὰ παρ' αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα καὶ ἐπεσταλμένα
9. ὡς ἀληθῆ καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐχόμενα
10. καὶ προσκυνοῦμεν τὸν ἕνα κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν
11. ἐν δύο φύσεσι γνωρίζομενον.
12. τὴν μὲν γὰρ εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ προαιώνιον
13. ὡς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς δόξης,
14. τὴν δὲ ὡς ἐκ μητρὸς δι' ἡμᾶς γεννηθεῖς
15. λαβὼν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἤνωσεν ἑαυτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν
16. καὶ κεχηματίκεν ὁ τέλειος θεὸς καὶ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ
17. καὶ τέλειος ἄνθρωπος καὶ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου,
18. πάντας ἡμᾶς σῶσαι βουληθεῖς
19. ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι κατὰ πάντα ἡμῖν παραπλήσιος πλὴν ἁμαρτίας.
20. τοὺς δὲ ἐναντιούμενους τοῖς τοιοῦτοις δόγμασιν
21. ἐχθροὺς τῆς ἐκκλησίας εἶναι φαμέν» (Mansi VI, 828; ACO II,1,1, 179).

⁴ See Fr. Loofs, *Nestoriana. Die Fragmente des Nestorius*, Halle 1905, p. 328: «Γνωρίζομεν τοίνυν τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα τοῦ βρέφους καὶ τὴν θεότητα, [ὁμολογοῦμεν τὴν τῶν φύσεων διαφοράν...], τό τῆς υἰότητος τηροῦμεν μοναδικόν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητος καὶ θεότητος φύσει». The passage in brackets is only saved in the Syriac translation, from which Loofs included it translated into German in the extant Greek quote. In Greek we attach the archaic style, trying to give the approximate original form.

“[...one and the same regarded in uncreated and created nature...He is known therefore as one Christ in two natures, divine and human, visible and invisible... one son in two natures]”⁵. As is becoming clear, not only the expression “one Christ or Son in two natures,” but also the connection with this expression of the verb “know” is commonplace in the aforementioned excerpts of both sermons of Nestorius and in the dyophysite formula of Basil. Perhaps this explains why, when Basil expressed his dyophysite formula for the first time in Chalcedon, the Egyptian and other Monophysite bishops cried: “this is what Nestorius believed; this is what Nestorius said”⁶.

This certainly does not exclude Basil, who knew well, as we have shown in our related study, the sermons and the teaching of Nestorius⁷, to take the dyophysite formula “one Christ or Son known... in two natures” from Nestorius, or, even if that did not occur, he took the formula via the Antiochian Christological tradition, where it would have been widely known. However, he had already undertaken by his Confession in the Endemousa Synod of 448 – and here exactly appears his fruitful and creative contribution in bridging the chasm between the Antiochian and Alexandrian Christologies – not merely to orthodoxly use this dyophysite formula and even against the teaching of Nestorius, characterizing him as “lunatic”⁸, but also to genetically link it, concerning its content, with Cyril, considering his Christological teaching as its source.

Furthermore, already from the beginning of his Confession, he not only explicitly turns against the heresy of Nestorius, but argues with fervour and enthusiasm the undisputed character of Cyril's Christological teaching⁹. While, as noted, Nestorius with

⁵ See op. cit., p. 330: «[...ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θεωρούμενον ἐν ἀκτίστῳ καὶ κτιστῇ φύσει...Γνωρίζεται οὖν ὡς εἰς Χριστὸς ἐν δύο φύσεσιν, θείᾳ τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνῃ, ὁρατῇ καὶ ἀοράτῳ...εἰς υἱὸς ἐν δύο φύσεσιν]». What is said in the above footnote because of Nestorius' excerpt, surviving in the Syriac translation, applies also to this passage.

⁶ See Mansi VI, 636; ACO II,1,1, 93 : «ταῦτα Νεστόριος ἐφρόνει ταῦτα Νεστόριος ἐβόα».

⁷ See G. D. Martzelos, *Η Χριστολογία του Βασιλείου Σελενκείας και η οικουμενική σημασία της*, P. Pournaras Pub., Thessaloniki 1990, pp. 44 ff.

⁸ See Mansi VI, 636; ACO II,1,1, 92.

⁹ See footnote 3, v. 1-7.

his impious teaching divided “our one Lord and God and Saviour Christ” to “two persons and two sons” (v. 4-5), Cyril showed that “perfect divinity and perfect humanity is known in one person and Son and Lord and Master of creation” (v. 6-7). Especially at this point, Basil paraphrases, in an original and creative way, the interpretation that Cyril makes in “double perfection” (“perfect God and perfect man”)¹⁰ of the Formulary of Reunion (433), the so-called Symbol of Union, as expressed in his *letter to John of Antioch* (“perfect... in divinity and the same perfect in humanity” – «τέλειος... ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειος ὁ αὐτός ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι»)¹¹ and in this way he essentially summarizes the quintessence of the Christology of Cyril, so as to clearly exclude Nestorianism.

Precisely for this reason, regarding the under discussion dyophysite formula, there exists a radical difference between Nestorius and Basil. For Nestorius the “one Christ and Son”, for whom he speaks about, is not the Son and Word of God, as is for Basil, but the moral person which resulted from the union of the two natures. For Nestorius the terms “Christ” and “Son” do not exclusively declare the Son and Word of God, but both of his natures; they are “messages” of the two natures¹². Contrarily for Basil, the “one Christ” who “is known in two natures”, as already shown in his Confession and as he explicitly underlined in Chalcedon, is solely “the only-begotten Son of God, God the Word”¹³, something which Nestorius would not be able to accept on the basis of his teaching.

However, beyond that, Basil clearly stresses that his dyophysite formula is not only anti-Nestorian, but also originates from the Christological teaching of Cyril and is inextricably tied to it¹⁴. Indeed, already in his Confession, his dyophysite formula (v. 10-11) not only conclusively summarizes the paraphrase that he

¹⁰ See Mansi, VI, 668; ACO II,1,1, 108.

¹¹ See PG 77, 180 B; Mansi VI, 672; ACO II,1,1 110.

¹² See Fr. Loofs, op. cit., pp. 171, 175, 176, 182, 192, 196, 211, 254, 269, 271, 273, 274, 295, 307, 317, 318, 336, 358, 361. See also F. Nau, *Nestorius. Le livre d' Héraclide de Damas* (traduit en français), Paris 1910, pp. 146, 184, 185; G. L. Driver – L. Hodgson, *Nestorius. The Bazaar of Heracleides* (newly translated from the Syriac), Oxford 1925, pp. 166, 207, 209.

¹³ See Mansi, op. cit.; ACO II,1,1,92 f.

¹⁴ See footnote 3, v. 1-11.

himself makes regarding Cyril's interpretation of the "two perfect [natures]" of the Symbol of Union, but also it is considered in a way to be dogmatically equivalent to that, since it produces the same dogmatic truth in a slightly different way. In his dyophysite formula "our one Lord Jesus Christ" is known "in two natures" (v. 10-11), while in the paraphrase that is made in Cyrillian interpretation of "two perfect [natures]" of the Symbol of Union, the perfect divinity and perfect humanity is known as "over one person and Son and Lord and Master of creation" (v. 6-7). Common points between these two Christological formulas are not only the emphasis on "one Lord" or "one person", but also the use of the participle of the verb "to know". The close relationship between these two Christological formulas becomes even more evident for Basil's dyophysite formula with his clarifications which he affirms in Chalcedon: "What I said: known in two natures after the union, in perfect divinity and perfect humanity"¹⁵. This clarification clearly shows that the two natures in the dyophysite formula of Basil's Confession are just the perfect divinity and the perfect humanity, for which he speaks in the paraphrase that he makes in Cyril's interpretation of the "two perfect [natures]" in the Symbol of Union (v. 6-7)¹⁶.

b) The source of the dyophysite formula of Basil of Seleucia

These data inevitably lead us to the source from which Basil produces his dyophysite formula and, as is plausible, this source can not be other than the above-mentioned passage from Cyril's *Epistle to John of Antioch*, in which Cyril interprets, with his own manner, the "two perfect [natures]" of the Symbol of Union. Indeed, in this passage, Cyril does not refer only to the double perfection of one and the same person "in divinity and...humanity", but also explicitly calls his "divinity" and

¹⁵ See Mansi, VI, 636; ACO II,1,1,93 : «Ὁ ἔλεγον· ἐν δύο φύσεσιν γνωριζόμενον μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, θεότητι τελεία καὶ ἀνθρωπότητι τελεία».

¹⁶ See also Th. Šagi-Bunić, «*Deus perfectus et homo perfectus*» a Concilio Ephesino (a. 431) ad Chalcedonense (a. 451), Romae-Friburgi Brisg.-Barcinone 1965, p. 192

“humanity” “natures (φύσεις)” (“even if the difference of natures...” – «κἄν ἡ τῶν φύσεων...διαφορά»)¹⁷, and that, as it appears, did not go unnoticed by Basil. Already in the Endemousa Synod of 448 he has a clear and crystallized opinion on this subject. It is very enlightening for the meaning, of which Basil observes in the phrase “two natures”, the question he asks Eutyches at the Endemousa Synod: “do you say that two natures are known in the Lord, divinity and humanity?”¹⁸.

Certainly the characterization of the “divinity” and the “humanity” of Christ as “natures,” and of course different from each other, not only responds to the above-mentioned passage from Cyril’s *Epistle to John of Antioch*, but also to his *Second Epistle to Nestorius*¹⁹. However, the advantage of the above-mentioned Cyrillian passage is that the characterization of the “divinity” and the “humanity” of Christ as “natures” is combined with the double perfection of the one and the same person of Christ and this is exactly what Basil exploits theologically. Thus from the phrase “one Lord Jesus Christ...perfect...in divinity and perfect...in humanity” of the above-mentioned Cyrillian passage very easily produces the phrase “one Lord...Jesus Christ in two natures” of his dyophysite formula.

Th. Šagi-Bunić holds the opinion that Basil could be in his conclusion probably influenced by Proclus of Constantinople²⁰. Perhaps the fact that Proclus spoke of “two natures in one hypostasis”²¹, thus distinguishing the terms “nature” («φύσις»)

¹⁷ See PG 77, 180 B; Mansi VI, 672; ACO II,1,1, 110: «τέλειος ὢν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειος ὁ αὐτός ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, καὶ ὡς ἐν ἐνὶ προσώπῳ νοούμενος· εἷς γὰρ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, κἄν ἡ τῶν φύσεων μὴ ἀγνοῖται διαφορά, ἐξ ὧν τὴν ἀπόρρητον ἔνωσιν πεπερᾶσθαι φαμέν».

¹⁸ See Mansi VI, 813; ACO II,1,1, 173: «λέγεις γνωρίζεσθαι δύο φύσεις ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ, θεότητα καὶ ἀνθρωπότητα;».

¹⁹ See PG 77, 45 C; Mansi VI, 661; ACO II,1,1, 105: «οὐχ ὡς τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, ἀποτελεσασῶν δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν ἕνα κύριον καὶ Χριστόν καὶ υἱόν θεό τε καὶ ἀνθρώπο τε διὰ τῆς ἀφράστου καὶ ἀπορρήτου πρὸς ἐνότητα συνδρομῆς».

²⁰ See Th. Šagi-Bunić, op. cit., p. 195 f.

²¹ See Proclus of Constantinople, *Sermo de dogmate incarnationis* (excerpt), Fr. Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum De incarnatione Verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des 7. Und 8. Jahrhunderts*, Aschendorff Münster 1981, p. 49: «καὶ ἔστιν εἷς υἱός, οὐ τῶν φύσεων εἰς δύο

and “hypostasis” («ὑπόστασις»), constitutes a precedent for Basil, in order to consider as a “nature” not only the “divinity” but also the “humanity” of Christ²². Moreover, at the Endemousa Synod of 448 there existed certain points of Proclus’ Christology, which undoubtedly cannot be ignored²³.

However, regardless of the fact that there are some elements of Proclus’ Christology on the doctrinal formulations of the Fathers of the Endemousa Synod, we have the opinion that in this particular case there is absolutely no need to resort to Proclus’ Christology, in order to explain the origin of the phrase “one...in two natures” in Basil’s dyophysite formula. This is not only because Basil stresses its direct origin from Cyril²⁴, but also because the same Cyril, as we have seen, explicitly calls the “divinity” and the “humanity” of the one Lord “natures.” Consequently, the passage, in which Cyril in his *Epistle to John of Antioch* interprets with his own manner the “two perfect [natures]” of the Symbol of Union, has all the prerequisites to allow Basil with the liveliness and fruitfulness of his thought to generate from the phrase “one...perfect...in divinity and perfect...in humanity” the phrase “one...in two natures” of his dyophysite formula. With this phrase Basil essentially summarizes, in a conclusive way, the double perfection “in divinity and...humanity” of the one person of Christ, according to the above-mentioned passage of the *Epistle of Cyril to John of Antioch*²⁵.

As far as the participle «γνωρίζόμενον» (“known”) is concerned, with which Basil puts down his dyophysite formula (v. 11), we can reasonably argue that, like the participle

ὑποστάσεις διαιρουμένων, ἀλλὰ τῆς φρικτῆς οἰκονομίας τὰς δύο φύσεις εἰς μίαν ὑπόστασιν ἐνωσάσης...».

²² See Th. Šagi-Bunić, op. cit., p. 194: «*Novum* episcopi seleuciensis in so est, quod – post Proclum Constantinopolitanum – clare terminum “natura” ponit *ex parte quidditatis*, seiungendo decisive naturam ab illo qui in natura dignoscitur atque in ea perfectus est».

²³ See op. cit., p. 196 f.

²⁴ See in footnote 3, verses 6-7, which are formulated, as we have seen, in a different way from v. 10-11 of the Confession of Basil.

²⁵ See Th. Šagi-Bunić, «‘Duo perfecta’ et ‘duae naturae’ in definitionem dogmatica chalcedonensi», in *Laurentianum* 5(1964), p. 325; see also the same author, «*Deus perfectus et homo perfectus*» a Concilio Ephesino (a. 431) ad Chalcedonense (a. 451), Romae-Friburgi Brisg.-Barcinone 1965, p. 209; see also G. D. Martzelos, op. cit., p. 204.

«γνωριζομένην» (“known”) of his dyophysite Confession (v. 7), he produces it in all likelihood from the phrase «μὴ ἀγνοῖται» (= “not to be ignored” = “to be known”), which also exists in the same Cyrillian passage²⁶. With this participle Basil essentially renders with one word the basic teaching of Cyril, which survives in this passage, that the unity of the person of Christ does not negate the difference of His two natures which came together in this “secret union” («ἀπόρρητον ἔνωσιν»)²⁷, as well as his widespread teaching, after the Reconciliation of 433, that the knowledge of the difference of natures after the union does not mean division or separation or a breakdown of a person of the incarnate Word in two natures and two persons, because his natures are distinguished by themselves “only in a theoretical manner” («κατὰ μόνην τὴν θεωρίαν»)²⁸.

Characteristics for the notion, in which Basil of Seleucia understands the participle “known” (v. 7 and 11) in his dyophysite Confession, are his two following clarifying interventions at the Council of Chalcedon:

²⁶ See the passage in footnote 17.

²⁷ See in this case also the passage in footnote 19.

²⁸ See Cyril of Alexandria, *Epistle 46, To Succensus Bishop of Diocaesareia, Second Epistle*, PG 77, 245 A; ACO I,1,6, 162: «Ἀλλ’ ἡγνόησαν ὅτι ὅσα μὴ κατὰ μόνην τὴν θεωρίαν διαίρεισθαι φιλεῖ, ταῦτα πάντως καὶ εἰς ἑτερότητα τὴν ἀνά μέρος ὀλοτρόπως καὶ ἰδικὴν ἀποφοιτήσκειν ἂν ἀλλήλων. ἔστω δέ ἡμῖν εἰς παράδειγμα πάλιν ὁ καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἄνθρωπος. Δύο μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ νοοῦμεν τὰς φύσεις, μίαν μὲν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἑτέραν δέ τοῦ σώματος· ἀλλ’ ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις καὶ ὡς ἐν ἰσχυαῖς θεωρίαις ἦτοι νοῦ φαντασίαις τὴν διαφορὰν δεξάμενοι οὐκ ἀνά μέρος τίθεμεν τὰς φύσεις οὔτε μὴν διαμπάξ διατομῆς δύναμιν ἐφίεμεν αὐταῖς ἀλλ’ ἐνός εἶναι νοοῦμεν, ὥστε τὰς δύο μηκέτι μὲν εἶναι δύο, δι’ ἀμφοῖν δέ τό ἕν ἀποτελεῖσθαι ζῶον». See also *Epistle 44, To Eulogios Presbyter of Constantinople*, PG 77, 225 B; ACO I,1,4, 35: «... ὁποῖόν ἐστιν καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ εἰπεῖν ἀνθρώπου· ἔστιν μὲν γὰρ ἐκ διαφορῶν φύσεων, ἀπὸ τε σώματος, φημί, καὶ ψυχῆς. Καὶ ὁ μὲν λόγος καὶ ἡ θεωρία οἶδε τὴν διαφορὰν· ἐνώσαντες δέ, τότε ποιοῦμεν μίαν ἀνθρώπου φύσιν. Οὐκοῦν οὐ τό εἰδέναι τῶν φύσεων τὴν διαφορὰν, διατέμνειν ἐστὶν εἰς δύο τὸν ἕνα Χριστόν»; *Epistle 45, To Succensus Bishop of Diocaesareia, First Epistle*, PG 77, 232 D – 233 A; ACO I,1,6, 153 f.: «Οὐκοῦν ὅσον μὲν ἦκεν εἰς ἐννοιαν καὶ εἰς μόνον τό ὁρᾶν τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς ὁμμασιν τίνα τρόπον ἐνηνθρώπησεν ὁ μονογενής, δύο τὰς φύσεις εἶναι φαμέν τὰς ἐνωθείσας, ἕνα δέ Χριστόν καὶ υἱόν καὶ κύριον, τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον ἐνανθρωπήσαντα καὶ σεσαρκωμένον»; *Epistle 40, To Akakius Bishop of Melitene*, PG 77, 192 D, 193 A, 193 C; ACO I,1,4, 26, 27. See also R. V. Sellers, *Two ancient Christologies. A study in the Christological thought of the schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the early history of Christian doctrine*, London 1954, p. 93. See also the same author, *The Council of Chalcedon. A historical and doctrinal survey*, London 1961, p. 144.

a) When the Egyptians and other monophysite bishops reacted because of his dyophysite formula, shouting: “No one should divide the undivided; no one should say the one two”²⁹, he agreed with them while underlining at the same time his opposition to Monophysitism, with the following statement: “Anathema to splitting, anathema to dividing the two natures after the union; but also anathema to not knowing the peculiarity of the natures”³⁰.

b) Also, when Eustathios of Beirut, also obviously alarmed by Basil’s dyophysite formula and other dyophysite expressions that were heard at the Council, expressed the fear that there was a danger for some to claim that “a doctrinal decision was taken to say two divided natures after the union”³¹, then Basil interrupted him abruptly and, wanting to make clear the difference of the Orthodox Christological doctrine from Nestorianism and Monophysitism, he emphatically gave the following clarification: “We know the natures, we do not divide them; we do not say them either divided or confused”³².

In the Nestorian division and in the Monophysite confusion of the natures Basil puts up their simple “knowledge,” which is not understood differently than the Cyrillian way as a distinction of natures “only in a theoretical manner”. The expressions “to know the natures” and “to know the peculiarity of the natures”, which Basil used above, are identical to each other. “To know the natures” means “to know the peculiarity of the natures”. In this sense, as we understand, these expressions are parallel with the expression “the difference of the natures is not ignored” that Cyril used in the above-mentioned passage of his *Epistle to John of Antioch*, where he interprets the “two perfect [natures]” of the Symbol of Union³³. Of course there are other similar expressions that Cyril used mainly in his epistles after the Reconciliation of

²⁹ See Mansi, VI, 636; ACO II,1,1, 93.

³⁰ See Mansi, op. cit.; ACO, op. cit.: «Ἀνάθεμα τῷ μερίζοντι ἀνάθεμα τῷ διαιροῦντι τὰς δύο φύσεις μετὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν· ἀνάθεμα δὲ καὶ τῷ μὴ γνωρίζοντι τὸ ἰδιάζον τῶν φύσεων»

³¹ See Mansi, VI, 744; ACO II,1,1, 143.

³² See Mansi, op. cit.; ACO, op. cit.: «Γνωρίζομεν τὰς φύσεις, οὐ διαιροῦμεν· οὔτε διηρημένας οὔτε συγκεχυμένας λέγομεν»

³³ See footnote 19.

433³⁴, expressions that Basil certainly knew, because he was, as it seems from his Christological statements in the Endemousa Synod (448) and in the so called “Robber” Synod (449), well learned of both two aspects of the Christology of Cyril. However, we have the opinion that the term «γνωρίζειν» (“to know”) in its various forms, which Basil consciously and persistently connects with the “two natures”, can only be derived from the expression «μὴ ἀγνοῆται» (= “not to be ignored” = “to be known”) of the above-mentioned Cyrillian passage. This not only because both participles “known” (v. 7 and 11) in his Confession are organically connected with the expressions “perfect... divinity... and perfect humanity” (v. 7) and “in two natures” (v. 11) respectively, which also originate from the same Cyrillian passage, but also because the “two natures,” which are attached with the verb “to know” or “to be known”, mean, as we have seen, according to Basil just as in the above-mentioned Cyrillian passage: as perfect divinity and perfect humanity.

Consequently, even if the dyophysite formula of Basil’s Confession (v. 10-11) is morphologically associated with Nestorius and perhaps originates from him, we can reasonably accept with certainty that essentially Basil produces it from Cyril. This is because its morphological relationship with Nestorius does not primarily matter as much as the genetic and according to its content relationship with the Christology of Cyril. Only in the way that Basil understands and uses his dyophysite formula can be understood, according to the teaching of Cyril, the distinction of natures of the incarnate Word after the union, without risking a danger of splitting His person. Exactly for that reason in relation with the expressions “to know the natures” or “to know the peculiarity of the natures”, which are certainly associated with the dyophysite formula of his Confession, Basil feels, as we have seen,

³⁴ See the particular expressions: «τό εἰδέναι τῶν φύσεων τὴν διαφορὰν» (*Epistle 44, To Eulogios Presbyter of Constantinople*, PG 77, 225 B; ACO I,1,4, 35); «ἐν ψιλαῖς διελόντες ἐννοίαις καὶ ὡς ἐν ἰσχυαῖς θεωρίαις ἤτοι νοῦ φαντασίαις τὴν διαφορὰν (ἐνν. τῶν φύσεων) δεξάμενοι» (*Epistle 46, To Succensus Bishop of Diocaesareia, Second Epistle*, PG 77, 245 A; ACO I,1,6, 162); «Καὶ κατ’ αὐτό δὴ τοῦτο νοηθεῖν ἂν ἢ τῶν φύσεων, ἢ γουν ὑποστάσεων διαφορὰ: οὐ γάρ που ταῦτόν ἐν ποιότητι φυσικῇ θεότης καὶ ἀνθρωπότης» (*Epistle 40, To Akakius Bishop of Melitene*, PG 77, 193 BC; ACO I,1,4, 27).

the need to emphasize the “unconfused” and “indivisible” character of the two natures. This emphasis is indeed done in such a way as to be considered an integral element of “knowing the natures” and by extension of his dyophysite formula. Moreover, it is by no coincidence that since the Endemousa Synod of 448, where his dyophysite formula was expressed for the first time, Basil stresses with particular emphasis the unconfused and indivisible character of the two natures, while rejecting both Nestorianism and Monophysitism³⁵. In his two-sided struggle against the two extreme and opposite amongst them Christological heresies his dyophysite formula is the most effective weapon in his hands, based on the *Epistle* of Cyril to *John of Antioch*.

c) The emphasis of the Cyrillian character of the dyophysite formula of Basil in the Definition of Chalcedon

The value of Basil’s dyophysite formula for the addressing against both Nestorianism and Monophysitism on the basis of the Christological teaching of Cyril was certainly not ignored by the Fathers of Chalcedon, who in the Definition they composed, as supported by our related study³⁶, sought not only to give a visibly Cyrillian character, but also to keep it intact from the few additions and modifications proposed in the Council. Consequently, when during the fifth session of the Council there arose a question of replacing the formula “of two natures” («ἐκ δύο φύσεων») of the original Definition with another phrase, deriving from the *Tome* of Leo and having a clear dyophysite character, the Committee set up for the revision of the original Definition preferred for this purpose instead of the dyophysite formula of Pope Leo, which was proposed by the imperial representatives³⁷, Basil’s dyophysite

³⁵ See the remark made by Basil to Eutyches because of his monophysite confession at the Endemic Council of 488: «ἐάν μή μετά τήν ἔνωσιν ἀ χωρίσ το υς και ἀ συ γ χύ το υς εἴπης δύο φύσεις σύγχυσιν λέγεις καί σύγκρασιν» (Mansi VI, 637; ACO II,1,1 93. See also Mansi VI, 817 f.; ACO II,1,1, 175).

³⁶ See G. D. Martzelos, *Γένεση καί πηγές τοῦ Ὁρου τῆς Χαλκηδόνας. Συμβολή στήν ἱστορικοδογματική διερεύνηση τοῦ Ὁρου τῆς Δ' Οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου*, P. Pournaras Pub., Thessaloniki 1986, pp. 93, 136, 197.

³⁷ See Mansi VII, 105; ACO II,1,2, 125[321]: «Οἱ μεγαλοπρεπέστατοι καί ἐνδοξότατοι ἄρχοντες εἶπον· Πρόσθετε οὖν τῷ ὄρω κατὰ τήν ψήφον τοῦ ἁγιοτάτου πατρός ἡμῶν

formula, which had a Cyrillian origin and harmonised perfectly with the general Cyrillian character of the original Definition³⁸. Indeed, the Committee which was set up for the revision of the original Definition, in order to make clear in the text of the final Definition the Cyrillian origin of the new dyophysite formula and to thus exclude the possibility of being considered as Nestorian, expressed the double perfection not in the form of the Symbol of Union (“perfect God and perfect man”), which echoed the Antiochian mode of expression, but in the interpretative form that Cyril gave in his *Epistle to John of Antioch* (“perfect...in divinity and perfect the same in humanity”), on the basis of which Basil, as we have seen, produces his dyophysite formula³⁹. For this reason the review Committee formulated the double perfection in the text of the final Definition as follows: «τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι» - “perfect the same in divinity and perfect the same in humanity” (v. 5-6).

With this manner, the review Committee of the original Definition not only achieved to make the Cyrillian origin of the new dyophysite formula irrefutable in the text of the final Definition, but also strongly highlighted its intimate and inseparable relationship with the “double perfection,” as, according with what we have said, similarly occurred in the Confession of Basil of Seleucia at the Endemousa Synod in 448⁴⁰. In other words, the dyophysite formula of the Definition of Chalcedon “one and the same Christ... known... in two natures” does not mean for the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council anything more than the perfection of the one and the same person, the incarnate Word, “in divinity and in humanity”, so as to exclude the Nestorian division or the Monophysite confusion of the two natures, of divinity and of humanity, in Christ. Moreover, this also is clearly underlined by the four adverbs («ἀσυγχύτως,

Λέοντος δύο φύσις εἶναι ἠνωμένας ἀτρέπτως καὶ ἀμερίστως καὶ ἀσυγχύτως ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ».

³⁸ See G. D. Martzelos, op. cit., pp. 175 f., 200.

³⁹ See also op. cit., p. 207 f.

⁴⁰ See also G. D. Martzelos, *Ἡ Χριστολογία τοῦ Βασιλείου Σελευκείας καὶ ἡ οἰκουμένη* σημασία της, P. Pournaras Pub., Thessaloniki 1990, p. 242 f.

ἀτρίπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως» - “unconfusedly, immutably, undivisibly, inseparably”) inserted in the dyophysite formula of the Definition of Chalcedon.

It is characteristic that the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553) understand the dyophysite formula of the Definition of Chalcedon in the same sense, not only stressing its anti-Nestorian, but also its anti-Monophysite meaning. As explicitly mentioned in their Definition, “If anyone using the expression ‘in two natures’, does not confess that our one Lord Jesus Christ is known in divinity and humanity, so as to designate by that expression the difference of the natures of which the ineffable union is unconfusedly made... but shall take the expression with regard to the mystery of Christ in a sense so as to divide the parties, or recognising the two natures in the same our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word incarnated, does not content himself with taking only in a theoretical manner the difference of the natures ... which is not destroyed by the union between them... let him be anathema”⁴¹. Just as much as the Fathers of Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council fully accord as to the Cyrillian meaning of the dyophysite formula of the Definition of Chalcedon and in this respect there is no doctrinal differentiation between the Fourth and the Fifth Ecumenical Councils, as certain Western researchers have erroneously assumed⁴².

⁴¹ See Mansi IX, 381; ACO IV,1, 242: «Εἴ τις ἐν δύο φύσεσι λέγων μὴ ὡς ἐν θεότητι καὶ ἀνθρωπότητι τὸν ἕνα κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν γνωρίζεσθαι ὁμολογεῖ, ἵνα διὰ τούτου σημάνῃ τὴν διαφορὰν τῶν φύσεων, ἐξ ὧν ἀσυγχύτως ἡ ἁφραστός ἔνωσις γέγονεν... ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ διαιρέσει τῇ ἀνά μέρος τὴν τοιαύτην λαμβάνει φωνὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ κατὰ Χριστὸν μυστηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν φύσεων ὁμολογῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐνός κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σαρκωθέντος μὴ τῇ θεωρίᾳ μόνῃ τὴν διαφορὰν τούτων λαμβάνει... οὐκ ἀναιρουμένην διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν... ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀνάθεμα ἔστω».

⁴² See indicatively A. von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2. Bd. (Die Entwicklung des kirchlichen Dogmas I), Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Freiburg i. B. 1888, p. 36 f., 399; Al. Grillmeier, «Vorbereitung des Mittelalters. Eine Studie über das Verhältnis von Chalkedonismus und Neu-Chalkedonismus in der lateinischen Theologie von Boethius bis zu Gregor dem Grossen», in A. Grillmeier – H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, Bd. II, Würzburg 1953, p. 563; R. Devreesse, *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Studi e Testi 141, Città del Vaticano 1948, p. 220; Ch. Moeller, «Le chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VI^e siècle», in A. Grillmeier – H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, Bd. I, Würzburg 1952, p. 647; see also Metropolitan Meletius of

Conclusion

After everything that we have said, we believe that it has been made clear that, even though the dyophysite formula in the Definition of Chalcedon was initially in all probability of Nestorian origin, nevertheless following the step taken by Basil of Seleucia from the Antiochian side to link it genetically and according to content with the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria, was unconditionally used by the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in the Definition they drafted, not only with an anti-Monophysite, but also with an anti-Nestorian meaning. In other words, the Fathers of Chalcedon in the most crucial and decisive point of their Definition of Faith, i.e. in its dyophysite formula, in order to express clearly the Orthodox Christology, did not hesitate to use the terminology that even Nestorius used, after they first have given it an entirely Cyrillian content, thus bridging the gap between the Antiochian and Alexandrian Christological terminologies.

This fact, although not unique in the history of Orthodox theology, however, highlights in the most eloquent and impressive way the theological principle that prevails within the entire Orthodox tradition, according to which what interests the Church Fathers in the formulation of the Orthodox doctrine is not the terminology itself or its origin, but the meaning it obtains, so as to be in the position to express clearly the Orthodox doctrine. In this regard the dyophysite formula of the Definition of Chalcedon is indeed one of the most characteristic examples in the history of the Church.

Nicopolis, *Ἡ Πέμπτη Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύνοδος (Εἰσαγωγή, Πρακτικά, Σχόλια)*, Athens 1985, p. 131 f.