

**Is Pope Gelasius a Calvinist regarding Transubstantiation?
Or
Melanchthon and Kilmartin Prove too Much
Rev. Dr. C.W. Kappes**

In my bliss of ignorance, I was recently informed about a controversy that apparently is well known in apologetic circles today. In Christian discussions, especially between Reformed or Evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics, there is apparently a raging controversy where Christians of today –who are in favor of the Reformation– are accustomed to invoke a Swiss theologian, the Calvinist Francis Turretin (AD 1623-1687), as the first person to point out to Roman Catholic theologians that Pope St. Gelasius (who reigned AD 492-496) had contradicted the Roman Catholic doctrine according to the Council of Trent regarding transubstantiation. Instead, they say, Pope St. Gelasius believed that the Eucharist or sacramental bread and wine were merely physical bread and wine and were not the true body and blood of Christ that was born of Mary and crucified and resurrected on the third day. The Council of Trent, to which Turretin objected, established a rather precise formula to talk about what the change is called for Roman Catholics to believe in, by faith, at what might be called the Catholic rendition of the Last Supper (also called the Mass):

This Council declared that by means of the consecration of the bread and wine a conversion (*conversionem*) of the whole substance (*totius substantiae*) of the bread into the substance of the body of the Christ, our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood, takes place. This change, the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.¹

Now that I have been awoken from “my dogmatic slumber,” finding out that Pope St Gelasius is alleged to be a foil to this dogma, I rooted around a little while (not very long) and was surprised to find out that it is entirely inaccurate to accredit this argument to a Reformer of the 1600s. Luther’s trusted ally, Phillip Melanchthon (AD 1497-1560), had invented or discovered this argument about one hundred years prior in his *Latin Writing handed over to Lord Granville* (AD 1541):²

For, first, since we [Luther and ourselves] retain the doctrine of the presence (*praesentia*) of the body of Christ, why is it necessary to ask about the modality? These disputations are recent regarding transubstantiation, and they are ignored, nor too are [the disputations] understood by the very authors themselves [!], wherefore it’s absent [from our discussion], as people should know. Therefore, we speak by means of Paul and the olden Fathers: “The bread which we break is a participation of the Lord’s body [...] [etc.]” (1 Corinthians 11). We also say that, after bread has been consecrated, there is truly present (*vere adesse*) and eaten the body of Christ.

Then, Melanchthon quotes Irenaeus. Then, he quotes St. Cyril:³

¹ Trent (AD 1545-1563), capitulum 4, sessio XIII, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, ed. Norman Tanner. (Washington DC: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:695, lines 19-23.

² Phillip Melanchthon, *Latin Writing handed over to Lord Granville, Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Carolus Brettschneider (Halis Saxonum: C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1837), 4:276.

³ Melanchthon, *Latin Writing handed over to Lord Granville*, 277.

(St.) Cyril speaks thus: “The Lord distributed fragments of bread, saying: ‘This is my body.’” He did not say that the Lord distributed accidents of bread. New is the imagination that pretends that accidents are without a subject. Whence there are born infinite useless questions about mice gnawing [on the consecrated bread], etc., being unworthy for the serious serving the Church. Then, in this, vanity of disputation in this question of that “theology” proceeded to be necessary by emendation [to the normal studies]. Meanwhile there was silence about the true use of such a gift. (St.) Epiphanius diligently describes both the dogmas of the Church and then the sacraments saying: “Indeed it is bread but in it is the body of Christ that gives life.” He openly says: “in it.” Indeed, not yet had the entire world heard the term transubstantiation. St. Cyprian says: “Nor can his blood be seen, by which we are enlivened and redeemed, that is in the chalice, when wine is lacking in the chalice, by which the blood of Christ is shown.” Augustine agrees well enough, it should be understood intelligently. He conjoins the bread and the body: “What is seen, is bread; what faith orders to be believed: the bread is the body of Christ.” And the testimony of Gelasius, the Roman Pontiff, is perspicacious, who says:

Certainly, sacraments of the body and blood of Christ is a [singular] divine thing (*res*) that we consume, on account of which and by means of the same aforesaid [sacraments] are we made **completed** as partakers of divine nature. However, too, the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease to be.

Well, the first point of order is to say that this has been around about one hundred years longer than apologists on the internet seem to think it has (this just underlines the poverty of real studies on the topic in that forum). It's odd that to me that the Christians who most refer to this passage do not believe in Melanchthon's “real presence” of the historical body and blood in the bread and wine. Contrary to them, Melanchthon argues that what is entirely and fully bread coexists with what is entirely and really the body of Christ in the Eucharist. This is the Lutheran doctrine of the day. So, to be clear, what Melanchthon argues is that no Scholastic substance⁴ (Scholastic definition: something that exists by itself not depending on another) of bread or wine are transmuted or taken away by consecration, according to Melanchthon's quoted Fathers who allegedly report this to the detriment of Roman Catholic belief. Melanchthon also says that the idea of accidents remaining after the substance is eliminated or changed is an entirely new doctrine (See the APPENDIX: this is clearly not true since St. Leontius of Byzantium discussed substance verse accidents in the change of Jesus's flesh as early as AD 530 and he is a contemporary of St. Gelasius). We shall subject Melanchthon's study to a closer examination than in the past in this article. Did Pope St. Gelasius embrace whatever was fully bread and fully wine remained so after the priestly consecration? Did St. Gelasius admit (allegedly) that the “body [parts]” and “blood [drops]” were made present and not the whole Christ at the consecration?

⁴ We will take “Scholastic substance” to be Aristotle's commonly held assertion that substance: (1.) Exists in itself and not in another, (2.) that the *Categories* use substance to signify a species/form (an organizing energy or principle like the human soul) that informs prime/matter (indistinguishable, invisible matter). A form-matter thing (iron, dog, plant) is a “subject” (matter that can receive other forms) in which there (or inhere) accidents: white/black, hot/cold, big/small.

1. Kilmartin to the Rescue? Blaming Jesuits

As the joke goes: “The only things that *don't change* at a Jesuit celebration of the Mass *are* the bread and wine!” The award-winning scholar Dr. Edward Kilmartin, Society of Jesus (or Jesuit), adds another curious mystery to the mix. Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, is invoked by modern apologists to strengthen argument that St. Gelasius denied transubstantiation, making him the patron saint of this classic Jesuit joke. Would Pope St. Gelasius congratulate our Jesuit for allegedly asserting that bread and wine at papal Masses never change or transubstantiate?⁵ The answer requires us to investigate *why* certain people are so excited to use Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, as an authority. Upon reading about his alleged judgment regarding transubstantiation in St. Gelasius, I read his article and book chapter on the topic. Unsurprisingly, his alleged anti-transubstantiation interpretation of Pope St. Gelasius requires some nuance (for it limited to a remark that Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, makes about the “total Christ” in the Eucharist at Trent; which seems to misquote the canon). I'm pleased to say that Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, had some real insights into “St. Gelasius's” *Tractatus III*. However, I don't expect the reader to know all this beforehand. So, I'll try to summarize the important points that complement my own reading of St. Gelasius and I will also highlight points of disagreement between us. I hope to point out some obvious reasons –once I present the keys to interpreting St. Gelasius– for the reader to accept my supplements and corrections to the Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, writings in a spirit of friendly peer-review. Let us start with the good news in Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, who writes an article dedicated to Pope St. Gelasius versus transubstantiation:

Kilmartin Nice List (What he gets right!)

- (1.) Unlike what we are told, Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, reports that many Catholic *scholars* have written that St. Gelasius is a support for transubstantiation, despite a recent turn in the opposite direction (I consider this odd and am surprised Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, does not cite Protestant literature arguing the opposite; the issue is clearly more complex than apologetic websites let on to get the right answer).⁶
- (2.) St. Gelasius “argues from [...] a strict parallel between a theology of the Eucharist and the hypostatic union (the union of the Word to Mary's human embryo at the moment of its conception), in order to confirm the dogma of the Council of Chalcedon”⁷ (I wholeheartedly think this is key to the mystery [!]).
- (3.) “Gelasius begins by stating the dogma of the coincidence of the mystery of the Incarnation and the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary. Behind this is, apparently, his understanding of the eucharistic consecration as analogous to the Incarnation of Christ”⁸ (This is from St. Cyril's *Third Letter* below and is a dominant theme in Oriental

⁵ Kilmartin's article only addresses directly the question of the “total Christ” in the Eucharist verse only parts of him. This is discussed further below.

⁶ Edward Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I: A Nontridentine View,” *Studia Patristica* 29 (1997): 284.

⁷ Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 284.

⁸ Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 285.

Orthodox or Miaphysite eucharistic theology. Therefore, this reflects a common theology not a Chalcedonian one).

(4.) Gelasius calls the Eucharist: “nourishment of the Incarnation of Christ”⁹ (As the Wisdom and Word-God descended to earth, he descends into the banquet to be eaten).

There are a lot of talking points about St. Gelasius’s letter in Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, that make it puzzling why his *one paragraph of conclusions* are thought to be so revolutionary. In fact, Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, sets up the very premises above that lead to my own conclusions (making it puzzling to understand his logic [whose tiny lapses we shall review]. It makes me wonder how much fifth-century Christology he had studied before writing this article).

Kilmartin Naughty List (What he got wrong!)

(1.) “The sacraments are an ‘image and likeness of Christ’¹⁰ in that the material elements [...] **contain a divine thing** (*divina res*) and yet remain what they were before consecration”¹¹ (Very unfortunate, since St. Gelasius says the material elements **are (est) a divine thing**. This is a projection into the text by Dr. Kilmartin, SJ; an understandable mistake if he doesn’t study the Christology in play).

(2.) “Gelasius employs the verb ‘cross over’ (*transire*; [transition]) to describe the movement of the earthly elements [bread/wine] from the sphere of this world to the sphere of the divine”¹² (Ditto: Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, projects a reasonable understanding onto what appears to be insanity; rather for St. Gelasius bread and wine “cross over into the divine substance” but remain by nature bread and wine –my statement aligns with the perfect analogy that Rev. Kilmartin, SJ, so correctly mentioned on the **Good List** no. 3 [above]).

Kilmartin’s Conclusions (needing improvement)

(1.) Trent, canon no. 2, says that the Eucharist contains “the whole Christ” (*totum Christum*):

If anyone says that in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine remains together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and denies that marvelous and unique change (*conversionem*) of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, while only the appearance of bread and wine remains, a change which the catholic church most aptly calls transubstantiation, let him be anathema (Canon 2).¹³

To the contrary, says Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, Gelasius *seems* to exclude this (It beats me how Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, missed two assertion by St. Gelasius that literally “the whole Christ”

⁹ Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 285.

¹⁰ Also, Rev. Kilmartin, SJ, thinks this sounds like Theodore of Mopsuestia and he provides a Greek citation using “archetype.” However, the citation is from Genesis 1:26, which is not only attested for the Eucharistic prayer I or the Roman Canon by Ambrose’s *De sacramentis* (“Make for us this oblation [...] acceptable [...] that is a type (*figura*) of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ”), but it means that it is an act of transubstantiation where the underlying material is transformed and replaced miraculously by a new form but Adam somehow is still materially “dust” or “clay” according to the argument from death provided by Genesis “for unto dust you shall return, etc.”

¹¹ Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 287.

¹² Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 288.

¹³ Trent (AD 1545-1563), capitulum 4, sessio XIII, 2:697, lines 27-32.

(*totus homo*) are the “divine thing” (*divina res*) that is also the Eucharist –Unlike others, I believe Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, *did really read the whole work but somehow missed this!*).¹⁴

(2.) Trent emphasizes “conversion” (*conversio*) of elements to avoid a union into God-man-bread and God-man-wine but for Gelasius there is union of bread-substance and wine-substance; “precisely this viewpoint is central to the eucharistic theology of Pope Gelasius”¹⁵ (Trent’s *conversion* is from Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic commentator’s transmutation (*metabolê*); St. Gelasius knows this doctrine in his *Tractatus III* against Eutychians who claim Jesus’s flesh underwent “conversion” at the incarnation. St. Gelasius, instead, proposes that the only “converted” are they bread and wine (below) and they lose by implication their *subsistences* just as the human nature of Christ did; hence, they are not Scholastic(Tridentine) substances, since Gelasius-substances dependently exist as form-matter in a relation of dependence on the God-man less strenuously than human nature depends on the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Hence, Pope Gelasius does use the “substance” in a 16th century mode but thinks substances exist more like accidents in a subject[!] since they have no subsistence after their “transition”).

Now that I have shown how important a detailed knowledge of the technicalities of Christology is to read St. Gelasius’s treatise (which is 90 percent Christology in imitation of St. Cyril’s *Third Letter to Nestorius* below), I will move on to help the reader understand the terms used throughout *Tractatus III* so that they have the capacity (for the first time in modern history it would seem) to read the book as it was written, as a strict theory of Eucharist as bread or wine substance-natures that have a different kind of dependence than Nestorius’s human-nature-will on the divinity (For Gelasius, in this sense, consecrated bread is not one person with Christ). First of all, opposite Chalcedon’s idea of Incarnation-at-the-moment-of-human-conception, bread and wine start out *without any* union with the Word (to this extent like the human nature was for Nestorius) but only achieved a union with the Word by both losing their subsistence (this is fatal for a Scholastic-substance). Also, St. Gelasius’s bread and wine are upheld by the one subsistence of God the Word-Incarnate but in a way that “this whole Christ” takes away bread subsistence and wine subsistence.¹⁶ In the Incarnation of the soul-body-divinity, the dependence of Jesus’s human nature was on the Word from the first moment of conception. Unlike heretical Eutychians, St. Gelasius’s union denied any transmutation (nature-to-nature change) of Jesus-flesh but rather asserted a union or elevation of Jesus-flesh to be one with the divinity and still remain human flesh. Now, St. Gelasius condemned the Eutychian heretics by using the language of transmutation or Scholastic-substance-change to speak about what happened to Jesus’s body in the womb. St. Gelasius has a proper sense of transmutation in the exact sense of transubstantiation, just like his ally and

¹⁴ Gelasius, *Tractatus III vel De duabus naturis*, in *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum genuinae...*, ed. Andreas Thiel (Brungsberg, Eduard Peter, 1868), 1:535-536 (paragraph 8): “We are should be instructed that two united nature by concept existed unto one and the same person of Jesus Christ, whole (*Christi totius*) God-man, and whole man-God [...] he persists in each of both as one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, total God-man (*totum Deum hominem*) and total man-God [...] who is one perfect and true (*verus*) Christ.” Note well, the “integral and true (*verus*) Christ” is consumed in the Eucharist, which means the “total Christ.” This is simply an error somehow missed by Dr. Kilmartin, SJ.

¹⁵ Kilmartin, “The Eucharistic Theology of Pope Gelasius I,” 289. See also the same work (*ibid.*, 545), paragraph 18.

¹⁶ Council of Chalcedon, *Definition of the Faith*, in *Decree*, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, ed. Norman Tanner. (Washington DC: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 86: “one subsistence.”

contemporary St. Leontius of Jerusalem (in the APPENDIX). Transubstantiation requires a divine miracle, is instantaneous change of the complete thing from into another thing by new matter and new form: “Divinity is transmutable (*mutabilis*), if converted (*conversa*) into flesh.”¹⁷ This indeed is the philosophic language of St. Cyril, which is rendered in Latin exactly how it would have been in the Scholastic period for bread being changed to the body of Christ. Just as in the East with his contemporary St. Leontius of Jerusalem, St. Gelasius fully understands the philosophical notion of substantial change that St. Leontius calls literally “transubstantiation” (*metousiôsis*).

2. St. Cyril of Alexandria and Pope St. Gelasius I

St. Augustine and St. Cyril had been short-lived pen pals, but we know only a little of what they talked about and exchanged. As one might suspect from the onset, St. Cyril was likely tipped off by St. Augustine about the dangers of Pelagians who tried to deny the doctrine of original sin. Whatever the details of their correspondences, St. Augustine and St. Cyril remained the preeminent theologians for Roman popes and theologians in the Latin West. After the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (AD 431), the documents of St. Cyril and the Council minutes, decrees, and canons were translated into Latin. These Latin documents guided not only Christian discussions about Jesus’s one person, constituted from both a divine and a human nature into one divine person or hypostasis, but also included some teachings on the Eucharist. As we shall see, St. Cyril’s *Third Letter to Nestorius* tacked onto his Christ-talk mention of the descent by the Holy Spirit onto the gifts at Mass, along with Christ’s descent in them, as a kind analogy to the Incarnation, whereby the bread and wine are changed by the Holy Spirit into something new, not entirely dissimilar from how Mary’s ovum or piece of flesh was miraculously transformed into a divine person without any cooperation of a human-male in any way. As we also said, analogies have their place, and they enjoy greater precision than metaphors.

The translation by Marius Mercator of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus into Latin provided a rule for using the Latin language to talk about Jesus the God-man. Let us take a look at some important formulas that reproduce vocabulary known to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, when speaking of Jesus’s flesh at the moment of its conception:

We do not say that the nature (*natura*) made flesh of God was converted (*conversa*) or transmuted (*immutata*), nor too that he –who [was made] from a soul and body– was transformed (*transformata*) into a what is wholly man (*totum hominem*) [...] but that the Word was substantially [...] made man [...] but also not by mere assumption of a person rather that indeed diverse natures came together into some one thing.”¹⁸

Not only are each of these words used to speak of Christ’s Incarnation, but nearly all of them have been employed historically by Latin Fathers to speak about substance-to-substance change in the Eucharist and about Eutychian heretics. St. Cyril finishes his exposition to Nestorius prior to the

¹⁷ Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 533 (paragraph 4).

¹⁸ Cyril *Second Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols., ed. Norman Tanner (Georgetown: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 1:41.

Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (AD 431) by speaking about what was just quoted a second time, in similar words, and then ends his letter immediately jumping to the Eucharist:

We will necessarily add this also. Proclaiming the death according to the flesh of the only begotten Son of God, that is Jesus Christ, and professing his return to life from the dead and his ascension into heaven, we offer the unbloody worship in the churches and so proceed to the mystical thanksgivings and are sanctified, having partaken of the holy flesh and precious blood of Christ, the savior of us all. This we receive not as ordinary flesh, heaven forbid, nor as that of a man who has been made holy and joined to the Word by union of honor [like you, o Nestorius!], or who had a divine indwelling, but as truly the life-giving and real flesh of the Word. For being life by nature as God, when he became one with his own flesh, he made it also to be life-giving, as also he said to us: "Amen I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood." For we must not think that it is the flesh of a man like us (for how can the flesh of man be life-giving by its own nature?), but as being made the true flesh of the one who for our sake became the son of man and was called so. For we do not divvy up the words of our Savior in the gospels among two subsistences (*subsistentiis*) or persons.¹⁹

All popes after St. Cyril feel the moral weight of the entire Ecumenical Conciliar tradition upon them to maintain the formulas, language, and theology of St. Cyril. In fact, failure to convince bishops, clergy, and people of papal utter fidelity to St. Cyril's anti-Nestorian program led to the falling out between (St.*)²⁰ Dioscorus, Archbishop of Alexandria, and Pope St. Leo the Great. Of course, disagreement remains today so that both the Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox churches each claim to be a more faithful interpreter of the sense, letter and spirit of St. Cyril than the other. This brings us to the second great authority in the Roman Catholic or Latin Church in the AD 400s, Pope St. Leo. One is struck by his almost verbatim statement from St. Cyril when talking about Christ's natures and flesh: "Indeed, that the Word was made flesh, does not signify the following: that the nature of God was transmuted (*mutata*) into flesh, but that flesh was taken up by the Word into a unity of a person, in whose name 'the whole man' (*totus homo*) is utterly taken."²¹ Clearly, if Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, thinks that St. Gelasius parallels Eucharist with Incarnation, this should mean that the "total Christ" descends into the gifts for a follower of Chalcedon. Elsewhere, St. Leo explores God as the creator of substances (*substantiarum creator*), who can transmute natures (*mutare naturas*) of bodily things by will. This divine power had long ago been discussed by St. Ambrose in the realm of Eucharistic change (see APPENDIX). My point is not to underline something surprising but to prepare us to read effortlessly a later example of a pope of Rome who is often misread by both Protestant and Roman Catholic apologists, as if he were worried about the issues occurring in the Reformation. Instead, we need to put our fifth-century thinking caps on. I will suppose that my reader knows that I've already demonstrated the theory of "transubstantiation" (*metousiôsis*) as a late-fifth and early-sixth century Greek theory of Christ-flesh substantial-change. Like the arguments in my other article (which will be attached as an APPENDIX) Latin authors shared with Greeks a common inheritance of biblical examples, Jewish influence by Philo of Alexandria (about AD 40), and common patristic use of notions of substantial change of bread and wine into an entirely different and whole substance at Eucharist. My article

¹⁹ Cyril, *Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius*, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols., ed. Norman Tanner (Georgetown: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 1:54-55.

²⁰ * signifies that a person is a saint for his respective Church today.

²¹ Leo the Great, *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*, ed. A. Chavasse, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 138 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973), 138A (tractatus : 27, linea 31 (= *Patrologia Latina*, 54, column 141)).

in the APPENDIX (anticipating an over-100-page forthcoming book on the topic) means to highlight the fact that St. Gelasius's ultimately lines up with a long tradition of substantial-change in the Eucharist of the first four hundred years of Christianity, but Gelasius's expression of his theory has some turns of phrase (the Tertullian and Priscian notion of substance) that cannot be translated as a Scholastic substance (= an independent existing thing not in another thing).

Pope St. Gelasius (who reigned 492-496), was an old man by the time St. Leontius of Jerusalem (who the first to use "transubstantiation" [*metousiôsis*] as a term in theology for Eucharistic change as in the APPENDIX) was old enough to be a professed monk (about AD 480). What is more, during his reign, the entire Eastern Roman Empire had officially embraced the Miaphysite (Oriental Orthodox) version of St. Cyril's doctrine. The so-called Acacian schism was in full flower in the Greek-speaking parts of the Roman Empire, where a succession of Patriarchs or Archbishops of Constantinople were attempting to ignore and then eventually reject the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in order to bring about reunion with the Miaphysite (Oriental Orthodox) party who thought Chalcedon was too wimpy to be a feather in St. Cyril's cap. Sometimes emperors pushed this policy to curry favor with the Egyptian bishops (along with some Syrian ones), but we should not underestimate the fact that many people of the time identified the party of the Miaphysites (Oriental Orthodox) as most faithful to St. Cyril. With such confusion reigning, Pope St. Gelasius made it his mission to promote, defend, and require strict doctrinal agreement with his predecessor Pope St. Leo as the absolute condition for Rome reentering into reconciliation with any bishop of the Eastern Churches. We need to keep this firmly in mind, since we should then expect that Pope St. Gelasius, as disciple of Pope St. Leo, will imitate the language and views of Pope St. Leo within his own writings. As such we should anticipate much discussion of the human nature of Jesus after the Word become flesh. We should also expect much discussion about what kind existence such a nature can have in order to preserve the unity of the Christ as stringently guarded by St. Cyril of Alexandria.²²

As St. Cyril had begun his most famous letter to Nestorius discussing the two natures from which the one Jesus Christ was constituted, so he ended his most famous letter to Nestorius by speaking about the Eucharist as an extension of this theology. The one divine person, resurrected from the dead, was present in his resurrected flesh –not the flesh of a mere man– in the divine mysteries. So, we should not be surprised if St. Gelasius also uses this style of discussion in his own work in imitation of St. Cyril's theology. St. Gelasius's work is entitled: *Tractatus III or On the two natures in Christ against Eutyches and Nestorius*. By the very nature of the title, we see that the emphasis will be on the two natures of Christ remaining untransmuted after the union of the divine and human natures into one person of God Incarnate in the womb of Mary. So, we should likely expect the language of St. Cyril to be augmented by Pope St. Leo's, or even vice versa.

After the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s, as far as I can tell, Englishmen began upholding the *Tractatus III* of St. Gelasius as a theory of the Eucharist that *denied transubstantiation*. I have found books from AD 1625 that hearken to St. Gelasius as the foil to papal pretensions toward transubstantiation. This requires Roman Catholics to look at the authority of the document before dealing with its interpretation. Why, for example, don't we find this document quoted by Roman Catholic theologians in the 1800s and 1900s in Denzinger²³ (exactly

²² The Latin edition has already identified many of St. Gelasius's citation from Pope St. Leo's sermons.

²³ Heinrich Denzinger, Fastiggi, R., Hünermann, et al. (ed.), *Enchiridion symbolorum: Definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum: Compendium of creeds, definitions, and declarations on matters of faith and morals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1973).

when Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, claims that Catholic scholars think St. Gelasius *argues transubstantiation*). Denzinger is the most famous collection of papal teachings on dogma! There have been nearly fifty different editors for about one hundred and fifty years. Still, no editor added this text to Denzinger, why? The answer is that St Gelasius's book (*Tractatus III*) does not constitute a papal letter from the papal office (decretal), nor an official statement at a council, but is more like Pope Benedict XVI's recent trilogy *Jesus of Nazareth*. The recently retired pope, as St. Gelasius centuries before him, zealously wrote about theology. We might recall that Pope Benedict XVI reminded his readers that they were free to disagree with his interpretations of Scripture since he was giving his opinion as a theologian. St. Gelasius's document is similar in theological weight. We can say that St. Gelasius's document *nowadays* has more authority than Pope Benedict XVI's aforesaid books because St. Gelasius was made a Father of the Church by the liturgy canonizing him in the book called the Roman martyrology. Other than this, we must judge St. Gelasius's doctrine on its own merits. Since the clarifications in the Roman Catholic Ecumenical Councils of Vatican I and Vatican II, official papal teaching must meet certain conditions to be called magisterium. What is more, an alleged infallible statement of the pope has to meet three stringent conditions to qualify: (1.) Explicitly address *all* the Catholic faithful, (2.) on a question of faith (and morals), (3.) while invoking his authority as a successor to the office of St. Peter the Apostle. Only one of the three qualifications does St. Gelasius meet in his book, for he addresses (no. 2) matters of faith. However, unlike "**Pope St.**" Gelasius in his official letters (decretals), "**St.**" Gelasius does not invoke his papal office when teaching on the faith in this booklet. So, now that we have ranked this document correctly as a theological booklet written by somebody who happens to be pope, but which has gained official church favor in virtue of St. Gelasius's canonization, we assume that it contains the orthodox faith of the rest of the Fathers who are likewise canonized for the Church until proven otherwise.

I refer to "**St. Gelasius**" (no longer "**Pope St. Gelasius**") from here on since he is writing (by reference to our pope-categories) as Father of the Church (given greater reverence as an interpreter than all other classes of writings save official papal and conciliar writings) and not as successor to St. Peter by official letter or decree. All commentators whom I've read (Roman Catholic or otherwise) have missed St. Gelasius's meaning by overly concentrating on St. Thomas Aquinas's and the Council of Trent's theories and language, as if their vocabulary or modes of expression should be found in St. Gelasius who, like his near contemporary St. Cyril, is fighting a different battle against Eutyches over proper description of the interaction between the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, St. Gelasius's vocabulary is developed from Ephesus (AD 431) and Pope St. Leo's *Tome* (AD 448). St. Gelasius's work sifts through a variety of definitions for the Latin term "substance." In St. Gelasius's *Tractatus III*, "substance" can mean: (i.) the basic matter (Mary's fleshy donation in utero),²⁴ and (ii.) an abstract definition of "humanity" irrespective of its activities or its real existence (that is, the rational-animal definition of a human but without its acts of existing or thinking or willing).²⁵ St. Gelasius discusses "nature," as we would expect, as the

²⁴ The (Pseudo-)Aristotelian book at the root of this notion of substance is probably Apuleius, *De mundo*, chapter 21, ed. Jean Beaujeu, *Apulée: Opusculs philosophiques* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres 2002), 169, who sees substance to consist of elements of the periodic chart (for him the four elements). Shortly after this time, among Christians, Tertullian almost everywhere clearly uses it to signify the human flesh, especially as referred to by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans.

²⁵ See St. Gelasius's contemporary who wrote for Emperor Anastasius, namely, Priscian, *Institutiones grammaticae: Libri tres*, ed. Martinus Hertius (Leipzig: Teubner, 1859), 3:149: "Substances [...] do not have a certain division of

acts that tend to flow out of a specific substance. St. Gelasius discusses “property” below in a manner typical of the tradition from St. Ambrose to Pope St. Leo:²⁶ “Each nature kept its property (*proprietas*) without loss.”²⁷ In his *Tractatus III*, St. Gelasius specifically yokes “property” with the idea of expressing a human nature’s “condition” (*condicio*).²⁸ This can easily be thought of as the visible everyday activities that a certain species of animal (for example, dogs). A dog barks, runs on four legs, etc. The canine “condition” manifests these kinds of activities but whatever activity is principally identifiable as “doggy,” and no other, is the doggy-property. There is some sort of doggy-property or something about dogs that really belongs to them that makes them *not* act like cats, nor like any other thing to be confused with a dog. In the long quotations below from St. Gelasius, the term “subsistence” is absent, but it is used in St. Gelasius’s same booklet just like St. Cyril had been translated into Latin as using it.²⁹ We have already seen the dogmatic assertion by St. Cyril that there are “not two subsistences” in one Jesus Christ. The God-man has only the Word or second person of the Trinity to supply the basic independently-existing being upon whom all human activities of Jesus are dependent. The reason why Jesus is not a “human being” or a separately-operating human person (subsistence), as Nestorius thinks, is due to the fact that Jesus’s “nature” and property of being human (for example, thinking rationally,) fails to move and command itself, as a mere human, but is moved and commanded by the Word in function, whereas other humans are entirely on their own.

3. St. Gelasius’s *Tractatus III* or *On the Two Natures [of Christ]*

The first reason why people don’t generally understand St. Gelasius is because they don’t read the whole booklet. The second reason that people don’t understand St. Gelasius is that they don’t specialize in the terminology used from the Council of Ephesus and Chalcedon as translated into Latin. The third reason people don’t understand St. Gelasius is because they don’t understand the positions of his opponents (Eutychians) who deny that there are two natures of Christ at the moment of conception and who have a theory that flesh can be changed into non-flesh at the Incarnation since they claim flesh is completely changed at union with the Word into the divine substance. The fourth reason that people don’t understand St. Gelasius is because they assume that fifth-century Latin uses the term “substance” from Pope St. Leo to mean the same thing as in Aristotle like St. Thomas Aquinas and the Council of Trent. The fifth reason people don’t understand St. Gelasius is that they don’t realize that paragraph 10 and paragraph 14 of his booklet are interrelated. Paragraphs 11-13 help explain paragraph 10 by establishing vocabulary and examples to help the reader see what St. Gelasius will mean in paragraph 14. Besides Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, I have not found anyone else demonstrating that they engage the texts in these paragraphs. Even so Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, never alludes to the parallelism I provide just below. I

their persons: An example, as ‘every man’ and ‘substance’ can be called ‘both animal and man,’ and to be named ‘Plato’ or ‘Cicero’ or ‘Virgil’ or whichever name can be imposed from their proper names to anyone among them.”

²⁶ See Ambrose, *Psalms 43*, in *Explanation of Twelve Psalms*, chapter 20, paragraph 1, page 277: “Therefore, the term ‘property’ is of anything, by which something can be understood.”; *Exameron*, day 3, chapter 4, paragraph 19: “Therefore, from a thing’s principles, and not from its earthly accidents, ought a property to be defined, so that our cognition be informed by sign of a quality.”

²⁷ Leo the Great, *The Letter of Pope Leo to Flavian*, bishop of Constantinople, about Eutyches, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, ed. Norman Tanner. (Washington DC: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1:78.

²⁸ Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 539 (paragraph 11).

²⁹ Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 539 (paragraph 11).

consider this the key to his misreading and essential for our unlocking the true meaning of the text below:

<p>Gelasius, <i>Tractatus III</i>, Paragraph 10:</p> <p>[A₁] Indeed, remove the nature from any substance you wish, then you even then take away its substance without doubt. [B₁] Once the substance has been removed, the aforementioned thing (<i>res</i>) we are talking about is removed. I [C₁] should say: Those [Eutychians] scorn the term “natures,” although God himself has not scorned to be called by his preachers by the vocabulary of “his own nature,” just as the Apostle Peter said in his epistle when he was preaching the mystery of Christ the Lord. 2 Peter says: [D₁] “Be completed as partakers of the divine nature.” Now what are they, since they also by say one nature in the Lord Jesus Christ, convinced to argue about the term “nature”? [E₁] If it is permitted to name one nature, shall it not be rightful to name two or more about other matters.</p>	<p><i>Tractatus, III</i> 539-540:</p> <p>Nam remove naturam cujuslibet substantiae, tolles etiam sine dubitatione substantiam: sublata substantia , pariter res quaelibet illa tollitur. Dedignantur, inquam, isti nomen naturarum, quum Deus ipse non dedignatus sit naturae suae vocabulo a suis praedicatoribus nuncupari, sicut beatus Petrus apostolus in epistola sua dixit, quum Christi Domini mysterium praedicaret: (II Petr. 1, 4) inquit, efficiamini divinae consortes naturae. Quid quod ipsi etiam unam dicendo naturam in Domino Jesu Christo, naturae tamen nomen convincuntur asserere? An unam liceat nominare naturam, et duas vel plures rerum ceterarum appellare fas non erit?</p>
<p>Gelasius: paragraph 14,:</p> <p>[B₂] Certainly, sacraments of the body and blood of Christ is a [singular] divine thing (<i>res</i>) that we consume, on account of which and by means of the same aforesaid [sacraments] are we made completed as partakers of divine nature. [A₂] However, too, the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease to be <small>[although the thing (<i>res</i>) is divine (!)]</small> And certainly “an image and similitude” (Genesis 1:16)³⁰ of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the <i>action</i> [Eucharistic prayer] of the mysteries. Therefore, it is shown clearly enough to us what should be thought on the topic of Christ the Lord himself: We believe, we celebrate, and we consume [these things] in his image so that as ***they transition into the divine, that is, [divine] substance, at which time the Holy Spirit is perfecting their substance, [C₂] while yet they remain in the property of their nature. Thus, the aforesaid principal mystery [of the Incarnation] ([D₂] the completion and power of which the [sacraments/body and blood] truly make present again for us) [E₁] properly constitutes,³¹ from enduring [natures], one Christ that proves to endure integral and true.</p>	<p><i>Tractatus III</i>, 541-542:</p> <p>Certe sacramenta, quae sumimus, corporis et sanguinis Christi divina res est, propter quod et per eadem divinae efficimur consortes naturae; et tamen esse non desinit substantia vel natura panis et vini. Et certe imago et similitudo corporis et sanguinis Christi in actione mysteriorum celebrantur. Satis ergo nobis evidenter ostenditur hoc nobis in ipso Christo Domino sentiendum, quod in ejus imagine profitemur, celebramus et sumimus: ***ut sicut in hanc, scilicet in divinam, transeant,³² sancto Spiritu perficiente substantiam, permanentes tamen in suae proprietate naturae; sic illud ipsum mysterium principale, cujus nobis efficiamiam virtutemque veraciter repraesentant, ex quibus constat proprie permanentibus, unum Christum, quia integrum verumque, permanere demonstrant.</p>

[A₁] Establishes clearly that the “thing” (*res*) itself (doggy) cannot survive if you remove what can be either its matter (flesh) or its definition (doggy-soul-in-animal-body). The thing (*res*) is at the

³⁰ See both the same translation for both Jerome’s Vulgate and Old Latin Bible (*Bibliorum sacrorum latinae versionis antiquae, seu vetus italica*, ed. Peter Sabatier [Rheims: Reginald Florentain, 1763], 1:11, column a). St. Gelasius’s implication is that as human beings were an act of creation from preexisting matter that had God’s spirit breathed into it to create man (transmutation where underlying matter is incorporated into the new being from clay). Thus, Eucharist is God breathing his spirit over bread and wine and eliminating their old form but possibly incorporating the old matter in some way into the new being (in this case the Word Incarnate). Consequently, St. Gelasius will try to account for the lack of “clay substance” in “man” as the parallel for the lack of “bread substance” and “wine substance” in the Eucharist, though the material aspect still appears to survive.

³¹ This is simply a parallel from Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 537 (paragraph 9): “on human nature which is constituted from two [natures], that is, as by way of principle from soul and body.”

³² This is an exact parallel to Christ’s human nature being eliminated by the Eutychians (a grievous error). See Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 533: “[*humanitas*] *conditio* [...] *proprietatis* [...] *ex toto* [...] *in deitatis naturam transeundo*.” This can only mean here that the elements are “transmuted” or completely absorbed or changed into deity!

core of what leads identifying something's definition and essential parts or attributes. [A₁] So, we expect that the world normally works in a way that a doggy-property (barking) ought to trace back to a doggy-nature (a four-legged licking, barking animal) that reflects a doggy-substance (either its body/elements or its definition of being doggy-soul + body). But this does not yet mean that Fido exists. Doggy-substance needs to subsist to be real, subsisting-doggy-substance give us a Fido, a Lassie, and a Cujo.

[B₁] In the natural world when a substance (either matter or the definition of a thing) are removed, then the thing itself can no longer exist. The thing-itself, at its root, is this-real-dog-in-its-essentials (*res*). [B₂] So what does it mean that bread-substance+nature and wine-substance+nature after consecration are "divine reality" (*divina res*)??³³ The key is here (** above): "We consume [these things] in his image so that as ****they transition into the divine*, that is, [divine] *substance*." This language is merely lifted from the same booklet earlier (with the same anti-Eutyches arguments as St. Leontius of Jerusalem from my last article), where St. Gelasius discusses the wrong position of Eutyches on what happens to flesh at the Incarnation:³⁴

If the same [condition] does not subsist in glory, our condition should also seem not glorified by the unity of deity but rather annihilated. But then the deity alone exists, then that humanity has already ceased to exist. It will seem that the mind abhors to assert [Eutychianism] but necessity requires it not to be silent: The [Eutychian] divinity either way is transmutable, if either itself it is converted into flesh, or in this is the condition of humanity *transitioned* (***transeundo*) *into divinity*, so that its property lacked existing. For if from that its own property, from the whole [of it], it exists not, as it awaits, in order to approach and increase through deity, in this way, namely, by transitioning into the nature of deity, so that humanity absolutely has ceased to exist.

The "thing" itself is a Scholastic-real-substance (something existing by itself not in another)! St. Gelasius is here saying that someone he calls the "total man" and "total Christ" and "integral Christ" is actually the "thing" showing a bread-nature and a wine-nature but it has been transmuted, like when Eutyches says that Christ's flesh is transmuted into God, leaving nothing of the former substance behind. But all now is (shamelessly) only divinity. What is a vice for the human nature in the union of Jesus at conception, is for St. Gelasius a virtue in Eucharistic change using the exact same vocabulary. The "one subsistence" in the God-man or Word-made-flesh or composite Word+soul+body, who is Jesus Christ, is the only independent-existing or existing-in-its-own right kind of being. Contrariwise, the bread-nature and wine-nature are changed to be without their underlying reality (*res*), yet are somehow present in their stuff (*substantia*) and in their activities (*natura*) that are visible to the sense after the consecration. This is the doctrine we saw in St. Cyril of Alexandria in my previous article (APPENDIX). So, it is no surprise that the doctrine is in St. Gelasius. After the blessing at Mass, the bread-substance and wine-substance are

³³ See Edward Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 47-48. He admits that there is no formal and literary dependence here on Augustine. Instead, Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, attempts to argue that there is some conceptual overlap between St. Augustine and St. Gelasius. However, the author's conclusions show that St. Gelasius identifies (unlike St. Augustine) the *res* with God himself. Given Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, penchant to synthesize the two, and his inability to do so, this is just like his insufficient argument to claim a potential (though admittedly unproven) relationship between Theodore of Mopsuestia and St. Gelasius on "image and similitude" when Gelasius is really citing Genesis 1:26 as obliquely referred to by the Roman Canon as witness by St. Ambrose's citation of this Roman Eucharistic prayer.

³⁴ Gelasius, *Tractatus III*, 533 (paragraph 4).

***“**transitioned into the divine substance.**” This means, like Jesus’s humanity (body-soul), the bread loses its own existence (*subsistentia*) and wine loses its own existence (*subsistencia*) and only the God-man-existence per se remains. The bread exists-in only another and the wine exists-in only another [in Christ], namely, in the God-man in a kind of dependence [later St. Thomas Aquinas will argue that bread/wine exist-in the Jesus-flesh (real-whole Jesus body) and Jesus-blood (a synecdoche for Jesus-body) but not directly in the divinity, clarifying this same notion].

For Melanchthon, life is just too complicated and messy. He worries that Scholastics assert: “the whiteness, quantity, taste, smell, etc.,” are miraculously preserved but the independently existing matter-form thing (Scholastic-substance) is no longer there, as the bread that it once was (if at all). Melanchthon thinks that by quoting St. Gelasius he can hearken back to *simpler* times!!! St. Gelasius proves only the opposite of Melanchthon’s claim, as Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, asserts: St. Gelasius wants the Word-made-flesh at conception to be a model for bread-made-flesh and wine-made-flesh. Yet, for St. Gelasius, bread and wine do not in every way imitate the Incarnation-flesh of Jesus. First is timing: Bread was bread and wine was wine before changing into the body. Contrariwise, Jesus’s embryo in Mary was –from its first moment– “existing-in” or “dependent on” the Word.

Question 1: Why isn’t this changed bread like a Nestorian-Incarnation, where the human-being-Jesus is conceived in utero and only afterwards raised up or united to God (morally)?

Answer 1: Well, there can be no moral union between will-less bread and mindless wine.

Question 2: Is the bread and wine a second and third Incarnation?

Answer 2: No, Jesus is not Word-impanate (Word-bread) and Word-invinate (Word-wine) for St. Gelasius but, like Eutyches's notion of change, the bread is no longer and the wine is no longer after the change. Even Dr. Kilmartin’s premises to his article suppose this, but he, too, *wished St. Gelasius to make sense to his 20th century mentality*. So, I underlined the verbal digressions that Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, made in St. Gelasius’s language to show my readers what happened. Dr. Kilmartin, SJ, tried to make St. Gelasius intelligible to his own scholarly sensibilities. Alas, that is not what St. Gelasius was asserting. St. Gelasius wants the miracle of the Mass to be an analogy of the Incarnation but with a few differences:

(i.) The embryo of Jesus’s humanity never “lost its subsistence” for it never had its own independent life and operation but was always united to the Word.

(ii.) Two natures are upheld: bread-ness and wine-ness, parallel to God’s two natures (divine and human) in Christ but, unlike Jesus-human-nature, bread & wine “transition (*transeant*)” as Eutychian-substance-change into an entirely different substance (this *is* transubstantiation and will be called explicitly so by St. Leontius of Jerusalem 40 years later).

(iii.) For Latin writers from St. Leo the Great on, Jesus’s non-subsistent human nature is also called a substance + nature! Why? Because Jesus’s substance-nature doesn’t have its own subsistence, but its subsistence is supplied by the Word’s existing for it. In effect, Gelasius’s parallelism is exact.

Question 3: Can we come up with a way to distance bread and wine from being non-subsistent natures taken up by the Word?

Answer 3: St. Gelasius lacked technical language [thus the two contradictory assertions]: (1.) it is divine (2.) and somehow it is the nature of bread. There are today

many Scholastic theories that elucidate a number of St. Gelasius's points (that Melanchthon admits are truly mindboggling *for him* to understand [!]).

4. How to Make Melanchthon's Gelasius nearly Understandable: Scholastic Disputations

St. Gelasius is not a wimp on transubstantiation, he's simply following a trend that (unlike Dr. Kilmartin, SJ), already Dr. Martin Jugie, SA, identified nearly a century ago as a favorite analogy (by Incarnation) for the Miaphysite or Oriental Orthodox commentaries on the Eucharist change *in opposition to Antiochenes like Nestorius*:³⁵

(i.) All Scholastics, whom I've surveyed, agree that after the transition into the newly existing-thing (*res*), there isn't bread or wine. St Gelasius's **response: Check!**

(ii.) All Scholastics, whom I've surveyed, agree that after transubstantiation the bread-ness and wine-ness don't exist in themselves but are dependent on something else: St. Gelasius's **response: Check!**

(iii.) Transubstantiation is argued in its manner/modality by many Scholastics diversely (as correctly asserted by Melanchthon), but Trent is clear (and St. Thomas Aquinas agrees): The "total substance" is changed in each item into the "total Christ": St. Gelasius **response: Check!**

Melanchthon might object: "See, but St. Gelasius says 'substance' right there in the text...it's still the same *word* substance! You are being deceptive!"

Response 1: So, I can hit the ball with a "bat" (meaning a winged-ratlike-creature)," or with a "bat"(I mean a stick-like tool)." "Let us not quibble about words" but, as St. Gregory Nazianzen famously says on doctrinal matters, "about the words' meanings"! In fact, on the very question of heretic Apollinaris in St. Gelasius's booklet the Apollinarian use of nature defines in one way, and the orthodox definition of nature in another, making him say: "Whenever these same expressions are well expounded, they are pious, but whenever they are badly expounded, they fall into impiety!"³⁶ Nor do I cite St. Gregory Nazianzenus as mere eye candy, for St. Leontius of Jerusalem (a contemporary and ally of St. Gelasius) uses this quote against the Monophysites definition of "one *nature* of God Incarnate" and the substances (*ousiai*) in Christ!³⁷ But, in the citation from St. Gelasius (above, paragraph 14), he himself asks how argument over using the term *nature* happens with Eutychians since they invoke the same word (but with a different definition)!

Response 2: Read St. Gelasius: There can be one subsistence in Christ, and the bread and wine are united to Christ's body, under one subsistence of the Word. No matter what St. Gelasius means, for St. Thomas Aquinas (and presumably for Trent), no "real substance" exists when it is described as something: (a.) dependent, (b.) and when it lacks its own act of existence (*esse*). St. Gelasius clearly denies that the "divine thing" is bread-subsistence or wine-subsistence by their "transition into divine substance" and he clearly says that wine-nature-activity and bread-nature-activity

³⁵ Martin Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium...* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1935), 5:670-683.

³⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letter 102*, ed. and trans. P. Gallay, *Lettre théologiques*, Sources Chrétiennes 208 (Paris: Cerf, 1974), 74.

³⁷ See St. Leontius of Jerusalem, *Testimonies of the Saints*, in *Leontius of Jerusalem: Against the Monophysites: Testimonies of the Saints and Aporiae*, ed. and trans. Patrick Gray, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 52-53.

“transition (*transeant*)” without becoing a second and third subsistence in Christ. So, in Melancthon-Luther Scholastic terms (per Gabriel Biel, Luther's doctoral dissertation master,) St. Gelasius is *not in the least* affirming a *Scholastic*-substance but Gelasius is talking (like his contemporary grammarian Priscian) about a definition (genus, species, difference) or the mere basic fleshy-stuff at the root of a thing depending on the reference in the booklet. St. Thomas Aquinas might criticize St. Gelasius for his emphasis on subsistence *if* it refers to a thing's act of existence (*subsistencia; actus essendi*)³⁸ from its “common nature” or “essence” (= St. Gelasius's substance). Whatever the case, St. Gelasius affirms too much for Melancthon's argument and way too much for a Calvinist Eucharist, even if Melancthon could have been correct!

Poor Melancthon did not realize that he *needed* Scholastics even to understand, let along to clear up, the confusing distinctions made by St. Gelasius. By and large, If Melancthon had read Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (= *S.Th.*, part I, question 29, articles 1-4), he could have grasped a great deal more of what St. Gelasius was saying *because St. Thomas makes sure to quote St. Gelasius's vocabulary from Gelasius's contemporary philosopher and theologian, Boethius, who defines the very terms of our discussion.* Let us compare St. Thomas to St. Gelasius by a summation on transubstantiation by the commentator Dr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas, Order of Preachers (= Dominicans), explaining St. Thomas's theory of transubstantiation:³⁹

[Melancthon's Complaint:] Does transubstantiation entail a subject? [...] The third kind is generation, which affects the very nature of the body that is changed, thus becoming another species. In all of these cases, there is a subject that changes. In other words, that which was X before the change has become Y by the change. For the [transubstantiation] change, it was precisely the necessity of explaining the reality of the movement that consists in the “generation” of a new bodily being from an anterior bodily being (not through a kind of substitution but through a “transition” [Gelasius's cross over; *transeat* !]) from the one to the other) that led Aristotle to distinguish two elements in bodily substances. One was a universal substrate, deprived of modifications [size, shape, etc.], though able to receive all of them and, for this reason, being found identically in the basic-real structure of all bodily beings. He called this element “prime matter.” The other element is the qualifying element that makes the given bodily being be this or that, making it have a given nature. He called this second element “the substantial form.” Given that matter is the same at the point of departure (in the being from which the new being is begotten) and in at the point of arrival (in the newly begotten being), it is what assures the continuity from the one to the other. Without this continuity, movement [from bread to Jesus] is unintelligible. Indeed, without this continuity, the new being would not be produced from the preceding one but would rather be produced in place of it, which is meaningless and stands in contradiction with experience. [...] Now, for its part, transubstantiation is a change. This thing that was bread no longer is bread. It has become the body of Christ. However, it is a complete change, not leaving anything unchanged in the initial reality, as we have seen. If it is a change, there must be something common to the two [extremes from/to of movement] termini of the change, which would assure continuity. If it is a complete change, this common thing cannot be a subject [matter underlying and staying the same during the process], properly speaking. It must embrace the two termini [start/stop] in such a way that it would itself be changed without, however, entirely ceasing to be common to both of them. St. Thomas proposed a most developed solution to this difficult problem. After emphasizing that it was a question of supernatural change [...] and not a natural change [...] he says that the common element that assures the continuity of this unique movement is the *communis natura entis* (the common nature of being). On the basis of this, he sometimes says there is not a subject [involved in this change]. At other times he says that the subject is the two

³⁸ See Roy Deferrari, *Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas based on the Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of his other Works* (Washington DC: CUA, 1949), 1063.

³⁹ Jean-Hervé Nicolas, *Synthèse dogmatique, De la Trinité à la Trinité* (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1985), §880. I thank Dr. Matthew Miner (Ss Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary) who is responsible for this translation.

substances together (the substance of the bread and the substance of the Body of Christ). Finally, on other occasions, he says that **the accidents that remain are in some way similar to a subject. In other words, it is not a subject [Gelasius's substance] in the proper sense but a "something" that holds the place of a subject** and which is the *communis natura entis* on the level of reality and the accidents of the bread and wine on the level of appearances. We now must explain this conclusion. **[Gelasius's solution simply says the same but claims that it is the Word supplies the "act of existing" that is proper to bread-substance and wine substance]** The community of being in question is obviously only concerned with creatures [...] *esse commune*, that which all being have in common: existence [*être*]. [different and analogically speaking]. In light of this, how can one understand that this community in being can assure the continuity of the passage from one being to another? [...] In transubstantiation, the two termini **[from bread to flesh]** have in common the fact that both are a realization of the common notion of being: When the complete reality of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, what formally makes it be the case that a thing is a being remains **[bread form or nature remains!]**. However, that which makes it be this being, bread, in its distinction, no longer does [its individualized nature **[act of being this is gone?]**] Therefore, the problem is one of knowing whence comes the distinction of beings within the community in being. [...] [bread] receiving **being** from [God], [...] The act is **being** (*esse*); the potency is essence **[Gelasius's substance as defined by Priscian above!]**. [...] Can God, the [...] Cause [this bread-act-of-being] in each [bread and wine] in the limited conditions proper to it, through an act of His creative omnipotence [...] exercised on an existent being) lead [act of existing], already given to [bread], outside [its nature's] limits of this **[bread]** to rejoin [its] proper **[bread-act-of-existence]** to another being so far as to be merged with it? Indeed, it is the case that two **[perfect acts of being; namely bread and Jesus]** are distinguished between themselves **[by]** limitations of being [...] in them **[for bread finite, for Jesus's godhead no limit]**. We can conceive of transubstantiation in the following manner. By the divine action, [limited bread-act-of-existing] realized in the substance of the bread is, as it were, wrenched from the limitations of this realization **[real matter-form combo]** in order that it may be joined to **[the actual existence]** of Christ's humanity and merged with it so that the being in which it is realized is now Christ's humanity. [Let us object] [...] This does not directly prove the possibility of transubstantiation [...] However, once this **[bread-existing]** is enclosed within its **[matter-form structure/nature]**, it no longer can exist without them. One could not prove that this reasoning is false. However, [...] This is what faith affirms: that which was bread has become the body of Christ. This is what enables us to pass from this simple non-impossibility to the affirmation of possibility. **[Hurray! Melancthon in the end actually concludes and agrees with the Thomists; explanations are not absolutely proofs, but faith in the revealing God is required, who revealed this to be changed into his body]** One must not be moved by the excessive difficulty involved in this metaphysical explanation. *If it itself depends on faith, faith does not depend on it. One can believe in transubstantiation without any metaphysical explanation.* (Take for example St. Ambrose when he simply appeals to the omnipotence of God who created all things, who changed water into wine at Cana, and who made the virgin conceive.) One must recognize the fact that this is much more difficult for the metaphysician whose metaphysics rejects the presuppositions of the explanation. Nonetheless, one can believe in transubstantiation even with a poor metaphysical explanation **[This seems to cover St. Gelasius perfectly, without reference to St. Gelasius at all]**. However, can one correctly believe in the Eucharist without admitting "this admirable and unique change of the whole substance of the bread into His body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood, while the appearances of bread and wine remain, a change which the Catholic Church very appropriately calls 'transubstantiation'"? We have seen that one cannot do so.

St. Gelasius agrees with the lion's share of what Thomists believe, but Thomists would notice that Gelasius can be read as proposing a problematic idea whereby God-the-Word can supply subsistence to matter+bread-form after he takes away the bread-act-of-existence at the consecration. But, as Dr. Jean-Hervé Nicolas, OP, affirms: "We can think you, o Gelasius, would probably be classed as too crude a metaphysician, but you are still a member of the faith-club: First rule of faith club: believe in a real change of bread/wine into the God-man by divine miracle." St. Gelasius meets the minimum requirements of Thomist faith-club (and, by inference, of the Council of Trent,) to be Catholic in his faith, but you probably won't see Dominicans citing approvingly from St. Gelasius, that's so far Jesuit business.

Conclusions

A detailed reading of one paragraph (no. 14) of Gelasius in light of the previous paragraphs (nos. 10-13) yielded surprising results! Gelasius is not unusual for his time. He fits in with Miaphysite Eucharistic theories that prioritize St. Cyril (see the APPENDIX): (1.) The Eucharist is analogous to the Incarnation, (2.) but the Eucharist is a change-of-fundamental elements (*metastoecheiosis*) in bread and wine like the Nile-water changed by divine miracle into blood. The two axes of St. Cyril's theory are simply carrying on early theories dating back to St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century. Nor should it be thought that St. Gelasius did not understand a scientific theory of "transubstantiation" since his contemporary in Greek, St. Leontius of Jerusalem, used this exact word (See APPENDIX) to describe heretical substantial change of flesh at the Incarnation. Gelasius used the same transmuted-flesh-into-divinity idea to accuse Eutyches of Jesus losing his human nature. St. Gelasius does not seem to be aware of a Latin translation of St. Leontius's word "transubstantiation" though he has the exact same concept in his booklet. This is not surprising, for St. Leontius attested that the locals (who spoke Greek) in Jerusalem were accustomed in lay language to use the term in place of Aristotelian (and Neo-Platonic) "conversion" (*metabolê/conversio*). These same terms are known to Scholastics like St. Thomas through translations of Greek works in the 1180s up to St. Thomas's own day. These culminated in the use of conversion (*conversio* and (*trans-*)*mutatio*) to describe Eucharistic change during the time of Trent. What is most surprising is that Melancthon was so wrong. His appeals to St. Cyril for one or two tiny phrases ignore another theorist of transmutation in the same vein as St. Gelasius and St. Leontius. Indeed, St. Gelasius clearly proves to anticipate Scholastic developments even though he uses Priscian's equivocal or less existential (non-subsistent) notion of substance as a pure definition, or at times in the lay sense of the bodily and fleshy elements. The long tradition of St. Ambrose's definitions (used by Nestorians, Chalcedonians and Monophysites), St. Leo the Great's appeal to substances and natures in one Christ as non-subsistents, and even St. Vincent of Lerins and Prosper of Aquitaine's imitation and synthesis with Augustine, find a home in St. Gelasius and the Scholastic tradition expressed at Trent hardly disagree. But what of Melancthon's complaint about mice gnawing the Eucharist? Maybe Melancthon ought to give Mr. Mouse a more revered place in the the disputations about the sacramental mysteries...That's another fun story! But, alas, I can only refer, for the moment, to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, where he reminds his reader that the **mouse** (*mys*) is the noblest of all creatures because it is in his name that we partake in holy **mystery** (*mysterion*)!

APPENDIX

Transubstantiation, a Popish invention? The Bible Jews and the Fathers Vs. Evangelical Doctrines of Eucharist

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Just out of curiosity, I tried my search engine on googlebooks with the word “transubstantiation.” Number two in my search was a howler: *The History of Popish Transubstantiation* (1840). Again, number four of my search looked intriguing: *Transubstantiation Unscriptural: Proved in Two Letters* (1833). Firstly, 4 of 10 books on my first search-page were positive, while 6 of 10 were books by anti-Roman Western Christian authors. The most interesting was *Ierugia: On Transubstantiation* (1851), which directly cited and correctly referred to the testimony of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. AD 383). As we will see, despite the state of scholarship until this last century, there was a sense that the fourth century really marked a scientific advance of the discussion of Eucharistic change. Sometimes unnecessarily grumpy Christian confreres accuse Catholics of being innovators for not only composing a Creed of belief, but by daring to say that ineffable word: “transubstantiation.” This article serves as a remedy or solution to such objections

1. THE BIBLE AND TRANSUBSTANTIATION

Let’s start with the Bible, which reads thus: “These things saith the Lord: Hereby shalt thou know that I am the Lord: behold I strike with the rod that is my hand on the water which is in the river, and it shall change it into blood” (Ex 7:17). What’s the big deal? Well, God took one natural kind of thing (viz., an individual instance of a nature) and replaced it with another. I mean, God displaced the substance of water and replaced it immediately and miraculously with blood. Maybe you are not very impressed with God’s miracle; well neither were the Egyptian “charmners” who had a potion to do the same a few passages later (Ex 7:21–22). Still, this doesn’t by itself prove much except that Jews themselves understood and received this teaching as a case of transubstantiation by about 40 AD. Let’s take a look at Philo of Alexandria: “For, too, they trans-elementate (μεταστοιχειούσι) the frogs into the natures of serpents and turn water into bloody flesh [...]” (Philo, *De migrationi Abrahami*, chapter 15, section 83). Let’s notice some key terms: nature #1 has its basic elements replaced by nature #2. This is, essentially, all that transubstantiation claims. There are a succession or a conversion of unrelated and disparate natures (both descriptions will do in the ancient and in the Medieval theories). Well, what about the appearances, characteristics, or accidents? Well, what about them? They are window dressing, not necessary, not key to one substance being instantaneously changed into another; viz., they are pure accidentals in our conversation! If you want to talk about the appearances or whiteness, quantity, and other characteristics of substance #1 perduring, well that’s an added consideration but hardly at the root of the Scholastic, let alone the Philonian, theory of substance-to-substance change. I also underline that Philo combined water-to-blood kinds of change to be in the same category as (Mosaic) staffs-into-snakes kind of change. This is important, since the philosophical tradition of the pagan Eastern Roman Empire and even authors like St. John of Damascus (died c. AD 753) consider snakes and Boucephalous (Alexander the Great’s horse [!]) to be hypostatic beings, or each to be an hypostasis, which will eventually be made interchangeable with person (πρόσωπον) at Christian Ecumenical Councils. I note, however, that Philo’s technical term is not the Exodus 7:17: “transmute (μεταβάλλω),” but the more precise “trans-elementate (μεταστοιχειώ) - that

means to change the elementary nature of a thing into something else. Well, it's not the Greek word "transubstantiate (μετουσιῶ)" but not to worry, all in good time.

2. THE FATHERS AND BIBLICAL TRANSUBSTANTIATION

Basically, Philo's fellow citizen of Alexandria, Origen had passing interest in the Nile-to-blood change and even passed on an *obiter dictum* here and there that became a tradition received by Eusebius in Palestine and by the aforementioned St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Well this tradition of changing one present substance or existent nature into another was fairly easy to absorb by the likes of Cyril. After all, Christ himself had foreshadowed such changes, saying: "And don't opine to tell yourselves: 'We have Abraham as our Father.' Now, I say to you that God is able to raise out of these stones children who belong to Abraham" (Mat 3:9). The objection, here, might be *raised* (pardon the pun!) that Jesus is foreshadowing his death and resurrection by typology: "to *raise* children from stones." This is actually helpful, nonetheless, for carcasses-being-raised is also a miraculous change of a dead non-personal, non-living substance into a living person. Here, taken literally, Jesus claims that non-personal, non-living rocks can become persons; so, too, bread becomes a divine person. I underline the fact that Jesus makes a claim that impersonal inanimate creatures can be instantaneously changed into personal natures by divine power. This is at the core of the notion of transubstantiation; namely, an instantaneous change of one substance into another whereby the former substance was unable to be naturally disposed toward the second by a successive form and as its potential end term (viz., natural stopping point for a new species) in the known physical order of nature. To produce young children from rocks would be a case of Jesus keying into this tradition of Nile-water turning into blood.

At any rate, when Cyril apparently got hold the Nile-to-blood tradition, he too thought Jesus was able to raise up hypostases from inanimate objects like rocks and water. Cyril writes: "The beginning of signs regarding Moses is blood and water, and the ultimate of all signs Jesus is the same. First, he transmuted (μετέβαλεν) the river of Moses into blood and Jesus ultimately brought out water from his side along with blood" (*Catecheses illuminandorum XII–XVIII*, 13.21). As we saw, the term "transmute" was biblical in Exodus 7:17. Now we are brought to look at Jesus's water miracles as cases parallel to the Nile-to-blood miracles. Take a look at Cyril's second application of the same principle: "Since then he himself has declared and said of the bread, 'This is my body,' who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since he has affirmed and said, 'This is my blood,' who shall ever hesitate, saying, that it is not his blood? He once turned water into wine, in Cana of Galilee, at his own will, and is it incredible that he should have turned wine into blood?" (*Catéchèses mystagogiques*, IV.1-2). Basically, Cyril took the production of water from Jesus's side and the production of wine from water to be cases of substance to substance change and then compared these to the Eucharist, where Jesus took the substance of bread and made it flesh and took an aggregate of wine-natures and transmuted them into blood.

Cyril's contemporary, who was an avid reader of his works, St. Ambrose of Milan (d. c. 399) repeated Cyril's doctrine, but noticed his own catechumens saying: "You assert to me that I am taking the *body* of Christ, but I *see* something else!" (*On the Mysteries*, 9.50). Ambrose solves the objection by claiming that the individual being (*hoc esse*) that nature has formed can be changed by the power of a benediction during the Eucharistic consecration, wherein "nature is transmuted (*natura mutatur*)." After all, says he: "Moses, when holding a rod, threw it and it was made (*facta est*) into a serpent; he took it back by the tail and it was reverted back (*revertit naturam*) into the nature of a staff" (ibid., 9.51). Not only can an inanimate object be

instantaneously and miraculously converted into an hypostasis (e.g., Dr. Suesse’s Sis the snake!), but the prototypical Jewish transubstantiation example is cited: “The Egyptians were running to the purely flowing waters, then in the next instant (*subito*) blood began to erupt from the source-waters” (ibid.). Notice that the teaching of Ambrose is a virtual anticipation of the full definition that Scholastics will use: (1.) an individual nature is changed into another, (2.) this happens instantaneously, (3.) the succession of substances cannot be explained except for a divine miracle.

Despite the clarity of these examples and of this teaching, the Antiochene tradition never seemed to warm to a high Christology or Mariology from the fourth through the sixth centuries (for our purposes), let alone a “high” Eucharistic theology. During that time, Nestorius formed a sort of newfangled opposition to this realism and its notion of substantial change. His book that survives is the so-called *Bazaar of Heracleides* (pp. 327–328), which has of course been dubbed to be better renamed Nestorius’s *Bizarre* self-defense! Nestorius attacks not *Cyril of Jerusalem*, but *Cyril of Alexandria*. The Alexandrine saint developed his own conviction of substance-to-substance change (which St. Cyril of Alexandria had called: transmutation, trans-elementation, and transformation) of the Nile-waters and taken it a step further, suggesting in his letters attached to the Council of Ephesus, that every Eucharist was a mini-event of the Incarnation. Nestorius impugned this idea of Cyril’s by doubling down on the fact that just as Jesus’s physical human embryo was never divine (at conception, let’s say), neither is the Eucharist really anything else except the *nature* or *substance* of bread that has some sort of relation to or presence of the divinity in it. Of course, the oddball anti-Roman Catholics of the contemporary blogosphere have essentially resurrected Nestorius (unknowingly one can hope)!

3. THE FIRST WITNESS AGAINST PATRISTIC TRANSUBSTANTIATION: NESTORIUS

It was likely in reaction to Nestorian Eucharistic theory that the famous miracle of St. Arsenius took place; namely, there was an ostensibly Nestorianizing monk in the desert who denied the physicality (viz., fleshly nature) of the body and blood in the Eucharist. The monk was challenged by fellow monks to a prayer-athon to resolve the issue, after which the Nestorianizing monk became enlightened as to the truth at Christian liturgy. The story goes thus:

They [monks] went on Sunday to the church, and the three [monks] set themselves up apart on a cushion [...] Their noetic eyes were opened and while the bread was put onto the altar a **child appeared** (ἐφαίνετο [...] παιδίον) only to these three. When the priest extended [his hands] to break the bread for distribution, behold: an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, having a sword, and sacrificed the child and emptied his blood into the chalice. When the priest broke the bread into small portions, the angel also cut small portions from the child. And as he went to receive from the holy mysteries, only bloody raw flesh-meat was given to him. And he saw, he feared, and cried out saying: “Lord, I believe that the bread is your body and the chalice is your blood.” And the raw flesh-meat in his hand immediately became bread in accordance with the mystery, and he communicated while thanking God. And the old man said: “God knows human nature that it is not able to eat crude, raw flesh-meat, and because of this **he transmuted his body into bread and his blood into wine** (μετεποίησε τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἄρτον, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ εἰς οἶνον) for those who receive with faith.”

So much for Nestorius’s bread remaining after the consecration theory, right? No, it’s back in action as Nestorius *redivivus* in the blogosphere; apparently important to emphasize that to be

Christian means to pick the opposite of whatever Roman Catholics either say or do; no matter the cost.

4. ST LEONTIOS OF JERUSALEM (AD 533-8) AND THE TERM TRANSUBSTANTIATION

If the question was settled for pro-Cyrrillians or the party of St. Cyril, a sort of aberration along different lines popped up in Constantinople around AD 448, wherein the famous Eutyches (excommunicated by the Chalcedonians and, later, even by the Coptic Orthodox) tried to deny the univocal or wholesale interchangeability of Mary's biological flesh with that of Jesus at the Incarnation. Mary was a true mother and single donor and the connection whereby Jesus is consubstantial or of the same flesh as you and I. Well, to combat the heretical Eutyches both orthodox Catholics and Miaphysites had to hone their Jesus-talk. In the midst of this, there began discussions in Jerusalem in the AD 530s about how to think about the mutually unacceptable theory of the Monophysites or Eutychians. They were condemnable for claiming that the Incarnation was an instant whereby either what was biological flesh was transubstantiated into another nature, viz., the very divine nature. On the opposite end, some of them wrote and argued in such a way that they could be accused of the opposite extreme; namely, that the Monophysite Jesus had one nature whereby divine substance or the divine nature was degraded or transubstantiated into the substance of flesh. In either case there was this process: (1.) A first substance belonging to an identifiable nature exists, (2.) An instant occurs where a divine miracle removes or changes the prior substance, (3.) At that moment a different form or form-matter being replaces the original substance miraculously. Let's take a look at St. Leontios's summarization of the Monophysite theory:

“Eutyches says the same thing in that he uses the expression without any change, though the meaning doesn't stay the same, for he uses ‘one incarnate nature of God the Word’ to mean that the nature of the Word was transubstantiated (μετουσιωθέντος) into flesh, and that the Lord possesses nothing consubstantial with us” (Leontios, *Testimonies of the Saints*, p. 52).

This might be the same word and the same basic notion of change that Cyril of Jerusalem had, but some literalist and skeptics want to see in plain sight the obvious connection to Eucharist. After all, reasoning, inference, analogy, and implications are often deemed heretical in anti-intellectualist circles; a sort of Neanderthalic literalism and appeals to Mr. Obvious will only satisfy the anti-abstractionists. So, Leontios does not disappoint, for he calls upon the very image that his illustrious fellow Jerusalemite (Hagiopolite) Cyril had made famous in Greek and Latin in the fourth century:

Every union seen to complete some newer nature shows that nature to possess certain things which neither of the natures united possessed on its own. On its own, neither a soul's nature nor a body's is ever hungry or thirsty [...] or just perceives a sense-object by means of its senses. It's just as in the case of the flute and the fluteplayer: neither makes music on its own. What then was the Lord –who [by their argument] is neither God nor man– shown to possess on his own? “the reasonable answer,” they say, “is walking on the water in a bodily way, and that sort of thing.” One shouldn't consider this to be a property of a compound nature, though, for God has often so arranged it that those of the saints who travel by water are carried bodily on it, though it's agreed there's no compounding by substance into either a nature or an hypostasis in their case! If, then, there's no natural property (φυσικὸν ἰδίωμα) belonging to Christ in particular, neither is there any one

particular nature that belongs only to him – not by a mixing together, as in the case of fermented liquors, **not by transubstantiation** (κατὰ μετουσίωσιν), **as in the case of the Egyptians’ water that became blood**, nor by transformation, as in the case of copper that turns into verdigris, nor yet by the necessity of a natural union, as in the case of a man’s soul that comes into existence in a body. Though a Billy goat has the ability to bleat [...] it’s still not the case that, if [a mimicking] man also happens to bleat –being an imitator of things that possess different natures from his– he’s plainly showing his nature to be compound! On the contrary, he’s revealing operations characteristic of two natures [of rational soul and irrational body] on the basis of that identical one nature of his. Similarly, the capacity to be moved from place to place belonged to human nature, but for the heavier [human] nature of the body not to sink, being carried by the lighter nature of water [...] that belongs to a divine nature. It has the ability, and ability supremely characteristic of it, to make (ποιῶσαι) and to transmute (μεταποιῶσαι) all natures, to cause them to exist (οὐσιῶσαι) and to transubstantiate (μετουσιῶσαι) them, and to deprive them of substance (ἀποουσιῶσαι), even though it springs from the same person. (Leontios, *Aporiae*, ch. 6)

So, there it is, the primary example of substance-to-substance or succession of two substances change is the Eucharistic example of Nile-water being miraculously transformed into (human[?]) blood. So, should we now admit with the saints and Fathers that “transubstantiation” is not only Eucharistic, not only a properly defined substance-to-substance change, but that it is an invention of Leontios around AD 536? No, for Leontios himself attests that he’s using a term that has apparently been in existence for some time, for he claims:

Again, was the one nature of the Word of God, now the incarnate nature, ever not incarnate, or was that never the case? If this is unambiguous issue for them, one needs to hear from them: if it belonged to God the Word, and was a nature, and was one even before the [accidental] taking on (ἐπεκτήσατο) of flesh, what did it take on when it became flesh, or what did it lose? If it didn’t take anything on –for the term “incarnate” isn’t used in the sense of change and transubstantiation (μετουσίωσιν), **as when we say of ice that water’s one nature “turned to stone”**– it’s clear that it took on flesh, that is, humanity. But what is this humanity, a quality (ποιότης), or some nature? If this nature that’s taken on is unquestionably a nature in addition to the one nature of the Word of God that took it on, they’re going to have to tell us candidly just how many natures there are! (Leontios, *Aporiae*, ch. 59)

These two mega-quotes from Leontios require a lot of unwrapping. First, Leontios reveals that his term: “transubstantiation” is standard fare for talking about substance-to-substance change in Late-Antique, Greek circles. We can’t know how old this word even is. A conservative guess would suggest, since Leontios attests that the word is common and known, that it should have been around during his educational years. This might move it back to the late-fifth century. Next, both of Leontios’s discussion are worried about accidents or qualities. Just as with Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose of Milan, a substantial change that is instantaneous can be one where the appearances (e.g., staffs-to-serpents) change or can be one where the original qualities remain the same. Leontios – for us twenty-first-century types – uses the unimpressive example of the single existent nature of a man bleating or producing the quality of a Billy goat. If our senses have access only to hearing, then we mistake a real substance (man) for being a different kind of nature. Even Leontios’s idea of the Word “taking on flesh” uses the verbal notion of taking on something as an accident in the Aristotelian categories. Basically, Leontios’s discussion of transubstantiation includes the following: (1.) substance-to-substance instantaneous changes, (2.) the potential of

such a change to look the same or to be accidentally different, (3.) the possibility of natural substances to be changed to supernatural ones, (4.) the natural possibility of natural substances to instantaneously change (water) into new substances (stone-like ice) (5.) The best example of transubstantiation is the biblical change of Nile-water into blood.

Conclusions

These ancient witnesses were later resurrected by authors like George-Genadius Scholarios (c. 1437) to speak about Eucharistic change in the Eastern Orthodox Church. The reason why is obvious; namely, Leontios is perfectly suited to the doctrine of substantial change in the Eucharist as it began to be discussed in more detail between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics, who were natural allies in the fourteenth century on the subject. Later, Dositheos of Jerusalem at a Pan-Orthodox Council of Jerusalem (c. 1672) made a further claim that not only was “transubstantiation” (which he defined as bread and wine being “substantially (οὐσιῶδως)” converted into the body and blood of Christ) the doctrine of the Eastern Orthodox Church but that it was patristic and had been used in Christology. Well, Dositheos was right and blogospheric and ahistorical claims against the doctrine of transubstantiation are simply wrong. The nature, substance, i.e., breadness and wineness, are no more and only the substance of Jesus’s glorified body underlies the species (per Ambrose) or phenomena of the bread and wine. Anything less is simply not Biblical, not patristic, and not Catholic, it even goes against Pan-Orthodox councils and is the victory of a Nestorian wish over orthodox reality.