

STUDIA LITURGICA

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FOR LITURGICAL RESEARCH AND RENEWAL



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Manducation, Reception, and Communion in Alexander of Hales: An Analysis

by

Troy Anthony Stefano*

The eucharistic doctrine of Alexander of Hales, the *Doctor Irrefragabilis* (c. 1185–1245), has not received due attention among scholars of liturgy or medieval church history; in fact, it would seem safe to say that no aspect of the life and writings of this influential theologian has been given sufficient sustained or systematic treatment. One could reference the short but comprehensive-aspiring bibliography of Irenaeus Herscher, OFM, as an example of the need for further exploration of Alexander's life and teaching.¹ Of those few who do treat his eucharistic thought, many writing in or prior to the early twentieth century focused on the *Summa Theologiae* now known to have been penned by Alexander's student, William of Militona.² Darwell Stone, for example, optimistically posited that although "his *Sum of Theology* was completed after his death by his scholars about 1252, [it] probably represents his opinions even where it is not wholly his work."³ But Stone, who published his monumental survey of eucharistic doctrine in 1909, did not have the luxury of Victorin Doucet's sensational discovery in 1946,⁴ in which the world received anew the first of the authentic writings of Alexander of Hales—his *Glossa* on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*. Today, in addition to the *Glossa*,⁵ scholars

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¹ Irenaeus Herscher, "A Bibliography of Alexander of Hales," *Franciscan Studies* 26 (1945) 435-54.

² See Ludwig Hödl, "87. W. v. Melitona," *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 9 (Munich: LexMA Verlag, 1998) col. 175.

³ Darwell Stone, *A History of the Holy Eucharist*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909) 314.

⁴ Victorin Doucet, "A New Source of the 'Summa Fratris Alexandri': The Commentary on the Sentences of Alexander of Hales," *Franciscan Studies* 6 (1946) 403-17; one can find a review of this article and its impact in Kilian F. Lynch, "[Review of] *Magistri Alexandri de Hales Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi, nunc demum reperta atque primum edita studio et cura PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae* (Quaracchi, Florentiae), vol. 1, 1951; vol. 2, 1952; vol. 3, 1954; vol. 4, 1957," *Franciscan Studies* 17 (1957) 307-12.

⁵ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, vols. 12–15 (Florence: Quarrachi, 1951–1957); hereafter, *Glossa*.

have at their disposal Alexander's *Quaestiones Disputatae* "Antequam Esset Frater,"⁶ written between 1220 and 1236, with which to pursue more accurately investigations of his thought.

I. Recent Scholarship and Hermeneutical Method: Comparing Alexander and Aquinas

Certain recent accounts of Alexander's eucharistic teaching on the basis of the *Glossa* and *Quaestiones* unfortunately have been works of constructive theology or otherwise betray some explicit theological agenda in which historical survey plays a role. In such works, the writings of Alexander of Hales are not given due attention in themselves, and key nuances of his doctrine often appear to be misunderstood, particularly when set in contrast to that of Thomas Aquinas. One such attempt exemplifying this unfortunate state of affairs is the treatment of Alexander's work by Gary Macy in *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist*.⁷ Advancing as a major thesis that the theology of the Middle Ages is more diverse than most customarily-monolithic presentations suggest, Macy accentuates distinctions among several medieval authors in an attempt to decentralize Aquinas.⁸ This leads him to employ certain heuristic categories that fail to capture adequately the "treasures" of thought found in those others whom he treats. Macy sets up polarities between "intentional" and "ontological" theologians, classifying Alexander of Hales and the subsequent Franciscan tradition as the former, and Albert the Great, Aquinas and others as the latter. Unfortunately, this construal forces Macy to overlook the rather "ontological" aspects of the earlier theologians and the "intentional" aspects of the later ones. More importantly, the category of "intentional" seems contrived, an imposed differentiation which serves no purpose other than accentuating the proliferation of medieval diversity.

Above all, questionable methodological presuppositions render Macy's category of "intentional" theologians inapt. Among those presuppositions, the following stand at the fore:

- (1) Granted that the explicit distinction between eucharistic reception as understood in terms of the thing received itself and in terms of the receiver was elaborated by Bonaventure, Albert and Aquinas,⁹ one must therefore conclude that the tension inherent in such a distinction is absent in all previous

⁶ Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones Disputatae* "Antequam Esset Frater," *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, vols. 19–21 (Florence: Quarrachi, 1960); hereafter, *Quaestiones*.

⁷ Gary Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press/Pueblo, 1999).

⁸ See *ibid.*, xiv–xix.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 39–45.

writers, who therefore must be understood strictly as speaking about subjective, “intentional” elements; that is, about reception as understood exclusively from the aspect of the receiver.

- (2) Granted that the category for interpretation for the earlier writers is “intentionality,” one then may safely assume that their discussion of ontological aspects with respect to the thing received in itself is negligible or irrelevant.
- (3) In contraposition to these authors, Aquinas, when treating the issue of reception, decidedly moves away from the aforementioned tradition to establish a metaphysical conception regarding the nature of the relationship between accidents and substance. He is thus primarily, almost exclusively, an “ontologist” rather than an “intentionalist.”

The last of these presuppositions is most clearly evident when Macy writes that

[i]n discussing whether a sinner can receive the Body of Christ, Thomas abandoned the usual arguments in favor of such a reception based on the faith of the sinner. Instead Thomas firmly insisted that sinners receive because the change of the substance of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord, once it takes place, cannot be reversed except by another substantial change. As long as the accidents of bread exist, the Body and Blood of the Lord continue in the sacrament.¹⁰

And again, “Thomas, in one of his last writings [i.e., *Summa Theologiae*], would merely repeat his insistence that the metaphysics of the sacrament outweigh the importance of the intentionality of the believer.”¹¹

Macy’s reading of Aquinas is beyond the scope of this article; yet, it seems that Macy construes his categories of “ontological” and “intentional” precisely in contention with the Angelic Doctor. While Aquinas does indeed posit such metaphysical principles as Macy highlights, the objective reality of the sacrament after consecration is not so much at issue for Aquinas as are the characteristics determining a worthy recipient of the sacrament.¹² He addresses this topic by appropriating the history of the scholastic commonplace question *quid mus sumit*—what does the

¹⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹¹ Ibid., 45.

¹² See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [ST] III, 79-81. The version of ST used is *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita*, vols. 4-12: *Summa theologiae cum Supplemento et commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani, O. P., S. R. E. cardinalis* (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888-1906), available at <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/iopera.html>. Unless otherwise specified, all translations from ST are mine.

mouse eat when it feeds on a consecrated host? For Aquinas (as for Alexander—which will be demonstrated shortly), the mouse cannot eat the eucharist *sacramentaliter*:

even if a mouse or dog were to eat the consecrated host, the substance of the body of Christ would not cease to be beneath the species . . . insofar as the substance of bread remained—just as if it were to be thrown into the mud. . . . But it may not be said that a brute animal may eat the body of Christ sacramentally (*sacramentaliter*) because [the animal] is not made to use it as a sacrament. So it is not sacramentally, but by the accidents (*per accidens*), that it eats the body of Christ.¹³

The mouse does not have the potential to make use of the host *sacramentaliter*. In the integrated logic of Aquinas' system—wherein grace does not destroy nature, but builds it up, perfects it¹⁴—such a sacramental eating would require that the mouse be made capable of something that its nature does not allow: thus a destruction of its nature.

As Macy does acknowledge, this is not to say that Aquinas believes the presence of Christ to recede upon the mouse's eating; rather, it is merely to posit that:

- (1) the manner or mode of reception for the recipient of the sacrament is distinct from the objective presence of Christ after consecration (which must always be safeguarded); and
- (2) the mouse *does* eat the sacramental species (which on account of the consecration contains the body of Christ); however, the mouse does not eat it *sacramentaliter* but only *per accidens*; further
- (3) the fact that the mouse has neither the potential to (a) recognize the signifying quality of the bread as a sacramental signifier (*sacramentum tantum*); nor (b) to receive the sacramental signifier and its signification (*res et sacramentum*), much less its end, i.e., incorporation into the mystical body of Christ (*res tantum*), suggests that the question of what the mouse eats itself sheds light on what constitutes a recipient as worthy;
- (4) therefore, appropriation of *quid mus sumit* by Aquinas is best understood in terms of his broader discussion of worthy reception.¹⁵

¹³ ST III, 80.3 ad 3: "etiam si mus aut canis hostiam consecratam manducet, substantia corporis Christi non desinet esse sub speciebus. . . . quandiu substantia panis maneret, sicut etiam si proiceretur in lutum. . . . Nec tamen dicendum est quod animal brutum sacramentaliter corpus Christi manducet, quia non est natum uti eo ut sacramento. Unde non sacramentaliter, sed per accidens corpus Christi manducat."

¹⁴ See ST I, 1.8 ad 2.

¹⁵ The different levels on which Aquinas addresses the issue bring this context into further clarity. Aquinas first raises the question of what the mouse eats in ST III, 80, where his discussion turns to issues surrounding the use or reception of the eucharist.

As evident in number (3) above, Aquinas employs the threefold categorization for speaking of the eucharist that became commonplace among the scholastics after its use in the *Summa Sententiarum* of Hugh of St. Victor: *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum*. Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, argues that this tri-fold systematization can be seen as an expansion on the bifold articulation of earlier authors, most notably of St. Augustine of Hippo.¹⁶ Undoubtedly, Macy's survey would have been better served if he had more fully probed the struggles that the expansion of these categories represent, and the respective significance that different authors attach to them, in his search for a heuristic principle.

The dual modes of eating, *sacramentaliter* and *spiritualiter*, are as evident in Aquinas as they are in other medieval authors; yet Macy's preferred opposition of "intentional" versus "ontological" hinders his recognition of Aquinas' appropriation of the question *quid mus sumit* within a larger examination of worthy reception. In the *Summa*, Aquinas identifies five different sorts of users or recipients of the eucharist in order to demonstrate the dynamics of the bifold modes of eating and their corresponding moral prescriptions in the recipient:

- (A) The **Worthy Recipient** enjoys a spiritual eating (which includes sacramental eating)¹⁷ of the eucharist, entering into the spiritual union with Christ through faith and charity that is the effect of this sacrament.¹⁸ Aquinas makes a further distinction within this "class" between those who receive the sacrament lukewarmly and those who are inflamed with the passion of charity.¹⁹
- (B) The **Unworthy Recipient** approaches the eucharist in a state of mortal sin, enjoying only a sacramental eating, since the reception is without its effects

¹⁶ See Edward J. Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press/Pueblo, 1998) esp. ch. 1, sec. 3, 61-78, and ch. 3, 117-26.

¹⁷ ST III, 80.1 ad 2: "sacramentalis manducatio quae pertingit ad spiritualement, non dividitur contra spiritualement, sed includitur ab ea. Sed illa sacramentalis manducatio contra spiritualement dividitur quae effectum non consequitur, sicut imperfectum quod non pertingit ad perfectionem speciei, dividitur contra perfectum."

¹⁸ ST III, 80.1 c, especially "Sicut igitur perfectum contra imperfectum dividitur, ita sacramentalis manducatio, per quam sumitur solum sacramentum sine effectu ipsius, dividitur contra spiritualement manducationem, per quam aliquis percipit effectum huius sacramenti quo spiritualiter homo Christo coniungitur per fidem et caritatem" (emphasis mine). Also consider, for example, ST III, 79.7 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod, sicut passio Christi prodest quidem omnibus ad remissionem culpae et ademptionem gratiae et gloriae, sed effectum non habet nisi in illis qui passioni Christi coniunguntur per fidem et caritatem; ita etiam hoc sacrificium, quod est memoriale dominicae passionis, non habet effectum nisi in illis qui coniunguntur huic sacramento per fidem et caritatem. Unde et Augustinus dicit, ad renatum, quis offerat corpus Christi nisi pro his qui sunt membra Christi? Unde et in canone Missae non oratur pro his qui sunt extra Ecclesiam. Illis tamen prodest plus vel minus, secundum modum devotionis eorum" (emphasis mine).

¹⁹ See ST III, 79.4 c. and ST III, 79.5 c, especially: "Non est autem institutum ad satisfaciendum, sed ad spiritualiter nutriendum per unionem ad Christum et ad membra eius, sicut et nutrimentum

(i.e., incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, the *res tantum* of the eucharist that constitutes spiritual eating).²⁰

- (C) The **Worthy Recipient via Desire** is hindered from receiving the eucharist sacramentally, but nonetheless partakes of a spiritual eating through desire for reception. In Aquinas' reckoning, this sort of recipient includes those who receive through desire after the institution and those who receive through a figure, such as the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, before it.²¹
- (D) The **Nonbeliever** eats what is intrinsically a sacrament, but not as a sacrament; rather, the eating is of corporeal food *per accidens*. (An exception is made wherein the nonbeliever "would intend to receive that which the Church confers" but without proper faith.²² In this case, she or he would be treated as a Worthy Recipient via Desire under C above.) Since the species cannot be eaten corporally as divorced from the substance that underlies them, the nonbeliever eats that which is in fact a sacrament and in which Christ is present, but not *sacramentaliter*, and most assuredly not *spiritualiter*.²³
- (E) Finally, the **Irrational Creature**, whose nature lacks potential for perfection through grace, engages only in a corporeal eating *per accidens*.²⁴

In the case of both the nonbeliever and the irrational creature, Aquinas does not consider corporeal eating to be a separate or distinct mode from spiritual and sacramental eating. Aquinas posits that eating *per accidens* does not constitute another category since it does not entail a division of substance; that is, one cannot in fact eat only the accidents of something as divorced from its underlying substance, even if the specific substance may escape our cognitive recognition.²⁵

unitur nutrito. Sed quia haec unitas fit per caritatem, ex cuius fervore aliquis consequitur remissionem non solum culpae, sed etiam poenae; inde est quod ex consequenti, per quamdam concomitantiam ad principalem effectum, homo consequitur remissionem poenae; non quidem totius, sed secundum modum suae devotionis et fervoris. . . . Quamvis igitur haec oblatio ex sui quantitate sufficiat ad satisfaciendum pro omni poena, tamen fit satisfactoria illis pro quibus offertur, vel etiam offerentibus, secundum quantitatem suae devotionis, et non pro tota poena" (emphasis mine).

²⁰ After establishing that Christ does not recede from the sacrament after consecration, even at the lips of the unworthy recipient, Aquinas posits that the unworthy recipient (one in a state of mortal sin) does in fact eat *sacramentaliter*, but does not receive the effect of the sacrament, its *res tantum*: See ST III, 80.3 c and ST III, 80.1 c. With regard to the relationship between the lack of charity in an unworthy recipient and her or his inability to eat *spiritualiter* because of the loss of proper relations, especially with God, see ST III, 79.3c.

²¹ ST III, 73.3 c.

²² ST III, 80.3 ad 2.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ ST III, 80.3 ad 3.

²⁵ Ibid.

In Aquinas' discussion on these precise issues, one notes a distinction in what the term *sacramentaliter* modifies. If it describes the manner of one's eating on the part of the "manducant" (*ex parte manducantis*) then it does *not* qualify as sacramental eating, since the one eating does not see the species as signifiers; however, if it refers to what is actually present and that which the recipient is albeit unwittingly consuming, then the adverb thus may be applied.²⁶ In this respect Aquinas is able to hold in tension both the "subjective" and "objective" dimensions of eucharistic reception; or provisionally to put it in Macy's categories, the "intentional" and "ontological" aspects. In this passage, as in many others, Aquinas does not eclipse the intentional dimensions of reception for the sake of his conviction regarding the manner of Christ's presence (i.e., the ontological aspect of the sacrament).

Given that the categorization of medieval treatments of the eucharist as either "ontological" or "intentional" is evidently problematic, it seems most advisable to approach Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, or any other theologian with whom one would like to compare either or both, by attempting to understand the categories that they themselves deploy and their reasons for so doing. Both Aquinas and Alexander—as well as most scholastics of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries—speak of the action of eucharistic eating in terms of the bifold distinction of *sacramentaliter* and *spiritualiter*; and of the eucharist generally (and especially regarding its reception) in terms of *sacramentum*, *res* or some combination thereof. The point of ambiguity in some of the early authors, including the *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, is found in their articulations of the content that is later developed as the middle category, *sacramentum et res*. Macy sees the addition of the middle category as indicative of a (conflicting) divergence from previous tradition, and thus interprets the "ontological" aspects of later writers as encapsulated in the *sacramentum et res* as reducible to the category of *sacramentum tantum*, thereby making recognition of the signifying quality a necessary prerequisite for encountering Christ objectively in the eucharist.²⁷ But one simply cannot assume that earlier authors collapse into the category of *sacramentum* all that later theologians would attribute to *sacramentum et res*. If such were the case, then the subjective dimension intrinsic to the perception of the sacrament's signifying quality in the *sacramentum tantum* would also *ipso facto* affect and determine the actuality of the *res*, the objective presence of Christ's body and blood. But as it stands, although the middle category emerges as a later crystallization, various earlier authors do, in fact, demonstrate the tensions that historically provoke the development of the

²⁶ ST III, 80.3 ad 2.

²⁷ See Macy, 37-39.

category of *sacramentum et res*, all of which belies Macy's exclusively "intentionalist" model. One must attend to these tensions and the limitations of the categories employed by the authors in various works. In Alexander of Hales, for example, *species panis et vini* corresponds to *sacramentum tantum*, and *unitas ecclesiae* (*per quam aliquis fidelis in mysticum corpore Christi incorporatus est*) to *res tantum*. Much room for exploration, however, surrounds exactly how Alexander understands what would correspond to *corpus et sanguis* (that is, what would later correspond to *sacramentum et res*). Reading and expositing Alexander of Hales in light of these distinctions, while attending to the tensions in his texts (as well as subsequent developments), offers a suitable and fruitful manner of proceeding, while avoiding the sort of artificial and forced construal demanded by Macy's pre-suppositions.

II. Alexander of Hales' Eucharistic Teaching on Manducation, Reception, and Communion

In light of these clarifications, an examination of aspects of Alexander of Hales' eucharistic teaching in the *Glossa* (written c. 1222–1223) and *Quaestiones disputatae* "*Antequam esset frater*" (1220–1236) is in order. While the former work offers an extended commentary on Lombard's treatment of the eucharist, and the latter a detailed examination *de sacramento altaris*, this analysis will be confined to the topics of manducation, reception, and communion. As mentioned above, exclusion from this article of the comprehensive treatment of the eucharist in the Halensian *Summa* is warranted by the fact that the work was not completed by Alexander, but by his disciple, William of Militona. William's personal exposure to the *Doctor Irrefragabilis* seems to have been minimal; one, therefore, could conclude that his work was largely a reconstruction on the basis of the two authentic texts under consideration here.

Of the two works, Alexander offers a fuller and more sustained treatment of the topics at hand in the second, such that the *Glossa*'s content is better understood if contextualized within the scope of the framework outlined in the *Quaestiones*. This approach does not preclude the possibility of development between the two writings; rather, it attempts to limit the degree of unnecessary speculation regarding some of the *in se* enigmatic statements of the *Glossa*, while fostering a greater understanding of the more explicit exposition of his eucharistic teaching in the *Quaestiones*. The *Quaestiones* therefore will be considered first.

Alexander's primary occupation in the seventh disputation of the *Quaestiones* is the issue of "the eating of the body of Christ according to the two modes of

eating, sacramental and spiritual.”²⁸ He divides his treatment into two broad sections, regarding those who are eating and regarding the action of eating itself, each of which contains further subsections, i.e., questions to be explored. Alexander begins by describing the structure of the seventh disputation of the questions “On the Sacrament of the Altar” (*De sacramento Altaris*), which may be outlined as follows:²⁹

I. First Part: Of those who are eating:

- a. Whether only rational creatures can eat, or some others also?
- b. If only of rational creatures, then is it only according to their soul, or according to their soul and body?
- c. If only of a rational creature and principally according to the soul, whether it is in the head and in the members in common, or if only in the members?
- d. Whether by the word “members,” members are understood through informed faith or uninformed faith?
- d. Whether this eating touches the triumphant church, Judas, or those with unformed faith?

II. Second Part: Of the action of eating:

- a. Whether here there is a common likeness of spiritual and sacramental eating with bodily eating?
- b. If the likeness differs, it will be asked which is fitting of sacramental eating and which of spiritual?
- c. Whether the eating should be something other than the two eatings, sacramental and spiritual?

Alexander himself prefaces his treatment as outlined above; yet his execution follows a yet more distinct structure, beginning with the Second Part, then proceeding to the First Part. The reason for this seems discernable: the theoretical questions of the Second Part afford the underlying basis from which he is able adequately to answer the questions of the First. It is particularly in the Second Part that Alexander’s preoccupation with the aforementioned bifold modes of eating (*sacramentaliter* and *spiritualiter*) becomes evident, especially in light of his further distinctions and classifications.

In his first heading, Alexander asks “whether there remains something in common in eating according to that which is said about the sacramental and spiritual eating, in which it comes together with carnal eating.”³⁰ This question seems to

²⁸ Alexander of Hales, *Questiones*, LI.7.195: “Quaeritur de manducatione corporis Christi secundum quod duplex est modus manducandi, sacramentaliter et spiritualiter.”

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., LI.7.1, 196: “Membrum 1: An sit communis quaedam similitudo manducationis sacramentalis et spiritualis ad illam corporalem.”

regard the mode of union between the one who eats and that which is eaten. Alexander outlines four stages in bodily eating: (1) mastication; (2) separation; (3) gestation; and (4) union.³¹ He then asks whether there is an overlap between these stages of bodily eating and sacramental or spiritual eating. Such a question forces Alexander to pose the more difficult question underlying this one: what constitutes union with the *res* of the eucharist when one partakes of communion? He intimates that there are three kinds of unions: (1) *in cognitione*; (2) *in dilectione*; and (3) *in natura*.³² These three are the conditions of the possibility for a perfect or “simple” union, but in themselves they do not *constitute* the union. In a perfect or simple union, Christ is both the one with whom the union is made and its content or constitutive element. Cognition, charity, and nature are rather the means, the avenues through which the union is established, such that if one of them is not fulfilled, then a full or perfect union is unattainable. As he writes regarding “becoming one” (a synonym for a perfect union), “to be one simply is to be one in cognition, in charity, and in nature. Therefore where there are these three things according to their greater perfection, there they do eat according to their greater perfection; but where there is a deficiency of something of these, there is not a perfect union, and as a consequence, there is not perfect eating.”³³ Thus, there are various degrees in which one may eat in greater perfection according to a greater fulfillment of these three, or lesser with less of them. As such, Alexander posits a correlation between the quality of eating and the corresponding perfection of the union with Christ. For example, there is a parallel case between the faithful who pre-date the incarnation and angels in that neither have a perfect union since—although for very different reasons—both were united to Christ in thought and in charity, but not in nature; hence, for Alexander, “there was not eating in these.”³⁴ While not explicitly stated in this passage, this schema suggests implications relating those three eatings for the categories of sacramental and spiritual eating on which he will eventually build. For it is said of the pre-incarnation faithful, as with the angels, that they have a spiritual union with Christ; however, it is not said of them that they *eat* sacramentally and spiritually: in order to do so, all three avenues of the union must be fulfilled.

Through the unique combination of these three eatings, Alexander is able to categorize different sorts of recipients, some of which have within them various degrees of intensity; for example, those who possess the quality of charity more than others

³¹ Ibid., LI.7.1, 197.

³² Ibid., LI.7.1, 199.

³³ Ibid., my translation: “Unum [esse] simpliciter est unum esse in cognitione, in dilectione et in natura. Ubi ergo haec tria sunt secundum suum perfectius, ibi manducare secundum suum perfectius; ubi vero deficit aliquod horum, non est perfecta unio, nec per consequens perfecta manducatio.”

³⁴ Ibid. “Ante adventum Christi erat unio in cognitione et dilectione, sed nondum fuit unio in natura, quia nondum fuerat incarnatio; et ita deest una praedictarum conditionum. Item aliquando invenitur unum cognitione et dilectione et non unum natura, sicut in angelis; nec in illis est manducatio.”

will have a greater degree of union. Given the dynamism inherent in each of these three categories, Alexander intimates that since charity is greatest in heaven, then the corresponding greatest perfection is only attainable there.³⁵ Here Alexander places eucharistic encounter and eschatological finality on a continuum, hinging together metaphors of “journey” and “fatherland” as describing the communicant’s current and final positions, respectively, on the underlying continuity of union with Christ.³⁶ His *respondeo* under this question contains a list of several kinds of unions which are essential for understanding his categories and the qualities pertaining to each of the recipients enumerated therein. This passage presents an overview of his hierarchy of reception and serves above all as the contextualizing framework for the rest of his examination. He maintains as general guidelines the three aforementioned unions of thinking, charity, and nature, but of necessity begins to admit certain distinctions or qualities in light of the difficulty of categorizing different groups, such as irrational creatures or various nonbelievers. Alexander introduces carnal eating, belief in the *signum* of the eucharist, and faith (with its different degrees, i.e., formed and unformed) in relation to the aforementioned three qualities, which enables him to categorize those who cannot easily be fitted into his threefold schema. When outlined in hierarchical order by degree of fulfillment, one can more clearly see how the unions Alexander identifies relate to the characteristics of the various recipients:³⁷

1. *Eschatological union*: nature, thinking, (greatest) charity.³⁸
2. *Worthy Recipient*: carnal eating, (formed) faith, nature, thinking, charity; this communicant believes, understands, and loves (and has a union according to sign and reality), and thus receives spiritually and sacramentally.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid. Alexander offers his most synthetic outline of this hierarchy of unions in LI.7.1, 199. This section serves as an overarching hermeneutical prism through which to understand his other statements throughout his eucharistic treatment.

³⁸ Alexander treats the nature of the glorified soul’s communion in the eschaton as a union of nature, thinking, and the (greatest) charity. In LI.7.1, 199, Alexander describes the perfect union characteristic of the beatific vision as a union according to nature, thinking, and charity: “Unum [esse] simpliciter est unum esse in cognitione, in dilectione et in natura. Ubi ergo haec tria sunt secundum suum perfectius, ibi manducare secundum suum perfectius; ubi vero deficit aliquod horum, non est perfecta unio, nec per consequens perfecta manducatio.” From this standard of perfect union he assesses the different classes of communicants. In his treatment of the nature of the union of the glorified souls, especially in LI.7.5, 221, Alexander distinguishes between the role and affect of communion for those *in via* and the glorified souls; see below, at note 55, for the text.

³⁹ Ibid., LI.7.1, 199: The difference between the greatest union *in via* and ordinary worthy union in general is the quality of charity. His distinction creates a hierarchy of reception and union within the broad category of worthy recipients in which the degree to which one communes with charity distinguishes one’s degree of union.

3. *Unworthy Recipient*: union in carnal eating, (formed or unformed) faith, nature, thinking, but not in charity; this communicant believes and understands (and has a union according to sign), but does not love, and thus receives sacramentally but not spiritually.⁴⁰
4. *Pre-Incarnation faithful/Angel*: union in faith (as diminished thinking), not in nature, but in charity; without carnal eating.⁴¹
5. *Jew or Pagan (i.e., Non-Christian)*: union in carnal eating, nature; but not in faith, thinking, or charity.⁴²
6. *Irrational creature*: union in carnal eating; but not in faith, nature, thinking, or charity.⁴³

In examining this key passage, certain questions come to the fore that are answerable on the basis of the rest of his writings: (1) what is the role of, and relationship between, what Alexander calls faith and thinking? (2) What exactly constitutes “carnal eating”? (3) How do sacramental and spiritual eating map onto his hierarchy and distinctions of recipients?

Regarding the first question, Alexander writes:

Moreover, somewhere there is a union through diminished thinking, namely where there is thinking through faith; and here, moreover, the reason of the union

⁴⁰ Ibid. The key distinction between worthy and unworthy reception is *charity*. While both sorts of recipient understand the *signum* of the eucharist, one approaches with love and the other without it. Consequently, there is a difference in degree of union, and thus, of eating: “Item est unio secundum rationem signi, ut in eo qui credit et intelligit; et maior adhuc est in eo qui credit et *diligit*, ut in iis qui spiritualiter accipiunt; et sic secundum quod maior unio, maior manducatio” (emphasis added).

⁴¹ Ibid. In the pre-incarnation faithful, the Son had yet to assume our humanity by which event he afforded a union according to nature. The Patriarchs, for example, would have been united through faith (as diminished thinking, that is, as the conviction of what is not seen, rather than as that which is experientially encountered) and charity to the one who would become flesh. The absence of the eucharist before the incarnation also indicates that they partook in Christ in anticipation, but without any sort of carnal eating. Alexander expounds on this point also in LI.7.3, 204: “Manducare sacramentaliter duo importat in se: corpus sub specie panis, et sanguinem sub specie vini. In digne ergo suscipiente est una unio ratione fidei, et quaedam ratione unionis cum corpore sub sacramento, quae respondet unioni in natura, quia sub sacramento est praesens nobis usque ad consummationem saeculi, sicut dicitur in Evangelio Matthaei, ultimo: *Vobiscum sum usque ad consummationem saeculi*. Sicut enim sacramentum regenerationis, ita sacramentum nutritionis; et de Baptismo praemisera. Hoc enim intelligitur de existentia qua praesens est sub sacramento. Haec ergo unio, quae est in natura, in manducatione sacramentali comprehenditur sive repraesentatur, unde non est necesse tres esse manducationes. Nec unio quae est per fidem complectitur totum illud in quo consistit manducatio sacramentalis; antiqui enim Patres, licet crederent, non tamen manducabant sacramentaliter.” The question of what he means by “diminished thinking” will be further explored below.

⁴² Ibid., LI.7.1, 199 and LI.7.3, 210.

⁴³ See *ibid.*, LI.7.3, 208 and LI.7.3, 209.

is diminished. Insofar as the nature of Christ is beyond the sacrament, we have a union with Christ's nature in our nature; insofar as the nature of Christ is under the sacrament, we are united with him through faith.⁴⁴

The question of what constitutes "non-diminished thinking," or better yet, the relationship between faith and thinking, is curious, especially given Alexander's apparent preference for thinking over and above faith in this passage. Given the context afforded elsewhere, Alexander here seems to use "thinking" in correlation with sacramental perception, and thus faith as that kind of union preceding the incarnation since there would not have been the possibility of a sacramental encounter. Here, then, thinking refers to the recognition of the *signum* of the eucharist, which presupposes a unity of nature as the condition of its possibility (since it was *post incarnationem*). A union based on faith without recognition of the *signum* of the eucharist, and so outside the parameters of the threefold conditions for a perfect union, is a diminished union; yet, as he intimates a few lines later, given the precondition of the incarnation through which humans are united to Christ in nature, union with Christ is possible not only through faith, as it was for the pre-incarnation faithful, but also and especially through the faith that enables recognition of Christ *sub sacramento*. Faith before the incarnation constituted a diminished union (as compared to its post-incarnation corollary); however, faith after the incarnation, given the unity of nature, is then correlated with cognition on the basis of human ability to encounter Christ under and beyond the sacrament. Faith then could be seen as having two broad realizations, pre- and post-incarnation. Faith before the incarnation constituted an imperfect spiritual union because the condition of the possibility for a perfect or "simple" union through the union of natures was lacking. Moreover, faith after the incarnation is then correlated with the cognition of the *signum* of the eucharist. This faith may be formed or unformed; thus, depending on the degree to which one's faith is formed, one attains to a higher degree of union.⁴⁵ These two classifications take into account the chronological or historical

⁴⁴ Ibid., LI.7.1, 199: "Item alicubi est unio per cognitionem diminutam, scilicet ubi est cognitio per fidem; et ibi diminuitur etiam ratio unionis. In quantum [natura Christi] est praeter sacramentum, habemus unionem cum illa in natura; in quantum sub sacramento, unimur cum illo per fidem."

⁴⁵ Ibid., LI.7.1, 199. One notes how Alexander accounts for the different degrees of the formation of one's faith: "Item, in cognitione in praesenti potest esse per magis et minus, quia in aliquibus est per modum doni [gratis] dati, in aliquibus per modum gratuiti, in aliquibus per potentiam naturalem. Item, ea unio cum corpore Christi in natura, alia est cum corpore Christi prout est [praeter sacramentum, alia prout est] sub sacramento; et haec est per fidem. Item, ubi est unio per fidem, aut est per fidem informem, aut per fidem formatam, vel per potentiam ad fidem formatam vel informem. Item, cum natura Christi duplex sit, in quantum est sub sacramento et praeter sacramentum, et secundum quod est sub sacramento tunc est unio per fidem: secundum ergo quod plus est de fide vel minus, est plus et minus de unione, et per consequens plus et minus de manducatione" (emphasis added).

aspect of faith in salvation history (thus also the change in faith due to the union of nature), and the dynamism of one's life of faith even after the incarnation on account of the degree to which one's faith is properly formed.

The second question prompted by the schematization of Alexander's hierarchy of unions, i.e., regarding what exactly constitutes carnal eating, intersects several of the listed headings—not to mention the fact that it is of much relevance to Macy's treatment (albeit indirectly). The question of carnal eating arises for Alexander in two ways: (1) in consideration of the overlap between bodily eating and sacramental/spiritual eating; and (2) through his discussion of what non-believers (i.e., Jews and pagans) and irrational creatures eat. With respect to the first, Alexander offers a simple response: "it is evident that this eating has an overlap with carnal eating in that I have been nourished here with nutrients and eating because there is a union."⁴⁶ The effect of consuming the consecrated host is material, thus nourishing; and it therefore constitutes an overlap with bodily eating. The union with Christ beyond the sacramental species of bread and wine, that is, the attainment of the *res*, when compared to the process of carnal eating, poses a more difficult question. Alexander attempts to distinguish between colloquial and proper discourse regarding the manner of the overlap, positing that in "speaking about a union simply and properly, they do not come together thus in a union";⁴⁷ however, one may speak improperly about the union, for "when the union occurs of spirit as if to the mystical body through faith and through charity, thus they convene."⁴⁸ For Alexander, to eat spiritually is to become incorporated into the mystical body of Christ. The effects of incorporation—adoption as a member of, and participation in, this mystical body of which Christ is the head—are all understood to occur outside the process of carnal eating if examined technically (though incorporation occurs as somehow related to physical reception of the eucharist). This forces consideration of the relationship between sacramental and spiritual eating; for (as becomes evident in the response to the next question), Alexander subsumes the union of carnal eating into sacramental eating as something presupposed. There must be *something* that not only signifies, but that one eats. This, then, is Alexander's difficulty in explaining the union of food with human bodies and the union of human recipients with Christ as two movements—the one intaking (directionally inwards), the other partaking (outwards)—that must share some connection. This issue is

⁴⁶ Ibid., LI.7.1, 199: "ita patet quod cum manducatione carnali habet convenientiam haec manducatio in hoc, quod unio est ibi nutriti cum nutritibili et manducatio."

⁴⁷ Ibid., LI.7.1, 200: "Ad hoc quod obicitur, quod in manducatione carnali tria sunt: unio, masticatio, separatio, etc., dico quod, loquendo de unione simpliciter et proprie, sic non conveniunt in unione."

⁴⁸ Ibid.: "dicendo tamen unionem [improprie], cum fiat unio spiritus sive ad corpus mysticum per fidem et per dilectionem, sic conveniunt."

nothing unique to Alexander: comprehending the double consumption of the eucharist was a struggle for medieval scholastics and mystics alike.⁴⁹

The other area for treating this question is Alexander's discussion of what non-believers (i.e., Jews and pagans) and irrational creatures eat. In one sense, Alexander posits that to eat carnally is to eat the species without recognizing its sacramental or signifying character, as though it were merely corporeal food—bread and wine. The more difficult issues surround the question of whether or not carnal eating of sacramental foods entails a further eating—sacramentally or spiritually, or of the body of Christ. Alexander himself wrestles with these issues: on the one hand, carnal eating does not exclude the possibility of sacramental or spiritual eating, for (as indicated above) those who faithfully or worthily receive the eucharist have an overlap in their reception with carnal eating.⁵⁰ On the other hand, it does not necessarily entail spiritual reception, as some eat carnally and yet are not incorporated into the body of Christ (i.e., Jews, pagans, or irrational creatures).⁵¹ Further, carnal eating does not necessarily entail that one recognizes the signifying dimension of the eucharist, but only the eating of foodstuffs that seem like bread and wine.⁵²

Regarding the third question, on sacramental and spiritual eating, Alexander is much clearer in his understanding of the spiritual form of eating than the sacramental. For Alexander, spiritual eating incorporates the worthy recipient into the body of Christ; the conditions of the possibility of such an eating are the unions of thinking, loving, and nature. In the *Glossa*, he posits that this kind of eating refers back to “the uniting to charity the members to one another, which is the

⁴⁹ One clearly observes this in Hadewijch's famous poem, “Love's Seven Names,” in which she writes, “He eats us; we think we eat him/ And we do eat him, of this we can be certain./ But because he remains so undevoured,/ And so untouched, and so undesired,/ Each of us remains uneaten by him/ And separated so far from each other”; Hadewijch, *The Complete Works*, trans. Columba Hart (New York: Paulist, 1980), 353, ll. 39-44. One could also reference the same theme in Jacques de Vitry's *Life of Marie d'Oignes* or in William of Auxerre's *Summa Aurea* in which, of the four stages of eating (mastication, delight, assimilation, and incorporation) the first two refer to the communicant's eating of Christ, and the second two to Christ eating the communicant. This conception is also found in Aquinas, who retains the conviction that while the *sacramentum et res* (that is, *corpus et sanguis Christi*) is eaten, the *res tantum* is not touched—but the recipients are incorporated into the *res* as an effect of this partaking. Thus in ST III.73.1 ad 3, where Aquinas introduces the threefold distinction for eucharistic consideration (*sacramentum tantum*, *sacramentum et res*, and *res tantum*), the *res tantum* is always described as the *effect* of the participation and not as that which is consumed. Also see ST III.80.1 c, in which spiritual manducation is described as a participation in the *res* and not as an eating of the *res*.

⁵⁰ See Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones*, LI.7.1, 199-201.

⁵¹ See *Ibid.*, LI.7.1, 199, LI.7.3, 208-210.

⁵² See *Ibid.*, LI.7.3, 210.

food and nourishment in each of the members.”⁵³ Spiritual eating is incorporation into the ultimate *res* of the eucharist; it is the reception and realization of the effect of the sacrament, taking the recipient up into the body of Christ as one of its members in communion with all the faithful. In the *Glossa*, as also intimated in the *Quaestiones*, one does not eat this body; for Christ’s mystical body is not what is consumed in the eucharist, but that into which one is taken up and incorporated as the effect and ultimate goal of eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ.⁵⁴ Through this fellowship as members of the one body, each of the believers embody the entire mystical body of Christ, because all its members are united to their head, Christ, from whom the spiritual food or nourishment flows down.⁵⁵ For Alexander, this incorporation has an eschatological dimension: it is the end towards which believers are directed and to which they are journeying. For those who have yet to be joined to Christ’s body, there they shall be united; for those who have been so joined, their union shall be there increased:

here there is spiritual eating, which is not until the end, so that the one who is not united may be united, or so that the one united may be more united, but it is for the conservation of the glorified life, just as the tree of life had been for the sake of conserving immortal life in Adam up to the glorification. I say therefore that they eat spiritually, as they conserve and most greatly delight in it.⁵⁶

This category discloses a strong parallel for what would later be known as *res tantum*, which Alexander correlates with the *unitas ecclesiae*. Emphasis falls on the fact that this reality underlying the sacrament is beyond the eucharist, and

⁵³ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa*, IV.10.7, k: “caro mystica sit quilibet fidelis, non tamen manducatur haec caro. Caro enim mystica non aliud est quam unio rerum incorporalium per caritatem unientem membra ad invicem, quae est cibus et nutrimentum in unoquoque membrorum. Per hoc autem quod iste cibus sumitur, quodlibet membrum aliis membris in corpore unitur; non tamen ab eis trahitur iste cibus, sed ad ipso capite, a quo defluit in membra” (emphasis added).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Note Alexander’s use of *aliquis* here: “we say that, although the mystical body is anyone of the faithful, nevertheless this body is not eaten” (“dicimus quod, licet caro mystica sit quilibet fidelis, non tamen manducatur haec caro”). Each member is itself a microcosm, as it were, of the christological macrocosm in which the entire *mystica caro* is contained in each believer on account of his or her relationship to Christ as the head of all members. See *ibid.*: “Per hoc autem quod iste cibus sumitur, quodlibet membrum aliis membris in corpore unitur; non tamen ab eis trahitur iste cibus, sed ad ipso capite, a quo defluit in membra.”

⁵⁶ Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones*, LI.7.5, 221: “Respondeo: Ibi est spiritualis manducatio, quae non est ad hunc finem, ut non unitus uniatur, vel ut unitus magis uniatur, sed ad conservationem viate gloriosae est, sicut lignum vitae fuit ad conservandam vitam immortalem in Adam usque ad glorificationem.—Dico ergo quod manducant spiritualiter, ut converventur et delectentur summe in eo. Unde Augustinus in libro *De anima et spiritu*” (Cap. 9 [inter opp. August., PL 40, 785]): “Sensus interior reficitur in contemplatione divinitatis, sensus vero exterior in contemplatione humanitatis.”

yet is contained in it; that one cannot eat this *res*, and yet it is present to all who eat worthily. The eucharist is thus the principle of charity that unites believers to one another and to their head, from which flow spiritual food and nourishment; it is what any and each of the faithful is *in se*. It is that into which Christians are incorporated in sacramental and spiritual eating; that which is only fully realized eschatologically. All of these clearly indicate that, for Alexander, to eat *spiritualiter* is to receive the *res tantum*.

As intimated above, though, for Alexander the relation between eating *spiritualiter* and eating *sacramentaliter* is more complex, owing to the fact that the presence of Christ in the eucharist after consecration is not categorized in association with eating spiritually. Alexander of Hales was among the first (if not in fact *the* first) to define transubstantiation not only as a change generally speaking, but as a change of the substances of bread and wine into the substances of the body and blood of Christ. To posit that the eating of Christ present under the sacrament does not take place at the level of spiritual eating (since “although the mystical body is anyone of the faithful, nevertheless this body is not eaten”),⁵⁷ requires that one look to his understanding of sacramental eating for both—his understanding of eating in light of his understanding of the manner of Christ’s presence and the signifying quality of the eucharist. Here one must recall the apprehensions regarding Macy’s approach: given the apparent collapse of what later scholastics would categorize as *sacramentum tantum* and *sacramentum et res* into the one category of sacramental eating, Macy argues that the reality underlying the *sacramentum et res* is thus relativized to the subjectivity of one’s perception of the signifying quality, among other things, of the *sacramentum tantum*.⁵⁸ This, however, does not follow in Alexander’s writings. The development of an explicit third category or middle point between *sacramentum* and *res* could itself be motivation for understanding a tension in previous authors, especially within the category of *sacramentum*. Thus, for Alexander, to eat sacramentally does not exclusively mean to discern the signifying quality of the eucharist; rather, it means both (1) to believe and understand the signifying quality of the eucharist; and (2) to eat the eucharist with that to which the *signum* points. Two key passages present Alexander’s definition and description of eating *sacramentaliter*:

to eat sacramentally introduces two things in itself: the body under the species of bread, and the blood under the species of wine. Therefore, in the taking up

⁵⁷ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa*, IV.10.7, k: “Caro enim mystica non aliud est quam unio rerum incorporalium per caritatem unientem membra ad invicem, quae est cibus et nutrimentum in unoquoque membrorum.”

⁵⁸ Macy, 176-77; see also 37-39.

of dignity, there is one union by reason of faith, and a certain one by reason of the union with the body under the sacrament, which corresponds to the union in nature, because under the sacrament it is present all the way up to the consummation of the ages, as it is said in the Gospel of Matthew lastly: *I am with you until the consummation of the ages*. For just as the sacrament of baptism is permanent, because it is the sacrament of regeneration, so is the sacrament of nutrients; and it was sent forth beforehand from baptism. For this is understood from the existence in which he is present under the sacrament. Therefore, this union, which is in nature, is comprehended in the sacramental eating, or if it was re-presented; whence it is not necessary for there to be three eatings. And the union which is through faith does not grasp that entire thing in which the sacramental eating consists: for, the ancient fathers, although they believed, did not nonetheless eat sacramentally.⁵⁹

And again,

to eat sacramentally, as it is properly said, is to attain the reality under the sacrament; therefore, where it is in no way touched, neither through the mode of believing, nor through the mode of thinking, there is in no way sacramental eating. Therefore, there is no sacramental eating or eating according to the sacrament for an irrational creature; but in a certain way there is carnal eating, and yet, properly speaking there is not a carnal eating here, because there is not a division of substance here, since it is not here except that it is a division of accidents alone.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones*, LI.7.3, 204: “Manducare sacramentaliter duo importat in se: corpus sub specie panis, et sanguinem sub specie vini. In digne ergo suscipiente est una unio ratione fidei, et quaedam ratione unionis cum corpore sub sacramento, quae respondet unioni in natura, quia sub sacramento est praesens nobis usque ad consummationem saeculi, sicut dicitur in Evangelio Matthaei, ultimo: *Vobiscum sum usque ad consummationem saeculi*. Sicut enim sacramentum regenerationis, ita sacramentum nutritionis; et de Baptismo praemisera. Hoc enim intelligitur de existencia qua praesens est sub sacramento. Haec ergo unio, quae est in natura, in manducatione sacramentali comprehenditur sive repraesentatur; unde non est necesse tres esse manducationes. Nec unio quae est per fidem complectitur totum illud in quo consistit manducatio sacramentalis; antiqui enim Patres, licet crederent, non tamen manducabant sacramentaliter.” The citation is from Matthew 28:20, but the context provided by Alexander suggests the import of the preceding verse: *Euntes ergo, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos*, etc. For Alexander, as for Aquinas, in the taxis of the sacramental economy, baptism necessarily precedes the eucharist. His mention of the permanence of baptism points to the fact that humans are ordered toward eschatological fulfillment: baptism is the ecclesial gateway to the sacrament of Christ’s ongoing presence (the eucharist), which both tends toward, and is continuous with, its own eschatological consummation without further sacramental mediation—the ultimate end of human striving.

⁶⁰ Ibid., LI.7.3, 208: “Manducare sacramentaliter, ut proprie dicitur, est attingere rem sub sacramento; ergo ubi nullo modo attingitur, nec per modum crediti, nec per modum cogniti, nullo modo est

In the first passage Alexander deals with the issue of why there are three conditions or unions for reception (thinking, loving, and nature), but only two forms of eating—sacramental, which he relates to thinking; and spiritual, which he relates to loving. Why, in other words, is there not a third form of eating to correspond with the union of nature? His response is critical for understanding the tension in the text. Alexander posits that sacramental eating not only includes a union in thinking (through recognition of the *signum*), but also a union in nature (through union with the body of Christ *sub sacramento*). It is this second aspect of sacramental eating, i.e., that of encountering Christ present under the sacrament, in which Alexander sees fulfilled Christ's promise to remain with his people until the consummation of the ages ("For this is understood from the existence in which he is present under the sacrament").⁶¹ In juxtaposition to Macy's reading,⁶² one finds that rather than collapsing all that is not *res tantum* into the subjectivity of one's recognition of the sign value of the eucharist, Alexander holds in tension both elements of recognition and encounter with a robust statement of real presence, all under the category of sacramental eating.

In the second passage, the evident issue is the relationship among the different unions subsumed under the category of sacramental eating (on the one hand) and their relation to spiritual eating (on the other). When Alexander writes, "therefore, where [the reality under the sacrament] is in no way touched, neither through the mode of believing, nor through the mode of thinking, there is in no way sacramental eating,"⁶³ is he rendering one's sacramental encounter entirely dependent on intention? Is he subsuming all aspects of "objective" presence, or "real presence," as it were, under the category of one's thinking or believing? To put the question more pointedly: if one approaches the eucharist without thinking or believing it to be a sacrament, but merely a piece of bread, is Christ still present? According to Macy's presentation, the presence of Christ seems to be contingent on the subjectivity or intentionality of the recipient.⁶⁴ To read Alexander in such a light would

manducatio sacramentalis. Irrationali ergo creaturae non est manducatio sacramentalis vel sacramentaliter; sed est quodam modo manducatio carnalis, et adhuc, proprie non est ibi manducatio carnalis, quia non est ibi divisio substantiae, cum non sit ibi nisi divisio accidentium solum."

⁶¹ Ibid., LI.7.3, 204: "Hoc enim intelligitur de existentia qua praesens est sub sacramento."

⁶² See the discussion presented above on Macy's position regarding the collapse of the "*sacramentum et res*" into the "*sacramentum tantum*."

⁶³ Ibid., LI.7.3, 208: "ergo ubi nullo modo attingitur, nec per modum crediti, nec per modum cogniti, nullo modo est manducatio sacramentalis."

⁶⁴ As discussed above, see the contextualization of his presentation of Alexander of Hales within his narrative of ontological and intentional theologians in chapters 3 and 8 of *Treasures from the Storeroom*.

be to ignore the tensions in his texts and the breadth of his perception on sacramental eating. Macy's position does justice only to a portion of Alexander's claims, of which the following are the most notable:

- (1) [Commenting on Peter Lombard's *That (which is eaten) by brute animals*]

The question with regard to this is: why, if the body of Christ is there, it is not consumed by brute animals.—I respond to this that the senses differ in brutes and in us. For there is an order towards reason in us, but not in the brutes. Therefore, because the body of Christ under the sacrament does not only say that it pertains to the senses, but also to reason, that which is sensed is consumed by the brutes, that is, a species of bread; and that which is ordered towards reason is not consumed, that is, the body of Christ.⁶⁵

- (2) [Regarding the question of Jewish or pagan consumption of a consecrated host] I say that it is more in this eating than in the eating of irrational creatures, because here there is a unity in nature. Nevertheless because here there is no cognition of the reality under the species, and since the sacramental eating includes receiving the species and attaining the reality which is under the sacrament by faith, they do not eat sacramentally.⁶⁶

- (3) I respond: To eat sacramentally, as it is said properly, is to touch the reality under the sacrament; therefore, where it is in no way touched, neither through the mode of believing, nor through the mode of thinking, there is in no way sacramental eating.⁶⁷

- (4) For the mouse does not touch the body of Christ; likewise it does not eat sacramentally.⁶⁸

At no point in any of these passages does Alexander have recourse to the idea of Christ receding or withdrawing from the sacrament when it is received by a person

⁶⁵ Alexander of Hales, *Glossa*, IV.XIII.8: "Quaestio est propter quid, si corpus Christi ibi est, non sumitur a brutis animalibus.—Responsio est ad hoc, quod differt sensus in brutis et in nobis. Est enim in nobis ordinatus ad rationem, in brutis vero non. Quia ergo corpus Christi sub sacramento non dicit tantum quod ad sensum pertinet, sed quod ad rationem, quod sensus est a brutis sumitur, scilicet species panis; quod in ordine ad rationem est non sumitur, scilicet corpus Christi."

⁶⁶ Alexander of Hales, *Quaestiones*, LI.7.3, 210: "Ad hoc quod obicitur de Iudaeo vel pagano (LI.7.3, 206), dico quod plus est in hac manducatione quam in manducatione irrationalis creaturae, quia unio est ibi in natura. Tamen quia non est ibi cognitio rei sub specie, et cum manducatio sacramentalis importet accipere species et attingere rem quae est sub sacramento fide, non manducant sacramentaliter."

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, LI.7.3, 208: "Respondeo: Manducare sacramentaliter, ut proprie dicitur, est attingere rem sub sacramento; ergo ubi nullo modo attingitur, nec per modum crediti, nec per modum cogniti, nullo modo est manducatio sacramentalis."

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, LI.7.3, 209: "Mus enim corpus Christi non attingit; ideo non manducat sacramentaliter."

or creature who cannot subjectively recognize its character as *sacramentum*; rather, his language is one of an inability to “touch the *res* of the sacrament,” using the Latin term *tango* or one of its cognates. Alexander’s primary preoccupation is not with the question of the objectivity of Christ’s presence, which is assumed as the constitutive factor of union and incorporation as discussed above. Rather, the presence of Christ is the precondition for understanding the union of nature as subsumed under sacramental eating, with the result that this discussion must be conducted in terms of worthy reception. In speaking of the role of the unions of thinking, loving, and nature in this passage, Alexander is positing the condition of the possibility for such a union. *Species* is the *sacramentum in se* when it is not oriented towards its underlying *res*; further, the term *species* is not utilized when speaking of the bread and wine prior to the consecration, after which Alexander confesses the real presence of Christ. *Species* refers to the accidents of the consecrated bread and the wine, the physical *things* which are perceived with the senses, encountered, chewed, digested, etc. These *species*, when encountered in the context of thinking and faith, signify—point toward, betray—their underlying *res*. Access to that *res* (as opposed to the objectivity of its presence) is contingent upon one’s ability to recognize the *species* as contextualized in the framework of the unions of thinking and believing, which point to that which underlies the sacrament. While carnal eating (or the eating of the species) is a precondition under the category of sacramental eating *when coupled with the union of nature and thinking/believing*, it is not in itself sufficient for concluding that a recipient’s eating is *sacramentaliter*; for in Alexander’s definition, to eat *sacramentaliter* entails receiving or attaining to the *res* of the eucharist.⁶⁹

Pushing the issue beyond the point that Alexander himself did, it seems necessary to ask (given that irrational creatures do not eat the sacrament *as a sacrament* and do not receive the *res* insofar as they are not incorporated into the body of Christ) whether they eat the accidents alone or the substance of the body of Christ inherent with the accidents. This highlights the ambiguity in Alexander’s use of *sacramental eating* and the tensions the category generates, which in general may well have occasioned the development of the explicit distinction between *sacramentum tantum* and *sacramentum et res*. Certainly for Alexander the category of sacramental eating entails both the *species panis et vini* and the *corpus et sanguis Christi*. Further, he at times advances the position that for one to eat *sacramentaliter*, properly speaking, one must be oriented towards approaching and actually

⁶⁹ Ibid., LI.7.3, 208: “Manducare sacramentaliter, ut proprie dicitur, est attingere rem sub sacramento.”

attaining the underlying *res*.⁷⁰ When held up to this standard, any animal or non-believer, lacking either the potential in nature or the thinking and believing necessary for attaining to the underlying *res*, cannot eat sacramentally. This response does not entail that Christ's substance or presence is no longer *sub specie* on that basis; rather, it states that there is a movement in eucharistic communion from presence to access and finally to union or incorporation. Presence and access are understood within sacramental eating: to eat *sacramentaliter* is to qualify as one who has access to eating *spiritualiter*, and therefore, as one who can encounter the presence of Christ. To say that access is limited to those who fulfill certain requirements is to say more about worthy reception than it is to say anything about the objectivity or ontology of Christ's presence; such a presentation as Macy's would undoubtedly obscure Alexander's task and distinctions.

For Alexander of Hales, the hinge between sacramental eating and spiritual eating is charity. Between encountering the species and sacramental eating, the corresponding hinge is the constellation of thinking, believing, and unity in nature. The presence of Christ in the eucharist is the principle of coherence between the two eatings, and the constitutive feature of the unions themselves. As such, there are different degrees of reception, not dependent on the presence of Christ in the eucharistic species, but according to the relative position and disposition of the recipient, with the dynamism of such a system guided on the axes of the recipient's loving, thinking, and nature.

⁷⁰ Ibid.