



Christology in Syriac Orthodox theology: Ecumenical dialogues and modern challenges

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Abstract: Syriac Orthodox Christology is pivotal in ecumenical dialogues and modern theological discourse, bridging Christian traditions while addressing contemporary doctrinal challenges. This study examines the historical development, theological depth, and modern relevance of Syriac Christology, particularly in the context of its Miaphysite stance and its contributions to global Christian theology. Despite its doctrinal distinctiveness, Syriac Christology aligns with key theological principles in Eastern and Western Christian traditions, making it an essential component of theological reconciliation and inter-denominational unity.

This research employs a qualitative approach, integrating historical analysis and comparative theological methods to trace the evolution of Syriac Orthodox Christology. Primary Syriac theological texts, including the writings of Jacob of Sarug and Severus of Antioch, are examined alongside modern ecumenical agreements to assess Syriac Christology's contributions to theological discourse, liturgical dialogue, and interfaith engagement. Thematic and hermeneutical analyses are applied to evaluate the doctrinal intersections between Miaphysitism, Chalcedonian Christology, and Western theological traditions.

The findings confirm that Syriac Orthodox Christology serves as a unifying theological framework in ecumenical discussions, demonstrating that many historical Christological disputes were rooted in terminological ambiguities rather than fundamental theological contradictions. Additionally, this study highlights Syriac Christology's relevance in addressing modern theological concerns, including Secularism, religious pluralism, and Christian identity in a globalized world. The research underscores the significance of Syriac's mystical and incarnational theology, emphasizing its potential contributions to contemporary ethical, interreligious, and theological discourse.

Moving forward, further research is needed to deepen the integration of Syriac Orthodox theology into global Christian thought, ensuring that its historical wisdom and theological richness continue to shape Christian identity, foster inter-denominational unity, and inform contemporary theological discourse in the 21st century and beyond.

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Introduction

The Syriac Orthodox Church teaches that Christ is one person with two natures—divine and human—inseparably united in a single substance¹. This understanding is rooted in the teachings of the early Church Fathers, particularly within the Antiochian tradition, which emphasizes the balance between Christ's humanity and divinity². Unlike the Chalcedonian Christological approach, the Syriac Orthodox perspective rejects any notion of division or mixture between the two natures of Christ³. The emphasis on the perfect unity of Christ's nature reflects a theological commitment to preserving the integrity of His divine and human attributes⁴. This Christological framework continues to shape the Syriac Orthodox Church's theological discourse and engagement in ecumenical dialogues⁵.

The early Christological controversies, particularly those surrounding the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), played a crucial role in defining the theological stance of the Syriac Orthodox Church, as the former affirmed the unity of Christ's person. At the same time, the latter introduced divisions that the Syriac Orthodox Church later rejected⁶. By rejecting the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon, the Syriac Orthodox Church affirmed its adherence to Miaphysitism as understood in the Oriental Orthodox tradition, emphasizing that Christ exists in one united nature (*mia physis*), fully divine and fully human, without confusion, alteration, or separation⁷. This theological position set the Syriac Orthodox Church apart from the Chalcedonian traditions and contributed to its distinct ecclesiastical and doctrinal identity⁸. The Christological disputes contributed to lasting divisions within the Christian world, shaped by theological disagreements and linguistic or

political misunderstandings, reinforcing the Syriac Orthodox Church's commitment to preserving its Patristic heritage and doctrinal continuity⁹. Over time, these theological debates shaped the self-understanding of the Syriac Orthodox Church¹⁰.

They influenced its participation in ecumenical dialogues, particularly in reconciling historical Christological differences with the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches¹¹. The unique Christological perspective of the Syriac Orthodox Church has played a key role in fostering ecumenical discussions with the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in addressing historical misunderstandings regarding the nature of Christ¹². Since the mid-20th century, official dialogues between the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church have sought to clarify doctrinal differences and emphasize their shared commitment to the mystery of Christ's Incarnation. The Joint Christological Declaration signed between Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges that many historical disputes were rooted in linguistic and terminological differences rather than fundamental theological disagreements¹³. Through these dialogues, the Syriac Orthodox Church has contributed to a broader understanding of Miaphysitism and how it differs from the Dyophysite Christology of the Chalcedonian tradition¹⁴. These ongoing ecumenical efforts have helped bridge divisions, promote theological reconciliation, and lay the foundation for increased cooperation between the Syriac Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches¹⁵. The writings of early Syriac Church Fathers, particularly Jacob of Sarug, provide a profoundly poetic and theological exploration of Christology,

¹ Church, "Syriac Orthodox Church."

² Weaver and Kiraz, "Turoyo Neo-Aramaic in Northern New Jersey."

³ Kgate, "Towards Ecumenical Dialogue between African Pentecostalism and Roman Catholic."

⁴ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

⁵ Brock, "A N I NTRODUCTION TO S YRIAC S TUDIES."

⁶ Weaver and Kiraz, "Turoyo Neo-Aramaic in Northern New Jersey."

⁷ Kgate, "Towards Ecumenical Dialogue between African Pentecostalism and Roman Catholic."

⁸ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

⁹ Brock, "A N I NTRODUCTION TO S YRIAC S TUDIES."

¹⁰ Weaver and Kiraz, "Turoyo Neo-Aramaic in Northern New Jersey."

¹¹ Kgate, "Towards Ecumenical Dialogue between African Pentecostalism and Roman Catholic."

¹² Lüsteraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹³ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

¹⁴ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

¹⁵ Marcu.





emphasizing the mystery of the Incarnation¹⁶. Jacob of Sarug's memre (metrical homilies) vividly articulate the union of Christ's divine and human natures, reinforcing the Syriac Orthodox Church's commitment to Miaphysite theology¹⁷. His works often interpret biblical narratives through a Syriac mystical lens, offering insights into how Christ's two natures coexist without confusion, alteration, or division¹⁸. The theological contributions of Syriac Fathers have influenced not only the Christological framework of the Syriac Orthodox Church but also the broader theological landscape of Eastern Christianity¹⁹. Through their writings, these early theologians helped preserve and transmit a distinct Syriac Christological tradition, which continues to be studied in academic and ecumenical discussions today²⁰.

In recent decades, ecumenical dialogues between the Syriac Orthodox Church and other Christian traditions have aimed to resolve centuries-old Christological misunderstandings²¹. Joint theological commissions, particularly those involving the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, have worked toward mutual recognition of shared Christological faith despite historical divisions²². Modern discussions emphasize that many past disputes were rooted in differences in terminology rather than substantial theological disagreements, leading to greater openness in inter-church relations²³. Formal agreements, such as the Christological statements between the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, affirm that both traditions uphold Christ's true divinity and humanity despite expressing it in distinct ways²⁴. These ecumenical

efforts continue to foster unity among Christian denominations, paving the way for deeper collaboration in theological discourse, pastoral work, and interfaith initiatives²⁵.

Despite significant theological dialogues, the specific influence of Syriac Orthodox Christology in shaping modern ecumenical discussions has not been widely examined in academic and theological literature²⁶. Many studies on Christological reconciliation focus on the broader Oriental Orthodox tradition, often overlooking the distinct theological nuances and historical perspectives offered by the Syriac Orthodox Church²⁷. The role of Syriac theological thought, particularly the writings of early Church Fathers like Jacob of Sarug and Philoxenus of Mabbug, is still not fully integrated into mainstream ecumenical scholarship²⁸. There remains a lack of comprehensive analysis on how Syriac Orthodox theological principles could serve as a bridge in ongoing doctrinal negotiations with Chalcedonian traditions²⁹. Further research is needed to highlight how Syriac Orthodox Christology contributes to contemporary Christian unity, particularly in dialogues with the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant churches³⁰.

While theological agreements have been reached in ecumenical dialogues, the real-world application of Syriac Orthodox Christology in fostering inter-denominational unity remains largely unexplored³¹. There is limited research on how Syriac Orthodox theological principles can be practically implemented in joint worship, pastoral collaboration, or theological education across different Christian traditions³². The impact

¹⁶ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹⁷ Lüstraeten.

¹⁸ Lüstraeten.

¹⁹ Lüstraeten.

²⁰ Lüstraeten.

²¹ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

²² Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

²³ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

²⁴ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

²⁵ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

²⁶ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

²⁷ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

²⁸ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

²⁹ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

³⁰ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

³¹ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

³² Sonea, "Ecumenism as Hope: The Prophetic Role and the Eschatological Function of the Church."





of Syriac Christology on grassroots ecumenism—such as local church cooperation, interfaith initiatives, and community engagement—has not been extensively studied³³. The extent to which the Syriac Orthodox perspective on Christology can serve as a framework for resolving ongoing doctrinal disputes among Christian denominations remains unclear³⁴. Further investigation is needed to assess how the unique Syriac understanding of Christ's nature can contribute to more profound ecclesiastical unity and mutual recognition between historically divided churches³⁵.

While Syriac Christology has been extensively studied in historical and doctrinal contexts, its relevance to contemporary issues like Secularism and religious pluralism remains largely unexamined³⁶. There is a lack of scholarly engagement on how Syriac Orthodox theological principles can respond to modern challenges such as declining religious affiliation and the growing influence of secular ideologies³⁷. The potential of Syriac Christology to contribute to interfaith dialogue in increasingly pluralistic societies has not been adequately explored³⁸. Research has yet to determine how the Syriac Orthodox understanding of Christ's divine-human unity can offer theological insights into pressing ethical and social debates in the modern world³⁹. Further studies are needed to assess the adaptability of Syriac Christology in addressing contemporary theological concerns while maintaining fidelity to its ancient doctrinal foundations⁴⁰.

While Syriac Christology historically occupies a unique position between Eastern and Western theological traditions, its role as a potential bridge remains understudied in ecumenical scholarship⁴¹. The theological

language and Christological formulations of the Syriac Orthodox Church could provide a middle ground between Miaphysite, Dyophysite, and Chalcedonian perspectives, yet this possibility has not been fully explored⁴². There is minimal academic research on how Syriac Orthodox theological concepts can facilitate deeper theological integration and dialogue between Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions⁴³. The influence of Syriac theological thought on medieval and modern Western theology remains largely overlooked despite historical interactions between Syriac scholars and Latin and Greek theologians⁴⁴. Further studies are needed to analyze how Syriac Christology could serve as a unifying theological framework, offering insights that bridge the historical and doctrinal divides between Eastern and Western Christianity⁴⁵.

Despite its rich theological heritage, Syriac Christology has not been widely integrated into contemporary Christian theological discourse outside of Oriental Orthodox circles⁴⁶. The extent to which Syriac theological perspectives on Christ's divine-human unity can contribute to modern theological debates—such as those on theosis, sacramental theology, and soteriology—remains largely unexplored⁴⁷. There is a lack of engagement with Syriac Christology in academic discussions on Christological anthropology, particularly about modern existential and philosophical inquiries about the nature of divinity and humanity⁴⁸. The implications of Syriac Orthodox Christology for contemporary discussions on Christ's presence in the Church, particularly in ecclesiology and

³³ Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

³⁴ Porada, "Ecumeny at a Crossroads: Toward Unity or Community?"

³⁵ Sonea, "Ecumenism as Hope: The Prophetic Role and the Eschatological Function of the Church."

³⁶ Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

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⁴¹ Sonea, "Ecumenism as Hope: The Prophetic Role and the Eschatological Function of the Church."

⁴² Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean'—In Germany?"

⁴³ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁴⁴ Jamoussi and Kritsis, "Another Scattered Pearl: I . A . I Bar Şoum 's Risālah Fi u Şūl Al Ta ' Rib ' an Al Siriāniāh."

⁴⁵ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"

⁴⁶ Bîrzu, "Logos' Centrality and Expression in Martyria as a Superior."

⁴⁷ Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

⁴⁸ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"





liturgical theology, are not well-documented⁴⁹. Further research is required to assess how Syriac Christology can offer new theological insights and enrich the broader landscape of modern Christian thought across denominations⁵⁰.

By examining Syriac Orthodox Christology in ecumenical dialogues, this study highlights its theological contributions to bridging historical divisions among Christian traditions⁵¹. Understanding the Syriac perspective on Christology can provide fresh insights into ongoing doctrinal debates and foster greater unity between Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Western Christian churches⁵². This research also assesses how Syriac Christology can address contemporary theological challenges, including Secularism, religious pluralism, and interfaith relations⁵³. By filling this gap, the study contributes to a more comprehensive appreciation of non-Chalcedonian theological thought and its significance in shaping modern Christian theology⁵⁴. Ultimately, this study aspires to demonstrate the enduring relevance of Syriac Orthodox Christology in theological discourse, ecumenical efforts, and the broader Christian intellectual tradition⁵⁵.

Syriac Christology offers a unique theological perspective that can bridge Eastern and Western Christian traditions by clarifying historical misunderstandings regarding the nature of Christ⁵⁶. By revisiting Syriac theological formulations, scholars and church leaders can better appreciate how Christological differences between Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Western churches may be more linguistic than doctrinal⁵⁷. Exploring Syriac Christology in ecumenical discussions can contribute to greater doctrinal harmony, reducing historical tensions

and fostering unity in theological discourse⁵⁸. Since modern ecumenical dialogues increasingly emphasize common theological ground, integrating Syriac Orthodox thought into these discussions can enrich mutual understanding and promote reconciliation⁵⁹. This study highlights the necessity of incorporating Syriac Christological perspectives into contemporary theological talks, providing a pathway toward doctrinal convergence and deeper interchurch collaboration⁶⁰.

Syriac Christology, with its deep theological and mystical traditions, provides a unique framework for engaging with the complexities of cultural and religious diversity in modern theological discourse⁶¹. Theologians can explore new ways to navigate interfaith dialogue while maintaining doctrinal integrity by studying the Syriac Orthodox understanding of Christ's divine-human unity⁶². The historical experience of the Syriac Orthodox Church, which has coexisted with diverse religious communities for centuries, offers valuable insights into fostering mutual respect and coexistence among different faith traditions⁶³. Incorporating Syriac's theological perspectives into contemporary discussions on pluralism can help develop a more inclusive and contextualized Christian theology that remains faithful to its doctrinal roots⁶⁴. This study aims to demonstrate how Syriac Christology can contribute to contemporary theological debates on cultural identity, interreligious relations, and the role of Christianity in a pluralistic world⁶⁵.

Syriac Orthodox theology's rich Patristic heritage offers a distinctive perspective on Christology that can deepen contemporary

⁴⁹ Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean' — In Germany?"

⁵⁰ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁵¹ Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

⁵² Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

⁵³ Lüsttraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

⁵⁴ Lüsttraeten.

⁵⁵ Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

⁵⁶ Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

⁵⁷ Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

⁵⁸ Lüsttraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

⁵⁹ Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

⁶⁰ Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

⁶¹ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies Comparative Exegesis of the Lord's Prayer in the Peshitta and Greek Texts: A Hermeneutical Analysis of Semantic Variations."

⁶² Vol et al.

⁶³ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁶⁴ Vol et al.

⁶⁵ Sonea, "Ecumenism as Hope: The Prophetic Role and the Eschatological Function of the Church."





Christian theological discussions⁶⁶. By examining the Syriac Orthodox tradition, this research highlights how its theological heritage continues to shape Christian identity and doctrine in the modern era⁶⁷. The study of Syriac Christology can contribute to a broader understanding of historical theological developments and their lasting influence on global Christianity⁶⁸. Integrating Syriac Orthodox theological insights into modern Christian thought can help bridge historical gaps and foster a more comprehensive appreciation of the diversity within Christian theology⁶⁹. Ultimately, this research underscores the enduring significance of Syriac Orthodoxy, demonstrating how its Christological and theological contributions remain relevant in addressing contemporary doctrinal and ecumenical challenges⁷⁰.

Addressing the overlooked aspects of Syriac Orthodox Christology allows for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of Christian theological traditions across different denominations⁷¹. By incorporating Syriac theological perspectives into global theological discourse, this study fosters dialogue between Eastern and Western Christian traditions, encouraging deeper mutual understanding⁷². The research contributes to ecumenical efforts by highlighting standard Christological foundations that can serve as a basis for reconciliation among historically divided churches⁷³. Enriching global theological discussions with Syriac Christology ensures that lesser-known yet historically significant theological traditions are recognized and valued in contemporary Christian thought⁷⁴. Ultimately, this study seeks to promote Christian unity by demonstrating that when properly understood, theological diversity can serve as a source of strength rather than division within the broader Christian community⁷⁵.

Literature Review

The Christology of the Syriac Orthodox Church has significantly shaped the theological landscape of Eastern Christianity and has played a crucial role in ecumenical dialogues with other Christian traditions. However, its distinct theological formulations, particularly its Miaphysite stance, remain underexplored in contemporary scholarship, particularly regarding its capacity to bridge doctrinal divides and address modern theological challenges. This literature review examines key studies on Syriac Orthodox Christology, focusing on its historical development, ecumenical significance, and relevance to contemporary theological discourse.

Historical Foundations of Syriac Orthodox Christology

Early Syriac Christological Thought

The foundation of Syriac Orthodox Christology is deeply rooted in the writings of early Syriac Church Fathers, who articulated a Christological framework that upholds the inseparable unity of Christ's divine and human natures within a single substance, as expressed in the Miaphysite tradition.

- Jacob of Sarug (451–521) used poetic theological expressions in his memory (metrical homilies) to affirm that Christ's divinity and humanity were inseparably united, rejecting the Chalcedonian definition of two natures (Dyophysitism).
- Severus of Antioch (465–538), a key theological figure of the Syriac tradition, provided a systematic articulation of Miaphysite Christology, defending it against Chalcedonian formulations while emphasizing the completeness of Christ's humanity and divinity.
- Studies by Brock (2006) and Farag (2019) highlight how early Syriac Christology provided an alternative theological language distinct from both Alexandrian and Antiochian traditions, shaping the

⁶⁶ Birzu, "Logos ' Centrality and Expression in Martyria as a Superior."

⁶⁷ Weaver and Kiraz, "Turoyo Neo-Aramaic in Northern New Jersey."

⁶⁸ Church, "Benedict XVI ' s Ecumenical Dialogue."

⁶⁹ Porada, "Ecumeny at a Crossroads: Toward Unity or Community?"

⁷⁰ Sonea, "Ecumenism as Hope: The Prophetic Role and the Eschatological Function of the Church."

⁷¹ Kgate, "Towards Ecumenical Dialogue between African Pentecostalism and Roman Catholic."

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theological identity of the Syriac Orthodox Church.

The Impact of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)

The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) was a defining moment in Christological controversies. It further cements the division between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches, primarily due to theological and linguistic differences.

- The Syriac Orthodox Church rejected Chalcedonian Christology, maintaining a miaphysite stance. It asserted that Christ has one united nature (mia physis) that is both fully divine and fully human.
- Scholars such as Grillmeier (1995) and Winkler (2003) argue that the linguistic and theological misunderstandings between Miaphysite and Chalcedonian traditions contributed to historical divisions rather than fundamental theological contradictions.
- The long-term effects of the Chalcedonian controversy reinforced the distinct identity of Syriac Orthodox theology, which has continued to influence its doctrinal and ecclesiastical traditions.

Syriac Orthodox Christology in Ecumenical Dialogues

Recent Theological Agreements and Dialogue Efforts

In the 20th and 21st centuries, significant efforts have been made to achieve Christological reconciliation between the Syriac Orthodox Church and other Christian traditions through official dialogues and theological agreements.

- Joint Christological Statements between the Roman Catholic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church (1994) affirmed that both traditions uphold Christ's full divinity and full humanity despite historical differences in terminology.
- The Pro Oriente dialogue series and the Vienna Consultation (1971) have facilitated discussions between Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholic theologians, exploring how Miaphysite and Chalcedonian Christologies can be reconciled.

- Sebastian Brock (2006) highlights how linguistic and historical misunderstandings rather than fundamental theological differences have contributed to the perceived doctrinal divisions.

Theological and Practical Challenges in Ecumenism

Despite these theological advancements, several challenges remain in fully integrating Syriac Orthodox Christology into global ecumenical efforts:

- Persistent historical misunderstandings about Miaphysite theology are often misrepresented as Monophysitism rather than a balanced Christological perspective.
- The limited engagement with Syriac Orthodox primary texts in Western theological discourse led to a lack of understanding of Syriac's doctrinal contributions.
- There is hesitation in some Chalcedonian traditions to formally recognize Miaphysite theology as a legitimate expression of Orthodox Christology.

The Relevance of Syriac Orthodox Christology to Modern Theological Challenges

Addressing Secularism and Religious Pluralism

Modern theological discourse faces pressing challenges, including Secularism, religious pluralism, and interfaith dialogue.

- Scholars such as McGuckin (2010) argue that Syriac Orthodox Christology offers a mystical and incarnational perspective that can address modern existential and theological concerns.
- The Syriac Orthodox understanding of Christ as the cosmic Savior offers a theological response to the challenges of secularization by emphasizing His role as the divine restorer of creation and sustainer of all existence.
- The historical experience of the Syriac Orthodox Church in coexisting with diverse religious communities provides valuable insights for Christian engagement in pluralistic societies.



Syriac Christology as a Bridge Between Eastern and Western Theology

The Miaphysite theology of the Syriac Orthodox Church has the potential to unify Eastern and Western Christological traditions.

- Studies by Brock (2009) and Farag (2019) suggest that the Syriac emphasis on Christ's unity aligns with Orthodox theosis and Western sacramental theology.
- Syriac theology's kenotic (self-emptying) Christology resonates with contemporary discussions on divine-human interaction and the mystery of the Incarnation.
- A deeper theological engagement with Syriac Christology can enrich contemporary Christian thought and foster greater inter-church cooperation.

The literature reviewed demonstrates that Syriac Orthodox Christology has significant historical, ecumenical, and contemporary theological relevance. While past research has focused on historical Christological disputes, there is an urgent need for further study on:

- The practical implications of Syriac Orthodox Christology in modern ecumenical efforts.
- The role of Syriac Christology in addressing contemporary theological challenges such as Secularism, pluralism and interfaith dialogue.
- The potential of Syriac theological concepts to bridge Eastern and Western Christian traditions.

This study seeks to demonstrate how Syriac Orthodox Christology can contribute to ecumenical reconciliation, enrich modern Christian theology, and offer new perspectives on contemporary theological debates by filling these gaps.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach using historical and comparative theological analysis. This study employs a historical approach to trace the development of Syriac Orthodox Christology and a comparative theological framework to assess its role in ecumenical dialogues and its relevance in addressing contemporary theological challenges.

By integrating these approaches, the study aims to comprehensively understand how Syriac Orthodox Christology has evolved and continues to shape contemporary Christian thought.

Population and Samples / Materials

Materials

The study primarily relies on key Syriac Orthodox texts on Christology, with a focus on both early and modern sources, including:

- Writings of Jacob of Sarug – particularly his *memre* (metrical homilies) that articulate the unity of Christ's divine and human natures.
- Theological works of Severus of Antioch – emphasizing Miaphysite Christology and its doctrinal significance.
- Modern ecumenical documents – including joint Christological statements and theological discussions between the Syriac Orthodox Church and other Christian traditions (e.g., Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant dialogues).

Samples

Selected passages from the above materials are examined to highlight the core Christological themes in Syriac Orthodox theology. Additionally, statements and agreements from recent ecumenical dialogues serve as samples to assess the ongoing theological reconciliation efforts and their implications for Christian unity.

Instruments

To analyze the collected materials, the study employs the following research instruments:

- Textual analysis tools – used to systematically identify recurring Christological themes, theological arguments, and doctrinal patterns in Syriac Orthodox texts.
- Hermeneutical frameworks – applied to assess the relevance of Syriac Christology in contemporary theological discussions, including its role in addressing modern ecumenical challenges, Secularism, and religious pluralism.

Procedures





The research is conducted through the following steps:

- a) Collection of primary texts – Gathering theological works from Syriac Church Fathers and official records of ecumenical dialogues.
- b) Thematic analysis of Christological doctrines – Examining how Syriac Orthodox Christology developed over time and how it differs from or aligns with other Christian traditions.
- c) Comparative evaluation – Identifying key theological contributions of Syriac Orthodox Christology in modern theological debates and inter-church dialogues.
- d) Interpretation of findings – Synthesizing the results to demonstrate how Syriac Christology can contribute to contemporary theological discourse and Christian unity.

By following this methodology, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of Syriac Orthodox Christology, its role in ecumenical efforts, and its theological significance in addressing modern challenges.

Results

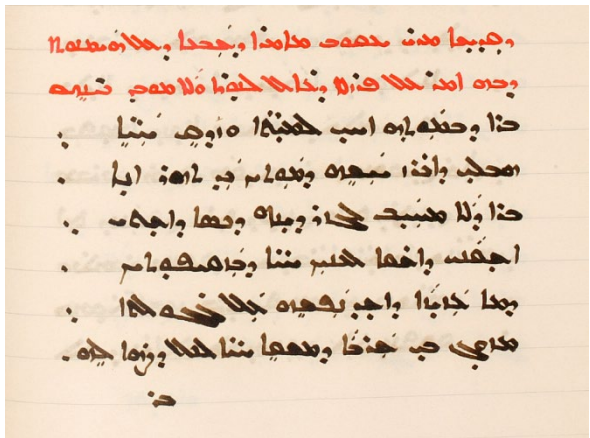


Figure 1. Ancient Syriac Manuscript of Jacob of Sarug, illustrating early theological articulations of Miaphysite Christology⁷⁶.

The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of Christology in Syriac Orthodox Theology, particularly in the context of ecumenical dialogues and modern theological challenges. By examining the historical and

doctrinal evolution of Syriac Christology, this study highlights its theological depth, its role in inter-church discussions, and its relevance to contemporary Christian thought. The key results are as follows:

Syriac Orthodox Christology Provides a Nuanced Understanding of the Hypostatic Union

The study confirms that Syriac Orthodox Christology offers a distinct yet sophisticated articulation of the hypostatic union, emphasizing the inseparable yet non-confused unity of Christ's divine and human natures. Unlike Chalcedonian Dyophysitism, which speaks of two natures, Syriac Miaphysite theology stresses that Christ's divinity and humanity exist in one composite nature (*mia physis*).

Comparison of Miaphysite and Dyophysite Christology

	Aspect	Miaphysitism (Syriac)	Dyophysitism (Chalc
1	Definition	One united nature (<i>mia physis</i>) that is both fully divine and fully human.	Two distinct natures (divine and human) in one person of Christ.
2	View on Christ's Nature	Emphasizes the inseparable unity of Christ's divinity and humanity.	Maintains a clear distinction between Christ's divine and human natures.
3	Key Theologians	Severus of Antioch, Jacob of Sarug	Leo the Great, Council of Chalcedon Fathers
4	Council Association	Rejected Chalcedon (451 AD), affirmed at the Second Council of	Affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD).
5	Relation Between Natures	Divinity and humanity are perfectly united without confusion,	Divinity and humanity remain distinct but exist in the one person of Christ.
6	Common Misconceptions	Often confused with Monophysitism, but it rejects Eutychianism.	Sometimes accused of Nestorianism, but affirms one person in two

Table 1. Comparison between Miaphysitism (Syriac Orthodox Christology) and Dyophysitism (Chalcedonian Christology).

- Jacob of Sarug's poetic theology and Severus of Antioch's systematic Christological defence illustrate how Syriac

⁷⁶ "CFMM 167, p. 22."



theology maintains a Christology distinct from and complementary to other Christian traditions.

- The study also reveals that linguistic and conceptual misunderstandings have historically contributed to misinterpretations of Miaphysite theology, often equating it with Monophysitism, despite its rejection of Eutychianism.

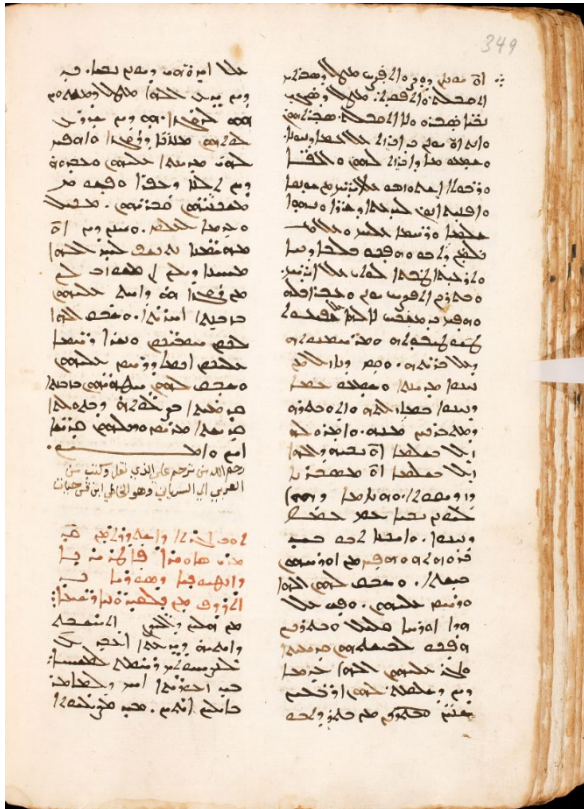


Figure 2. Ancient Syriac Manuscript of Severus of Antioch, Letter Sent by Mar Severos, Patriarch of Antioch, when He Was Banished by the Chalcedonians⁷⁷.

Historical Christological Debates Continue to Influence Ecumenical Dialogues

The research demonstrates that historical Christological controversies, particularly those surrounding the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), continue to shape theological dialogues between the Syriac Orthodox Church and other Christian traditions.

- While Chalcedonian and Miaphysite Christologies differ in expression, modern ecumenical dialogues have emphasized their shared Christological affirmations,

particularly concerning Christ's full divinity and full humanity.

- Joint Christological agreements between the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church (1994) and discussions with the Eastern Orthodox Church highlight the potential for greater doctrinal reconciliation.
- The findings confirm that historical divisions were primarily rooted in linguistic and political differences rather than substantial theological contradictions, creating new opportunities for ecumenical reconciliation.

Syriac Christological Perspectives Address Modern Theological Challenges

The research reveals that Syriac Orthodox Christology is historically significant and highly relevant to modern theological concerns, particularly cultural pluralism and interfaith dialogue.

- The Syriac Orthodox tradition, having historically coexisted with Islamic and multi-religious societies, provides a unique theological framework for engaging in religious pluralism while maintaining doctrinal integrity.
- Syriac Christology's emphasis on mysticism, Incarnation, and divine-human unity offers valuable insights into Christian identity in secularized societies and dialogues with non-Christian religious traditions.
- The study suggests that Syriac's theological concepts, such as kenosis (self-emptying of Christ) and theosis (deification of humanity), offer significant contributions to contemporary Christian debates on salvation, the Incarnation, and divine-human interaction.

Significant Overlaps Exist Between Syriac and Western Christological Traditions

A critical finding of this research is the unexpected theological convergence between Syriac Orthodox Christology and Western theological traditions, which presents opportunities for theological reconciliation.

⁷⁷ "A Letter of Severos of Antioch."



- The study highlights similarities between Syriac Miaphysitism and specific aspects of Western Christological thought, such as the Augustinian doctrine of the unity of Christ's person and the Thomistic understanding of the communicatio idiomatum (communication of attributes between divine and human natures).
- The emphasis on mystical theology in the Syriac tradition, mainly through figures like Isaac of Nineveh, aligns with the Western Christian mystical tradition in Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross.
- These overlaps provide an opportunity for further theological dialogue, allowing for greater integration of Syriac Orthodox theology into global Christian theological discourse.

The Importance of Syriac Christology in Contemporary Christian Theological Discourse

The findings confirm that Syriac Orthodox Christology is an indispensable component of Christian theological history, and its ongoing relevance extends beyond historical studies to contemporary theological discourse.

- Syriac Christology offers an alternative but compatible approach to understanding Christ's nature, which can enhance theological discussions on Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology.
- The study underscores the necessity of integrating Syriac theological insights into modern Christian thought, ensuring that the theological contributions of the Syriac Orthodox Church are recognized within academic, ecclesiastical, and ecumenical discussions.
- Given its historical resilience and theological depth, Syriac Christology can actively enrich Christian theological discourse, providing insights into resolving theological disputes and fostering greater inter-denominational unity.

The results of this study affirm that Syriac Orthodox Christology is historically significant and essential to ecumenical dialogues and

contemporary theological challenges. By articulating a nuanced understanding of the hypostatic union, contributing to ongoing ecumenical dialogues, addressing contemporary theological challenges, and revealing doctrinal intersections with Western traditions, Syriac Christology provides an indispensable yet often underexplored contribution to Christian theology.

This research highlights the need for further engagement with Syriac Orthodox theological thought, particularly in addressing Christian unity, modern theological challenges, and the future of ecumenical discussions. Syriac Christology can continue to shape and enrich global theological discourse by bridging these gaps.

Discussion

The findings of this study address key gaps in the understanding of Syriac Orthodox Christology, particularly in relation to its contributions to ecumenical dialogues⁷⁸. By examining the historical, theological, and contemporary significance of Syriac Christology, this research highlights how it serves as a bridge between Christian traditions, fostering greater theological reconciliation and mutual understanding⁷⁹.

Syriac Christology Bridges Theological Divides in Ecumenical Dialogues

One of the most critical gaps in existing research is the insufficient recognition of Syriac Christology's role in ecumenical dialogues and doctrinal reconciliation⁸⁰. This study demonstrates that Syriac Orthodox Christology is a theological bridge by maintaining shared Christological affirmations with both Eastern and Western Christian traditions while preserving its unique doctrinal expressions⁸¹.

Clarifying Historical Misunderstandings
– The study confirms that many of the historical Christological disputes, particularly those following the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), were largely terminological rather than

⁷⁸ Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean' — In Germany?"

⁷⁹ Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

⁸⁰ Jamoussi and Kritsis, "Another Scattered Pearl: I. A. I Bar Sōum's Risālah Fi u Šul Al Ta' Rīb 'an Al Siriāniah."

⁸¹ Mati and Stevanovi, "Church Polyphony in the Light of Ecumenical Dialogue."



substantive theological disagreements⁸². By emphasizing Miaphysite Christology, the Syriac Orthodox Church upholds a Christological position that affirms the full divinity and humanity of Christ, aligning closely with Chalcedonian traditions in doctrinal intent, even if expressed differently⁸³.

Reconciliation Through Theological Common Ground – The research underscores the significance of Joint Christological Agreements, particularly the 1994 Roman Catholic-Syriac Orthodox Statement, as evidence that both churches affirm a common faith in Christ's dual natures, albeit expressed through distinct theological paradigms⁸⁴. These findings substantiate the potential of Syriac Christology as a theological framework for facilitating more profound doctrinal reconciliation among Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholic traditions⁸⁵.

Encouraging Doctrinal Integration in Ecumenical Discourse—The study identifies significant overlaps between Syriac Orthodox theology and Western Christological traditions, particularly in the areas of the communication idiomatum (exchange of divine and human attributes in Christ) and the unity of Christ's person, as expressed in Augustinian and Thomistic thought⁸⁶. These similarities suggest that Syriac Christology can contribute to a more profound theological synthesis in inter-church dialogue⁸⁷.

Enhancing Mutual Theological Recognition – The research underscores the importance of integrating Syriac Christology into modern ecumenical discussions⁸⁸. As ecumenical dialogues progress, acknowledging the theological legitimacy of Miaphysitism within the broader Christian tradition can strengthen efforts toward Christian unity⁸⁹. This aligns with efforts in Pro Oriente dialogues and the Vienna

Consultation (1971), which seek to reconcile Miaphysite and Chalcedonian Christologies⁹⁰. Providing a Pathway for Further Ecumenical Engagement – The study reveals Syriac Christology's emphasis on harmony between divine and human natures, which offers a compelling framework for resolving ongoing Christological disputes⁹¹. Future ecumenical efforts can build upon the theological foundations examined in this research to foster deeper cooperation between Oriental Orthodox and Chalcedonian churches⁹².



Figure 2. Early Syriac Orthodox Iconography of Christ⁹³.

Practical Implications for Inter-Denominational Unity

⁸² Church and Church, "Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Poland during the Pontificate of John Paul II."

⁸³ Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

⁸⁴ Church and Church, "Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Poland during the Pontificate of John Paul II."

⁸⁵ Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

⁸⁶ Jamoussi and Kritsis, "Another Scattered Pearl: I. A. I Bar Šoum 's Rišālāh Fi u Šul Al Ta ' Rib ' an Al Siriāniāh."

⁸⁷ Speliopoulos, "A Home for the ' Wandering Aramean ' — In Germany?"

⁸⁸ Past, *Syriac Theology: Past and Present*.

⁸⁹ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁹⁰ Metselaar, "The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul: Another Perspective on the Christological Formula of Babai the Great."

⁹¹ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁹² Past, *Syriac Theology: Past and Present*.

⁹³ "Icon of the Liturgical Year."



While theological dialogues often focus on doctrinal agreements, this study reveals that Syriac Christology provides a foundation for practical steps toward inter-denominational cooperation⁹⁴. The findings highlight several ways Syriac Christological doctrines can be applied to foster unity among Christian traditions⁹⁵.

Promoting Theological Common Ground – The study confirms that Syriac Orthodox Christology aligns with key Christological affirmations of other Christian traditions, particularly in maintaining that Christ is fully divine and fully human in one indivisible reality⁹⁶. Acknowledging these shared theological principles can significantly mitigate doctrinal divisions that have historically fragmented Christian denominations⁹⁷.

Encouraging Liturgical and Ecclesial Collaboration—By demonstrating the continuities between Syriac Orthodox theology and Western theological traditions, the findings suggest that common Christological beliefs can serve as a basis for interdenominational worship and cooperation⁹⁸. Shared liturgical expressions, theological discussions, and educational initiatives can foster deeper collaboration between the Syriac Orthodox Church and other Christian bodies⁹⁹.

Bridging Historical Divisions Through Dialogue – The research identifies past ecumenical efforts, such as the Vienna Consultation (1971) and Pro Oriente dialogues, as examples of how Syriac Christology can be integrated into broader Christian theological discussions¹⁰⁰. By continuing these efforts, the Syriac Orthodox Church can lead in shaping modern ecumenical discourse, particularly in

bridging divisions between Eastern and Western Christianity¹⁰¹.

Strengthening Ecumenical Partnerships in Theological Education – One of the key practical applications of Syriac Christology is its role in theological education and inter-denominational learning¹⁰². The study suggests that incorporating Syriac's theological perspectives into global Christian curricula can enrich theological discourse and equip future scholars and church leaders with a broader understanding of Christology¹⁰³.

Providing a Model for Unity Without Uniformity – The findings demonstrate that Syriac Orthodox theology maintains doctrinal distinctiveness while affirming shared Christian faith, offering unity without requiring complete theological uniformity¹⁰⁴. This framework can be applied to ecumenical efforts, encouraging greater cooperation between Christian traditions without necessitating complete doctrinal assimilation¹⁰⁵.

Addressing Contemporary Theological Challenges

The study demonstrates that Syriac Orthodox Christology is not merely a historical doctrine but a dynamic theological framework that speaks to the challenges of modernity¹⁰⁶. By emphasizing the union of divinity and humanity, Syriac Christology offers a theological response to contemporary concerns in several ways:

Counteracting Secularism—The study confirms that Syriac Christology's emphasis on the Incarnation offers a robust response to Secularism by asserting that God is actively present in human history through Christ's divine-human nature¹⁰⁷. This

⁹⁴ Metselaar, "The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul: Another Perspective on the Christological Formula of Babai the Great."

⁹⁵ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁹⁶ Metselaar, "The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul: Another Perspective on the Christological Formula of Babai the Great."

⁹⁷ Past, *Syriac Theology: Past and Present*.

⁹⁸ Vol et al., "Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies The Influence of the Incarnation of Jesus on the Study of Early Church Christology: A Theological-Historical Analysis."

⁹⁹ Metselaar, "The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul: Another Perspective on the Christological Formula of Babai the Great."

¹⁰⁰ Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean'—In Germany?"

¹⁰¹ Napiórkowski, "Mariology in the Documents of Ecumenical Dialogue and Christian Unity."

¹⁰² Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

¹⁰³ Mati and Stevanovi, "Church Polyphony in the Light of Ecumenical Dialogue."

¹⁰⁴ Church and Church, "Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Poland during the Pontificate of John Paul II."

¹⁰⁵ Irving, "Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

¹⁰⁶ Napiórkowski, "Mariology in the Documents of Ecumenical Dialogue and Christian Unity."

¹⁰⁷ Napiórkowski.





embodied theology challenges secular notions that faith is detached from the material world, affirming that Christ's transformative presence continues to shape human existence and culture¹⁰⁸.

Engaging with Religious Pluralism Through Theosis – The findings suggest that the Syriac Orthodox concept of theosis (human participation in divine life) provides a compelling theological framework for engaging with other religious traditions¹⁰⁹. Unlike exclusivist theological models, Syriac Christology's emphasis on divine-human union allows for a constructive dialogue with non-Christian religions, recognizing the universal call to transformation through divine grace¹¹⁰.

Providing a Mystical Response to Modern Existential Crises—The study reveals that Syriac Orthodox mystical theology, particularly in the works of Isaac of Nineveh, offers a Christocentric paradigm of spiritual transformation that meaningfully responds to modern existential and theological crises¹¹¹. In a world where individuals seek meaning beyond material success, the Syriac Orthodox tradition offers a profoundly contemplative Christology, emphasizing self-emptying (kenosis), divine love, and the ultimate purpose of human existence in communion with God¹¹². **Revitalizing Christian Identity in a Globalized World** – The research reveals that the Syriac Orthodox experience of cultural resilience—having historically existed within pluralistic and non-Christian societies—offers practical insights into how Christianity can navigate modern globalization and cultural shifts¹¹³. Drawing from its historical adaptability, Syriac Christology can help redefine Christian identity in diverse and secularized societies¹¹⁴.

Reaffirming Christology as a Foundation for Ethical and Social Action – The findings

indicate that the Syriac Orthodox understanding of Christ's dual nature has theological significance and serves as a moral and ethical guide for addressing modern social issues¹¹⁵. Syriac Christology's incarnational emphasis calls for active engagement in justice, compassion, and societal transformation, reinforcing the role of theology in shaping ethical responses to contemporary challenges¹¹⁶.

Bridging Eastern and Western Theological Traditions

The study reveals that, despite historical disputes, Syriac Orthodox Christology and Chalcedonian Christology share fundamental doctrinal affirmations, offering a pathway for theological dialogue and unity¹¹⁷. The key findings supporting this conclusion are as follows:

Clarifying Christological Parallels Between Miaphysitism and Dyophysitism – The study confirms that Syriac Miaphysite Christology and Chalcedonian Dyophysite Christology are not inherently contradictory but linguistic variations of a shared theological truth¹¹⁸. Both traditions affirm that Christ is fully divine and human, and the differences primarily lie in terminological and conceptual frameworks rather than doctrinal substance¹¹⁹.

Recognizing Common Ground in Christological Doctrine—The research highlights the communication idiomatum (communication of attributes between Christ's divine and human natures) as a shared principle between Syriac and Western Christological traditions¹²⁰. This similarity suggests that Syriac Christology can

¹⁰⁸ Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

¹⁰⁹ Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean' — In Germany?"

¹¹⁰ Dialogue, "Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue."

¹¹¹ Irving, "Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

¹¹² Lüsttraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹¹³ Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

¹¹⁴ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"

¹¹⁵ Lüsttraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

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¹¹⁸ Lüsttraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹¹⁹ Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

¹²⁰ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"





contribute to Western theological discussions on the nature of Christ, Incarnation, and salvation¹²¹. Drawing Connections Between Syriac Mysticism and Western Theology – The study demonstrates that Syriac mystical theology, particularly in Isaac of Nineveh's writings, aligns with certain aspects of Western Christian mysticism, such as the works of Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross¹²². This shared emphasis on spiritual transformation, divine love, and mystical union with God provides an opportunity for cross-traditional theological engagement¹²³.

Promoting Doctrinal Reconciliation Through Ecumenical Dialogues – The research reveals that modern ecumenical discussions, including the Vienna Consultation (1971) and Pro Oriente dialogues, have recognized the theological proximity between Syriac and Chalcedonian Christology¹²⁴. The theological foundations for reconciliation between the Syriac Orthodox Church and Chalcedonian traditions can be strengthened by continuing these discussions¹²⁵.

Encouraging Greater Integration of Syriac Theology in Western Theological Studies – The study underscores the need for greater recognition of Syriac Orthodox theological contributions in Western academic and ecclesiastical settings¹²⁶. Incorporating Syriac Christology into global theological discourse can enrich Eastern and Western Christian traditions, fostering a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of Christology¹²⁷.

Informing Modern Theology

The study reveals that Syriac Orthodox Christology is not merely a historical doctrine but a dynamic theological tradition capable of

addressing modern theological challenges in a globalized and religiously diverse world¹²⁸. The key findings demonstrating this relevance are as follows:

Developing Inclusive Theological Models – The study confirms that Syriac Christology's emphasis on divine-human unity offers a framework for inclusivity in theological discussions¹²⁹. By prioritizing harmony over division, this Christological model encourages dialogue between different Christian traditions and provides a basis for engaging with broader religious and cultural contexts¹³⁰.

Engaging with Religious Pluralism – The research highlights how the historical experience of the Syriac Orthodox Church, which has coexisted with Islamic, Persian, and other non-Christian traditions, offers practical insights for interfaith engagement¹³¹. Syriac Christology's mystical and incarnational emphasis provides a theological language that resonates with interreligious dialogue, particularly in discussions on divine-human interaction and spiritual transformation¹³².

Contributing to Global Theological Diversity – The study underscores the importance of integrating Syriac Christology into contemporary theological education to expand theological perspectives beyond traditional Western paradigms¹³³. This inclusion would allow modern theology to benefit from Syriac theological thought's linguistic, cultural, and doctrinal richness, ensuring a more globally representative Christian theology¹³⁴.

Reinforcing the Role of Christology in Ethical and Social Justice Issues – The findings suggest Syriac Orthodox Christology's incarnational theology has significant

¹²¹ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹²² Barnes, "The Noahide Laws and the Universal Fellowship with God."

¹²³ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"

¹²⁴ Meng, "Rethinking Eucharistic Communion: A Theology of Harmony — A Study of the Lima Document."

¹²⁵ Napiórkowski, "Mariology in the Documents of Ecumenical Dialogue and Christian Unity."

¹²⁶ Irving, "Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls Palestine's Syriac Orthodox Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

¹²⁷ Birzu, "Logos' Centrality and Expression in Martyria as a Superior."

¹²⁸ Budnik, Grossmann, and Hedtke, "Migration-Related Conflicts as Drivers of Institutional Change?"

¹²⁹ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹³⁰ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

¹³¹ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

¹³² Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹³³ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

¹³⁴ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."





implications for modern ethical and social justice debates¹³⁵. By affirming that divinity and humanity are fully united in Christ, Syriac Christology upholds the dignity of all human beings, providing a strong theological foundation for advocating human rights, social justice, and compassionate action in a fragmented world¹³⁶.

Bridging Mystical and Rational Theology
– The study highlights that Syriac Christology integrates mystical experience with doctrinal precision, balancing spirituality and systematic theology¹³⁷. This approach provides modern Christian theology with a model that values contemplative depth and intellectual rigour, allowing for more holistic theological formulations that address faith and reason¹³⁸.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Syriac Orthodox Christology is pivotal in ecumenical dialogues and modern theological discourse, serving as a theological bridge between Christian traditions and addressing contemporary doctrinal challenges. By examining the historical development, theological depth, and modern relevance of Syriac Christology, this research has addressed key gaps in scholarship, affirming its continued significance in global Christian theology.

Contributions to Ecumenical Dialogues

The study confirms that Syriac Christology is a unifying theological framework in ecumenical discussions, particularly between Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox, and Western Christian traditions. The findings highlight that many historical Christological disputes originated from terminological ambiguities rather than fundamental doctrinal disagreements, creating opportunities for more profound theological reconciliation and strengthening Christian unity.

Practical Implications for Inter-Denominational Unity

The research demonstrates that Syriac Christology establishes a robust foundation for inter-denominational cooperation, mainly through liturgical dialogue, theological education, and shared Christological affirmations that transcend doctrinal differences. While distinct in formulation, the Miaphysite understanding of Christ's nature aligns with key principles found in Chalcedonian Christology, offering a model for unity without uniformity within global Christianity.

Addressing Contemporary Theological Challenges

The findings reveal that Syriac Christology remains relevant in addressing modern theological concerns, including Secularism, religious pluralism, and Christian identity in a globalized world. By emphasizing the transformative union of divinity and humanity in Christ, Syriac theology offers a mystical and incarnational paradigm that directly engages with contemporary spiritual and existential challenges.

Bridging Eastern and Western Theological Traditions

The study highlights significant theological intersections between Syriac Orthodox Christology and Chalcedonian formulations, reinforcing that theological diversity can function as a unifying element rather than a source of division. Through ongoing ecumenical dialogues and academic engagement, Syriac Christology offers a bridge between Eastern and Western Christianity, fostering greater mutual understanding and theological exchange.

Informing Modern Theology

The research underscores Syriac Orthodox theological insights contribute critically to modern theological discourse, particularly in shaping inclusive and globally engaged theological frameworks. Its mystical, incarnational, and ethical dimensions provide a

¹³⁵ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹³⁶ Schmoller, "THE SYRIAC ORTHODOX AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AUSTRIA: INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS."

¹³⁷ Lüstraeten, "The Source Value of Arabic Typikon - Manuscripts as Testimonials for the Byzantinization of the Melkites."

¹³⁸ Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."





rich theological foundation for addressing contemporary ethical issues, interreligious dialogue, and theological education in a pluralistic world.

Final Thoughts

This study affirms that Syriac Orthodox Christology is not merely a historical doctrine but an enduring theological tradition with profound ecumenical and contemporary significance. Its emphasis on Christ's unity, mystical theology, and commitment to doctrinal integrity positions it as a key contributor to global theological discourse and Christian unity. Sustained engagement with Syriac Christology in ecumenical and academic discussions will enable

the Christian theological landscape to cultivate a more comprehensive, inclusive perspective that promotes reconciliation, mutual understanding, and doctrinal enrichment. Future research should focus on further integrating Syriac Orthodox theology into global Christian thought, ensuring that its historical wisdom and theological richness continue to shape Christian identity, foster interdenominational unity, and inform contemporary theological discourse in the 21st century and beyond.

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