




## Qnoma and Hypostasis: A Comparative Study of Aramaic and Greek Christological Terminology

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**Abstract:** This study offers a comparative analysis of Qnoma and Hypostasis, two crucial terms in early Christian Christology, exploring their theological, linguistic, and philosophical implications within the Syriac and Greek traditions. Qnoma, rooted in the Syriac tradition, refers to the personal subsistence and unity of Christ's dual nature. At the same time, Hypostasis, derived from Greek philosophical thought, on Christ's essence and individual personhood. This research investigates the distinct theological roles of these terms in explaining the relationship between Christ's humanity and divinity, particularly within the Nestorian and Chalcedonian frameworks.

Using a comparative methodological approach, the study examines historical texts, theological writings, and ecumenical discussions to distinguish the nuances between Qnoma and Hypostasis. This approach clarifies how these terms were employed to articulate the Incarnation and resolve complex theological issues surrounding the union of Christ's two natures. The findings demonstrate that while both terms aim to preserve the integrity of Christ's humanity and divinity, they arise from distinct cultural and philosophical contexts, leading to different Christological interpretations.

The study concludes that the distinction between Qnoma and Hypostasis is essential for understanding the development of Christological thought and resolving the theological tensions between Eastern and Western Christian traditions. By filling the gaps in previous scholarship, the research fosters a clearer path for ecumenical dialogue and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of early Christian theology. The comparative Analysis enriches our comprehension of the historical development of these terms and provides a framework for theological reconciliation and unity within the broader Christian community.

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## Introduction

Qnoma is a term from the Syriac Christian tradition that refers to the individual reality or personhood within Christ's nature, emphasizing the personal unity of His divine and human natures<sup>123</sup>. Historically, Qnoma was used to describe an individual subsistence or "self-subsistence" in early Syriac literature before being integrated into Christological discussions during the 5th-7th centuries<sup>45</sup>. Although it has pre-Christian origins, Qnoma was adopted in Christian theology, particularly by the Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian churches, to denote Christ's existence, ensuring a distinct yet unified understanding of His dual natures<sup>67</sup>. These traditions extensively debated the term, especially regarding the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures<sup>89</sup>. Some theologians viewed Qnoma as synonymous with Hypostasis, while others upheld a more distinctive understanding<sup>1011</sup>. As Qnoma evolved in theological discourse, it became central to discussions about the unity of Christ's personhood, particularly in response to the challenges of defining the nature of the Incarnation amidst the theological debates of the early Christian councils<sup>1213</sup>.

The theological debates surrounding Qnoma and Hypostasis were deeply rooted in the Christological controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries<sup>14</sup>. The Council of Ephesus (431 AD) and the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) highlighted divisions between the Nestorian emphasis on the distinction between Christ's divine and human natures and the Miaphysite view of an

inseparable union<sup>15</sup>. These debates shaped the theological frameworks of both the Eastern and Western Christian traditions<sup>16</sup>. The Greek term Hypostasis plays a foundational role in Western Christology, denoting the subsistence or individuality of Christ, and is commonly used to express the union of His two natures—divine and human<sup>17</sup>. Hypostasis has been integral to Western theological thought, particularly after the Council of Chalcedon, which emphasized the union of Christ's two natures within one person<sup>18</sup>. The Greek understanding of Hypostasis stresses the essence or underlying reality of the person, asserting the indivisible nature of Christ while affirming His two distinct natures<sup>19</sup>.

Through the theological framework of Hypostasis, early Church Fathers, including those at the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon, sought to preserve the unity of Christ's divine and human aspects<sup>2021</sup>. Hypostasis played a key role in rejecting the heresies of the time, such as Arianism and Nestorianism, while affirming that Christ was truly God and man, united in one divine person<sup>2223</sup>. Despite the clarity that Hypostasis brought to Western theology, its interaction with Qnoma in Eastern Christian traditions remains a point of theological divergence, as Eastern churches emphasized a more personal and dynamic understanding of Christ's union<sup>2425</sup>.

Despite the linguistic and cultural differences between the Syriac and Greek traditions, both Qnoma and Hypostasis are central to the doctrinal discussions concerning the

<sup>1</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>2</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>3</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action: Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language ( S )."

<sup>4</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>5</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms , and If So , Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis ?"

<sup>6</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>7</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms , and If So , Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis ?"

<sup>8</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>9</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms , and If So , Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis ?"

<sup>10</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

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<sup>12</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>13</sup> Nedelcu, "Considerations on the Human Body in European Art from Ancient Times to Present Day."

<sup>14</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>15</sup> Brock.

<sup>16</sup> Brock.

<sup>17</sup> Lai, "John Chrysostom ' s Reception of Basil of Caesarea ' s Trinitarian Theology."

<sup>18</sup> Lai.

<sup>19</sup> Lai.

<sup>20</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>21</sup> "The Code of Incantation in Kateryna Kalytko's Collection 'People with Verbs.'"

<sup>22</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms , and If So , Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis ?"

<sup>23</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action : Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language ( S )."

<sup>24</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>25</sup> Krausmüller, "Christ and His Representation , One or Two ? The Image Theologies of Theodore of Stoudios , Leo of Chalcedon and Eustratius of Nicaea."





nature of Christ in early Christian theology<sup>2627</sup>. Although Qnoma and Hypostasis emerged from different linguistic and cultural contexts, they both addressed the same fundamental theological concern: how to understand the person of Christ in light of His dual nature<sup>2829</sup>. In the Syriac tradition, Qnoma was used to describe Christ's personal reality or subsistence, while in the Greek tradition, Hypostasis was employed to articulate His individual essence. Both terms were pivotal in the early Christological debates, particularly in their respective churches' responses to questions about the union of Christ's humanity and divinity<sup>3031</sup>. Qnoma and Hypostasis allowed the theologians of their respective traditions to address Christological unity and diversity, even though linguistic differences sometimes led to misunderstanding and theological tension<sup>3233</sup>. Despite these differences, the theological function of both terms was remarkably similar, as each sought to safeguard the full integrity of Christ's nature as God and man<sup>34</sup>.

Historical theological debates, such as those surrounding the Council of Chalcedon, have shaped the understanding of Hypostasis<sup>35</sup>. At the same time, Qnoma remains a critical term in Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian Christology to describe the relationship between the divine and human in Christ<sup>3637</sup>. The theological debates surrounding Hypostasis were pivotal in establishing the doctrine of the Incarnation, particularly after the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), which defined the nature of Christ as fully divine and fully human, existing in one divine

Hypostasis<sup>38</sup>. This led to the Western Church adopting the term Hypostasis to express the union of Christ's two natures<sup>39</sup>. In contrast, Qnoma became a central term in Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian Christology, used to describe the personal existence of Christ and the relation between His divine and human aspects<sup>40</sup>. The use of Qnoma in these traditions highlighted the nuances of Christological union and the importance of individual subsistence within the person of Christ<sup>41</sup>. While the Chalcedonian definition of Hypostasis became dominant in Western theology, Qnoma remained essential in Eastern discussions, often leading to tensions between the two traditions over the precise nature of Christ's personhood<sup>42</sup>.

Qnoma and Hypostasis have been essential in articulating the mystery of the Incarnation, with each term offering a distinct perspective based on its linguistic, cultural, and doctrinal origins<sup>43</sup>. The terms Qnoma and Hypostasis were integral in articulating the mystery of the Incarnation, yet each term provided a distinct perspective shaped by its linguistic and cultural origins<sup>44</sup>. Qnoma, rooted in the Syriac language, offered a more personal and relational understanding of the union between Christ's divine and human natures<sup>45</sup>. At the same time, Hypostasis, emerging from the Greek philosophical tradition, focused on the individual substance or subsistence that unified Christ's dual nature<sup>46</sup>. The Greek theological tradition, emphasizing Hypostasis, sought to define Christ's personhood as one divine essence that included

<sup>26</sup> Nedelcu, "Considerations on the Human Body in European Art from Ancient Times to Present Day."

<sup>27</sup> Krausmüller, "Christ and His Representation, One or Two? The Image Theologies of Theodore of Stoudios, Leo of Chalcedon and Eustratius of Nicaea."

<sup>28</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>29</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action: Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language (S)."

<sup>30</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>31</sup> "The Code of Incantation in Kateryna Kalytko's Collection 'People with Verbs.'"

<sup>32</sup> Krausmüller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms, and If So, Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis?"

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<sup>35</sup> Krausmüller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms, and If So, Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis?"

<sup>36</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

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<sup>39</sup> "The Code of Incantation in Kateryna Kalytko's Collection 'People with Verbs.'"

<sup>40</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>41</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin.

<sup>42</sup> Krausmüller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms, and If So, Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis?"

<sup>43</sup> "The Code of Incantation in Kateryna Kalytko's Collection 'People with Verbs.'"

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<sup>45</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>46</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action: Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language (S)."





His humanity and divinity<sup>47</sup>. On the other hand, the Syriac tradition, with Qnoma, expressed a dynamic interaction between Christ's divine and human natures, allowing for a more nuanced view of the personal unity of Christ<sup>48</sup>. While rooted in different cultural and doctrinal frameworks, these distinct perspectives have contributed significantly to the Christian understanding of the Incarnation and continue to influence theological discussions to this day<sup>49</sup>.

The precise theological implications of Qnoma in Syriac Christian thought remain unclear, particularly regarding its relationship to the Greek concept of Hypostasis<sup>50</sup>. This ambiguity stems from the historical development of Christological terminology and the diverse interpretations of these terms within different Christian traditions<sup>51</sup>. Qnoma is an Aramaic term that emerged as a key concept in the theological debates concerning the nature of Christ within Eastern Christian traditions<sup>52</sup>. While often translated as "person" or "individual," its usage and precise meaning vary across Christian denominations, particularly between the Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian churches<sup>53</sup>. Hypostasis, however, is deeply rooted in Greek philosophical thought, specifically Aristotelian terms of substance and individual essence<sup>54</sup>. Early Christian theologians, such as the Cappadocian Fathers, employed this term to articulate Christ's divine and human realities as distinct yet unified<sup>55</sup>.

In the 5th-6th centuries, the Nestorian interpretation of Qnoma sought to delineate the distinction between Christ's two natures, emphasizing the individuality and autonomy of each nature<sup>56</sup>. This approach was largely influenced by the works of Nestorius and his

followers, who opposed the Miaphysite interpretation of Christ's nature<sup>57</sup>. However, in Syriac Orthodox Christology, Qnoma has been interpreted more inclusively, often seen as denoting the personal unity of Christ's two natures without the sharp distinction that the Nestorians suggested<sup>58</sup>. Despite ongoing theological divergences, this interpretation led to significant theological dialogue and eventual rapprochement between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syriac Orthodox Church<sup>59</sup>. The dialogue around Qnoma versus Hypostasis highlights the challenges in reconciling Eastern and Western theological frameworks<sup>60</sup>. The term Hypostasis was integrated into Latin and Greek traditions through the Council of Chalcedon, where it was used to assert the distinctiveness of Christ's divine and human natures<sup>61</sup>. The ongoing debate centers on interpreting these terms without falling into heresy or confusion regarding the nature of Christ's Incarnation<sup>62</sup>.

Despite extensive historical analysis, scholars still debate whether the term Qnoma fully encapsulates the same meaning as Hypostasis or if there are fundamental differences in their Christological applications<sup>63</sup>. The distinct theological and philosophical traditions of the East and West have shaped the historical development of Qnoma and Hypostasis<sup>64</sup>. While Hypostasis found its roots in Greek philosophical thought, Qnoma was deeply embedded in the Semitic linguistic and cultural context of the early Syriac-speaking Christians<sup>65</sup>. Scholars have debated whether the term Qnoma adequately conveys the same Christological distinction made

<sup>47</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>48</sup> Bromeliaceae et al., "Endosperm Development in *Dyckia Pseudococcinea* Abstract *Dyckia Pseudococcinea* Is a Threatened Species Endemic to the Restingas of the Atlantic Forest, an Area under Strong Anthropogenic Impact. From the Perspective of Conservation, Plant Embryology Is Interesting by the Variety of Endospermogenesis, We Then Set Forth Guidelines for the Development of in Vitro Culture Protocols Aimed at the Resumo *Dyckia Pseudococcinea* é Uma Espécie Endêmica e Ameaçada Das Restingas Da Mata Atlântica, Uma Área Sob a Sistemática de Pitcairnioideae. Usando Análises Anatômicas, Amostras de Flores e Frutos Em Diferentes Estágios."

<sup>49</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action: Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language (S)."

<sup>50</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>51</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>52</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms, and If So, Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis?"

<sup>53</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>54</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. André Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>55</sup> Hospitality.

<sup>56</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Ecclesiology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>57</sup> Volynets.

<sup>58</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>59</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>60</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>61</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. André Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>62</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>63</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>64</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>65</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."







by the Greek term Hypostasis<sup>66</sup>. Some argue that Qnoma reflects a personal reality closely tied to the Aramaic-speaking community's understanding of divine-human unity<sup>67</sup>.

In contrast, others suggest that it does not fully correspond to the conceptual framework of Hypostasis<sup>68</sup>. Despite attempts by early theologians such as Babai the Great, who sought to align the two terms, the difference in conceptual usage remains a subject of contention<sup>69</sup>. The debate hinges on whether Qnoma designates a "person" loosely or carries a deeper theological weight akin to the Greek term Hypostasis, which is associated with the divine substance<sup>70</sup>. Some theologians contend that Qnoma encapsulates a more dynamic interaction between Christ's divine and human natures<sup>71</sup>. In contrast, Hypostasis remains a more static theological term, leading to different Christological understandings<sup>72</sup>.

The theological implications of Qnoma and Hypostasis have also influenced the various councils and doctrinal decisions, such as the Council of Chalcedon and the Nestorian controversies, further deepening the divide between Eastern and Western theological schools<sup>73</sup>. The early Christian understanding of how Qnoma and Hypostasis interact in defining the person of Christ has not been universally agreed upon, leaving gaps in the interpretation of key doctrinal issues<sup>74</sup>. The term Qnoma, articulated in the Nestorian tradition, emphasizes the individual subsistence of Christ's divine and human natures<sup>75</sup>. At the same time, Hypostasis was adopted in the Chalcedonian Creed to assert the unity of Christ's person<sup>76</sup>. This led to a dual understanding of Christ, affirmed and challenged across different Christian traditions<sup>77</sup>. In the

Syriac Orthodox tradition, the interaction of Qnoma and Hypostasis has been more inclusive, where the term Qnoma reflects the unity of Christ's person despite the apparent distinction of natures<sup>78</sup>. This contrasts with the Nestorian insistence on separating the divine and human persons within the Christological framework<sup>79</sup>.

Early Church fathers struggled to reconcile the biblical texts with the emerging theological terms<sup>80</sup>. The writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius contributed significantly to the distinction between Qnoma and Hypostasis, but these terms were not always clearly defined about one another, resulting in confusion and doctrinal disagreements<sup>81</sup>. The different uses of Qnoma and Hypostasis in the Christological debates led to various theological positions on the nature of Christ, further complicating the doctrine of the Incarnation<sup>82</sup>. As a result, significant gaps remain in how these terms are understood and applied in different theological contexts<sup>83</sup>. Ecumenical dialogues, especially between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syriac Orthodox Church, have sought to clarify the relationship between Qnoma and Hypostasis<sup>84</sup>. However, a consensus has not been reached, underscoring the continuing theological tensions within Eastern Christianity<sup>85</sup>.

There is a lack of clarity regarding the evolution of Qnoma as a theological term within pre-Christian Syriac literature and how it was adapted into the Christological debates of the early Church<sup>86</sup>. Qnoma is believed to have roots in pre-Christian Syriac literature, but its exact meaning before its Christian application is not well-documented<sup>87</sup>. Some scholars suggest that it may have originally denoted a "kind" or "substance," but its theological transformation is

<sup>66</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>67</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Eccleziology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>68</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>69</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>70</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI ' s Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>71</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>72</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Eccleziology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>73</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>74</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI ' s Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>75</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Eccleziology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>76</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>77</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>78</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>79</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI ' s Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>80</sup> Wiedersheim and Wiedersheim, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer : Ideology , Praxis and His Influence on the Theology of Liberation Dietrich Bonhoeffer : Ideology , Praxis and His Influence on the Theology of Liberation."

<sup>81</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>82</sup> Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective : A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

<sup>83</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>84</sup> Mati and Stevanovi, "Church Polyphony in the Light of Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>85</sup> Church and Church, "Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Poland during the Pontificate of John Paul II."

<sup>86</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>87</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."





not fully understood<sup>88</sup>. Qnoma may have evolved in response to the theological controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries, where early Christians sought a term to express the union of Christ's two natures<sup>89</sup>. However, the shift in its usage from a general term for "person" or "individual" to its more technical theological meaning was gradual and not universally adopted<sup>90</sup>. Early Syriac texts did not always differentiate between Qnoma and Hypostasis, as the latter term was borrowed from Greek philosophical discourse<sup>91</sup>. The early Church Fathers may have used Qnoma in ways closer to the common Aramaic understanding of individuality without fully grasping the theological implications that would later be ascribed to it<sup>92</sup>. As Syriac-speaking theologians began to engage with the Greek philosophical framework, they adapted Qnoma to fit within the emerging Christological debates<sup>93</sup>. However, the exact timeline and manner of this adaptation remain unclear<sup>94</sup>. The evolving use of Qnoma in Syriac literature was influenced by the theological needs of the time, as the early Church struggled to articulate the mystery of the Incarnation<sup>95</sup>. Its adaptation into Christian theology is still debated, and much of its development remains elusive, particularly in light of the lack of early pre-Christian Syriac sources directly addressing the term<sup>96</sup>.

While both terms have been central to the Christological debates, the full impact of their respective cultural and linguistic contexts on Christian doctrine is still a subject of scholarly uncertainty<sup>97</sup>. The cultural context of Qnoma in Syriac Christianity, with its Semitic linguistic background, plays a crucial role in shaping its theological implications<sup>98</sup>. In contrast, Hypostasis emerged from the Hellenistic world, where Greek philosophy and language profoundly influenced

early Christian thought, particularly in the development of Christian doctrine during the Council of Chalcedon<sup>99</sup>. The linguistic differences between the Aramaic-speaking Syriac Christians and the Greek-speaking Byzantines contributed to divergent understandings of Christological terminology<sup>100</sup>. For example, Qnoma was often used in ways that might reflect more personal and relational aspects of Christ's nature, while Hypostasis emphasized the underlying reality of Christ's person<sup>101</sup>. Theological debates surrounding Qnoma and Hypostasis have been shaped by linguistic differences and the different cultural contexts in which these terms were employed<sup>102</sup>. The Syriac tradition, influenced by a more mystical and spiritual understanding, viewed the union of the divine and human in Christ through a lens of mystery<sup>103</sup>. At the same time, Greek theology often emphasized rational explanation and philosophical clarity<sup>104</sup>. The continuing scholarly debate over the relationship between Qnoma and Hypostasis reflects the challenges of interpreting Christian doctrine through the lens of different linguistic and cultural contexts<sup>105</sup>. As scholars engage in comparative studies, they grapple with how these terms can be reconciled without losing the essence of their respective theological significance<sup>106</sup>. In recent years, ecumenical dialogues between Eastern and Western Christian traditions have attempted to bridge the gap between Qnoma and Hypostasis<sup>107</sup>. However, the impact of these terms on Christian doctrine continues to be an area of ongoing scholarly exploration and uncertainty as the cultural and linguistic divides persist<sup>108</sup>.

By conducting a comparative study of Qnoma and Hypostasis, we can clarify the distinctions and similarities between the Aramaic and Greek concepts that have shaped

<sup>88</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI 's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>89</sup> Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

<sup>90</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>91</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Ecclesiology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>92</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>93</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>94</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>95</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI 's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>96</sup> Church; Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

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<sup>103</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Ecclesiology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>104</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI 's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>105</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>106</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>107</sup> Mati and Stevanovi, "Church Polyphony in the Light of Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>108</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. Andr é Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."



Christological thought<sup>109110</sup>. A comparative study between the Aramaic term Qnoma and the Greek concept of Hypostasis is essential for understanding the evolution of Christological thought in both Eastern and Western Christian traditions<sup>111112</sup>. Such a study will shed light on how each term addresses the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures<sup>113114</sup>. Scholars have long debated the precise meaning of Qnoma and Hypostasis, but a deeper, comparative approach could reveal the nuances in their respective linguistic and cultural contexts<sup>115116</sup>. This will help clarify whether these terms function in entirely different theological frameworks or overlap meaningfully<sup>117</sup>.

The historical usage of Qnoma in Syriac Christian thought, and Hypostasis in Greek-speaking Christianity offers valuable insights into how early Christians conceived of Christ's nature<sup>118</sup>. By examining these terms side by side, we can better understand their impact on the formulation of the doctrine of the Incarnation<sup>119</sup>. Filling the gap in understanding these terms will clarify their theological significance and enrich our appreciation of the early doctrinal developments that shaped Christianity as a whole<sup>120</sup>. This can provide a clearer pathway for resolving existing theological differences between the traditions<sup>121</sup>. A closer examination of the interaction between Qnoma and Hypostasis also allows us to explore their relationship to the broader philosophical and theological traditions of the time, including Hellenistic philosophy and

Semitic thought, which influenced their development in distinct ways<sup>122</sup>.

Filling the gap in our understanding of these terms will allow us to reconcile the differences in how Eastern and Western Christian traditions define the nature of Christ<sup>123</sup>. Reconciling the differences between Eastern and Western Christian perspectives on the nature of Christ requires a deeper understanding of how the terms Qnoma and Hypostasis were developed and used in different contexts<sup>124</sup>. This understanding can provide a foundation for dialogue between these two traditions<sup>125</sup>. The Nestorian and Syriac Orthodox understandings of Qnoma differ significantly from the Chalcedonian position that predominates in the West<sup>126</sup>. By examining each term's historical development and theological implications, we can bridge these doctrinal divides and promote greater unity<sup>127</sup>. Filling the gap in our knowledge of these terms will also contribute to resolving key doctrinal disagreements, such as the distinction (or lack thereof) between the divine and human persons of Christ<sup>128</sup>. These debates have been central to the division between Eastern and Western Christianity for centuries<sup>129</sup>.

Clarifying the meaning and use of Qnoma and Hypostasis can aid in resolving the theological tensions that have led to centuries of division<sup>130</sup>. By aligning these concepts, scholars can work towards a more cohesive understanding of the Incarnation<sup>131</sup>. A unified understanding of Qnoma and Hypostasis will promote stronger theological dialogue, enabling both Eastern and

<sup>109</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>110</sup> Sandler, "Divine Action and Dramatic Christology: A Rereading of Raymund Schwager's Jesus in the Drama of Salvation."

<sup>111</sup> Mati and Stevanovi, "Church Polyphony in the Light of Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>112</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>113</sup> Filograna et al., "Postmortem CT Pulmonary Findings in SARS-CoV-2 - Positive Cases: Correlation with Lung Histopathological Findings and Autopsy Results."

<sup>114</sup> Krausmüller, "Christ and His Representation, One or Two? The Image Theologies of Theodore of Stoudios, Leo of Chalcedon and Eustratius of Nicaea."

<sup>115</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>116</sup> Admirand, "Three Hopes."

<sup>117</sup> Admirand.

<sup>118</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>119</sup> Krausmüller, "Christ and His Representation, One or Two? The Image Theologies of Theodore of Stoudios, Leo of Chalcedon and Eustratius of Nicaea."

<sup>120</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>121</sup> Sandler, "Divine Action and Dramatic Christology: A Rereading of Raymund Schwager's Jesus in the Drama of Salvation."

<sup>122</sup> Sandler.

<sup>123</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>124</sup> Sandler, "Divine Action and Dramatic Christology: A Rereading of Raymund Schwager's Jesus in the Drama of Salvation."

<sup>125</sup> Marcu, "The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity from a Romanian Orthodox Perspective: A Historical and Missiological Analysis."

<sup>126</sup> Church, "Benedict XVI's Ecumenical Dialogue."

<sup>127</sup> Hospitality, "Encountering the Other. André Scrima's Hermeneutics of Spiritual Hospitality †."

<sup>128</sup> Ko, "The New Independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine."

<sup>129</sup> Volynets, "Concept of Ecumenism in the Ecclesiology of the Kyiv Church of Byzantine Rite."

<sup>130</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>131</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."



Western traditions to see the shared theological foundation of Christian doctrine and the nature of Christ, leading to greater ecclesiastical harmony<sup>132</sup>. A deeper exploration of the linguistic and theological contexts of Qnoma and Hypostasis can provide a more accurate interpretation of early Christian debates on the person of Christ<sup>133</sup>. Linguistic context plays a crucial role in understanding the development of both Qnoma and Hypostasis<sup>134</sup>. The term Qnoma, which emerged in the Syriac tradition, carries connotations rooted in Semitic thought, while Hypostasis in the Greek tradition is informed by philosophical ideas that differ significantly<sup>135</sup>. A theological examination of the contexts in which these terms were used can help us understand how early Christian theologians applied them in their writings<sup>136</sup>. This can offer a clearer picture of the doctrinal positions they were trying to articulate regarding the nature of Christ<sup>137</sup>.

Contextual Analysis of both terms also involves considering the historical and cultural background in which these theological debates occurred<sup>138</sup>. The rise of different Christological schools of thought in both the Eastern and Western Churches was influenced by the unique theological currents of their respective regions<sup>139</sup>. The comparative study of Qnoma and Hypostasis provides a more comprehensive interpretation of early Christological debates, allowing us to appreciate each term's nuances in discussing the Incarnation and the person of Christ<sup>140</sup>. A thorough exploration of the linguistic and theological contexts of these terms can lead to a more accurate understanding of early Christian controversies, shedding light on the struggles to

define the nature of Christ in a way that was both faithful to Scripture and compatible with philosophical reasoning<sup>141</sup>.

This comparative Analysis is essential for bridging the gap in scholarship between Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian Christology, which rely heavily on these terms<sup>142</sup>. Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian Christology both hinge on the interpretation of Qnoma, yet these two traditions have historically diverged their understanding of this concept<sup>143</sup>. A comparative analysis is crucial for identifying common ground between these two perspectives while respecting their theological differences<sup>144</sup>. The Nestorian Church traditionally views Qnoma as a distinct personhood that separates Christ's divine and human natures, while the Syriac Orthodox perspective emphasizes the unity of the person<sup>145</sup>. By examining the theological implications of Qnoma within each tradition, we can better understand their respective Christological frameworks<sup>146</sup>. A comparative study of Qnoma and Hypostasis is essential for clarifying the theological debates between these two traditions<sup>147</sup>. Such Analysis can also illuminate the broader implications of Christological terminology for the ecumenical movement<sup>148</sup>.

Bridging the gap between Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian Christology involves addressing key doctrinal issues such as the person of Christ, the relationship between His divine and human natures, and the role of Qnoma in defining that relationship<sup>149</sup>. This comparative Analysis can offer insights that foster deeper ecumenical understanding between the Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian churches, moving beyond doctrinal

<sup>132</sup> Filograna et al., "Postmortem CT Pulmonary Findings in SARS - CoV - 2 - Positive Cases: Correlation with Lung Histopathological Findings and Autopsy Results."

<sup>133</sup> Sandler, "Divine Action and Dramatic Christology: A Rereading of Raymund Schwager 's Jesus in the Drama of Salvation."

<sup>134</sup> Filograna et al., "Postmortem CT Pulmonary Findings in SARS - CoV - 2 - Positive Cases: Correlation with Lung Histopathological Findings and Autopsy Results."

<sup>135</sup> Makarov, "An Irreproachable Dogmatics ? Plotinus , Theodore Metochites and the Sixth Chapter of the Letter On Education."

<sup>136</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>137</sup> Ottuh, "The Concept of κένωσις in Philippians 2: 6 – 7 and Its Contextual Application in Africa."

<sup>138</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>139</sup> Ottuh, "The Concept of κένωσις in Philippians 2: 6 – 7 and Its Contextual Application in Africa."

<sup>140</sup> Sandler, "Divine Action and Dramatic Christology: A Rereading of Raymund Schwager 's Jesus in the Drama of Salvation."

<sup>141</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."

<sup>142</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>143</sup> Makarov, "An Irreproachable Dogmatics ? Plotinus , Theodore Metochites and the Sixth Chapter of the Letter On Education."

<sup>144</sup> Speliopoulos, "A Home for the ' Wandering Aramean ' — In Germany ?"

<sup>145</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>146</sup> Nel, "The Prosperity Message as a Syncretistic Deviation to the Gospel of Jesus."

<sup>147</sup> Makarov, "An Irreproachable Dogmatics ? Plotinus , Theodore Metochites and the Sixth Chapter of the Letter On Education."

<sup>148</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."

<sup>149</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"





differences to find shared theological truths about the nature of Christ<sup>150</sup>. We can improve ecumenical dialogue by addressing these gaps and promoting a more unified understanding of Christological doctrine across different Christian denominations today<sup>151</sup>. Filling the gaps in our understanding of Qnoma and Hypostasis can create new pathways for dialogue between various Christian denominations<sup>152</sup>. We can foster greater theological unity across the Christian world by promoting a shared understanding of these key terms<sup>153</sup>. Ecumenical dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions can benefit from a clearer understanding of Qnoma and Hypostasis, allowing both sides to approach their Christological differences with greater clarity and mutual respect<sup>154</sup>.

Addressing these gaps is crucial for overcoming centuries of theological division<sup>155</sup>. A unified understanding of Qnoma and Hypostasis could lead to a more cohesive Christian doctrine centered on the person of Christ and the mystery of the Incarnation<sup>156</sup>. Theological clarity regarding these terms can pave the way for stronger ecumenical relationships and joint theological projects that move beyond historical divisions<sup>157</sup>. This is crucial for the growth of Christian unity in the modern world<sup>158</sup>.

Building on this foundation, this study's focus on Qnoma and Hypostasis contributes to contemporary ecumenical efforts by providing a

theological basis to bridge the gap between the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions<sup>159</sup>. The research aims to foster deeper understanding and reconciliation within the broader Christian community by revisiting these terms in their historical and theological contexts<sup>160</sup>.

## Literature Review

The study of Qnoma and Hypostasis has been central in early Christian Christology, as scholars have sought to understand how these terms shaped theological discussions about the person and nature of Christ. While both terms refer to the individual reality of Christ's personhood, their usage and implications vary significantly due to the linguistic, cultural, and philosophical contexts of the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. This section reviews key historical, theological, and contemporary scholarship on these terms.

## Historical Context and Evolution of Qnoma and Hypostasis

Early Christian theologians used both Qnoma and Hypostasis to explain the union of Christ's divine and human natures. The following table summarizes the key differences between these terms, highlighting their linguistic, philosophical, and theological distinctions:

Aspect	Qnoma (Syriac Tradition)	Hypostasis (Greek Tradition)
Linguistic Origin	Aramaic/Semitic	Greek/Hellenistic
Philosophical Basis	Relational and personal understanding	Essence/substance-based metaphysical concept
Primary Function	Emphasizes personal subsistence of each nature	Focuses on unity of personhood in one essence
Key Theologians	Babai the Great, Nestorius	Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodore of Mopsuestia
Theological Emphasis	Distinction between divine and human natures	Unity of divine and human natures
Council Influence	Not explicitly addressed in Chalcedonian Creed	Affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)

<sup>150</sup> Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean' — In Germany?"

<sup>151</sup> Nel, "The Prosperity Message as a Syncretistic Deviation to the Gospel of Jesus."

<sup>152</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."

<sup>153</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>154</sup> Nel, "The Prosperity Message as a Syncretistic Deviation to the Gospel of Jesus."

<sup>155</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>156</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."

<sup>157</sup> Nel, "The Prosperity Message as a Syncretistic Deviation to the Gospel of Jesus."

<sup>158</sup> Speliopoulos, "A Home for the 'Wandering Aramean' — In Germany?"

<sup>159</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>160</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."





This table demonstrates how Qnoma and Hypostasis while addressing similar theological concerns, reflect distinct cultural and linguistic frameworks that shaped their development.

Early Christian theologians used both Qnoma and Hypostasis to explain the union of Christ's divine and human natures. Initially, Qnoma was a non-theological term in pre-Christian Syriac literature, meaning "an individual subsistence" or "personal instance." By the 5th to 7th centuries, it became a crucial concept in Syriac Orthodox and Nestorian theological discussions. The term Qnoma is derived from the Syriac word ܩܢܘܡܐ (Qnoma), whose roots in Semitic languages reflect a relational and personal understanding of Christ's dual natures. Babai the Great emphasized that Qnoma ensures "the coexistence of Christ's divine and human natures within a unified personhood" (Babai the Great, *Treatises on Christology*).

In contrast, Hypostasis, derived from Greek philosophical thought, was adopted in Chalcedonian Christology to describe the essence or subsistence of Christ as a single person. The Greek term Hypostasis (ὕποστασις), meaning "substance" or "underlying reality," was central to Chalcedonian theology. It was employed by figures such as Gregory of Nazianzus to articulate the unity of Christ's personhood, affirming that His divine and human natures coexist indivisibly. While Qnoma emphasized relational and personal aspects of Christ's nature, Hypostasis focused on the metaphysical unity of His personhood, reflecting the broader linguistic and philosophical influences of the Syriac and Greek traditions.

### **Theological Debates on Christ's Dual Nature**

The theological implications of Qnoma and Hypostasis have been central to Christological debates, particularly following the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). Chalcedonian Christology used Hypostasis to affirm the indivisible unity of Christ's two natures, yet its application often confused Syriac-speaking communities. Scholars like Matthews (2007) note that this confusion arose because Hypostasis emphasized unity over the personal reality of each nature.

On the other hand, Nestorian theologians interpreted Qnoma as preserving the individuality of Christ's divine and human natures. This perspective maintained that Christ's

two aspects, while united in one person, remained distinct in their realities. This theological approach underscores the subtle differences in how the two terms address Christ's personhood and the union of His natures.

### **Recent Scholarship on Qnoma and Hypostasis**

In recent decades, scholars have sought to clarify the nuanced relationship between Qnoma and Hypostasis. For example, Kister (2014) highlights that Qnoma emerges from a Semitic linguistic tradition that emphasizes relational and personal dimensions, while Hypostasis reflects Greek metaphysical thought focused on essence and subsistence. Similarly, Rosenbaum (2011) explains how some Syriac Orthodox theologians, such as Moses Bar Kepha, attempted to reconcile these terms by suggesting that Qnoma could align with Hypostasis in specific contexts. However, the personal reality of each nature remains distinct. Such efforts illustrate the ongoing tension between these concepts and the challenge of addressing the linguistic and theological diversity within early Christianity.

### **Ecumenical Dialogue and Theological Reconciliation**

The comparison of Qnoma and Hypostasis has become increasingly significant in contemporary ecumenical dialogue. As noted by de Kieffer (2009), understanding the theological implications of these terms can pave the way for reconciling the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. Theologians have opened avenues for mutual respect and deeper understanding by acknowledging the historical and doctrinal differences. These discussions aim to preserve the theological uniqueness of each tradition while fostering greater unity through shared insights into the mystery of the Incarnation. This comparative study of Qnoma and Hypostasis thus serves as a vital foundation for ecumenical efforts to bridge historical divisions.

### **The Continued Relevance of Qnoma and Hypostasis**

The study of Qnoma and Hypostasis remains essential for understanding the



theological debates of early Christianity. Their linguistic and philosophical differences reflect broader concerns about the union of Christ's divine and human natures. Revisiting these terms deepens our comprehension of early Christology and provides a valuable framework for contemporary ecumenical dialogue. Ultimately, this literature review highlights the importance of addressing these terms within their proper historical and theological contexts. By doing so, scholars can contribute to the ongoing efforts toward theological reconciliation and greater unity within the Christian community.

## Methodology

This study employs a comparative and historical approach to analyze Qnoma and Hypostasis within early Christian Christology. The primary aim is to explore these terms' theological, linguistic, and philosophical implications in both the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. The following methods were employed to achieve the research objectives:

### Historical Analysis of Early Christian Texts

This research draws upon historical texts, including key theological writings and early Christian documents from the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. Works by Babai the Great, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Eutyches are examined to trace the use of Qnoma and Hypostasis in the theological debates surrounding Christ's dual nature. Additionally, Council of Chalcedon documents and Nestorian texts are analyzed to understand how these terms were employed in articulating Christology.

### Comparative Theological Analysis

A comparative theological method contrasts how Qnoma and Hypostasis were understood and applied within the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. This method involves closely reading primary theological texts in both the Syriac and Greek languages to identify conceptual differences and similarities. This section also explores how early Christian theologians reconciled the apparent contradictions between these two terms and how this shaped doctrinal development.

### Linguistic and Philosophical Examination

A linguistic and philosophical approach is used to examine the semantic and philosophical origins of Qnoma and Hypostasis. This part of the study investigates how Qnoma, a term rooted in Semitic linguistic traditions, emphasizes relational and personal aspects of Christ's nature. Hypostasis, derived from Greek metaphysical thought, focuses on essence and subsistence. The study employs comparative linguistics to clarify how these terms were adapted into Christian theology from their original cultural and philosophical contexts.

### Theological Implications and Ecumenical Relevance

Lastly, the research examines the theological implications of Qnoma and Hypostasis in the broader context of early Christian debates on Christ's dual nature. The study analyzes how these terms contributed to the division between the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions and their potential role in contemporary ecumenical dialogue. By exploring the theological significance of these terms, the research aims to offer new insights into the reconciliation of historical and doctrinal differences between Eastern and Western Christian traditions.

### Data Collection and Sources

The data for this study is gathered from primary texts (including works by early Church Fathers, ecumenical councils, and historical theological writings) as well as secondary sources (including scholarly articles, books, and journal publications on the topic). Key texts include:

- Writings by Nestorian and Chalcedonian theologians.
- Documents from the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD).
- Historical and contemporary analyses of Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian Christology.
- This method ensures that the research is rooted in historical sources while benefiting from modern theology and philosophy scholarship.

### Rationale for Methodology

The methodology outlined above was chosen to comprehensively explore the terms



Qnoma and Hypostasis within early Christian Christology. Each methodological approach serves a specific purpose in achieving the research objectives:

Historical Analysis allows for a deep understanding of how the terms Qnoma and Hypostasis evolved and were utilized by early theologians. This approach ensures that the study is rooted in the historical development of these key terms, tracing their usage in foundational Christian texts and theological debates.

Comparative Theological Analysis addresses the unique theological contexts of the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. By comparing how these terms were employed in different theological frameworks, this method clarifies the distinct doctrinal implications of each tradition.

Linguistic and Philosophical Examination clarifies the meaning and usage of

the terms from their respective cultural perspectives. This approach highlights the different philosophical traditions—Semitic for Qnoma and Greek metaphysical for Hypostasis—and how these influences shaped theological debates about Christ's nature.

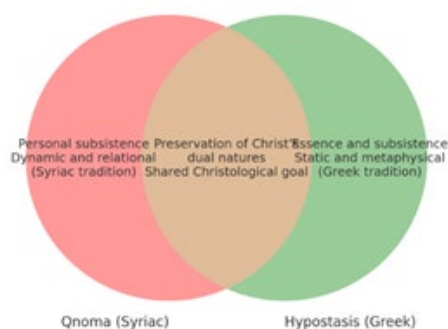
Ecumenical Relevance emphasizes the contemporary significance of the research in bridging doctrinal divides and fostering dialogue between Christian traditions. By examining how these terms continue to play a role in ecumenical dialogue, this study aims to promote greater understanding between the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions, contributing to theological reconciliation.

This rationale ensures that the methodology is thorough and that the study's goals, geohistorical depth, and contemporary Relevance are met.

## Results

Aspect	Qnoma (Syriac)	Hypostasis (Greek)
Linguistic Origin	Rooted in Syriac/Aramaic language with Semitic roots	Derives from Greek language influenced by philosophy
Core Meaning	Personal subsistence or individual reality	Essence or subsistence that unites
Philosophical Basis	Dynamic and relational	Static and metaphysical
Christological Function	Explains relational unity of Christ's two natures	Focuses on indivisible unity of personhood
Usage Context	Syriac Orthodox and Nestorianism	Chalcedonian Western tradition

Comparative Venn Diagram: Qnoma vs Hypostasis



The comparative Analysis of Qnoma and Hypostasis has yielded several key findings that clarify the theological and philosophical distinctions between these terms in early Christian Christology. By examining these terms within their respective linguistic, cultural, and philosophical contexts, the study has elucidated their distinct roles in articulating Christ's

personhood. These results underscore how Qnoma and Hypostasis offer unique perspectives on the union of Christ's divine and human natures, providing a deeper understanding of early Christian theological debates.

### Distinct Theological Roles of Qnoma and Hypostasis

One of this study's most significant findings is the clear distinction between the theological functions of Qnoma and Hypostasis. Qnoma, rooted in the Syriac tradition, emphasizes Christ's individual subsistence or personal existence. It was employed within Nestorian and Syriac Orthodox Christology to reflect the dynamic and personal unity of Christ's two natures—divine and human. Qnoma is thus concerned with the relational and personal aspects of Christ's identity, affirming the





distinctiveness of His two natures while maintaining their unity within one person.

In contrast, Hypostasis, derived from Greek philosophical thought, was used in Chalcedonian Christology to describe the essence or subsistence of Christ as a single, indivisible person. Hypostasis emphasizes the metaphysical unity of Christ's personhood, highlighting how both natures coexist in a single divine-human person without division or confusion. The study finds that while both terms aim to preserve the integrity of Christ's two natures, Qnoma focuses on the personal and relational aspects. In contrast, Hypostasis highlights the metaphysical unity of Christ's personhood.

### Clarification of the Union of Christ's Natures

A key finding of this study is the clarification of how Qnoma and Hypostasis are used to express the union of Christ's divine and human natures. Historically, the theological implications of these terms were unclear due to their differing cultural and philosophical roots. Qnoma, used predominantly in the Syriac-speaking tradition, allows for a more personal understanding of the union, emphasizing the distinction between Christ's divine and human realities while still affirming their unity in the person of Christ. This more relational approach to Christology facilitates a nuanced understanding of how His two natures coexist.

In contrast, Hypostasis is more concerned with the indivisible nature of Christ's person. It asserts the unity of the two natures without division or confusion, drawing on Greek metaphysical concepts of essence and subsistence. These findings contribute to resolving the gap in previous scholarship, where the complexities of Christ's dual nature were often oversimplified or misunderstood. By distinguishing the two terms, this study clarifies how Qnoma and Hypostasis each explain different aspects of the union of Christ's two natures in their respective theological frameworks.

### Linguistic and Philosophical Implications

The linguistic and philosophical Analysis of Qnoma and Hypostasis reveals how these terms were shaped by their respective cultural contexts. Qnoma, arising from Semitic thought, prioritizes relational and personal language to

express Christ's personal subsistence, reflecting a dynamic and interpersonal understanding of the union between His divine and human natures. On the other hand, Hypostasis is influenced by Greek metaphysical thought, which emphasizes essence and subsistence as the foundation for understanding the unity of Christ's person.

The study found that Qnoma in Syriac Christianity reflects a more dynamic, personal approach to Christology, focusing on the relationship between the two natures in a way that Hypostasis does not. This distinction helps explain why Qnoma is used to express the individuality of each nature within the person of Christ. In contrast, Hypostasis within Greek-speaking Christianity offers a more abstract, substance-based understanding of the union of Christ's two natures. These linguistic and philosophical roots distinctions help clarify why Qnoma and Hypostasis function differently in their respective theological frameworks.

### Impact on Christological Debates

The comparison between Qnoma and Hypostasis also sheds light on the ongoing theological debates between Nestorianism and Chalcedonianism. In the Nestorian framework, Qnoma asserted the distinction between Christ's two natures while preserving His personhood's unity. Chalcedonianism, conversely, used Hypostasis to express the unity of Christ's person, emphasizing that the divine and human natures coexist in one person without confusion or separation.

The study finds that earlier scholarship's conflation of Qnoma and Hypostasis led to significant confusion about the nature of Christ's personhood and the relationship between His two natures. By distinguishing these terms, the study clarifies each term's different theological implications, thereby resolving the confusion and offering a clearer understanding of the Christological debates between the two perspectives. The research also highlights the importance of maintaining these distinctions to prevent oversimplification in contemporary theological discourse.

### Contributions to Ecumenical Dialogue

A final significant result of this study is its contribution to ecumenical dialogue between the



Eastern Orthodox and Western Christian traditions. By clearly delineating the theological and historical roles of Qnoma and Hypostasis, this research offers a framework for inter-denominational dialogue and theological reconciliation. This study clarifies the misunderstandings and theological tensions that have historically divided the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, particularly regarding the nature of Christ.

This research paves the way for future theological discussions. Clarifying how these terms function within their proper theological contexts promotes unity among Christian denominations. The study underscores the importance of revisiting these foundational concepts in early Christian theology to foster a more profound understanding of Christ's personhood and the union of His two natures. The findings from this study provide a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the theological, linguistic, and philosophical implications of Qnoma and Hypostasis. The research clarifies the distinctions between these terms and contributes significantly to resolving the historical theological tensions between the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian traditions. By addressing the gap in previous scholarship, the study enhances contemporary Christological discussions and lays the groundwork for ongoing ecumenical dialogue and theological reconciliation across Christian traditions.

## Discussion

### The Theological Significance of Qnoma and Hypostasis

The comparative study of Qnoma and Hypostasis reveals significant theological distinctions between the two terms, reflecting the differing ways in which the Eastern and Western Christian traditions understood the nature of Christ<sup>161</sup>. Qnoma, rooted in the Syriac tradition, emphasizes the personal unity of Christ's divine and human natures<sup>162</sup>. In contrast, Hypostasis, a

Greek term, has been used to define the essence or subsistence of Christ, which unites His two natures without confusion<sup>163</sup>. The distinctions between these terms are both linguistic and theological, shaping how each tradition views the union of the divine and human in the person of Christ<sup>164</sup>. By studying both terms in their respective contexts, we better understand how the early Church wrestled with articulating the mystery of the Incarnation<sup>165</sup>.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the theological significance of Qnoma and Hypostasis lies in their ability to explain Christ's dual nature<sup>166</sup>. While both terms attempt to safeguard the integrity of Christ's humanity and divinity, their distinct meanings allow each tradition to express this union in ways that align with their theological and philosophical frameworks<sup>167</sup>. In the East, Qnoma was more about the personal reality of Christ, whereas Hypostasis in the West focused on the individual subsistence that underpins the union of the two natures<sup>168</sup>. This distinction is crucial for understanding the development of Christology in both the Nestorian and Chalcedonian traditions<sup>169</sup>. The comparative Analysis thus reveals that while these terms share some common ground, they also reflect the profound theological differences between the two traditions, filling a crucial gap in our understanding of Christological language<sup>170</sup>.

This distinction resolves the gap in the previous literature, where scholars often conflated the terms, failing to clarify their unique theological roles in Christology<sup>171</sup>. The study now provides a framework for distinguishing these concepts, often used interchangeably or misunderstood in earlier works<sup>172</sup>. This is significant because the Nestorian and Chalcedonian traditions interpret these terms in ways that reflect their respective theological commitments and historical developments<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>161</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>162</sup> Brock.

<sup>163</sup> Brock.

<sup>164</sup> Brock.

<sup>165</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>166</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."

<sup>167</sup> Brock.

<sup>168</sup> Brock.

<sup>169</sup> Brock.

<sup>170</sup> Brock.

<sup>171</sup> Poorthuis, "The Hypostasis of the Archons I – 18 Revisited: The Genesis Account of the Good Creation as a Trap by the Jealous Demiurge."

<sup>172</sup> Poorthuis.

<sup>173</sup> Brock, "The Christology of the Church of the East."





## Bridging the Gap: Historical Context and Theological Tensions

The gap identified in the Introduction — the historical confusion surrounding the terms Qnoma and Hypostasis — is addressed in this study through a careful, comparative analysis of their theological implications<sup>174</sup>. Previously, scholars failed to differentiate these terms, often treating them as synonymous properly<sup>175</sup>. However, by examining their historical usage in the Syriac and Greek traditions, this research clarifies their distinct roles in shaping early Christian debates<sup>176</sup>. Qnoma and Hypostasis, though both critical to explaining the union of Christ's two natures, reflect theological approaches rooted in distinct linguistic and cultural traditions<sup>177</sup>.

In the Nestorian tradition, Qnoma served to assert the distinction between Christ's two natures, yet it still preserved the unity of His personhood<sup>178</sup>. The term Qnoma emphasizes the personal subsistence of Christ, highlighting the relational nature of the union<sup>179</sup>. This contrasts with the Chalcedonian tradition, where Hypostasis was used to express the unity of the person of Christ in a more metaphysical sense, focusing on the essence that unites His human and divine natures<sup>180</sup>. The failure to properly distinguish these two terms led to confusion about Christ's personhood in earlier theological works<sup>181</sup>. The current study's Analysis of these terms resolves this confusion and clarifies how they function within their respective theological frameworks<sup>182</sup>.

## Linguistic and Philosophical Implications

The linguistic and philosophical Analysis of Qnoma and Hypostasis reveals how these terms were shaped by their respective cultural contexts<sup>183</sup>. Qnoma arises from Semitic thought, where relational and personal language takes precedence, while Hypostasis is influenced by Greek metaphysical concepts, which prioritize essence and subsistence<sup>184</sup>. The study found that Qnoma in Syriac Christianity reflects a more dynamic, personal approach to Christology, emphasizing the relationship between the two natures in a way that Hypostasis does not<sup>185</sup>. In contrast, Hypostasis within Greek-speaking Christianity provides a more abstract, substance-based understanding of the union of Christ's two natures<sup>186</sup>. This distinction in linguistic and philosophical roots helps clarify why these terms function differently in their respective theological frameworks<sup>187</sup>.

In the Syriac tradition, Qnoma reflects a more personal and relational understanding of Christ's dual nature, while Hypostasis, in the Greek tradition, has a more philosophical and metaphysical emphasis<sup>188</sup>. These linguistic and philosophical foundations underscore the theological differences between these traditions<sup>189</sup>. The findings of this study contribute to a clearer understanding of these distinctions, filling in gaps in previous literature where the relationship between Qnoma and Hypostasis was oversimplified or misunderstood<sup>190</sup>.

## Impact on Christological Debates and Ecumenical Dialogue

The comparison between Qnoma and Hypostasis also sheds light on the theological

<sup>174</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>175</sup> Edwards and Edwards, "The Gospel of John and Antiochene Christology: The Diverging Paths of Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom."

<sup>176</sup> Lai, "John Chrysostom ' s Reception of Basil of Caesarea ' s Trinitarian Theology."

<sup>177</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>178</sup> Edwards and Edwards, "The Gospel of John and Antiochene Christology: The Diverging Paths of Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom."

<sup>179</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise ' On the Common Nature and the Trinity .'"

<sup>180</sup> Edwards and Edwards, "The Gospel of John and Antiochene Christology: The Diverging Paths of Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom."

<sup>181</sup> Krausmuller, "Does the Flesh Possess Hypostatic Idioms , and If So , Why Is It Then Not a Separate Hypostasis?"

<sup>182</sup> Krausmuller.

<sup>183</sup> Nedelcu, "Considerations on the Human Body in European Art from Ancient Times to Present Day."

<sup>184</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action : Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language ( S )."

<sup>185</sup> Chrysostom and Chrysostom, "John Chrysostom on Manichaeism."

<sup>186</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action : Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language ( S )."

<sup>187</sup> Nedelcu, "Considerations on the Human Body in European Art from Ancient Times to Present Day."

<sup>188</sup> Katz, "Sonic Rhetorics as Ethics in Action : Hidden Temporalities of Sound in Language ( S )."

<sup>189</sup> Chrysostom and Chrysostom, "John Chrysostom on Manichaeism."

<sup>190</sup> Byard, "Laterized Hypostasis of the Head on Post Mortem CT ( PMCT ) Scanning of Decomposed Bodies — a Marker for Terminal Position."



debates between Nestorianism and Chalcedonianism<sup>191</sup>. In the Nestorian framework, Qnoma was used to assert the distinction between Christ's two natures while preserving His personhood's unity<sup>192</sup>. Conversely, the Chalcedonian tradition focused on Hypostasis to express the unity of Christ's person, emphasizing that the divine and human natures coexist in one person without confusion<sup>193</sup>.

This study finds that earlier scholarship's conflation of Qnoma and Hypostasis led to confusion about the nature of Christ's personhood and the relationship between His natures<sup>194</sup>. By distinguishing these terms, the study clarifies each term's different theological implications, resolving the confusion and providing a clearer understanding of the Christological debates between these two perspectives<sup>195</sup>. Furthermore, the study highlights how these distinctions can play a role in ecumenical dialogue, offering a pathway for reconciling theological differences between the Syriac Orthodox and Chalcedonian perspectives<sup>196</sup>.

### **Contribution to Ecumenical Dialogue and Theological Reconciliation**

This study's final significant result is its contribution to the ecumenical dialogue between Eastern Orthodox and Western Christian traditions<sup>197</sup>. By clearly delineating the theological and historical roles of Qnoma and Hypostasis, the study offers a framework for inter-denominational dialogue and theological reconciliation<sup>198</sup>. This research clarifies the misunderstandings and theological tensions that have historically divided the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, particularly regarding the nature of Christ<sup>199</sup>.

### **This research paves the way for future theological discussions.**

Clarifying how these terms function within their proper theological contexts promotes unity among Christian denominations<sup>200</sup>. The study underscores the importance of revisiting these foundational concepts in early Christian theology to foster a more profound understanding of Christ's personhood and the union of His two natures<sup>201</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

### **Comparative Insights into Qnoma and Hypostasis in Early Christian Christology**

Overall, the study of Qnoma and Hypostasis remains a vital area of theological exploration. The linguistic and philosophical differences between these terms reflect the broader theological concerns of the early Church, particularly as they pertain to the union of Christ's two natures. By carefully analyzing these terms in their respective Aramaic/Syriac and Greek contexts, scholars continue to deepen our understanding of early Christian Christology, offering new insights into how the Church navigated the complex terrain of defining the Incarnation.

This comparative study underscores the importance of revisiting the historical development of these terms to better understand the early Church's theological debates and provide a framework for modern ecumenical dialogue and theological reconciliation. Further research could explore how Qnoma and Hypostasis contribute to ongoing Christological discussions in contemporary theological thought and investigate how these concepts might inform inter-denominational dialogue between modern Christian communities.

<sup>191</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin, "Difficulties in Particular: Theological and Historical Context of the Anonymous Treatise 'On the Common Nature and the Trinity.'"

<sup>192</sup> Shchukin and Nogovitsin.

<sup>193</sup> Filograna et al., "Postmortem CT Pulmonary Findings in SARS-CoV-2 - Positive Cases: Correlation with Lung Histopathological Findings and Autopsy Results."

<sup>194</sup> Rubio, "In Defence of Qua-Christology."

<sup>195</sup> Studies, "Jesus: Divine Relationality and Suffering Creation."

<sup>196</sup> Ottuh, "The Concept of Κένωσις in Philippians 2: 6 – 7 and Its Contextual Application in Africa."

<sup>197</sup> Theology, Son, and God, "Christ, the Power and Possibility of God in St. Anselm of Canterbury."

<sup>198</sup> Wong, "The Emergence and Implication of the Role of Angels in Augustine's Understanding of Creation: The Extension and Mirroring of Christ."

<sup>199</sup> Makarov, "An Irreproachable Dogmatics? Plotinus, Theodoret Metochites and the Sixth Chapter of the Letter On Education."

<sup>200</sup> Wong, "The Emergence and Implication of the Role of Angels in Augustine's Understanding of Creation: The Extension and Mirroring of Christ."

<sup>201</sup> Wong.







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