ORIENTALIA CHRISTIANA PERIODICA

COMMENTARII DE RE ORIENTALI AETATIS CHRISTIANAE SACRA ET PROFANA EDITI CURA ET OPERE PONTIFICII INSTITUTI ORIENTALIUM STUDIORUM

EXTRACTA



PONTIFICIUM INSTITUTUM ORIENTALIUM STUDIORUM PIAZZA S. MARIA MAGGIORE, 7

ROMA

Nr. 2 / 2016

 $\label{eq:continuous} Poste Italiane s.p.a. \\ Spedizione in abbonamento postale. \\ D.L. 353/2003 (conv. in L. 27/02/2004 n° 46) art. 1, comma 2, DCB Roma. \\ Semestrale. Taxe perçue. \\$

ORIENTALIA CHRISTIANA PERIODICA

Piazza S. Maria Maggiore 7 — 00185 Roma

www.orientaliachristiana.it

tel. 0644741-7104; fax 06446-5576

ISSN 0030-5375

This periodical began publication in 1935. Two fascicles are issued each year, which contain articles, shorter notes and book reviews about the Christian East, that is, whatever concerns the theology, history, patrology, liturgy, archaeology and canon law of the Christian East, or whatever is closely connected therewith. The annual contribution is €46,00 in Italy, and €58,00 or USD 76,00 outside Italy. The entire series is still in print and can be supplied on demand.

Subscription should be paid by a check made to Pontificio Istituto Orientale or a deposit to ccp. 34269001.

International Bank Account Number (IBAN):

BIC- Code BPPIITRRXXX

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All materials for publication (articles, notes, books for review) should be addressed to the Editor.

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Bishara Ebeid

The Christology of the Church of the East

An Analysis of Christological Statements and Professions of Faith of the Official Synods of the Church of the East before A.D. 612

Introduction

The assembly of the bishops of the Church of the East in 612, under the direction of Babai the Great, is considered to have undertaken the "Nestorianization" of the Church of the East. Before this date we can note another approach in official Christological statements from the Church of the East, in its official synods, and in its thinkers and theologians: officially this Church used a traditional Antiochene Christology of the one *parşopā* (πρόσωπον) and two *kyanē* (natures – φύσεις), while the theologians of this Church tried to interpret this doctrine through different currents of thought. These attempts of interpretation are reflected, as we will demonstrate in this article, in the Christological statements of the Synods of the Church before 612. Unfortunately there has not been any study on these professions of faith or statements, except the general presentation in the article by J. Fiey² and the analysis in the article by S. Brock.³ Even Patros Yukhana Patros did not include all the synods in his presentation of the Christology of the Church of the East.4 Likewise, Bawai Soro, in his book on the Church of the East, did not refer to the Christological decisions of the synods of this Church. 5 This fact has led us to write on this subject and to make an analysis of these Christological statements. As we will see, an examination of these synods and of their Christological professions of faith

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¹ By the term "Nestorianism" we mean the Christological expression: two $kyan\bar{e}$ (natures) and two $qnom\bar{e}$ (hypostases) in one $parṣop\bar{a}$ (person/πρόσωπον) of Christ, which could be found in some Greek sources (such as the anonymous author quoted by Leontius of Jerusalem), or in Syriac sources, even before 612 (such as Ḥabib, cited by Philoxenus). See also the clarification in the course of our introduction and also in note 87. This topic will be discussed in an article we are preparing and that deals with the Christology of Ḥabib.

² Cf. Fiey, "Christologie et Mariologie."

³ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church."

⁴ Cf. Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente."

⁵ Cf. Soro, The Church of the East. Apostolic and Orthodox.

reveals a significant progression of thought expressed in traditional and archaic language.

A. de Halleux expressed the opinion that two Christological currents co-existed peacefully together within the Church of the East.⁶ To support his opinion, however, he did not refer to the synods and their statements. Other scholars, seeking to demonstrate that the opinion of de Halleux was not precise, tried to see a western Chalcedonian⁷ influence in some theologians of this Church and to note the controversies between its theologians.⁸ We are convinced that the Christological development over time, by the theologians of this Church, occurred in various ways; not only was this interesting evolution indirectly influenced by the Christological currents of the West, but it was also directly related to the historical context of this Church.

To prove our hypothesis, we will analyze the Christological statements of the nine synods held before the year 612, taking into consideration the historical context outside and inside the Persian Empire. We will call the two Christological currents, to which de Halleux and other scholars refer: *qnomā-parṣopā* and *two-qnomē*, but these terms will not appear before our analysis reaches the point at which it can demonstrate their existence. To carry out our analysis, we will cite the statements and professions of faith of the Church of the East found in the *Synodicon Orientale*, translating them into English and taking into consideration the existent translation by S. Brock. At the end of our analysis we will present our conclusions to demonstrate our hypothesis on the Christology of these synods, a Christology in progress that attempted to resolve the same Christological questions that theologians and Councils in Byzantium sought to address.

Before we start our analysis it could be helpful to make a clarification of some technical terms we use. Even if the term $qnom\bar{a}$ is the Syriac translation of the Greek ὑπόστασις, and even if it is usually translated by scholars as hypostasis (at least, in a Trinitarian context)¹¹ we will leave it as $qnom\bar{a}$. In the history of Christian dogma, Trinitarian and Christological, the term ὑπόστασις did not have one significance and unique metaphysical function. If it was translated into Syriac by $qnom\bar{a}$, it does not always mean that the





⁶ Cf. de Halleux, "La christologie de Martyrius-Sahdona," 29.

⁷ By the term west we mean Byzantium, the Byzantine Empire.

⁸ Cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona."

⁹ It should be mentioned that the edition of the *Synodicon*, made by Chabot, is a very limited collection and is based on later copies of a 13th or 14th cen. manuscript, cf. Van Rompay, "Synodicon Orientale," 387. This is to be considered as a hindrance to research in this field.

¹⁰ See the translation in Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 133-142.

¹¹ Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 29-31.

meaning which the Syrian theologians gave to it was not one and unique, corresponding to the significances the Greeks gave. We agree, therefore, with those scholars who hold that $qnom\bar{a}$, sometimes, is not absolutely identical in meaning with the Greek term ὑπόστασις, 12 and for this reason we will leave it transliterated. The same thing one can notice regarding the Greek term πρόσωπον. It was used in different ways to explain either Trinitarian theology or the Christological doctrine. In the Syriac tradition it was transliterated by $parṣop\bar{a}$, 13 and was used with different meanings and significances, 14 however, only in Christological doctrine. For these reasons again we kept it as $parṣop\bar{a}$ without translating it by person or πρόσοπων. 15

We have also chosen to call the Christology of the two *kyanē* (natures) and two *qnomē* and one *parṣopā* Nestorianism. We do not use this term in a polemical or offensive way; we prefer this term because the same Church, adopting this Christology in 612, considered it as Nestorian doctrine, which also became a synonym for orthodoxy. So the traditional and archaic Antiochene Christology, which was the doctrine of this Church before 612, could not be considered as Nestorianism. However, it was accused of being so either by Monophysites or by Chalcedonians. To distinguish this accusation from what we call Nestorianism, we chose the term "real Nestorianism." With this term we mean the doctrine attributed to the Church of the East (its traditional Christology and the two Christological currents within it), and some other Greek Antiochene groups: the Christology of division, teaching two subjects, i.e. two christs and two sons. It is clear that such





¹² Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 131.

¹³ Cf. Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 31.

¹⁴ The fact that there are two Christological currents with different comprehensions and uses of the terms *qnomā* and *parṣopā* confirms that within the Church of the East these terms were given different metaphysical meanings.

 $^{^{15}}$ This, for sure, does not mean that translating the term $qnom\bar{a}$ with hypostasis, or $parṣop\bar{a}$ with person/πρόσωπον (which we personally did), is wrong. The important thing is to underline the various comprehensions of the terms and the different meanings they hold, cf. Ebeid, "La cristologia," 203, note 2. For the different meanings and metaphysical significances of these terms see de Halleux, ""Hypostase" et "personne""; Milano, *Persona in teologia*; Turcescu, ""Prosopon" and "Hypostasis""; while for the meaning of these terms in the Eastern Syriac tradition see Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 28-33.

¹⁷ On this subject cf. the testimony of Leontius of Byzantium who first was a member of such groups that were, as he says, diffused among Greeks and Syrians, and later became their opponent when he was converted to Chalcedonism, cf. Leontius of Byzantium, *Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos*, Liber III, *PG* 86, 1357-1396.

Christology was never existed; in fact, even Nestorius was not a real Nestorian. 18

Finally, we preferred also to use the term Monophysitism for all those who proclaimed one nature in Christ. This does not mean that we ignore the proposal of modern scholars to distinguish between moderate and extreme Monophysites calling the former by the term "Miaphysitism/Miaphysites" and the latter "Monophysitism/Monophysites." But since the same texts that we are examining do not distinguish terminologically between these two groups, as will be clear from our analysis, we chose to use just the term Monophysitism for the two groups. To distinguish, however, between them we used for the extreme Monophysites the term "real Monophysitism," which was the doctrine of Eutyches and his followers and for that we used also for them terms like Eutychians or Eutychianism, while for the moderates we used terms like: Severians, Jacobites, Syrian Monophysites or moderate Monophysites.²⁰ Having now made these necessary clarifications we can start our Christological analysis of the *Synodicon Orientale*.

The Synod of 410

This synod is considered the first official synod of the Church of the East after its unification under one Catholicos, the bishop of the capital city of the Sassanid Empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon.²¹ In this synod, the Church of the East officially recognized the Creed of Nicea, quoting the text of the Creed of the 318 Fathers of Nicea in the acts of this synod and noting the agreement of the bishops of the Church of the East. Since there are two versions of this Creed — one in the *Synodicon Orientale* of the same Church and the other in West Syriac manuscripts that include the acts of the Synod of 410 — and even if, as de Halleux has demonstrated, the form found in the West Syriac manuscripts is the original text of the creed of the Synod of the 410,²² we will present both texts because we do not know exactly when the Church of the East changed the original text and adopted the one we have in the edited *Synodicon*.

Our interest is to see how this text translates and expresses the belief in Christ. An analysis of the expressions used could help us to understand the progress and the development of the dogmatic thought of the Church of the East and its philosophical terminology.





¹⁸ Cf. de Halleux, "Nestorius," 169-174.

¹⁹ Cf. Brock, "Il dibattito," 76-77.

²⁰ On this see also Luisier, "Il miafisismo."

²¹ Cf. Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 14-15.

²² See the article by de Halleux, "Le symbole."

The text according to the west Syriac version:

אינה מבים מינה And in Him, in His Son, the Only-Begotten,

אליז ממי Who was born from Him, that is, from the substance/essence of His Father. God from God

ィップィ くっぱん Light from Light

rue God from true God

אנייד איז אייי אייי אייי (He] was born and not made

אלבב אר אבב Who is the Son of the nature (consubstantial) of His Father
Who for us, the human beings that were made by

אלאס השיאה מים Him, and for our salvation,

descended and put on a body and became a descended and put on a body and became a 23... Kuis Kama Kila rala du man...

The text according to the Synodicon Orientale

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the Son of God, Who was born from the Father, the Only-Begot-Kim Kok So ilpyki ten,

אבא מש that is, from the substance/essence of the Father.

イMイ つっ イM木 God from God,

אומים או אומים and Light from Light
True God from True God
Who was born and not made

אבבו. The Son of the substance/essence (consubstan-

べってい べかのかべ in tial) of the Father,

אר אבאס איז איז איז איז איז איז איז by whom everything in heaven and on earth was

ردنده made Who for us, the human beings, and for our sal-من vation مربل منسعی محل همانمی

אבע ארס אייש descended from heaven and was incarnate and ²⁴.. שוביאה became a man ...

We can notice in the text of the Synodicon the following: Jesus Christ the Lord is the Son of God the Only-Begotten; he comes from the substance/ essence (Aboba) of the Father, for that he is consubstantial with the Father. The text uses the phrase "the Son of the substance/essence of the Father" to translate the Greek expression ὁμοούσιος. 25 Even if such a translation were made, i.e. "the Son of the substance/essence of the Father," is literal, we can see a theological meaning behind it: the Father is the substance/essence of the divinity. This means that the Son gets his essence





²³ Idem, 162-163.

²⁴ Synodicon orientale, 22.

²⁵ See also on this use in Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/II, 482, especially note 12 on the same page.

from God the Father as substance/essence, or in other words, as a cause.²⁶ The question that someone might have, looking at both texts together, is the following: why did the Synodicon's version use in the expression of the "consubstantial" the term substance/essence (べんんん) instead of nature (حینہ)? Do we have an explanation given by the same text (the *Synodicon*'s

To have an answer we can read the anathema with which the Creed concludes:

[comes] from nothing, or say that He [comes] from another *qnomā* or substance/essence, or think that the Son of God could be changed or displaced; these the Catholic and Apostolic Church excommunicates.

אכא, זאסאל אירן ביאלז אירן But those who say that there was [a time] when He [the Son of God] did not exist and [that] He של אם מא אם מא של did not exist before He was born, or [that] He

We find in this anathema the appearance of an important term: $qnom\bar{a}$ (ميموكم). As we said above, this term, at least in Trinitarian doctrine, corresponded to the Greek hypostasis. However, we also see that the expression that the Son is not (generated) "from another $qnom\bar{a}$, or from [another] substance/essence (べんんべ)" might suggest that these two terms are synonyms, even though we are in a period after the fifth century. So someone could say that the development of the Cappadocian Fathers is not taken into consideration: i.e. the distinction between substance and hypostasis.²⁸ We do not think this is the case, though. The fathers of the Church of the East already knew about the distinction in the Trinitarian doctrine between the terms οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. It is not by chance that the text uses the term substance/essence (מאסאיא) instead of nature (בעיא) or substance (حمصمہ) — a transliteration of the Greek οὐσία.²⁹ We think that the use of the term substance/essence (べんんべ) has a technical and philosophical motivation that reflects the time when the Church of the East changed the original text. With this term (べんのんべ), the same Church wanted to explain that the Father as a hypostasis is the cause of the Son. It is very





²⁶ In fact, knowing that the authors of this Church chose to translate this same phrase into Arabic literally, leads us to maitain that there was a theological dimension and dynamism behind such phrase which is the underlining of the fact that the Father is the cause of the Trinity and, for this reason, He could be identified with the divine substance itself.

²⁷ Synodicon orientale, 22-23.

²⁸ On this topic see Kariatlis, "St Basil's Contribution."

²⁹ On this term see Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 29.

interesting to note that in the other synods this Church uses the term "nature" for the divinity of Christ, which is common to the three hypostases of the Trinity, but, as we have said, the term Khohok is the cause of the Trinity which is the hypostasis of the Father, who includes the divinity as nature. So if the Son cannot have another cause for his existence, then this cause could be just a hypostasis, which means a concrete nature or, to use Aristotelian terminology, a second substance. For this reason, in fact, we think that the text uses the terms אמאה and שנסכד which according to our interpretation could be identified, provided that the condition that べるると indicates, in our case, just the hypostatized nature of the Father.

The Synod of 486

Unfortunately, there are no extant decrees or decisions of the synods between 410 and 486, especially those held in 484 and 485 as a reaction to the *Henotikon* of the Byzantine Emperor Zeno and his religious policies. We only know that the Christological statements of those synods were expressed in Antiochene terms.³⁰ In the year 486, a synod was held under Catholicos Acacius in the capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and it is the first synod, of which we have the decisions, that deals with Christological doctrine and problems after the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).³¹ As Sebastian Brock notes, the Christological statement of this synod is expressed in Antiochene terms also, but it cannot be considered a Nestorian doctrine. 32 We will analyze the Trinitarian statement and the Christological one, and we will focus on the terminology and the philosophical way that the Church of the East chose to express these doctrines, in order to understand more about the relationship between the doctrine of this Church and Antiochene Christology.

The Trinitarian statement:

ראל אם מסטר מסטר מינו בעד בעד confession of the one divine nature which ex-Kharhah معلقت K.w.1 Orcin んりんょ מבממביתא 33... K±1001 Kwai1a

אסגיש א בעד בייז אסיציש עסשא The belief of all of us should be in the one ists in the three perfect qnomē of the one true and eternal Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...

This statement is expressed in the first part of the first canon of this





³⁰ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 126.

³¹ Cf. Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 34-35.

³² Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 126.

³³ Synodicon orientale, 54.

synod. The belief of the Church of Christ, according to the cited text, must be in the one divine nature (حينه). The use of the term nature (حينه) is clear. As we said, it expresses the *common* nature of the Trinity.

The second part of this belief speaks of three perfect (حعلقنه) gnomē (مية معالمية). What is the meaning of "perfect *qnomā*" (مية معالمية) in our context? We think that with this expression the synod meant to say that the *qnomā* of each one of the persons of the Trinity is a perfect hypostatized nature, which means that each person manifests the one divine nature (w רבים perfectly with all its natural properties. For example, if the divine nature is eternal, the three *qnome*, being perfect divine nature, are eternal also. The difference between these three perfect $qnom\bar{e}$ is that one is the Father, who is not the second — the one called the Son — both of whom are different from the third, the Holy Spirit. The distinction between the three perfect $qnom\bar{e}$ is expressed by saying that the one Trinity is of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. With this expression the fathers of is *proper* while at the same time perfectly manifesting the common nature. So we see that the $qnom\bar{a}$ is in a close relationship with the nature and at the same time that the *qnomā* makes the distinction between multiple instances that belong to the same common nature. In fact, we can see that with this terminology, the Church of the East tried to express the Cappadocian doctrine of the Trinity in her own terms.

The Christological statement:

אמטא זבעביבונהאה שמעה זכבובינואה fact, should also be in the confession of the ity. And let nobody among us venture to in-ראם מה האלומי מה הא troduce a blend or a mixture or a confusion دمت جنام ما مصعلتامع کے عصر concerning the differences of these two na-אמסטלא אינילים אינים איני ביר tures, but [each one] remains and stays [in its properties]: the divinity in its propert[ies], and the humanity in its propert[ies]. We join מאוש אבושט הפוציון פישעות o the exemplars of the natures together in one ארא בינה אל lordship and one adoration because of the שמל אססל אססו באפיזעלא: perfect and inseparable conjunction of the divinity with the humanity. And if anyone thinks or teaches others that passion and തർരതിപ്പ് ചെ പ്രവാദ പ്രാവാദ്യ change joined the divinity of our Lord, and משם בישו אמל ילי עלם: ישו does not keep to the confession of the unity ³⁴עים אים אים פרבים perfect man, let him be anathema.

Our belief in the economy of Christ, in two natures of the divinity and of the human-രച്പ് പര്യം കാര്യം of the parsopā of our Savior, perfect God and







³⁴ Synodicon orientale, 55.

The second part of the first canon contains a Christological statement. Belief in the Economy of Christ, the Incarnation, consists in the confession of the two natures (אוֹץ בינא) — the divinity (אוֹארא) and the humanity (משמשל). These two natures are united perfectly. To express this dogma, the fathers of this synod spoke of a perfect conjunction (حمعملام) کمنامی). The meaning of this perfect conjunction is that there is no separation (הא באפישנהא) between the two natures after they are united. That does not mean, however, that there is a confusion or a mixture between the humanity and the divinity because of this perfect conjunction. We think that the doctrine of the perfect conjunction was the way with which the fathers of the synod wanted to express the reality of the union, and not, as some scholars hold, the way with which they wanted to express the one appearance of the two natures.³⁵ In our opinion, it is a response to those who maintained that the union between the natures of Christ was "according to the will," which was understood by the fathers of the synod as not being a real union.³⁶

We must notice, according to our text, that every nature conserves its properties (حداثة, lit. in what belongs to it). With this, the fathers sought to protect the divine nature from any idea of introducing a passion into it. It is a clear anti-Theopaschite character of this Christological statement, as noticed by Brock.³⁷ In the last sentence of the statement its anti-Theopaschite character is even clearer.

These two natures are called a perfect God (בּנֹבּא האלה) and a perfect Man (בּנֹבּא בּנֹבּא). It is worth asking if the fathers wanted to say that the natures are two perfect *qnomē*, taking into consideration what





³⁵ Cf. Macomber, "The Christology of the Synod," 152-153.

³⁶ Cf. Grillmeier, Gesù il Cristo, Vol. I/II, 880.

³⁷ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 126.

the first part said about the three perfect *qnome* of the Trinity. We can be sure that the synod is referring to the *qnoma* of the Son as a perfect nature, even if they do not call it by that term in the Christology. However, do they mean by "perfect Man" that he is a single person, an individual? That could be one interpretation. What could help us, in fact, to maintain that this Christological statement could be interpreted as two-qnomē Christology, i.e. Nestorian doctrine, is the expression "the exemplars of the natures" (ביבאה). It is the only known synodical text that uses such an expression. We think that applying this term in Christology the fathers of the synod tried to underline the very distinction between the natures and that each one conserved not just the natural properties but also the individual ones, since the term could be translated as individual representation. In this case, the two natures manifest their natural and individual properties through the one $parsop\bar{a}$ of Christ as one manifestation, without considering them, however, as separated natures-realities. According to this interpretation, actually, one could maintain that with the expression "exemplar" (ביביב) the fathers of the synod meant *qnomā*, individual nature. In any case, we are not sure, since we know that the Church of the East did not officially use the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in its Christology, even for the Logos, before the year 612.38 For that reason, we cannot speak in this case about a Nestorian doctrine, i.e., two-qnome Christology, but the text by itself can be understood in that way, namely as Nestorian.

The last issue we will discuss is the use of the term $par \circ p\bar{a}$. As Abramowski noted, this is the first time in the official documents that we posses from the Church of the East that this term is used to refer to the one subject of the two united natures. Some scholars saw Nestorianism in it. Use think that there is no Nestorianism at all since, as we noted above, there is no use of the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in the Christological statement. What we do have, though, is a very clear Antiochene influence, and especially, as Macomber noticed, a Theodorian Christological background. Antiochene Christology uses for the one subject of the Incarnation the term $\pi\rho\delta\sigma\omega\pi\sigma\nu$, and this is the fundamental Antiochene element in the Christology of this synod, besides the anti-Theopaschite position. This use of the term $\pi\rho\delta\sigma\omega\pi\nu\nu$ is





 $^{^{38}}$ The same question and answer was given by Macomber, "The Christology of the Synod," 153.

³⁹ Cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 18.

⁴⁰ Cf. Macomber, "The Christology of the Synod," 154.

⁴¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 126.

⁴² Cf. Macomber, "The Christology of the Synod," 151-154.

⁴³ Cf. Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 29-30.

clear, for example, in the correspondence between Nestorius and Cyril.⁴⁴ Actually, we see that a very clear influence on the statement of the synod of 486 comes from the Formula of Union (433) between the Antiochians and the Alexandrians, written by the latter using their Christological terminology and thought,⁴⁵ even if this formula does not use the term "conjunction." Later on, we will see in the analysis of the Synod of 605 how this technical term was understood as "union."

After this analysis, we can really understand the reaction of the Church of the East to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon and the Christological discussion taking place in the Byzantine Empire. This reaction can be understood further by analyzing the other synods, as we will do now.

The Synod of 544

Between the Synod of 486 and that of 544, several historical events took place that could help us to understand the Christological texts of this period. First of all, the theological school of Edessa was closed by the emperor Zeno and transferred to Nisibis. Narsai also moved to Nisibis, where he reopened the school with the help of Barsauma, the bishop of the city. Under new management, so to speak, the school of Nisibis was characterized by an adherence to Antiochene thought, especially that of Theodore of Mopsuestia.46 The second event involved another transfer into Persia, this time, of the works of Nestorius. Here, the Catholicos of the Church of the East, Aba, played a very significant role. He had the works of Nestorius translated into Syriac;47 among these was the Bazar of Heracleides which was probably translated in the year 539/540.48 It is also important to remember that Justinian ascended the throne of Constantinople in the year 527. His reign was full of theological discussions and various religious policies;49 as we will see, this atmosphere in the Byzantine Empire had a certain influence, though probably an indirect one, on the Church of the East.⁵⁰

The Synod of 544 did not produce an extant Christological statement.⁵¹ However, we do have a type of Creed of the Fathers of the synod, in which





⁴⁴ Cf. Scipioni, Nestorio e Il Concilio, 132ss.

⁴⁵ In that formula we can notice the expressions "perfect God" and "perfect Man," the distinction of the natures and the conservation of the properties of each nature which are united in the one πρόσωπον. See more on this formula in Grillmeier, *Gesù il Cristo*, Vol. I/II, 897ss.

⁴⁶ Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 26-28.

⁴⁷ Cf. Van Rompay, L., "Aba I," 1.

⁴⁸ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 126.

⁴⁹ See the article by Maraval, "La politica religiosa di Giustiniano."

⁵⁰ See the article by Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'Église de Perse."

⁵¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

we can find important Christological material. Moreover, this synod pronounced several anathemas, in which we can find, as we will see, a clear reflection of the Christological discussions held in Byzantium at the time.

Expressions from the Creed of the synod of 544:

his Son, whom he appointed as heir of everything, who is Christ our Lord, he who was born in the flesh from the Holy Virgin Mary הוא אוא אוא אוא איז אוא אוא היים אוא איז ... and he gave to his disciples the mystery

:תבא שלם שלה באם יהיכים יהיכים היה ... and after forty days he ascended to heav-פת אלוביגיסס, ממנים, מחסים בת אלוביגיסס, פח while his disciples were looking at him, those who were told by the Angels: "this Jesus whom you saw, who ascended to heaven," to אבר בים בים השמחות, השלם שרבי או say that as he ascended in his true body, that :«ג'יב מוֹב בּבְים בּיב יוֹב יבי איר אין is, in fact, in his perfect humanity... 54... Khilasa Khasika 61 inu

מפליז אובין לייני ארא אבובא מה אבוב מ man, nor a God who is naked of the garment הבת אמצורז הבתם לא אוליז of humanity in which he was manifested, but משלה השנה המלה אל אר Christ is God and Man ...

⁵²... במיבים באני שר We believe in one God ... in the singleness of

מבים בל בכן האים אול אם היים ברות האסמים And in the latter days, he spoke with us by סתבה הסתב, מרבה of his body and his blood. And then he finished his economy with his passion and his death on the cross. And on the third day he prevailed over death with the power of his divinity ...

ראם במסחמם איירא מיין איין איין These things were known exactly by the grace

The part on the Trinity is very simple; the belief is in the one God and the one nature (حيد) of God. There is no mention of the three *qnome*, and not even of the names "Father, Son, Holy Spirit." 56 But from the beginning of the Christological part of this Creed, we can notice that this one God, as a cause of everything, is the Father. In fact we read in the cited text, حمر) precisely in the second sentence, that God spoke with us by his Son





⁵² Synodicon orientale, 541.

 $^{^{53}}$ Idem.

⁵⁴ *Idem*, 542

⁵⁵ *Idem*.

⁵⁶ We need to notice that in the rest of the text, in the Christological part, we have a men-

(בבּה). After that, we have very important information; this Son of God is Christ our Lord (מבא מבער), he who also was born in the flesh (מבא האלג בבעול), he who also was born in the flesh (מבא האלג בבעול) from the Virgin. It seems to us that we have an identification between the Son of God and Christ the Lord, the subject of the Incarnation.

In reference to the ascension, we have another important expression. The subject of the action is Jesus (عمد) whom the disciples saw ascending to heaven. Jesus ascended with his true body (בשבות שולה), which means for the Church of the East, as we can notice in the same text cited (בז מסה), that Jesus ascended with his perfect humanity (מאסבאב אברלים). We need to remember that the Syriac tradition, and specially, the Church of the East, does not always use the term kyanā (حيك) to talk about the divine nature and the human nature in Christ; often it simply employs the terms "divinity" (אמסטאר) and "humanity" (אמסטאר).59 Taking this into consideration, saying that the true body is perfect humanity means that the body is a perfect human nature. Can we say that this perfect human nature is a *qnomā*? In fact, according to what we noticed in the synod of 486, it could be a way of interpretation. So, if we take into consideration that the perfect $qnom\bar{a}$ manifests the common nature, we can suppose that the real and true body is a $qnom\bar{a}$ of the common nature of human beings. 60 Thus, when the synod writes that Jesus has a true body,





⁵⁷ On this term see Brock, "Sant'Efrem," 94-95.

 $^{^{58}}$ Even if the text above does not mention the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son, we know, as we saw in the texts of the previous synods, that the Son of God is one $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Holy Trinity. Also, the term $parsop\bar{a}$, as a technical term for "Christ," the subject of the Incarnation, would be used by us even if the texts do not mention it. It was already in use by the fathers of the synod of 486, who applied it to Christology.

⁵⁹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 131.

⁶⁰ The same understanding/interpretation can also be found in Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/III, 578.

it means that he has a perfect human nature; in our opinion and according to these interpretations, this means also that the humanity in Christ is one $qnom\bar{a}$. Likewise, calling the subject now with the name Jesus makes us wonder if they really desired, with this expression, to indicate a single person, an individual man, and in consequence, $qnom\bar{a}$, which could be understood as a single nature, an individual.

Our image will be clearer when we analyze the last sentence cited above. It emphasizes the unity of Christ as a single subject of two natures. Christ is not merely an ordinary man (בוצא שעעבא) and at the same time he is not just a God (べかん) who is without the garment of humanity (べょっかん) ראסציה.). Does the use of the expression "ordinary man" mean an individual man? Someone might think that this expression could be the Syriac translation of the Greek "ψιλός ἄνθρωπος." This Greek expression was used to refer to those who believed that Christ had just a human nature.⁶¹ It was attributed to Theodore of Mopsuestia and to Nestorius to accuse them of being adorers of a human being.⁶² Leontius of Jerusalem (d. 543), in his work against the Nestorians (Contra Nestorianos), alleges that the Nestorians, in their works, used the term "ψιλός ἄνθρωπος," simple man, for the humanity of Christ to express that this humanity has its own hypostasis.⁶³ We can suppose that the Syriac expression "בועד "was used to express the same idea, that the humanity in Christ was a single and individual man.64

We think that this interpretation could be taken into consideration seriously since the second phrase mentions the term "God" (κωλκ), and not "divinity" (κλωωλκ). If "divinity" indicates the divine kyanā (nature) so, we can suppose that the term "God" could be understood as a divine qnomā. So Christ cannot be just one human qnomā or just one divine qnomā. Christ, as the Creed affirms, is God and Man (κωιμο κωλκ). Again the last affirmation of the Creed uses the terms "God" and "Man" and not "divinity" and "humanity." According to our view, we see a possible Nestorian way of





⁶¹ Cf. Cross - Livingston, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1345.

⁶² This was, in fact, anathema XII of Constantinople II: "Εἴ τις ἀντιποιεῖται Θεοδώρου τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς τοῦ Μοψουεστίας ... ὡς ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον βαπτισθῆναι ...," Denzinger – Hünermann, Enchiridion, 242 (n. 434). See also Fairbairn, Grace and Christology, 180,

^{63 &}quot;... Καὶ περὶ τούτου τὴν πίστιν ἡμᾶς ἀπατεῖ, ὡς τὴν προϋπάρχουσαν τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως ὑπόστασιν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ φύσιν ὁ Λόγος τήν ἄσαρκον πρό αἰώνων, ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς ἐαυτῷ σάρκα περιβαλὼν αὐτῆ τῆ ἰδία ὑποστάσει οὐκ ἀνθρώπου ψιλοῦ τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν φύσιν ἐνυπέστησεν," PG 86, 1748D. We can also notice that the citations in the Contra Nestorianos probably come from an existing Nestorian work in Greek, cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 273-274. See also the comment by Gleed, The Development, 125 (note 431), 132-133.

⁶⁴ See also the opinion of Patros, "La cristologia della Chiesa d'Oriente," 36; he thinks that the synod affirms that the humanity in Christ is an individual man, but without providing any further explanation.

interpreting this doctrine even if the Creed does not use the technical and philosophical terms "kyanā," "qnomā" or "parsopā." At the same time we have another problem: on the one hand, the identification between Christ the parsop \bar{a} of the Incarnation, or — in other words — the union of God and Man, and on the other, the Son of God, the *qnomā* of the Logos. Now, one can ask if it is about identifying the terms $anom\bar{a}$ and $parsop\bar{a}$.

Before we try to answer all these very important questions we need to see and analyze some of the anathemas of this synod:

אלישיטא אב אראסיים ויים And anyone who introduces a quaternity

בבסו אל אל האושו הומס הלו בם And anyone who does not confess that the

:തർറമിറ്റു പ്രമേദ്ധ പ്രാ പ്രാവ്യാദ്യ sion and the death of the humanity of Christ

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and counts with them something else, or [who] does not believe that the חבעג אבענא האמשארם האמשלא ב name 'Son' makes known the divinity and the humanity of Christ together, or [who] מסגב: אם בל געאמ באראס בשרכת : אומים 68 אמיאין איר מום : האונדאיז concludes a prayer with the name of Christ and does not confess the Trinity, is to be excommunicated.

into the Holy and immutable Trinity is to be excommunicated.

only-begotten Son of God in the end of time was manifested in the flesh and [that] he is Christ our Lord, is to be excommunicated. מאמצורז אמאס מבעש אואס איז באס And anyone who does not confess the pas-

and the impassibility of his divinity, is to be excommunicated. אם בו השל באם אבא הבי ארא ar And anyone who concludes a prayer in the

From the first anathema cited, we can understand that the synod cannot accept the doctrine of quaternity in the Trinity. We need, in fact, to remember here the Christological discussion in Byzantium after Chalcedon, starting with the attempt of the emperors to bring about unity, such as the Henotikon of Zeno.70 Also, when trying to explain the doctrine of Chalcedon, the so-called neo-Chalcedonians affirmed that Christ is one hypostasis, so a fourth hypostasis cannot be added to the Trinity, an idea that is clear in the fifth anathema of the Council of Constantinople II.71 Can we





⁶⁵ Synodicon orientale, 543.

⁶⁶ Idem.

⁶⁷ Idem.

⁶⁸ The edition has איישריטער,

⁶⁹ Synodicon orientale, 543.

 $^{^{70}}$ "Μεμένηκε γὰρ Τριὰς ἡ Τριάς, καὶ σαρκωθέντος τοῦ ἑνὸς τῆς Τριάδος Θεοῦ Λόγου," PG86, 2624BC.

⁷¹ Cf. Denzinger – Hünermann, *Enchiridion*, 238 (n. 426): "... Οὔτε γὰρ προσθήκην προσώ-

see the same affirmation in the anathema of this synod of the Church of the East? Did the Church of the East feel the necessity to deal with this heretical doctrine?⁷² This anathema could be understood in this way, namely, that for the Church of the East, in Christ there are not two $qnom\bar{e}$: a divine and a human one, so that the Trinity becomes quaternity, if we take seriously into consideration our doubt about the possible identification of $parṣop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$.

This identification does not mean that there is any confusion between the two natures of Christ. To underline that, the synod mentions another anathema against the Theopaschite doctrine, which is the third anathema cited. The passions and the death belong to the human nature of Christ (משמשל), while his divinity (משמשל) remains impassible. This position was underlined also by the neo-Chalcedonians. The teaching that in Christ there is one hypostasis and one person made them underline that Christ's sufferings were in his human nature. Again we see a reaction of the Church of the East to what was happening in the West. It is clear that the Church knew about this discussion either directly, since some of its men were involved in the Christological discussion, such as Narsai⁷⁴ and the Catholicos Aba mentioned above, or indirectly through contact with people who were coming from the West and bringing with them news of the Byzantine Empire.

This means that the Church of the East was not silent, as some scholars





που, ἤγουν ὑποστάσεως ἐπεδέξατο ἡ ἁγία τριὰς καί σαρκωθέντος τοῦ ἑνός τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος Θεοῦ λόγου."

⁷² The heresy in this case is the consideration that in Christ there exist two hypostases as not really united realities: divine and human, so the Trinity becomes quaternity.

⁷³ The goal of the neo-Chalcedonian movement was the adoption of the formula *the One* of the Trinity who suffered in the flesh; even if there is a Theopaschite character, the emphasis that the passions were of the human nature is clear, cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 318ss. In fact, the third anathema of the fifth Ecumenical Council marks this dogma: "... ἀλλ' οὺχ ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτόν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον, σαρκωθέντα καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τά τε θαύματα καὶ τὰ πάθη, ἄπερ ἑκουσίως ὑπέμεινε σαρκί ...," Denzinger – Hünermann, Enchiridion, 236 (n. 423).

⁷⁴ Cf. Becker, *Fear of God*, 71-72.

⁷⁵ Cf. Bettiolo, "Mar Aba," 101-103.

argue;⁷⁶ rather, it took a clear but indirect stand on the events that were taking place in the West. This fact is clear also from the last anathema mentioned above. In our opinion, it is a response to those who were teaching two hypostases/*qnomē* in Christ.⁷⁷ In fact, saying that the prayer should not be concluded with the name of the holy Trinity and the name of something else is reminiscent of the accusation of the non-Chalcedonians against the Nestorians and the Chalcedonians.⁷⁸

In the end, we can conclude our analysis of this synod by saying that, even if the Church of the East did not use technical and philosophical terminology to express its doctrine, it does not mean that this doctrine is not important or cannot be a base for the progress and development of the Christology of that Church. We can see the stress on the subject of the Economy, which is Christ. This subject is identified with the eternal Logos and Son of God. Thus, if we could give an interpretation using the technical terminology that appeared in the previous synod, we could say that we are dealing with an identification of the terms parşopā and qnomā.⁷⁹ Also we can notice that the humanity of Christ, which is perfect and true, is described as that of an individual man. So this means that the same doctrine could be interpreted in a Nestorian way; the Christology of two *qnomē* and one parşopā. The fact that the Catholicos Aba translated Nestorius into Syriac means that the Christology of Nestorius was becoming accessible to the thinkers in the Church of the East, but still needed time to be interpreted. 80 In the same period, terms such as $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parsop\bar{a}$ continued to require further explanation to be used correctly. In the end, if we take the identification of $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parsop\bar{a}$ made by our interpretation, we could arrive at a concept close to the one of hypostatic union, but we still need more progress in Christological thought, as we will see in the next synods.

The Synod of 554

Under Catholicos Joseph, in the year 554 — just one year after the fifth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople II — a synod of the bishops of the





⁷⁶ Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 30.

⁷⁷ About the existence of theologians who were teaching two hypostases in Christ one can give the example of the anonymous author of the citations in the work of Leontius of Jerusalem *Contra Nestorianos*; for more details see Abramowski, "Ein nestorianischer Traktat."

⁷⁸ It was, for example, one of the favorite accusations against Nestorians by Philoxenos of Mabbug, cf. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, 361.

⁷⁹ We can notice that Christ $(parṣop\bar{a})$ is one, he is identified with the Son of God $(qnom\bar{a})$, and the Trinity does not become quaternity, so we can hypothesize that the $parṣop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$ are identified.

⁸⁰ Cf. Bettiolo, "Mar Aba," 108.

Church of the East was held. In our opinion, this synod, even though, as Brock noticed,81 it does not use technical or philosophical terminology to describe its Christological faith, is in one way a reaction to the anathemas of the Council of Constantinople II. It is also a very clear reaction to the religious policy of the emperor Justinian. 82 To understand the statement of faith which this synod offers, we need to remember the main points of the anathemas of Constantinople II against the Nestorians.83 The fundamental point is the condemnation of the "three chapters," Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa.84 The fourth anathema is against the unreal (false) union: such union is considered to be "according to honor" or "according to relation," etc. The same anathema is against the doctrine of two persons in Christ, which is a classical accusation against Nestorius and subsequently against all Nestorians. The fifth anathema, as we said above, affirms that there is no addition in the Trinity, which remains Trinity: three hypostases/persons. Keeping in mind the content of the anathemas against the Nestorians and against the doctrines attributed to them, we will now look at the profession of faith of the synod of 554:

בה כל מומ של Before anything else we conserve the right (or-

thodox) confession of two natures in Christ, which are his divinity and his humanity. And we conserve the properties of the natures, השל מבס הימסמס הלשלמש האש these properties) we remove any disorder, אסמים איז בו בי ביין האום השלים confusion, change and alteration. We conserve אראים פיינג אינגע מואס also the number of the *qnomē* of the Trinity as threefold. We confess the one true and inef-יוודיפוסום. we comess are one and true Son of the one fable union in the one and true Son of the one אובן אבא אים איז איז איז God, the Father of truth. If anyone thinks or ar בשנוא אוים משנוא speaks of two christs or two sons, or because הבשג אם בעג כביד היא of some reason or device he arouses quater-

Reading this statement, or this profession of faith, we can notice some similarity with the definition by Chalcedon.86 However, we do not observe the use of technical terms for the one subject of the Incarnation, either gnomā or parṣopā. We just have the use of the terms nature (حيد) and property (גלאלא) for the Christological part and *qnomā* in the Trinitarian





⁸¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

⁸² Cf. Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'Église de Perse," 54ss.

⁸³ For more see Grillmeier - Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 443-461.

⁸⁴ See also *Syriac dialogue*, vol. I, 123-125.

⁸⁵ Synodicon orientale, 97-98.

⁸⁶ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

section. So is there really a connection with the Chalcedonian definition, or do have we a traditional statement and profession of faith? To answer this question, we need to analyze this profession further.

First of all, the synod claims to hold the traditional doctrine on Christ. This doctrine teaches that in Christ there are two natures $(kyan\bar{e})$: his divinity and his humanity. We can say that the subject of the doctrine is the Lord Christ, the result of the Incarnation. Can we call him $parṣop\bar{a}$, as the synod of 486 did? We think it is possible to do so because Christ is the subject of the Economy of God, or in other words, the subject — the result — of the Incarnation, as we saw above.

In addition, this doctrine, according to the profession of the synod of 554, has consequences. The first is the conservation of the properties of each nature. Teaching, in fact, that the two natures conserve their properties means that there are no grounds for thinking that mutations and confusions could happen between these two natures: the divinity and the humanity of Christ. The second consequence is very important as well. With this doctrine, the three $qnom\bar{e}$ (hypostases) of the Trinity remain three. Does this mean that they refute the accusation of the addition of another $qnom\bar{a}$ to the Trinity? It seems to be so, and it means that, probably, Christ is one $qnom\bar{a}$ and not two. This affirmation will be supported by the anathema at the end of the profession, which we will analyze afterwards. Now, let us see the relationship between the Trinity and the union in Christ.

The profession of faith finishes with one anathema against those who teach two christs and two sons, because this doctrine means that the three $qnom\bar{e}$ (hypostases) of God become four, the Trinity becomes quaternity. Now it is clear that speaking of just one Christ and one Son means one $qnom\bar{a}$. And if Christ is the $parṣop\bar{a}$ of the union, then we have, probably, an identification of the terms $parṣop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$, even without the use of these terms.





Can we say now that there is a Chalcedonian or neo-Chalcedonian influence on the profession of this synod? Such a relationship is possible, but only indirectly. We need to take into consideration the fact that the presence of the Nestorians (those who teach two hypostases/qnome in Christ)87 and the moderate Monophysites (the Severians) who were finding refuge in the Sassanid Empire, as a result of the religious policy of Justinian, is an important element in the historical context of this synod.88 These newcomers could be an indirect source of the Christological development made in the West for the Christians of the Church of the East. In our opinion, the profession is written in an Antiochene language, probably under the influence of Theodorian Christology. Even if we can notice the emphasis on the non-confusion and non-division of the two natures in Christ, we cannot say, as some scholars have maintained, that this synod recalls the four adverbs of Chalcedon;89 it is a clear anti-Theopaschite formulation rooted in an Antiochene Christology90 which was also adopted by the Church of the East.91

So, as a conclusion, we can say that this synod was held to deal with the presence of the newcomers from Byzantium. The profession of faith adopted by this synod is against real Nestorianism, but at the same time it is also against real Monophysitism (Eutychianism). It is clear that the language of the synod is traditional and Antiochene, but this does not mean that we cannot make a possible interpretation of it, trying to understand the reasons that pushed the Church of the East to hold this synod and to compose this profession of faith. In other words, the presence of the Monophysites in the land of the Persian Empire and their accusation against the Church of the East — that the acceptance of the doctrine of two natures entails





⁸⁷ As an example we can give *Ḥabib* the Nestorian against whom Philoxenus of Mabbug wrote two works, see on this de Halleux, "Le Mamlelā de 'Ḥabīb' contre Aksenāyā"; Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/III, 545-620. These Nestorians did not teach two christs or two sons in Christ as two subjects (real-Nestorianism), but they sustained that in Christ the two really united natures were hypostatized (singular and determinate natures), which is, according to us, the base of the doctrine of the synod of 612 in which the Church of the East adopted the two-*qnomē* Christology under the influence of Babai the Great.

⁸⁸ Cf. Abūna, *Tārīh al-Kanīsah*, 129-132.

⁸⁹ Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 34.

 $^{^{90}}$ Cf. Grillmeier, $G\!es\grave{u}$ il Cristo, Vol. I/II, 790ss.

⁹¹ Cf. Becker, Fear of God, 117ss.

⁹² We do not believe that the reason for this synod was to deal with the problem of the Catholicos elected by the Persian authority, cf. Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 34. Reading the canons of this synod (especially canon XIV), we can notice that there was a fear from the newcomers and strangers from Byzantium and the new situation in the Persian empire, cf. *Synodicon orientale*, 103-104.

an adoption of the real Nestorianism⁹³ — caused this Church to hold this synod and to deal with this accusation. The doctrine is expressed with traditional language: two natures in one Christ, but against the two extreme doctrines: real Monophysitism (one nature) and real Nestorianism (two christ-subjects). The fifth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople II, had to deal with the same problem, and we believe it is the reason behind the indirect similarity between the anathemas of the fifth Ecumenical Council and the profession of this synod, and thus an indirect relationship with the theology of Chalcedon and the neo-Chalcedonians.

The Synod of 576

In the year 576 and under Catholicos Ezekiel, a new synod in the Church of the East was held. As Brock has noticed, we have no formal profession of faith, unlike with other synods, but we have a type of Creed included in the canons of the synod, in which we have some important Christological expressions that we can analyze, even if these expressions do not make use of the philosophical terms *qnomā* or *parṣopā*. 94 Before we look at these Christological expressions, it is also important to realize that in the period of this synod, we have the organization of monasticism in the Church of the East made by Abraham of Kashkar. 95 It is very important to mention that Abraham of Kashkar required his monks to read the translated works of Nestorius% because this fact sheds light on how the current of two-qnomē Christology started to grow and gain support; moreover, Babai the Great was a monk in the Monastery of Abraham of Kashkar, and this explains his two-qnomē doctrine. 97 Also, the presence of moderate Monophysites in this period is more noticed in the Persian Empire. These two events could help us to understand the reason the Church held this synod. One event was actually a reaction to the other. The Church of the East felt the necessity to





⁹³ If we take, for example, the work of John of Tella "Profession of Faith," we can find a clear accusation of real Nestorianism against the members of the Church of the East who were teaching two natures and one parṣopā in Christ, cf. Menze – Aklam, John of Tella's Profession of Faith, 87.89: "בוא באלים אלה מלא המובע באלבא לאלים באלבא לאלים באלים אילים וליים באלים אילים וליים אילים לאלים באלים אילים וליים וליים אילים אילים אילים לאלים אילים לאלים אילים לאלים אילים א

⁹⁴ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

 $^{^{95}}$ For the reform of monasticism by Abraham of Kashkar see Chialà, $Abramo\ di\ Kashkar$.

⁹⁶ Cf. Bettiolo, "Mar Aba," 108.

⁹⁷ Cf. Chialà, *Abramo di Kashkar*, 119ss, for his monastic orders and the importance of reading Nestorius, see *idem*, 122.

protect herself from the presence of the Syrian Monophysites coming from Byzantium. That was one reason for the monastic re-organization of this Church. We need to mention, in addition, that the war between Byzantium and the Persian Empire restarted in this period.98

The Christological expressions of this synod are as follows:

mbhhuh,

പ്ര He humbled himself voluntarily for the salvation of our nature, which had grown old and worn out through the acts of our sin. He took (for himself), inseparably, a perfect Temple :പ്രപ്പോ പ് തമ്യാപ് പ്രാച് for the inhabitation (dwelling) of his divinity, האכל האישואאי. האאכל האישור from Mary the Holy Virgin. And the incarnate רבים בעולה וארים Christ (who is in the flesh) was conceived and שליים אינים אינים

In this citation, we can observe the traditional language consistently used by the Church of the East. The use of the term "Temple" (محلحه) to describe the humanity of Christ is one example. Also, the inhabitation of the divinity in the humanity, in the Temple, is another example of this traditional language. This is not the only important observation, however.

First of all, the subject of this passage is the Son of God, Christ the Lord (מבעל בה כבוֹם משעא הוֹ),100 who humbled himself voluntary for the salvation of human nature. This subject took human nature, a Temple, from the Virgin Mary and made it a Temple for the inhabitation of his divinity. So, we can say that the Temple, the human nature, belongs to this subject "Son of God," to whom the divinity, as a nature, also belongs. This is a very important point because we have an identification between the Son of the Father and the subject of the Incarnation. In other words, we have an identification of the terms $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parsop\bar{a}$, even if we have no mention of them. In fact, there is another expression that helps us to make this interpretation and hypothesis: the "incarnate Christ" (حعيد المعالم المع literally, "Christ who is in the flesh"), as the subject of the Incarnation. This means that Christ is identified with the Son, as was mentioned above, and after the Incarnation he could be called "the incarnate Christ."

To refer to the humanity of Christ just with the term Temple was not enough, though. This Temple is described as a perfect one (محلكم رحعدانه). We should remember here what we already noticed about the







⁹⁸ Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 34.

⁹⁹ Synodicon orientale, 113.

 $^{^{100}}$ Idem.

 $qnom\bar{a}$ as a perfect nature. So, if the humanity of Christ is perfect, does that mean that it is a *qnomā*?

The last sentence of the citation could help us further. The expression we have is very similar to the Chalcedonian definition.¹⁰¹ It states that the "incarnate Christ" must be known "in two natures" (حلاتي حتك): God (תמשא) and Man (בינשא), but at the same time that he is one Son (שנ רבי). This expression, which does not use any technical term for the incarnate Christ, could be interpreted in two ways. The first interpretation is as follows: We have two natures that are perfect. This means that there are two *qnome*, and for that reason, the two natures are called "God" (i.e., one divine hypostasis) and "Man" (i.e., an individual human being) and not "divinity" and "humanity." These two natures/qnome are united in the one $parsop\bar{a}$, the one Son. The second interpretation takes into consideration the identification between $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parsop\bar{a}$ and says that the two natures are united in the $qnom\bar{a}$ -parşop \bar{a} of the Son. This means that the human nature, even if it is perfect, does not possess its own $qnom\bar{a}$ and for that reason we have not four *qnome* in the Trinity after the Incarnation, but only three.

Certainly, these are two ways of interpretation. However, the ambiguity shows that the traditional way to express the faith in the Church of the East could be a basis of development for two different currents of Christology which have the same goal: describing the distinction between the two natures of Christ and the unity of the subject of the Incarnation, the one Christ and Son. The next anathema that comes from the same synod could help to explain this opinion of ours further.

Khiiz Khazzo Knażl 102. Khena Khahelh

Thus, this [is the] true belief, in three qnome, ייים אוויים אוו במשבא השבים היוסאס היוסא tentious companies of the followers of Mani, במניא וביא האנ, ocion, Bardaisan and the rest of their fellow . מבינתם או הבינתם שבינים heretics. And in [this belief] are taken away, הבשאמבים הכלונים הכשאמבים הבשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים הכשאמבים followers of Arius, Eunomius and Apollinarius with the rest of the heretics, their adherents, [who] blaspheme the Father and make the divinity of the Son to suffer and move away the אסמאל Holy Spirit, and [in this way] they [introduce] confusion into the equality of the Holy Trinity.





¹⁰¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127. We can notice the expression of Chalcedon "ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ... γνωριζόμενον," adopted by this synod.

¹⁰² Synodicon orientale, 114.

The anathema begins with an affirmation of the correct and true belief, which consists in the three $qnom\bar{e}$ of the divine nature: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We can read this affirmation as a polemical answer to the accusation of the addition of a fourth $qnom\bar{a}$ in the Trinity, similar to the anathema made by the previous synod.

The second part of this anathema is against those who cause the divinity of the Son to suffer (i.e., who believe that the divinity of the Son suffered). It is a clear polemic against the Syrian Monophysites whose presence in the Sassanid Empire was growing more noticeable. Despite this, the anathema does not mention the names of any of the great moderate Monophysites, such as Severus of Antioch; even the name of Eutyches, the real Monophysite, is not mentioned, as the synod of 585 will do.

This second part of the anathema is very important. Again, we have the affirmation that the divinity belongs to the Son. This means that the synod would choose the second way of interpretation we gave above. The Son as a $qnom\bar{a}$ — and we can be sure of this because in the beginning of the anathema it was mentioned as a $qnom\bar{a}$ — remains after the Incarnation one Son. For that reason, there is no addition of a fourth $qnom\bar{a}$ in the Trinity. This one Son, after the Incarnation, is called, "incarnate Christ," which is the $parṣop\bar{a}$ of the union. This leads us to see again an intention to identify the $qnom\bar{a}$ with $parṣop\bar{a}$, even without the use of this terminology. Such an interpretation could lead us to suppose that the human nature in Christ, even being perfect (caccle caccle c

As a conclusion, we can notice that with this synod, the Church of the East sought to answer the accusations made by the Syrian Monophysites against its traditional Christology. With regard to definitions and expressions, the Church remains traditional, but on the level of thought, we have a notable progress and development. The distinction between the two natures is necessary to protect the divinity of Christ from any introduction of passion. For that reason, the same synod remarks that Christ, the one Son, was crucified in his human nature. 103 These two natures are united in the one Christ and Son. This belief protects the Trinity from any addition of a fourth *qnomā*. We can see that the Church of the East had to respond to some questions and accusations. To do so, however, it did not choose to use technical terminology for describing her Christological doctrine. The use of the traditional expressions led different theologians of this Church to choose different ways of interpretation, as we pointed out above, and as





 $^{^{103}}$ Cf. idem, 113 : "אמלי האמיביה האמים ישע א האמים אביה האמים הלשטוג האמים הצייו."

we will see clearly in the next pages, taking into consideration the movement of the two-*qnomē* Christology, which was already starting to be notably present in the Great Monastery of Abraham of Kashkar's community, and the opposite movement of Ḥenana, the *qnomā-parṣopā* current, about which we are going to speak in the next synod.

The Synod of 585

The importance of this synod is to be found in its historical context. We have the beginning of the doctrinal movement of Ḥenana of Adiabene at the school of Nisibis and his provocative Christology and hermeneutical doctrine. In fact, in his hermeneutical lessons at the school of Nisibis, of which he was the director in 571, Ḥenana preferred the works of John Chrysostom to those of Theodore of Mopsuestia. ¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, this theologian was, according to his enemies, ¹⁰⁵ a supporter of Origen and of the Chalcedonian Christology. ¹⁰⁶ These choices of Ḥenana were so provocative that some of his students, two future Catholicoi of the Church of the East, Ishoʻyahb II and Ishoʻyahb III, left the school of Nisibis with other students and teachers. In addition, since Ḥenana's movement had a big influence on the monasticism of the area, ¹⁰⁷ the community of Abraham of Kashakar started to argue against him and his followers. ¹⁰⁸

In Byzantium, we have the attempts of the emperor Maurice to bring about union with the Church of the East. In fact, Catholicos Isho'yahb I, under whom this synod was held, went to Constantinople as a head of a delegation 586/587. We can certainly see behind this event a political will to confirm the peace after the long period of war between the Persian and the Byzantine Empires.¹⁰⁹ Isho'yahb I also wrote a profession of faith that, according to some historical sources, was accepted as orthodox by the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch (the Chalcedonian one).¹¹⁰ Before we see this interesting profession of faith, we need to see and analyze first another profession, the one of the synod of 585 and its Christological statement.





¹⁰⁴ Cf. Baum – Winkler, The Church of the East, 36.

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately the works of Ḥenana were destroyed because of the over against him, cf. Childers, J. W., "Ḥenana," 194; for that reason, what we know about his Christology and his exegesis comes solely from citations in the works of his opponents, cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 19.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Childers, "Henana," 194.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Becker, Fear of God, 90.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Chialà, Abramo di Kashkar, 57.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 36.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

The profession of faith of 585 could be considered as a comment on the Creed of Nicea. We will not make an analysis of the whole Christological part; we will just mark those expressions that could show us a progress in the thought and in the way of expressing the faith in Christ by the Church of the East.

First of all, we need to consider that the Church of the East could not remain silent, seeing the notable presence of the Syrian Monophysites in the Persian Empire. For that reason, we have a condemnation against Eutyches and his followers and their doctrine.111 The fathers of the synod say that they cannot agree that the humanity of Christ disappeared in his divinity, because the consequence of this doctrine is to introduce the passions and suffering into the divinity. Therefore, they mark the distinction between the two united natures in Christ:

The name 'Christ', in fact is an exposition of his divinity, which [comes] from the Father, and [of] his humanity, which [comes] from the mother...

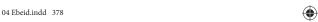
קאמוב אומינוב المرابعة المالكة المالكة not abused or forgotten

... and after, the doctrine [of the fathers] re-

We can notice that the name "Christ" in this passage is given to the two natures, which means that it is a technical term in the context of the Economy of God, the Incarnation. Actually, we have no identification of the title "Christ" with the *qnomā* of the Son, even in other passages of this profession of faith. We need to note also that in the first phrase cited above, we have a new way of talking about the double consubstantiality of Christ. His divinity comes from the Father and his humanity comes from his mother. The two natures are called in the traditional way: divinity and humanity; there is no technical term that could help us to interpret the type of these natures — as perfect natures $(qnom\bar{e})$ or not. However, from the very fact that the divinity of Christ comes from the Father, we can be sure that this divinity is the *qnomā* of the Son. The problem is that we cannot know what







¹¹¹ Cf. Synodicon orientale, 134: "היבה האמשרט של בילך הביל הביל הביל הביל בילי בילי האמשרט של הילים האמשרט בילים בילים בילים האמשלה האמשרט הילים בילים בילים בילים האמשרט בילים בי affirmation of our opinion that the Syrian Monophysites, who were moderate in their Christological doctrine, were accused to be the followers of the true Monophysite, Eutyches.

¹¹² Idem, 134.

¹¹³ *Idem*, 135.

the type of the human nature in Christ is; is it a single man or a general nature? To answer this question, we need to look at another citation.

Before that, however, we would like to point out the way in which the second phrase marks the unity and the distinction of the two natures and the importance of this phrase. First of all, we have a new term with which to describe the unity of the natures, the word "unification" (حسيمه المراجية). In our opinion, the fathers of this synod chose this term to mark the reality of the union. That is, if the two natures are truly united it does not mean that the humanity could be abused (האללבא) or forgotten (האלביא) or that the divinity could change (حعماسلک) or die (حميلا). The importance of this phrase is its simplicity in expressing the conservation of the properties of each nature without the use of the term "property." Moreover, this last affirmation was clearly written against, or as an answer to the Syrian Monophysites. As we have said, the goal of making this distinction between the natures of Christ is to make sure that no one could think that the divine nature of Christ suffered; the same is clear also in the next expression of the creed of this synod:

ماه $\frac{114}{114}$... that as the nature of his divinity did not suffer and did not die ...

Even if simplicity is a very notable element in this profession of faith, at the end of the commentary, where we have a very important and interesting Christological statement that is considered by the fathers of the synod as a summary of all the commentary on the Creed, we can find the use of a very important technical term about the Economy: We have the reappearance of the term parṣopā (هني محم), after a long absence since the synod of 486:

this is its sense, put briefly, following the ല്ച മെന 1129LC gregizing שמביל זה שלמשול הבייה של שמביל שמיאה מלידים של שמביל בי שלמשות המלידים שמיאה שלמידים שמיאה שלמביל בי שמבילים שלמידים שמיאה שלמבילים שלמידים שמיאה שלמידים שמידים ש יוווty and deny his numanity, and against those who confess his humanity and deny his divinity, and against those who deny his divinity, and against those who deny his divinity and confess that he is an ordinary of the inst.

This is the belief without corruption, and המנטא גלא עבל. ממט לבענס sequence of its phrases, with which the man or who liken him to one of the just.

This statement is formulated as a polemic against all those who do not confess the two natures of Christ. This polemic is directed, firstly, against





¹¹⁴ Idem.

¹¹⁵ *Idem*, 136.

Eutyches and his followers, the Monophysites who believe only in the one divine nature and refuse to confess the humanity of Christ. The second group against whom the polemic is directed are those who confess the human nature while ignoring the divine, those who consider Christ just as a simple or ordinary man (כוֹצה שעובה) or a man who is similar to the righteous and the just (אנים). It seems to us that, in this case, the Church of the East is again condemning the two heresies, real Monophysitism and real Nestorianism. It is clear, too, that the Syrian Monophysites at that time were accusing the Nestorians (the members of the Church of the East) of considering Christ to be just a simple man (בינבא בענבא), as we can see in the profession of faith of John, the Monophysite bishop of Tella (d. 538) who used this expression and attributed it to Nestorians. 116 Through this synod again the Church of the East rejected the accusation, made by the Syrian Monophysites, against it, that taught two subjects in Christ and, as a consequence, adored the humanity of Christ separately from his divinity, accusing them of being the followers of Eutyches, i.e., real Monophysites. 117

We have already encountered the expression "simple man" (حنیت) عسدک) above, and we attempted earlier to explain its sense as a single man or an individual, trying to use the technical term $qnom\bar{a}$ also in anthropology, with *qnomā* meaning a concrete and single human nature. We think that we can see the same phenomenon here also. Saying that Christ cannot be just a simple and ordinary man, the fathers of the synod meant a single or an individual man. In fact the continuation of the phrase uses the word "or" to condemn others who were teaching that Christ was merely like the righteous ones, which could be a good interpretation of the concept "ψιλός ἄνθρωπος," as one single and individual man. In fact, the refutation of the belief that Christ cannot be just a simple man is because of the fact that humanity was united with the divinity. We are sure that the divinity of Christ is the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son; so, if the humanity cannot be a $qnom\bar{a}$, then we can reach the same result as we did with the last synod. The humanity in Christ has no $qnom\bar{a}$ of its own because it is united with the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son, and the two natures form the one Christ. This possible interpretation can help us understand the first phrase in which we have the technical term for the Economy, parṣopā (حفي معاء).

The belief, according to the synod, should be in the one *parṣopā* of Christ





¹¹⁷ Similar accusations could be found in works of theologians of the school of Nisibis, cf. Becker, *Fear of God*, 91.

and in the two natures, his divinity and his humanity. The natures belong to Christ and the $parsop\bar{a}$ belongs to Christ too. What does that mean, and how can we approach these terms? In our opinion, Christ is the subject of the Incarnation and the Economy of God. He is the one manifestation of the two united natures. In other words, these united natures are manifested by the *parsopā* of Christ.

A *qnomā* is the manifestation of a perfect nature, and this term was used by the Church of the East only in its Trinitarian theology. In Christology they used the term $parsop\bar{a}$ to say the same thing: the manifestation of the nature, but this time the $parsop\bar{a}$ manifests two natures and not one. The function of $parsop\bar{a}$ could be the same as $qnom\bar{a}$, so we can identify them but with the caveat that each term has its field, *qnomā* for Trinitarian doctrine and $parsop\bar{a}$ for Christology (the Economy). In fact, the same synod could help us to understand the identification we have made. In the next anathema, which is against the Syrian Monophysites who introduce, according to the synod, passions into the divine nature, we can read the following:

ححمتك യുരുപ്പാ യുഗയുപ്പ لحلهما るがろん מיבא האמים המשאה היא האום of the human nature of Christ — those things that, sometimes, because of the perfect union גראס א אריים אלא איי ארא גרסאל hαl מאס אריבי אי איי איי vinity, are allocated to God by Economy, but not by nature.

: amhall and That is, the heretics, in their stubbornness, have dared [to attribute] to the nature and to the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the divinity and of the essence of the Logos the properties and the passions האמצות that the humanity of Christ had with his di-

It is clear that we have a kind of use of the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in the field of حصلت Christology, precisely in the divine nature of the Logos in Christ (حصلت പ്പോ തമരുപ്പാ തമരയിപ്പു പ്രാവമാം). This confirms, in fact, our interpretation that we make in this analysis, namely, being sure that in Christology the divine nature of Christ, i.e. the Logos, is considered as a *qnoma*, even if is not always called so. The Church of the East could accept the identification between the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Logos and Christ, the union of the two natures, only on the condition that this identification be made according to Economy and not according to nature. Similarly, they could even accept the communicatio idiomatum, but only on the same condition. This means that because of the perfect union (מוניסאלא אביילאלא) between the two natures, the properties that belong to the human nature could be attributed to the divine nature of Christ, which is the *qnomā* of the Logos. All this could happen without any problem if we acknowledge that it regards





¹¹⁸ Synodicon orientale, 136.

the Economy of God, which means the Incarnation of the Logos. Saying additionally "not by nature" the fathers of the synod sought to re-emphasize that the $parṣop\bar{a}$, which is the manifestation of the two natures of Christ, could not be identified with the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Logos by nature, because this $qnom\bar{a}$ is of the divine nature and not of the two natures, or else the result of the union would be one nature and not two distinct natures.

If we make such an interpretation, we need to explain another problem. Can we suppose that the humanity has no *qnomā* of its own, but is not the divinity the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son? In our opinion, if we take into consideration what we have noticed in the last synod, we can make another hypothesis. The $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son was united with a human nature without $qnom\bar{a}$; the union took place in the one $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son, which henceforth was a $gnom\bar{a}$ of two natures; and for that reason it is called $parsop\bar{a}$. This can really help us to understand how some thinkers of the Church of the East could make an exchange between these two terms. They were not just influenced by the Chalcedonian and neo-Chalcedonian currents; rather, the official documents of their Church form the basis that led them to make use of such terminology and to engage in this progression in thought. In fact, Henana, whom we mentioned above, was one of these thinkers who identified the eternal Son and Christ, using a type of identification between the terms $parsop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$ to describe the result of the union, 119 which we can also see being done by the last synod. He even adopted the concept of the composition (σύνθεσις), 120 which we could see in the function of the metaphysical term of parsopā according to our interpretation, namely, parşopā could have the same metaphysical function of the "σύνθετος ὑπόστασις": parsopā could be understood, in fact, as the qnomā of the Logos with the human nature.

We can find an identification between $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parṣop\bar{a}$, also, in the profession of the Catholicos Isho'yahb I which he made in front of the Byzantine Emperor Maurice and which was accepted as orthodox, as we said above. In this profession, we cannot find any technical term in the Christological part. In our opinion, we have a traditional language with a clear progress in thought. It is not, as some scholars might think, a profession under the influence of Chalcedonians or neo-Chalcedonians; 121 rather, in our opinion, it is a profession of the faith of the Church of the East that reflects the theological current and thought within it during that period.

The Catholicos identifies Christ, the subject of the Economy, with the





¹¹⁹ Cf. Abramowski, "Die Christologie," 315ss, see also, Abramowski, "Babai der Grosse," 233ss, see also Becker, *Fear of God*, 199-200; Reinink, "The Cause," 526-527.

¹²⁰ Cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 25.

¹²¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127.

Son of God, so the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son, under this identification, could be called Christ. These are some expressions that could demonstrate what we are talking about:

പ്പ പ്യവ്യാ പ്രത among us. 122. - Ka

אמאל . אמאל מים אויבא במיב Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God the Logos, בוght from Light, according to the divine Econ-אנו האומן און האומן און האומן און האומן ה in his divinity, was born in the flesh from the can שליבא בארמים. בר באס אל בינים באסלאה ever-Virgin Mary in the latter times — one and the same but not in the same way. The Logos בי מסף במי באלא בשני בי ביי ביי בעלא became flesh in an indivisible union and dwelt

אב כשמא: מס כאשמאה מלבאאה 123

בסג, מסה גואל גלא בארא Christ, who, being unembodied, descended :שביא בו אי שביא בו האסשאל from heaven without any change in his divinity, was, in the limitlessness of his divinity, also in

യമയെപ്പ محواحد: $\prec 2^{\circ}$ 124. حمالهای حام حمیلهای حام or consumed ...

ראבא: תענגא: Christ is the Only-Begotten and united: he is Only-Begotten [in relation] to the Father, and he is united and unseparated [so that] his di-ראם אוווופן and me is united and unseparated to winity does not die or get destroyed or changed, משל איז איז מאמייעה :מאל and his humanity is not stolen away or hidden

It is clear from these citations that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Logos who became incarnate, who descended from heaven without any change in his divinity and became a man. If we take this identification and apply it to the profession of the synod we could arrive at the same conclusion. The *qnomā* of the Son belongs to Christ as Only-Begotten, and the parsopā belongs to Christ as united (incarnate), so it is clear that the qnomā and the parşopā could give the same metaphysical meaning. The human nature, as a consequence, could not have its own $qnom\bar{a}$, and because of that, there is no addition of a fourth *qnomā* in the Trinity. 125 We could say that the human nature of Christ exists in the *qnomā* and the *parṣopā* of Christ, which is the divine $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son. Can we say that, with these non-philosophical expressions and explanation, especially if we look again





¹²² Synodicon orientale, 194-195.

¹²³ Idem, 195.

¹²⁴ *Idem*.

[&]quot;.u. בעא הלא פהלבפב: אלא מוסכא הלו הכאורבבי," Cf. idem, 491: ".u. בעא הלא הלא מוסכא הלא הלא מוסכא."

at the third citation above, the Catholicos affirms a hypostatic union? Or a union according to composition? Probably yes, but we cannot talk about a hypostatic union using the term $qnom\bar{a}$ because we have the condition that this identification can be made "only by Economy." So we can say that the term $parṣop\bar{a}$ could really mean a union according to composition.

In such a profession, with which the Catholicos sought to pave the way towards an agreement between the two Churches, i.e., the Chalcedonian and the Church of the East, we do not have the use of any technical terms for the Economy; however, even if this lack of technical terminology seems to be a political attempt on the part of the Catholicos, this way to express Christology is traditional for the Church of the East, as we have seen above. In conclusion we can say that the Catholicos's statement confirms the existence of a Christological current in the Church of the East that identifies the term $qnom\bar{a}$ with $parsop\bar{a}$. In fact, the official documents allow us to make this affirmation, even if they do not always use these technical terms; their metaphysical content is clear. For that reason, we can be sure that this synod was a victory for the Christological current of Henana and not a condemnation of it, as some scholars maintain. 127 In fact, the synod takes a negative attitude towards those who do not accept the works and the doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia, 128 but that does not mean that the Christological position of Henana was condemned. For that reason, we think, the fathers of the synod did not mention his name, 129 not only because he was supported by the Metropolitan of Nisibis Simon and other bishops, 130 but also because of the fact that his Christology was in the same current as that of the Catholicos Isho'yahb I and of the fathers of the synod.

The Synod of 598

A new synod was held in the year 598 under the Catholicos Sabrisho. This synod does not have a profession of faith or a commentary on the Creed, as the other synods do. We do, however, have a list of anathemas that contain Christological doctrine; we will analyze these to understand the progress of the thought of this Church and the relation of this synod and its doctrine with those of the other synods. Before doing so, we need to





¹²⁶ Union according to composition means that the two natures in Christ coexist together in the one hypostasis of the Logos; see the fourth anathema of the ecumenical council of Constantinople II, cf. Denzinger – Hünermann, *Enchiridion*, 238 (n. 424). See also Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/II, 448.

¹²⁷ Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 36.

¹²⁸ Cf. Synodicon orientale, 136-138. (The second canon of this synod).

¹²⁹ Cf. Chialà, Abramo di Kashkar, 57

¹³⁰ Cf. *idem*.

remember that this period is marked by the long wars between the Persian and Byzantine Empires. 131 This could explain the anathematic character of this synod: the Church of the East was trying to define its identity so that it could appear different from the other Churches and confessions: the Syrian Monophysites (Jacobites) in Persia and the Chalcedonians of Byzantium. With this synod, we have, in fact, the start of a movement that had as its goal finding a clear definition of the faith. At the same time, we have some very important progress in how to express Christological doctrine, following the current that identifies $parsop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$ with each other — the current we discussed above.

We excommunicate and alienate from our בג השובע הכך בלוח שהללך הוביע: בל בין באר בינים מאמשלא. בינים בינים משמחים amamakr בינים בינים האמשים company anyone who rejects the divine nature and the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ; or who introduces blending and מה השם מה הישו mixture or composition or confusion into Kin Kham לאסא מר אניבאן בעני אין butes] suffering or death or any of the base things of humanity in any way to the glorious nature of his divinity; or who considers as ordinary man the dominical Temple of التع: لحبيك عصيم ممامه من التعاديم مح من التعاديم ال הבינה משבר לישב לה להיבלה היניא God the Logos which, in inexplicable mys-באוא גלא א מס ובאוא דלא מא בואר tery and in an incomprehensible union, He [the Logos] united to himself in the womb of the holy Virgin, in a union which is ever-ארא בעניאר או אוואס איז איז lasting, indissoluble and inseparable. 132 rashows rela resident relation

בה בל בל: the union of the Son of God; or who [attri-

The first list of anathemas we cited deals with the union in Christ and its consequences. Everyone, according to the text, who does not confess both of the natures of Christ the Lord is excommunicated. It is a clear polemic against the Syrian Monophysites who were proclaiming the one nature of Christ. The continuity of the text confirms our opinion. Confessing just one nature has dangerous consequences: first of all, it means mixture and confusion (אור (אור אווויסו (אור אווויסו (אור אווויסו (איר אוויסו (איר אייטו אוויסו (איר אייטו אוויסו אייטו איי the Son of God. It is the first time we have a refutation of the term "composition" (σύνθεσις), which was used both by the Monophysites (Severians)¹³³ and by the neo-Chalcedonians¹³⁴ and was adopted, as we said above, by the fifth Ecumenical Council. The refutation of this term is due to the fact that the Church of the East understood it as a composition of a new nature and not, as it was used by the others (Severians and neo-Chalcedonians),





¹³¹ Cf. Abūna, Tārīḥ al-Kanīsah, 137-140.

¹³² Synodicon orientale, 197-198.

¹³³ Cf. Grillmeier - Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 126-128.

¹³⁴ Cf. idem, 283.294.336-338.

as a synonym of the hypostatic union. Indeed, in our discussion of the last synod, we argued that some of the expressions could refer to a type of "composition." This anathema could not be contrary to our interpretation, since the composition to which we referred above does not mean a mixture of natures; rather, the term "composition" in our explanation above simply explains the way of existence of the two united natures that are manifested by one $parṣop\bar{a}$. That this is the case will be shown by the next interpretation.

For the Church of the East, the teaching of composition, adopted by Monophysites and neo-Chalcedonians, means mixture, and such doctrine cannot preserve the union of the Son of God (תמלא גם אלא הבוא). We should ask now which kind of union the fathers of the synod do affirm. Is it a hypostatic union?

We need to notice, first of all, that this union is called by the term "תגם "Also, this union belongs to the Son of God; in other words, it is a union of the *qnomā* of the Son of God. Can we consider this a hypostatic union? To understand more and to answer this important question, we need to analyze the rest of the text cited. On the one hand, this union means that every nature must conserve its properties, and for that reason, everyone, says the text, who attributes the sufferings and the death to the divine nature is anothema. On the other hand, the humanity of the Logos of God, which is called a dominical Temple (حمله حماح، حينه صلحما) cannot be considered a simple or ordinary man (בוֹעבא בעובה). Again, we have the use of the term "simple man." We need to look for the reason why the humanity of the subject of the union cannot be considered as a simple man. The quotation says that this humanity belongs to the Logos of God. This means two important things: the humanity belongs to the *qnomā* of the Logos, and the subject is the same Logos of God who is identified with Christ, the subject of the Economy. The consequence of this is that, according to our interpretation, the humanity of Christ does not have its own $qnom\bar{a}$, and for that reason, it cannot be seen as a simple or mere man. In fact, this analysis confirms our hypothesis, as we said above, about the use of the term "בועבא." The second reason for the rejection of considering the humanity of Christ as a simple man is the union by itself.

At the end of the anathemas, we have a kind of explanation of the type of union that the fathers of the synod affirm. It is an indescribable and inexplicable union, starting in the womb of the Virgin; moreover, the union lasts forever and is without separation (אבלת גלה אבער הואס). To know that we are going in the right direction in our





 $^{^{135}}$ Cf. *idem*, 128.249-295. It is good to notice, also, that the interpretation that every group gave to this term is different.

interpretation, we need to see the expression that the text gives to the humanity of Christ; it is called a dominical temple (صحلح مخنيم). The adjective "dominical" was given also by Leontius of Jerusalem to the humanity of Christ, calling it "κυριακός ἄνθρωπος." For Leontius, this term, as noticed by Grillmeier, was chosen to refer to Christ as a perfect term to explain the consequence of the union for the human nature, which was divinized, since it did not have its own hypostasis. 136 Leontius of Jerusalem, in fact, in the thirteenth chapter of his work Contra Nestorianos, tries to answer the question asked by an anonymous Greek Nestorian: to explain the composition between the Logos and the human being taken from us. In answer to this question, Leontius makes it clear that the humanity in Christ, which he calls "κυριακός ἄνθρωπος," has no hypostasis of its own because it was united with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Logos. 137 Expressions such as "the Logos united to himself the human nature," which we find in our text, can be found in the work of Leontius in a similar polemical context, just as in our text here. 138 Again, we can notice, in our opinion, a reciprocal influence between the neo-Chalcedonians and the theologians of the Church of the East. The influence made by the neo-Chalcedonians remains indirect,139 because the thinkers of this Church had made their own developments in Christology so that they could arrive precisely at such an affirmation. We say that the influence is indirect, because in this profession we have no use of the technical terminology that is used by Leontius of Jerusalem, such as "en-hypostaton/etero-hypostaton" etc. This fact means that the Church of the East was far removed from the progress in metaphysical thought that was occurring among the Chalcedonian Greeks, but at the same time, the Church could reach, with simple and traditional language, the same Christological ideas. So, as a first conclusion, by calling the humanity of Christ "a dominical temple," the fathers of the synod





¹³⁶ Cf. idem, 309-311. For the history of this concept in the patristic tradition see Grill-meier, "Ο κυριακός ἄνθρωπος."

¹³⁷ Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*,vol. II/II, 309-311.

 $^{^{138}}$ "Τὸ συντεθῆναι τὸν Θεὸν Λόγον τῷ ἑξ ἡμῶν ἀνρώπῳ καθ' ὑμᾶς, ἥ αὐτὸν μόνον εὐρηγέτησεν, ἤ τόν ῷ συνετέθη ἄνθρωπον, ἤ ἀμφοτέρους ἄμα, ἤ οὐδ' ἑαυτὸν οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνον, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς μόνους, ἤ Θεόν καὶ ἡμᾶς, τὸν δὲ ἑξ ἡμῶν ἑαυτῷ συντεθέντα ἄνθρωπον οὐδαμῶς, ἤ αὐτόν τε καὶ ἠμᾶς ἄμα, ἤ ἠμᾶς τε καὶ τὸν ἑξ ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπον, Θεόν δὲ οὐδὲ ὅλως," PG 86, 1465C.

¹³⁹ We do not have any information about an extant Syriac translation of the work *Contra Nestorianos* of Leontius of Jerusalem, cf. *CPG* 6813; for that reason, we cannot affirm that his work was known in Persia, even if it could have arrived and been known in Greek. Nevertheless, the fact that Leontius made a very interesting metaphysical progress of thought and use of terminology, which are not used by the fathers of this synod, leads us to maintain that solely the general opinion of this neo-Chalcedonian thinker was known by the thinkers of the Church of the East, especially if, as we said, his work was composed in a polemical atmosphere.

probably wanted to say, taking also into consideration everything we have noticed above on the whole passage, that this humanity does not have its own $qnom\bar{a}$. 140

After all this analysis, can we affirm and say that they are talking here about a hypostatic union? In our opinion and the interpretation we have made, saving that this union belongs to the Son of God, that the humanity cannot be a *qnomā*, and that the Logos united the humanity to himself, all leads us to maintain that such union could indeed be interpreted as hypostatic. Actually, only in this way could the Church of the East affirm that there is no fourth $qnom\bar{a}$ added in the Trinity, as the second group of anathemas mentions:

We also reject anyone who introduces a מסז ישה אבי מר השלא שבי was God the Logos himself who perfected the passion of our salvation in the body of האמלם משבים השלים בי בים השלים היא והיא his humanity, being in it and with it and by it, in the womb and on the cross and forever, without separation, while the glorious nature of his divinity did not participate in

Again, we have a connection between the addition of a fourth *qnom\bar{a}* to the Trinity and the accusation of the teaching of two christs or two sons. Moreover, this connection affirms our hypothesis about the understanding of the type of human nature in Christ. It could not be considered as another son or as another christ because that would imply another *qnomā*, i.e., two separate subjects. We need to notice that in this anathema, we have a clear identification between Christ and the Son of God: one is Christ and one is the Son of God (حملاء متعدد). This reinforces our opinion about the identification of the terms $parsop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$ when we see that their meanings and their metaphysical use are identical.

The second part of this anathema is also very important. It is a clear acceptance of the Theopaschite formula which was adopted by the council of Constantinople II¹⁴² after being long in use and elaboration by the neo-Chalcedonian thinkers. 143 In fact, the synod here anathematizes those who





¹⁴⁰ Being the author against whom Leontius wrote his work a Greek Nestorian, shows, in fact, the indirect link between the theologians of the Church of the East, the neo-Chalcedonians and the Greek Nestorians.

¹⁴¹ Synodicon orientale, 198.

¹⁴² See the fourth anathema of this Council.

¹⁴³ Cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/II, 317ss.

do not accept that the Logos of God perfected and realized the passions by the body of his humanity. The Theopaschite formula in Latin, "unus de Trinitate passus est carne," sounds strikingly similar to the synod's Syriac formula, "the Logos, God himself, perfected the passion of our salvation in the body of his humanity" (במוֹם בעוֹא אוֹת אוֹם בעוֹא בעוֹץ בעוֹא בעוֹץ בעוֹץ

Again, also, in this Theopaschite formula, we see how the humanity belongs to the Logos of God; that is, it belongs to the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Son. This human nature, as the text says, never left the divine nature of the Son of God from the moment of the conception and will stay with him forever. This does not mean that there is a confusion or blending between the natures. Rather, the divinity cannot receive and participate in the passions that belong exclusively to the humanity of Christ. We can say in a few words that we have considerable progress in the Christology of the $qnom\bar{a}-par\bar{s}op\bar{a}$ current, or the Christological movement of Ḥenana: One subject, Logos and Christ in whom there are two united natures that are at the same time distinct.

After this analysis, we can conclude by saying that this synod, in fact, tried to define its doctrine against the Severian Monophysites. There is no need to discuss their doctrine and Christology; it is simply regarded as heterodox. This is clear from the rest of the acts and decisions of this synod. He we observe a similarity with the Christology of Chalcedon and of Constantinople II, it does not mean that the Church of the East adopted that Christology. Instead, we can be sure that this synod is even against the Chalcedonians, who are anathematized because they refute the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Condemned by Constantinople II. He for us, the condemnation of those who reject the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia could not be seen as an indirect condemnation of all the teach-







למנד מבער מיבונים בנינוץ בירוץ בארחים בירוץ בארידים בירוץ בארידים בירוץ בירוץ

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 411ss.

ing of Ḥenana and his movement, as some scholars suggest;¹⁴⁷ rather, it could be a condemnation of the position of Ḥenana regarding Theodore of Mopsuestia, even if the synod did not mention his name openly. Ḥenana, in fact, did not consider Theodore the doctor (حلعت) of the Church, even if he did not refute his works. ¹⁴⁸ In any case, we cannot see that the synod condemned the Christological doctrine of Ḥenana and his movement; on the contrary, the synod adopted this current of Christology, as we demonstrated in our analysis above. ¹⁴⁹

It is clear also that the doctrine of this synod is against the Nestorian-ism, i.e., the two-qnomē Christology. We are not sure, however, if this two-qnomē Christology was considered as real Nestorianism, that is, the teaching of the two christs and two sons. ¹⁵⁰ We can safely say that if the Church of the East had continued her adoption of this Christological current, that is the qnomē-parṣopē Christology, and had developed it more it could even have accepted the communicatio idiomatum. However, as historical events tell us, the victory of this Christological current did not remain for long, and the work of the enemies of Ḥenana and of his followers started to get stronger, as we will see reflected in the next and last synod of our analysis.







¹⁴⁷ Cf. Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 37. In note 145 above, we can notice in the cited text the word "محتفّل»," which could refer to the school of Nisibis, even if it is in the plural. Nevertheless, we see in this condemnation a position against the hermeneutical teaching of Ḥenana and not against his Christological way of thinking.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Becker, *Fear of God*, 90, 199-200.

¹⁴⁹ Some scholars consider also that the indirect condemnation of Ḥenana's movement in these synods was because of his exegetical position regarding Theodore of Mopsuestia, cf. *idem*, 199. We think, however, that this synod of 598, that we are analyzing here, condemned just the exegetical position of Ḥenana, the director of the school of Nisibis, and not his Christological thought, trying by this to calm the situation at the school of Nisibis. In fact, we know that as a reaction to such an exegetical position some teachers and students left the school, cf. Vööbus, A., *History*, 308-312. Then, however, some opponents of Ḥenana, especially Babai the Great, started to write against his Christological thought, linking it with his exegetical and spiritual theology. So, after a time of indirect condemnation of his exegetical thought, in the synod hold during the year 605 and the one of 612 we have an indirect condemnation of Ḥenana's Christology too. This is our hypothesis to be considered as a revaluation of the opinions of L. Abramowski and A. Becker; for their opinions see Becker, *Fear of God*, 199-202.

¹⁵⁰ In fact, this period should be considered as a period of tensions between these different Christological currents within the Church of the East. As A. Becker demonstrated, in this time there appeared also works of individual theologians, members of the same Church of the East, who were accusing each other of wrong doctrines, cf. *idem*, 91-92. For the case of Henana we know that he was accused to be Monophysite, Chalcedonian, or Originist, cf. Childers, "Ḥenana," 194; we do not know however, if the two-*qnomē* Christological current was accused, by the *qnomā-parṣopā* current, to teach two christs and two sons.



The Synod of 605

The historical context of this synod is particular. The wars between the Persian Empire and Byzantium were still ongoing. The Church of the East continued to try to define its doctrine in the face of other confessions and especially, this time, in the face of the Christology of the Chalcedonians. For that reason, as Brock has noticed, we have the most powerful statement against all those who refute the teaching of the great Theodore of Mopsuestia. 151 Some scholars see in such a position a condemnation of Henana and his movement; 152 in our opinion, however, this time it could be not just against his hermeneutical doctrine, but also indirectly against the Christological *qnomā-parṣopā* current. ¹⁵³ As we will see, starting from this synod, the two-qnomē Christological movement became stronger and more notable, a fact which is reflected in the Christological expressions of this synod. Also, we need to observe that in this period, Babai the Great started his activity in the two-qnome Christological movement, adopting the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius and giving it an interesting interpretation and making at the same time a notable progress in thought.¹⁵⁴ We should remember also that Babai started his action from the Great Monastery of the community of Abraham of Kashkar, the center of the two-qnomē Christological movement;155 this means that we have a controversy between two monastic communities, the one which was influenced by Henana¹⁵⁶ and the other, the community of Abraham of Kashkar. 157 In this context, Catholicos Gregory I held a synod in which we find the next Christological statement:





¹⁵¹ Cf. Brock, "The Christology of the Church," 127. See the position of the Church in *Synodicon orientale*, 210-211.

¹⁵² Cf. Baum - Winkler, The Church of the East, 37.

¹⁵³ In fact as G. Reinink noticed, Babai developed the two-qnomē Christology as a reaction to the doctrine of Ḥenana, cf. Reinink, "The Cause," 525. So, taking into consideration that the Christological current of Babai was very strong at the time of this synod, which is reflected through its Christological statement as we are going to see, we can consider the decisions and the Christology of this synod as an indirect condemnation of the Christology of Ḥenana and also of his exegetical tradition.

 $^{^{154}}$ Cf. idem; On the thought of Babai and its relation to the Christology of Nestorius see Scipioni, Ricerche.

¹⁵⁵ See the note 97, above, see also Baum – Winkler, *The Church of the East*, 36, 38.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. idem, 35-36.

¹⁵⁷ Ḥenana accepted Alexandrian ways of exegesis, i.e. more spiritual and less historical and literal, and this influenced the spirituality of some monastic communities of the Church of the East, cf. Becker, *Fear of God*, 90; The reaction against this spiritual doctrine could be reflected in the canons of the community of Abraham of Kashkar and the conditions of its establishment, cf. Chialà, *Abramo di Kashkar*, 49-96. Babai, in fact, being a member of this community and its future guide, cf. *idem*, 119-136, linked this spiritual doctrine with the

ייי מו בוא אבימארא: זכאיזיט one Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through スランス ھةے KylowyK' حعتب Kaluaza Kzu IZ کے ملے برا رضا ہے سے برسے معم the divinity. ¹⁵⁸. ≺മന⊅≺

whom everything came into being, perfect God and perfect Man, perfect God in the nature of his divinity, and perfect Man in the השלמבי הפונים :mature of his humanity, two [natures] of di-מאסבור. vinity and humanity, the divinity conserved הגלס אסמלא הייש :איז וווו its propert[ies] and the humanity in its ארא בגעה מינים propert[ies], and they are united in a true union of the one parsopā of the Son, Christ.

And the divinity perfected the humanity in the אמצול אוססלא איזע o passion, as it is written, while passion, change, הבאבב. איא and alteration of any kind did not enter into

The first thing we can notice in this Christological profession is the identification of the one Son of God with Jesus Christ, the subject of the Economy. This identification has become traditional, and it is not a new element. Another element, which is more important, is the way of speaking about the two natures of the one subject, Son and Christ: perfect God (תיאבי אים). We note the appearance of the adjective perfect "معلمة," which is an important key for understanding the dogmatic statements of this Church, as we said. By "perfect God," the fathers of the synod meant the *qnom* \bar{a} of the Son, as we already explained regarding this connection between the perfect nature as a single nature ($qnom\bar{a}$) of a common nature and the common nature by itself. If the perfect God is the *qnomā* of the Son, does saying "perfect man" mean that the human nature of Christ is a *qnomā* (a single and individual nature)? Again we still have no application of the technical term qnomā in the context of Christology, but such a hypothesis could probably be the best interpretation of this expression, as was the case with the synod of 486, where we had the appearance of the same expressions. The rest of the Christological profession helps us to confirm our opinion. "Perfect God" means perfect in the divine nature (מאסמלא: מבנא בבנא אולא), and "perfect man" means perfect in the human nature (בוֹעַא מבּוֹביא) האמשמיה: רבינא). In our opinion, with this explanation, the fathers of the synod tried to give a definition to the term $qnom\bar{a}$, as a perfect nature. This definition is similar to one that Leontius of Jerusalem had given earlier.¹⁵⁹

Christology of Henana, and after a long controversy, he won, making the two-qomē Christology as the official Christology of the Church of the East in 612, cf. Reinink, "The Cause," 525.





¹⁵⁸ Synodicon orientale, 210.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. II/II, 280-282. This, in fact, confirms our opinion about the different metaphysical meanings that were given to the Greek hypostasis, which was translated into Syriac by the term *qnomā*.

Even if our text here does not mention the term $qnom\bar{a}$, we can interpret the words "perfect God" or "perfect man" as a $qnom\bar{a}$, which is perfect in the common nature to which it belongs. To understand this explanation better we should take into consideration that the fathers of the synod by perfect probably meant a concrete nature that exists by itself (subsistent). So the perfect God as $qnom\bar{a}$ is a subsistent divine nature which belongs to the common nature of divinity, and the perfect man is a subsistent human nature which belongs to the common human nature.

We can notice also that the properties are more related to the common natures than to the concrete ones, and precisely because the natures conserve their properties the union is real. This is a refutation of the accusation made by Chalcedonians and Monophysites against the real Nestorianism and against the Nestorians, including the Church of the East and its traditional official Christology at that time (two natures, one <code>parṣopā</code>) and the two Christological currents within it (<code>qnomā-parṣopā</code> and two-<code>qnomē</code>): that the lasts (so called Nestorians) teach that the union in Christ was not real. This accusation, in fact, was the result of the interpretation made by the Chalcedonians and Monophysites to the union according the pleasure or the will, i.e. the doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia and other Antiochians. Again, the Church of the East rejects the real Nestorianism, and rejects the accusation of being considered real Nestorian, i.e. teaching two, not really united, subjects (natures) in Christ. However, we do not have a definition of this real union that the synod proclaims. Both Chalcedonians





¹⁶⁰ See the IV anathema of the council of Constantinople II; the same accusation we can find in the *Profession of faith* of John of Tella, and in the *Contra Nestorianos* of Leontius of Jerusalem.

and non-Chalcedonians talk about a real union, marked the hypostatic type of union, and some thinkers even went so far as to talk about a "natural" or "substantial" union, to emphasize the reality of the union of the two natures, as Leontius of Byzantium did. 161 For the Church of the East, however, saying that this union was "of the one parşopā" of the Son and Christ was enough to show that the union is real. It could be the way they chose to express the Theodorian doctrine of the prosopic union.¹⁶² It is clear, in addition, from the text that the result of the union is one, and for that reason they used the technical term $parsop\bar{a}$, which, as we have said earlier, was used exclusively in the context of the divine Economy to refer to the one subject. The question now could be the following: what is the relationship between this one parsopā and the united perfect natures? Moreover, since the synod states that this $parsop\bar{a}$ is of the one Son and Christ, who is identified with the Logos of God, the *qnomā* of the Son, is there any connection between $parsop\bar{a}$ and $qnom\bar{a}$? Are they synonyms, or does every term have its own metaphysical function?

In our opinion, we have in this passage a new approach to the Christology of the Church of the East. We cannot use the same interpretation that we used with the other Christological statements for one reason: In this profession of faith, we have a clear definition of the human nature of Christ as being perfect man, which means a concrete and subsistent nature, namely a single $qnom\bar{a}$, even if the fathers did not use the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in the Christology. Moreover, it is clear that there is a difference between the terms $qnom\bar{a}$ and $parṣop\bar{a}$. In fact, we have the same analysis as with the synod of 486, in which we encountered the adjective "perfect" and the technical term $parsop\bar{a}$.

This synod does not explain all this metaphysical background of our analysis-interpretation, but taking into consideration that the movement of Babai the Great was started before this synod, and that we already had thinkers who were starting to use the translated works of Nestorius, we can affirm that probably with this synod, we have the beginning of the influence of this second current of Christology on the official doctrine of the Church of the East. That does not mean that one current took the place of the other. The victory of this current will occur in the next synod of this Church in 612, in the assembly of the bishops under Babai the Great himself. Our synod here still identifies Christ and the eternal Logos, and it did not employ the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in a Christological context. Babai and his followers could find in this synod and the one in 486, and in their professions of faith, a good background and preparation for expressing the two- $qnom\bar{a}$





¹⁶¹ Cf. Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 205-212.

¹⁶² On this doctrine see McLeod, *The Roles*, 163-175.

Christology. It is clear, in fact, that there is a desire not simply to refute the other Christological current, but rather to be different from the other Christian confessions — especially, in this period, from the Chalcedonians and from neo-Chalcedonian Christology. In our opinion, the Church of the East tried with this synod to define its traditional doctrine in the face of the other confessions, using the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia. This time, even the Christology of Henana is refuted, because it could be identified with the Chalcedonians. 163 In addition, although we have an identification of the Logos with Christ, the two-qnomē Christological current won the victory in this synod. Yet we cannot consider this synod, just as we did regarding the one in 486, to have adopted "Nestorianism," namely the teaching of two natures and two *qnome* in one *parsopa*, which was to happen only in the year 612. These two synods, then, could be considered as a preparation for the final victory of the two-qnome current, which makes a distinction between Christ and the Logos and uses the term $qnom\bar{a}$ in the Christological context.

Conclusions

After our analysis of the official synods of the Church of the East, we can arrive at some conclusions that regard the Christology of this Church and the discussion between scholars about it. First of all, it is clear that the terminology chosen by this Church in its official synods is distinctive in two categories, Trinitarian theology and Christology (i.e., the divine Economy in Christ's Incarnation). Each field has its own metaphysical terminology: *qnomā* for Trinitarian theology and *parṣopā* for Christology, while the term nature ($kyan\bar{a}$) is used in both fields. ¹⁶⁴ For this reason, we have tried to approach the Christological professions and statements of those synods, applying this terminology, even if sometimes the term *parṣopā* does not appear in reference to the divine Economy. We have also noticed that *qnomā* is a perfect nature. Even if this definition was used exclusively in the context of Trinitarian doctrine, we have tried to apply it in the context of Christological doctrine where we noted the appearance of the expressions "perfect humanity," "perfect divinity," "perfect God," or "perfect Man." This application helped us to observe how the two-qnome Christological current or the *qnomā-parṣopā* current could base their doctrines on the first synods of the Church of the East, i.e., the traditional Antiochene Christology of two natures and one πρόσωπον (parsop \bar{a}). 165





¹⁶³ For more see *Syriac dialogue*, vol. II, 125-129.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 18. See also Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/III, 615-620.

¹⁶⁵ See also the opinion, without lots of details or even detailed analysis, of G. Reinink who

The following summary in tabular form will help us to make a final reflection on all our analysis:

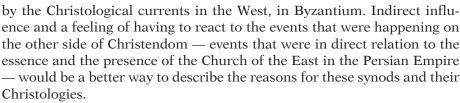
Synod	Subject of the Incarnation	Description	Other information
486	Christ parșopā	Perfect Conjunction of two natures, with their exemplars: Perfect God, perfect Man.	Conjunction without confusion or separation
544	Son Christ	God and Man; Divinity and humanity together	Not ordinary man, Not God without humanity, Perfect humanity
554	Christ Son of God	Ineffable union of divinity and humanity without confusion or change; conservation of properties.	No quaternity, No two christs or sons
576	Christ Son Logos	Two natures: God and Man; Incarnate Christ	Perfect temple of the dwelling
585	Christ parșopā	Unification of two natures: divinity and humanity; the <i>qnomā</i> of the Logos in Christ, Perfect union between divinity and humanity	Not ordinary man, Identification with the Logos by Economy, Defense of Theodore of Mopsuestia
598	Christ	Inseparable union of divine nature and human nature without confusion or composition	Dominical temple, Not mere man, No quaternity, no two christs or sons, Acceptance of Theopaschite formula
605	Christ Son parṣopā	True union of perfect God in his divinity and perfect man in his humanity	Conservation of properties

We do not believe, after all this analysis we have made, that the Church of the East, in composing these professions of faith, was directly influenced





confirms the existence of two different interpretations of the same traditional Christology, cf. Reinink, "The Cause," 525-526; We, actually, call these two different interpretations as two different Christological currents within the Church of the East.



First of all, with the synod of 486, we have the only clear surviving Christological reaction to the synods of Ephesus and Chalcedon and the Henotikon of Zeno. In this synod, Christ as the one subject of the Economy is also called by the term $parsop\bar{a}$. This technical and metaphysical term for the Economy, which is a fundamental element of Antiochene Christological thought, is the result of the perfect conjunction of the two natures. As we noted, the term "perfect conjunction" is understood, probably, as a real union without separation. The two united natures are described as exemplars, probably to underline the very distinction between them through the individual properties. They are also called "perfect God" and "perfect man." This last expression is very important. The "perfect God" is the $qnom\bar{a}$ of the Logos, even if the synod did not use this term in the context of the divine Economy. The question, then, deals with the type of the "perfect man" in Christ: is it another *qnomā*, which means a singular and individual man? If so, do we have the addition of a fourth *qnomā* in the Trinity, which would mean a change into quaternity? What is the connection between the qnomā and *parṣopā*? What is their metaphysical function? These, we think, are the important questions to which the synod of 486 did not reply.

The synods of 544, 554 and 576 tried to give answers to the above questions. In these three synods, we have an identification between the Logos, the Son of God, and the Christ. In addition, the synods of 544 and 554 emphasized that the Trinity cannot become a quaternity and that there are no two christs or two sons. If we take into consideration these two affirmations, we could suppose, with some certainty, that the human nature of Christ cannot be a *qnoma*, which means a single man. The expression "ordinary man" (בועד שעעבה) here provides good support for our hypothesis. However, at the same time, this humanity is a perfect nature, and it is called "man"; how can we explain this? The synod of 576 took another step to resolve this problem. We have the expression "the incarnate Christ/Christ in the flesh," (כשנוא הכבשוֹי); in our opinion, this expression could be a key to understanding the connection between the *qnomā* and the *parṣopā*. Qnomā could manifest a single perfect nature, so Christ before his Incarnation could be called a $qnom\bar{a}$, while after the Incarnation, we have the parşopā which manifests two natures. The term "incarnate Christ," according to our interpretation, could also express the evolution of the Church of





the East as regards the Christological idea of the composition "σύνθεσις." The incarnate Christ could be a synonym of *Christus compositus*, "Χριστός σύνθετος." With this interpretation, we could resolve the problem regarding the perfect human nature that is not a single $qnom\bar{a}$. Certainly, we do not have a clear doctrine of a hypostatic union, but if the hypostatic union means a real and true union, then the synods always emphasized this fact. The union is real, without confusion or separation.

In our opinion, these three synods could be a clear reflection of the qnomā-parṣopā Christological current, which certainly co-existed peacefully with the other Christological current until the controversy with Henana, as de Halleux maintained,167 without giving a good explanation.168 The fact that in the year 562/563 we have an official text of a delegation of the Church of the East to Byzantium in which we have a clear two-gnome Christology¹⁶⁹ confirms our opinion on the peaceful co-existence of the two currents. The two-qnome current was the other solution that some thinkers of the Church of the East tried to give to the open questions posed by the synod of 486. This current, as is clear from the official documents we have analyzed, was not yet very influential. Both currents were using Christological thought found in some thinkers of the Church of the East, and maybe an indirect influence from thinkers from the West, especially Chalcedonians and neo-Chalcedonians. The two-qnomē current was doubtless using the Syriac translations of Nestorius, while the *qnomā-parsopā* current employed other works. The common tradition of these two currents could be the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Only with the stance taken by Ḥenana against the tradition of Theodore of Mopsuestia do we have the start of competition between the two Christological currents. This conflict was fuelled by the fact that it was a conflict between different monastic movements in the Church of the East.

The synod of 585 could be a good reflection of this atmosphere. In this synod, we have the appearance of the technical term $par\bar{p}op\bar{a}$ in the context of Christology; this $par\bar{p}op\bar{a}$ is the unification and perfect union of the two natures. The human nature could not be ordinary man, but at the same time, and only in reference to the divine Economy, the $par\bar{p}op\bar{a}$ could be identified with the Logos. In other words, the human passion could be at-





¹⁶⁶ On this term see Grillmeier – Hainthaler, Christ in Christian Tradition, vol. II/II, 126-128,294-295.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. de Halleux, "La christologie de Martyrius-Sahdona," 29.

¹⁶⁸ This prompted Ambramowski to raise a rhetorical question about this opinion of de Halleux, cf. Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 17.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Guillaumont, A., "Justinien et l'Église de Perse," 62-66, see also Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona," 17-18.

tributed to the Logos, which means one type of *communicatio idiomatum*. In our opinion, all this leads us to maintain that here the $parṣop\bar{a}$ could have the function of the composition. If this interpretation is correct, then this synod, even if it condemned indirectly the position of Ḥenana against that of Theodore of Mopsuestia, supported a Christology that is still in the $parṣop\bar{a}\text{-}qnom\bar{a}$ current, the current to which Ḥenana belonged as well. We should also notice that in the Christological doctrine of this synod there is a kind of use of the term $qnom\bar{a}$ for the divine nature of Christ. It is clear, then, that this synod reflects the start of the tensions between the two Christological currents.

We could describe the synod of 598, in which we have some very important elements, as being in the same tradition as the Synod of 585, with its acceptance of the Theopaschite formula "God the Logos himself perfected the passion of our salvation in the body of his humanity" (אמבלא בינים). Moreover, the humanity of Christ is called a "dominical temple" (מעבלא מינים), which could be understood to indicate that this humanity did not have its own *qnomā*. The problem with this synod is the refutation of the "composition" in Christ. This refutation does not mean that the idea of composition in general, which we found, according to our interpretation, in the doctrine of the synods of 576 and 585, is refuted, but rather that the idea that this composition means a confusion between the natures is rejected. It is clear that the official way of thinking of the Church of the East is still in agreement with the parṣopā-qnomā current.

The last synod analyzed, the one in the year 605, could be considered as the start of the influence of the two- $qnom\bar{e}$ current in the official documents of the Church of the East. Christ as the $par\bar{p}op\bar{a}$ of the Economy, even if he is identified with the Son, is perfect man in his humanity and perfect God in his divinity. We saw in these expressions a definition of the metaphysical function of $qnom\bar{a}$, which is different from that of $par\bar{p}op\bar{a}$.

The victory of the two- $qnom\bar{e}$ current came about in the synod of 612 under the direction of Babai the Great. It would not be an outright victory for his Christological thought, however, because the synod did not use the term $par \circ p\bar{a}$ in its Trinitarian theology, as he did. Nevertheless, from this synod onwards, the term $qnom\bar{a}$ started to have a new metaphysical significance and was applied in the field of Christology. This victory was not accepted by the other current, which continued to exist and to express its Christology. The conflict between the Catholicoi Isho'yahb II and Isho'yahb III, who were members of the community of Abraham of





¹⁷⁰ On this subject see, Abramowski, "Babai der Grosse," 297ss.

Kashkar on the one hand, and Martyrius-Sahdona, who belonged to another monastic community influenced by Ḥenana, on the other, could be a good example of this atmosphere.¹⁷¹

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¹⁷¹ On this controversy see the articles of de Halleux, "La christologie de Martyrius-Sahdona"; de Halleux, "Martyrius-Sahdona," and the opinion of Abramowski in Abramowski, "Martyrius-Sahdona." We should say that L. Abramowski did not see Martyrius as a follower of the Christology of Ḥenana, but as a Chalcedonian in the Church of the East. However, we do not agree with this opinion; after our analysis, we sustain that the *qnomā-parṣopā* current had different approaches and ways to resolve the open Christological questions from those of Chalcedonian Christology had. We thus see the Christology of Martyrius as belonging to the *qnomā-parṣopā* current, rather than as Chalcedonian. See also, regarding this, Reinink, "The Cause," 525-526, note 45. This would be a topic of a future study we are planning to do, cf. Ebeid, "La cristologia," 218-219, note 53.

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SUMMARY

The Church of the East, even if it was outside the Byzantine Empire and did not take part in the Christological discussions and controversies there, could not be silent. Our analysis of the Christological statements and professions of faith shows the reaction of this Church to the Christological controversies. These statements demonstrate this Church's own progress in Christological thought, its way of responding to the most important Christological questions, in two different Christological currents: the $qnom\bar{a}$ - $par\bar{s}op\bar{a}$ current and the two- $qnom\bar{e}$ current. This analysis could help scholars understand better the development of the Christology of this Church before the assembly of bishops in 612 and her "Nestorianization," namely, the doctrine of two $kyan\bar{e}$ (natures) and two $qnom\bar{e}$ (hypostases) in the one $par\bar{s}op\bar{a}$ (persona) of Christ. This analysis could also assist scholars who study the Christology of the Church of the East after the year 612, since the controversy between the two different Christological currents did not stop with the victory of the two- $qnom\bar{e}$ movement in 612.





