

## **Description for the General Public**

The cognitive curiosity is the main motive for undertaking this problem. Despite several decades of studies on Arab Christianity, the issue of Christianity's authenticity in the dispute with Islam has not come up for a detailed elaboration. The purpose of this project is to fill this gap. Another reason is to draw the attention of readers to the existence of Arab Christians, to show their rich theological thought, history and culture. In addition, western Christianity enters a new, unknown stage of its existence, which is the encounter with Islam. The theological heritage of the centuries, as a result of a creative meeting between the followers of these religions, may prove inspirational in the modern era.

The main research objective of the project is to present original methods and content for the Christian writers in Arabic in a Muslim-dominated environment to reject the allegations made by the Muslim side about the truth of the Christian religion and, therefore, its divine origin. For a better understanding of the theological challenge posed by Islam, it will also outline its main truths of faith and the charges it poses to Christianity. To the fundamental doctrinal divergences between Christianity and Islam one may count concept of God that has a direct impact on Christian dogma of the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son, and the rejection of the authenticity and the ultimate character of the Christian message by questioning the truth of the Bible.

The project involves the following research: an analysis of the historical sources of the VI-Ith, Greek and Syrian days, with information about Islam, its message and its interpretation. This analysis is important from the point of view of the content of the main sources of this project. Another study will aim to identify the specificity of the Arab theological tradition as a result of the theological dialogue of Christianity with Islam. The issue preceding the analysis of the principal sources will be to show the divergences that exist between Christianity and Islam in the context of the doctrine of faith (the conception of God) and the canonicity of scriptures. Presentation of these issues will be a preparation for presentation of the central research problem of the project.

The central part of this project is the presentation and analysis of the texts of 9th century Arab Christian theologians. The authors belong to three basic Christian denominations in the Middle East: Melchites, Jacobites and East Syrians. The works of the following Christian writers will be analyzed: Timothy I, 'Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Ishāq al-Kindī, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq (East Syrians); Teodor Abū Qurrah and Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabarānī (Melchites); and Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Ra'īṭa al-Takrītī (Jacobite). The diversity of confessional affiliation can have an impact on the difference in argumentation. For the complementarity of the description of the problem, in addition to the Christian perspective, the opinion of the four Muslim theologians of the day on the issue of the authenticity of Christianity will also be studied. The writings of Al-Qasīm ibn Ibrāhīm, Alī al-Ṭabarī, Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq and Alī ibn Yahyā ibn al-Munaḡḡim will be included.

The culminating stage in the project will be the gathering of the arguments for the authenticity of Christianity and their classification in the following categories: the rational criteria - the mission of the messenger and the supernatural accomplishments, the criteria of the message - its transcendence, rationality, and perfection - and the transmission of the message and its reception, expressed in either reception of the message or its rejection.