

Popular abstract

The history of the Melkite Church in the period of 969-1250 undoubtedly reflects most of the Muslim-Christian and intra-Christian problems in the Middle East. They include the interactions between Byzantium and several sultanates; interactions between Muslims, Oriental Christianity and Byzantium and the crusaders; the overwhelming cultural and religious influences of Constantinople; the synthesis of Greek, Arab and Syriac elements; processes of the Arabization of the communities; literary involvement; inter-confessional rivalries; religious and political persecutions, as well as relations with distant Rome. Therefore, in the complex reality of the mediaeval Middle East the Melkite communities are worth exploring as examples of multilateral acculturation and interaction.

Paradoxically, these medieval experiences of the Melkites can be very useful in contemporary intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Since the Melkites modified their identity in connection with new phenomena, without losing its essential trait: Semitic Orthodoxy. They also crossed confessional, religious and ethnic barriers more than once. They were not permanently stuck in the memories of antiquity, but still used their influence to create new realities, a kind of *modus vivendi* with the dynamically changing world of those times.