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Review of Baby Varghese, *The Council of Chalcedon and the Syriac Orthodox Church. Efforts of Reconciliation 451-631*, Göttinger Orientforschungen Syriaca 71, Harrasowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2025, 232 pp.

Baby Varghese, a renowned scholar of Syriac liturgy and its development, has made a major contribution to the field of dogmatical history with her current opus. *The Council of Chalcedon and the Syriac Orthodox Church. Efforts of Reconciliation 451-631* covers the Christological conflict from the Council of Chalcedon to the unsuccessful attempt by Emperor Heraclius (610-641) to achieve a union with the Miaphysite churches and the Church of the East. The work provides an insightful, yet concise account of the controversy in the period.

Following the Foreword by Prof. Sebastian P. Brock of Oxford University and the Preface, Chapter I serves as an introduction, discussing the core concepts of the controversy, the tenets of Antiochene Christology, and religious developments from the First Council of Ephesus to the death of Emperor Theodosius II (408-450). Chapter II is an account of the events of the Council of Chalcedon itself, with special regard to the conflicting Christological views, and the theological beliefs serving as their ideological foundations.

Chapter III deals with the reactions to Chalcedon in the first decades after the council. From immediate reactions and further developments until the *Henotikon* issued by the emperor Zeno (474-491) in 482, the chapter continues with an overview of the Acacian Schism, and then with the religious upheavals under Anastasius I (491-518). Chapter IV analyses the often violently intolerant Pro-Chalcedonian policies of Justin I (518-527) and Justinian (527-565), then the Non-Chalcedonian revivals, in which said policies unintentionally played a significant role. The first failed attempts at a reconciliation between the three Christological schools are similarly discussed in detail.

Chapter V covers the negotiations and persecutions under Justin II (565-578), Tiberius II (578-582), and Maurice (582-602), then the final Byzantine-Sasanian war (602-628), and the contradictory religious policies of Heraclius are brought into focus in Chapter VI. Chapter VII provides a brief history of Non-Chalcedonian Christians in the Sasanian Empire from their first communities to the advent of Islam, after which the book is closed by the Conclusion (Chapter VIII).

The volume includes six appendices, and each of them are useful additions to the work. The first of them discusses the Byzantine occupation of Northern Syria (969-1085), the second one provides an overview of Non-Chalcedonian Christian denominations, while appendices III to VI contain tables of the Miaphysite and Chalcedonian patriarchs of the East, the Eastern Roman emperors, and the Sasanian great kings of the period, in this order. Finally, the book includes an extensive bibliography of sources and secondary literature.

The only shortcoming to be mentioned is that the work would have benefitted much from a better English proofreading, but this problem does not diminish the great scholarly value of the volume. Varghese has provided a practical and significantly needed synthesis, which is expected to have enduring relevance in its field.

Zoltán Szegvári