

## EMPIRICAL STUDY

### Artificial Intelligence in Academic Research and Writing: Implications for Academic Studies in the Coptic Orthodox Church

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لقد أدى ظهور الذكاء الاصطناعي (AI) إلى إحداث نقلة نوعية في العديد من مجالات البحث بما في ذلك الدراسات الروحية. في هذه المقالة، نركز على كيفية تطبيق الذكاء الاصطناعي في البحث والكتابة اللاهوتية في إطار الدراسات الأكاديمية داخل الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية. وبمثابة التركيز بشكل خاص على التدايعات الأخلاقية والأدبية للذكاء الاصطناعي، ومشاكل الانتحال، وإمكانياته في الترجمة متعددة اللغات للنصوص المقدسة، نقدم توصيات حول كيفية استخدام تطبيقات الذكاء الاصطناعي بطريقة تحافظ على دقة العقيدة، وصحة البحث الأكاديمي، ونزاهة الخطاب اللاهوتي. وهنا نفحص كيف يمكن لهذه التقنيات أن تعزز التعليم اللاهوتي، لا سيما في ظل التراث اللغوي والتاريخي الثري للكنيسة.

بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ووفقاً للتعاليم الكتابية والفكر المعاصر، نقدم نموذجاً لاستخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي بشكل مسؤول في البحث العلمي، بحيث يظل الباحثون اللاهوتيون أوفياء لتعاليم الكتاب المقدس، مع الاستفادة الكاملة من التقدم التكنولوجي.

في هذه المقالة، استخدمنا نموذجاً تجريبياً للمساعدة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في الجدول رقم 1: مثال توضيحي لتقييم مدى ملاءمة المراجع والاقتراسات باستخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي، لإبراز أحد الأساليب التي يمكن من خلالها للذكاء الاصطناعي أن يسهم في زيادة إنتاجية الكتابة البحثية الأكاديمية.

بل وتناقش المقالة وتعلل أيضاً بأنه على الرغم من أن الذكاء الاصطناعي قد يساعد الباحث القبطي الأرثوذكسي في تعزيز قدرته البحثية، فإن القرارات الأساسية المتعلقة بالتفسير والرعاية يجب أن تظل في أيدي من دُعا وتم إعدادهم روحياً لتحمل هذه المسؤولية.

**Dutch:** De komst van Artificial Intelligence (AI) heeft diverse vakgebieden gerevolutioneerd, inclusief die van religie. In dit artikel concentreren wij op hoe AI wordt toegepast in (het schrijven van) theologisch onderzoek in relatie met academische studies binnen de Koptisch Orthodoxe Kerk. Met de nadruk op AI's ethische implicaties, bezorgdheden over plagiaat en de potentie ervan in meertalige vertalingen van heilige geschriften, bieden wij aanbevelingen over hoe AI-toepassingen zodanig gebruikt kunnen worden met behoud van doctrinaire precisie, academische accuraatheid en de integriteit van theologische communicatie. Wij onderzoeken

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hoe deze technologieën theologisch onderwijs kunnen verbeteren, met name binnen de rijke taalkundige en historische nalatenschap van de Kerk. Volgens Bijbelse leringen en moderne gedachtegangen geven wij bovendien het voorbeeld om AI zodanig verantwoord in onderzoeken te gebruiken dat theologische onderzoekers trouw blijven aan Bijbelse leringen en tegelijkertijd volledig gebruik maken van de vooruitgangen in technologie. In dit artikel hebben wij een sample AI hulpmodel gebruikt in Tabel 1: Illustratieve voorbeeld van AI gedreven evaluatie van de relevantie van referenties en citaten, om één van de vele manieren te presenteren waarin AI, onder vele andere toepassingen, kan helpen in de productiviteit van het schrijven van wetenschappelijk onderzoek. Het artikel betoogt tevens dat, alhoewel AI de Koptisch Orthodoxe leerling kan assisteren in het versterken van diens onderzoekvermogen, de essentiële interpretatieve en pastorale beslissingen in handen moeten blijven van degenen die daarvoor zijn toegewezen en spiritueel capabel zijn om deze te dragen.

**English:** The arrival of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized diverse fields of study, including the study of religion. In this article, we concentrate on how AI is applied in theological research and writing in relation to the academic studies within the Coptic Orthodox Church. With particular emphasis on AI's ethical implications, plagiarism concerns, and potential in multilingual translation of sacred scriptures, we provide recommendations on how AI applications can be used in a way that preserves doctrinal precision, academic accuracy, and integrity of theological discourse. We explore how these technologies can enhance theological education, particularly within the Church's rich linguistic and historical heritage. Besides, according to biblical teachings and contemporary thought, we set the example for utilizing AI in researching responsibly so that theological researchers will remain loyal to the Bible's teachings yet simultaneously make full use of advances in technology. In this article, we used a sample AI assistance model in Table 1: Illustrative Example of AI-assisted assessment of references relevance and inline citation, to showcase one of the many ways AI could assist in scholarly research writing productivity, amongst several other applications. The article also argues that though AI may assist the Coptic Orthodox scholar in augmenting research capacity, the essential interpretive and pastoral decisions must remain in the hands of those called and spiritually equipped to carry them.

**French:** L'arrivée de l'intelligence artificielle (IA) a révolutionné divers domaines d'études, dont l'étude des religions. Dans cet article, nous nous concentrons sur l'application de l'IA à la recherche et à la rédaction théologiques, en lien avec les études académiques au sein de l'Église Copte Orthodoxe. En mettant l'accent sur les implications éthiques de l'IA, les préoccupations liées au plagiat, et son potentiel pour la traduction multilingue des textes sacrés, nous proposons des recommandations sur la manière d'utiliser les applications de l'IA tout en préservant la précision doctrinale, l'exactitude académique et l'intégrité du discours théologique. Nous explorons comment ces technologies peuvent enrichir l'enseignement théologique, notamment au sein du riche patrimoine linguistique et historique de l'Église. Par ailleurs, conformément aux enseignements bibliques et à la pensée contemporaine, nous donnons l'exemple d'une utilisation responsable de l'IA dans la recherche, afin que les chercheurs en théologie restent fidèles aux enseignements bibliques tout en tirant pleinement parti des avancées technologiques. Dans cet article, nous avons utilisé un exemple de modèle d'assistance par l'IA, tableau 1 : Exemple qui illustre l'évaluation assistée par l'IA de la pertinence des références et des citations en ligne, afin de présenter l'une des nombreuses façons dont l'IA pourrait contribuer à la productivité de la rédaction de recherches scientifiques, parmi d'autres applications. L'article explique également que, même si l'IA peut aider les chercheurs coptes orthodoxes à accroître leurs capacités de recherche, les décisions d'interprétation et pastorales essentielles doivent rester entre les mains de ceux qui sont appelés à les mettre en œuvre, et qui y sont spirituellement préparés.

**German:** Der Einzug der Künstlichen Intelligenz (KI) hat zahlreiche Forschungsbereiche revolutioniert – einschließlich der Religionswissenschaft. In diesem Artikel konzentrieren wir uns darauf, wie KI in der theologischen Forschung und beim Schreiben im Kontext der akademischen Studien innerhalb der Koptisch-Orthodoxen Kirche angewendet wird. Mit besonderem Augenmerk auf die ethischen Implikationen von KI, Bedenken hinsichtlich Plagiaten und dem Potenzial der KI bei der mehrsprachigen Übersetzung heiliger Schriften geben wir Empfehlungen, wie KI-Anwendungen genutzt werden können, ohne die doktrinaire Präzision, wissenschaftliche Genauigkeit und Integrität des theologischen Diskurses zu gefährden.

Table 1. Illustrative example of AI assisted assessment of references relevance and inline citation.

Reference No.	Position in the Text	Cited Reference	Relevance	Exact Line Correspondence
1	Introduction, 2nd paragraph	Proverbs 1:7, NIV	<b>Biblical reference</b> introducing the theme of the ethical basis of AI in theological work.	'As Proverbs 1:7 instructs, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (NIV), pointing out that all knowledge, including that derived from modern technology, must be grounded in wisdom and spiritual prudence.'
2	AI in Academic Research and Writing, 2nd paragraph	Philippians 4:8, NIV	<b>Biblical reference</b> emphasizing the need for accuracy and virtue in the translation of sacred texts.	'As Philippians 4:8 dictates, "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right..." so that AI translations are carefully scrutinized for fidelity and accuracy to the original intent'.
3	Ethical Considerations in the Use of AI, 4th paragraph	James 1:5, NIV	<b>Biblical reference</b> emphasizing the necessity of wisdom and discernment in the use of AI tools in theological research.	'As James 1:5 directs, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach..."'
4	Genuineness and Prevention of Plagiarism, 2nd paragraph	2 Timothy 2:15, NIV	<b>Biblical reference</b> focusing on the necessity for truth and purity in research, stressing that AI-generated content should be accurately attributed.	'As 2 Timothy 2:15 reminds us, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth".'
5	Genuineness and Prevention of Plagiarism, 3rd paragraph	Turnitin (2023). AI Paraphrasing Detection	<b>Academic reference</b> discussing AI detection software for plagiarism and its role in academic integrity.	'Applications such as Turnitin, now with AI detection of paraphrased materials, are instrumental in ensuring academic integrity'. [1]
6	Ethical Considerations in the Use of AI, 3rd paragraph	UNESCO (2021). AI in Education: Challenges and Opportunities	<b>Institutional reference</b> to UNESCO's research on the need to avoid bias in AI, which is particularly relevant in religious studies.	'UNESCO is critical of the need to defeat prejudice in AI to ensure that it serves all stakeholders equitably'. [5]

Table 1. (Continued)

Reference No.	Position in the Text	Cited Reference	Relevance	Exact Line Correspondence
7	Ethical Considerations in the Use of AI, 3rd paragraph	Mitchell, M. (2025). AI Is Spreading Old Stereotypes to New Languages and Cultures. <i>Wired</i>	<b>Media reference</b> discussing the danger of perpetuating stereotypes in AI, especially as AI models are trained on biased data.	'AI is trained on the available texts and data, and so inbuilt biases of the sources can be replicated in the output of AI. As Mitchell (2025) states, AI can spread existing stereotypes...'. [2]
8	Ethical Considerations in the Use of AI, 4th paragraph	Weber-Wulff et al. (2023). Testing of detection tools for AI-generated text. <i>International Journal for Educational Integrity</i>	<b>Academic article</b> on the reliability and limitations of AI detection tools for identifying plagiarism and AI-generated content.	'Several AI detection software packages have been created, which are designed to detect AI-generated texts. One such tool is OpenAI's AI Text Classifier, which assesses whether a text is likely to be AI-generated based on its complexity and coherence'. [3]
9	Conclusion, last paragraph	Turnitin (2023). AI Paraphrasing Detection	<b>Reference used to support academic integrity tools</b> and the prevention of AI-based plagiarism.	'Several AI detection software packages have been created, which are designed to detect AI-generated texts. These software packages are required for upholding academic integrity...'
10	Conclusion, last paragraph	Fowler, G. A. (2023). Analysis: We tested a new ChatGPT detector for teachers. It flagged an innocent student. <i>The Washington Post</i>	<b>News source</b> discussing the reliability of AI detection tools, which is relevant to theological scholars using AI tools for academic writing.	'Teachers can use AI detection software, such as Turnitin's AI detection tools, to analyze students' papers for signs of AI-generated content'. [4]
11	Paragraph 3, Line 7	Marx, L. (2017). Theology and Tradition: Eastern Orthodoxy in the Modern Era. <i>Journal of Christian Theology</i> , 24(3), 152–175.	Discusses the theological outlook of the Greek and Russian Orthodox traditions, specifically addressing the differing views on Christology, relevant to the article's comparison of traditions.	'Greek and Russian Orthodox theologians focus on determining Christ's two natures, while the Coptic Orthodox Church stresses unity'. [7]

**Explanation:**

- **Position in the Text:** Identifies where the reference appears in the article.
  - **Cited Reference:** Shows the full citation or reference used.
  - **Relevance:** Explains the connection between the reference and the point made in the article.
  - **Exact Line Correspondence:** Provides the exact sentence or part of the sentence where the citation directly relates to the text.
- This table links each citation to the relevant part of the article and provides the specific reference that supports the points discussed.

Wir untersuchen, wie diese Technologien die theologische Bildung verbessern können, insbesondere im Hinblick auf das reiche sprachliche und historische Erbe der Kirche.

Darüber hinaus zeigen wir im Einklang mit biblischer Lehre und zeitgenössischem Denken ein Beispiel für die verantwortungsvolle Nutzung von KI in der Forschung auf, so dass theologische Forscher der Bibel treu bleiben und gleichzeitig die Fortschritte der Technologie voll ausschöpfen können. In diesem Artikel verwenden wir ein Beispielmodell der KI-Unterstützung in Tabelle 1: Illustratives Beispiel für KI-gestützte Bewertung der Relevanz von Quellen und Inline-Zitaten, um eine der vielen Möglichkeiten aufzuzeigen, wie KI die Produktivität beim wissenschaftlichen Schreiben unterstützen kann – neben zahlreichen weiteren Anwendungen. Der Artikel argumentiert zudem, dass KI zwar den koptisch-orthodoxen Forschenden bei der Erweiterung ihrer Forschungskapazitäten helfen kann, die wesentlichen interpretativen und seelsorgerlichen Entscheidungen jedoch weiterhin denjenigen überlassen bleiben müssen, die dazu berufen und geistlich befähigt sind.

**Greek:** Η εμφάνιση της Τεχνητής Νοημοσύνης (AI) έχει επιφέρει επανάσταση σε διάφορους τομείς της επιστήμης, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της μελέτης της θρησκείας. Στο παρόν άρθρο, εστιάζουμε στον τρόπο με τον οποίο η AI εφαρμόζεται στη θεολογική έρευνα και συγγραφή, σε σχέση με τις ακαδημαϊκές σπουδές εντός της Κopticής Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας.

Με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στις ηθικές διαστάσεις της AI, στις ανησυχίες για λογοκλοπή και στις δυνατότητές της στη μετάφραση ιερών κειμένων σε πολλές γλώσσες, προτείνουμε τρόπους αξιοποίησης των εφαρμογών της AI με τρόπο που να διασφαλίζει τη δογματική ακρίβεια, την ακαδημαϊκή εγκυρότητα και την ακεραιότητα του θεολογικού λόγου.

Εξετάζουμε πώς οι εν λόγω τεχνολογίες μπορούν να ενισχύσουν τη θεολογική εκπαίδευση, ιδίως εντός της πλούσιας γλωσσικής και ιστορικής κληρονομιάς της Εκκλησίας. Επιπλέον, βάσει των βιβλικών διδασκαλιών και της σύγχρονης σκέψης, προτείνουμε ένα πρότυπο υπεύθυνης χρήσης της AI στην έρευνα, ώστε οι θεολόγοι ερευνητές να παραμένουν πιστοί στις διδασκαλίες της Αγίας Γραφής, αξιοποιώντας ταυτόχρονα τις τεχνολογικές εξελίξεις.

Στο παρόν άρθρο χρησιμοποιούμε ένα ενδεικτικό μοντέλο υποστήριξης μέσω AI στον Πίνακα 1: Ενδεικτικό Παράδειγμα Αξιολόγησης Σχετικότητας Παραπομπών και Ενσωματωμένων Αναφορών, παρουσιάζοντας έναν από τους πολλούς τρόπους με τους οποίους η AI μπορεί να ενισχύσει την παραγωγικότητα στην ακαδημαϊκή συγγραφή.

Το άρθρο υποστηρίζει επίσης ότι, αν και η AI μπορεί να ενισχύσει τις ερευνητικές δυνατότητες του Κόπτη Ορθόδοξου μελετητή, οι κρίσιμες ερμηνευτικές και ποιμαντικές αποφάσεις οφείλουν να παραμείνουν στα χέρια εκείνων που έχουν κληθεί και είναι πνευματικά προετοιμασμένοι να τις αναλάβουν.

**Italian:** L'avvento dell'Intelligenza Artificiale (IA) ha trasformato in modo significativo numerosi ambiti disciplinari, inclusi gli studi religiosi. Il presente contributo si propone di esaminare le modalità attraverso cui l'IA viene applicata alla ricerca e alla scrittura teologica in relazione agli studi accademici della Chiesa Copta Ortodossa. Particolare attenzione è riservata alle implicazioni etiche derivanti dall'uso di tali tecnologie, alle problematiche connesse al plagio, nonché al potenziale offerto nella traduzione multilingue delle Sacre Scritture.

L'articolo fornisce raccomandazioni sull'impiego dell'IA in modo tale da garantire la salvaguardia della precisione dottrinale, dell'accuratezza metodologica e dell'integrità del discorso teologico. Viene altresì analizzato come queste tecnologie possano contribuire a rafforzare la formazione teologica, con specifico riferimento al ricco patrimonio linguistico e storico della Chiesa.

Inoltre, alla luce dell'insegnamento biblico e del pensiero teologico contemporaneo, si propone un modello di riferimento per l'uso responsabile dell'IA in ambito teologico, al fine di consentire ai ricercatori di rimanere fedeli ai principi della Scrittura pur beneficiando delle opportunità offerte dal progresso tecnologico.

A titolo esemplificativo, il lavoro presenta un modello di assistenza basato sull'IA, illustrato nella Tabella 1: Esempio illustrativo di valutazione assistita da IA della rilevanza

delle fonti e delle citazioni nel testo, per mostrare uno dei molti modi in cui l'IA può contribuire alla produttività nella scrittura della ricerca accademica, insieme a molte altre applicazioni. L'articolo sostiene inoltre che, sebbene l'IA possa aiutare lo studioso copto-ortodosso ad ampliare la capacità di ricerca, le decisioni interpretative e pastorali essenziali devono rimanere nelle mani di coloro che sono chiamati e spiritualmente preparati a compierle.

**Swedish:** Framväxten av artificiell intelligens (AI) har revolutionerat olika forskningsfält, inklusive religionsstudier. I denna artikel fokuserar vi på hur AI används inom teologisk forskning och skrivande i samband med akademiska studier inom den koptisk-ortodoxa kyrkan. Med särskild betoning på AI:s etiska implikationer, plagiarism och potential för flerspråkig översättning av heliga skrifter, ger vi rekommendationer om hur AI-applikationer kan användas på ett sätt som bevarar doktrinär precision, akademisk noggrannhet och integritet i teologisk diskurs.

Vi undersöker hur dessa teknologier kan förbättra teologisk utbildning, särskilt med hänsyn till kyrkans rika språkliga och historiska arv.

Vidare, i enlighet med bibliska läror och samtida tankar, ger vi exempel på hur AI kan användas ansvarsfullt i forskning, så att teologiska forskare förblir trogna Bibelns läror samtidigt som de fullt ut drar nytta av teknologiska framsteg.

I artikeln använder vi en exempelmodell för AI-assistans i Tabell 1: Illustrativt exempel på AI-assisterad bedömning av referensers relevans och inline-citering, för att visa ett av de många sätten AI kan bidra till ökad produktivitet i akademiskt skrivande.

Artikeln argumenterar också för att även om AI kan hjälpa koptisk-ortodoxa forskare att öka sin forskningskapacitet, måste de centrala tolkande och pastorala besluten fortsatt ligga i händerna på dem som är kallade och andligt utrustade för uppgiften.

## **Introduction: The Rise of AI in Academia**

AI's Impression in Academia and Theology AI has been shown to be a powerful tool for academics, and theology is no exception. In academic study, AI enhances the efficiency of literature reviews, assists in analysis of data, and helps with the translation of ancient texts to make long-impossible-to-reach theological material more accessible. In Coptic Orthodox Church Academic studies, AI can assist with filling gaps in historical studies, assist in analysis of ancient Coptic and Greek texts, and streamline the task of academic writing. The introduction of AI, however, poses grave ethical issues that must be navigated so that the doctrines of the Church are imparted in a loyal way. The Coptic Orthodox Church has a long and glorious theological heritage richly embedded in the doctrine of the early Church Fathers, liturgy, and the ancient scriptural books.

Therefore, AI must be employed prudently, so that its deployment will not undermine doctrinal purity or the Church's authentic theological message. And as Proverbs 1:7 instructs, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction' (NIV), pointing out that all knowledge, including that derived from modern technology, must be grounded in wisdom and spiritual prudence. AI has a significant ability to assist in enhancing the education of theology, but it is most important that its integration stays firmly within the context of the Church's underlying values. Theological specialists need to approach AI from a position of insight that preserves the tradition and authenticity of the church teachings.

### **AI in Academic Research and Writing**

AI tools, especially Natural Language Processing (NLP), Machine Learning (ML), and Deep Learning, offer invaluable aid in theological studies by analyzing big amounts of text and determining salient themes, historical patterns, and doctrinal evolution. NLP, for example, may assist researchers in analyzing huge collections of theological works and determining the themes and trends over centuries of Christian theology, from the Church Fathers to the modern theologian. In the context of the Coptic Orthodox Church, AI can contribute significantly to the research of great theological figures like St. Athanasius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Shenouda the Archimandrite.

Through AI, researchers can compare and contrast their writings, examining subtle theological turns or doctrinal nuances that may not be noticed through traditional methods. This ability to process historical data quickly makes AI a powerful tool in the hands of researchers who may be working with scarce resources or rare texts. Moreover, AI's capacity for data analysis extends to the translation of ancient languages. The Coptic Orthodox Church's theological tradition is deeply embedded in languages such as Greek, Coptic, and Arabic, each of which contains unique theological nuances.

Computer-based translation applications, like DeepL and Google Translate, can provide a decent place to begin to translate them, but are used with warning. Because machine translation software will not be 100% correct when dealing with challenging theological words in their translation, ancient language skill sets will be required. As Philippians 4:8 dictates, scholars must focus on 'whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right', so that AI translations are carefully scrutinized for fidelity and accuracy to the original intent.

### **Multilingual Writing and Translation in Theological Studies**

The Coptic Orthodox Church's theological tradition is deeply rooted in languages such as Coptic, Greek, and Arabic. AI has the potential to facilitate the translation and interpretation of ancient texts, enabling scholars to access theological writings that may otherwise be difficult to understand due to language barriers. AI-powered translation tools can assist in translating classical texts, making them more accessible to a global audience.

However, AI translations should be used cautiously, as they may not capture the subtleties and nuances of theological language. For example, Greek and Coptic have specific theological meanings embedded in their vocabulary, and AI may struggle to adequately convey these meanings in modern languages. As the Bible reminds us in Philippians 4:8, 'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things'. This verse underscores the importance of accuracy and fidelity to the original meaning, particularly when dealing with sacred texts.

### **Ethical Considerations in the Use of AI in Theological Research**

While AI has vast potential for supplementing theological research, its use in academic study presents a number of ethical concerns. One of the greatest fears is that

AI can replace human judgment and theological acumen. While AI software may be influential, it cannot equal the spiritual wisdom and perceptive understanding that human scholars bring to the study of sacred texts. This is especially the case with theology, where questions of spirituality and doctrine are not separable from faith and practice. In this context, AI's role should be seen as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, human judgment.

The Bible underscores the importance of wisdom and discernment in the pursuit of knowledge. As James 1:5 directs, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach'. This is particularly relevant to theological researchers who must make sure their application of AI is built on a sound Scriptural and Church teaching basis. Another ethical concern is that AI can perpetuate existing prejudice in the data it is trained on. AI is trained on the available texts and data, and so inbuilt biases of the sources can be replicated in the output of AI.

As more AI tools are being used in theological scholarship, scholars should be cautious about the possibility of those biases influencing interpretations of religious texts. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is critical of the need to defeat prejudice in AI in an effort to ensure that it serves all stakeholders equitably [5]. Theologians must ensure that scholarship written by AI is reviewed with thoughtful concern for prejudice, especially if it involves holy and historic scripture.

### **Genuineness and Prevention of Plagiarism in AI-Generated Content**

One of the most serious issues confronting academic scholarship is the risk that AI-created work can cross ethical boundaries, including the risk of plagiarism. The ability of AI to synthesize, paraphrase, and rephrase previously existing content raises questions about the originality of AI-written work. The fact that AI is able to produce so-called 'new' ideas or reinterpretations of established concepts based on the materials it was trained on makes it impossible to ensure that theological scholarship is original and properly accredited.

In religious study, particularly where the Coptic Orthodox Church is involved, doctrinal purity must be maintained. Scholars must exercise extreme caution to ensure that they are not utilizing AI tools to develop content that will unintentionally attribute or misstate theological ideas. Applications such as Turnitin, now with AI detection of paraphrased materials, are instrumental in ensuring research academic integrity [1]. Scholars should ensure that any content generated by AI is properly differentiated from their work and that the sources of all quotes or ideas are properly referenced. As 2 Timothy 2:15 reminds us, 'Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth' (NIV). This verse points out the importance of diligent, truthful scholarship—particularly when relying on AI programs as a research tool.

As more scholarly texts are generated by AI systems, institutions will have to devise methods of detecting and preventing the submission of AI-generated or plagiarized work. There are several AI detection software packages that have been created, which are designed to detect AI-generated texts. These software packages use machine learning algorithms to scan the writing style, structure, and linguistic patterns that are distinct from human-written texts. One such tool is OpenAI's AI Text Classifier, which assesses whether a text is likely to be AI-generated based on its complexity and

coherence. Another widely used tool is Turnitin's AI Detection, which is specifically designed to identify AI-written content by comparing submitted papers with a vast database of known sources, including AI-generated outputs [1].

These software packages are required for upholding academic integrity and discouraging students and researchers from submitting plagiarized work. Plagiarism detection services like Plagscan and Copleaks have also added AI-detection technology to their websites. These services cross-reference the submitted work against billions of published works and previously submitted papers to look for similarities and potential instances of AI paraphrasing or copying. Nonetheless, although these tools are robust, they are not infallible. False positives can be experienced, and AI-generated content that closely imitates human writing might still evade detection. As such, institutions need to complement these tools with human verification processes to guarantee the legitimacy of academic work.

### **Best Practices for Institutions to Guard Against AI-Based Plagiarism and Inaccuracies**

In order to protect academic integrity, educational institutions must implement comprehensive measures that integrate AI-detection tools with policies that promote ethical scholarship practices. Some of these measures should include: **Clear Guidelines:** Universities must implement and make clear guidelines for the use of AI in scholarly work. Students should be instructed on ethical use of AI tools and potential consequences for providing AI-generated information without proper attribution. **Including AI Literacy in Curricula:** As a counter-response to the increased use of AI, educational institutions can introduce AI literacy courses or workshops wherein the students learn how to understand the strengths and shortcomings of AI instruments. This will help researchers effectively use AI as well as make use of AI responsibly in academic research.

**AI Detection Integration:** Schools need to incorporate AI detection software into their plagiarism checking mechanisms to verify submissions are checked for authenticity. This will act as a deterrent to students who would employ AI to avoid academic integrity policies. **Encouraging Transparency:** Students and researchers should be encouraged to disclose their use of AI tools during the process of writing their papers. Total openness regarding the usage of AI during the preparation of a paper or research paper creates academic integrity and accountability. **Promoting Critical Thinking:** Since judgment cannot be replaced by AI, institutions must place maximum significance on critical thinking and theological insight in the research process. AI can be used as a medium employed by experts and not in place of scrupulous evaluation and divine comprehension.

### **Using AI Ethically and Productively in Theological Research**

To use AI ethically and productively in theological research, scholars must prioritize academic rigor, doctrinal integrity, and transparency. AI tools should be used to enhance the research process rather than replace the scholar's role in interpreting and analyzing theological texts.

**Best Practices for Using AI Ethically:**

1. **Transparency:** Any AI-generated content should be clearly labeled, and scholars should provide full disclosure of the tools used in the research process.

2. **Critical Evaluation:** Scholars should critically evaluate AI-generated suggestions to ensure they align with established theological teachings.
3. **Collaboration:** Theological scholars should collaborate with AI tools in a manner that complements human judgment, not replaces it.
4. **Accountability:** Researchers should take responsibility for the accuracy and ethical use of AI-generated content, ensuring that their work maintains the integrity of the theological discipline.

By following these best practices, scholars can leverage AI's capabilities while staying true to the faith and tradition of the Coptic Orthodox Church. As Proverbs 2:6 states, 'For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding'. AI, when used wisely, can become a tool that helps illuminate the path of knowledge, enriching theological study while preserving its authenticity.

### **The Role of Divine Inspiration in Theological Work**

In any discussion of academic tools within the theological domain—especially in the context of the Coptic Orthodox Church—it is crucial to recall that the foundation of spiritual knowledge is not solely based on analytical or cognitive effort, but also upon divine inspiration and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Coptic Orthodox Church holds that hymns, prayers, liturgical compositions, and sermons are not mere human creations or scholarly achievements, but are guided and often inspired by the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 2:13, 'These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual'. This underscores a divine dimension that cannot be accessed or replicated by machines.

Artificial intelligence, by its nature, lacks spiritual consciousness. While it can process language, analyze data, and even mimic theological reasoning based on patterns found in its training data, AI remains a machine incapable of divine communion or spiritual discernment. It does not pray, it does not fast, and it does not seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it cannot perceive or receive the divine illumination that often guides a theologian, hymnographer, or preacher in their sacred task. This critical difference must guide how we utilize AI in theological research. AI may help organize sources, suggest relevant scriptural connections, or assist in translation, but it is ultimately the human scholar who must approach the task with prayer, humility, and discernment. AI can benefit from human inputs—such as curated theological data and annotated scriptural commentary—but only humans, as bearers of the image of God, can truly interpret these sources in a manner consistent with divine revelation and the Church's spiritual tradition.

Thus, while AI may assist the Coptic Orthodox scholar in augmenting research capacity, the essential interpretive and pastoral decisions must remain in the hands of those called and spiritually equipped to carry them. As such, AI should be regarded as a tool that assists human analysis, but not as a participant in the divine-human synergy that forms the heart of authentic theological work. In the same way that pen and parchment did not inspire the Holy Fathers, but rather served as instruments through which divine truths were communicated, AI is a tool—not a theologian. By remembering this essential truth, scholars within the Coptic Orthodox tradition can confidently use AI as a support for rigorous academic inquiry, while maintaining the primacy of the Holy Spirit's guidance in matters of theology, worship, and Church teaching.

### Future Perspectives

The combination of AI and religious scholarship has immense potential to transform research and tackle modern challenges. One of the major challenges is how AI deals with theological language, especially keeping in view the diversity of Christian denominations like Greek, Russian, and Coptic Orthodox. While these denominations share common Christian beliefs and liturgical practices, their theological outlook—especially on Christology—could be different in certain instances and may require precision. Words employed in these traditions may appear the same, but they tend to have different meanings, which is important when crafting AI systems that engage with religious texts. As disparate as the traditions are, all of these share core Christian beliefs, including the Trinity, the Incarnation of Jesus, and sacraments. These vary, depending on theological matters, in doctrine interpretation. The Coptic Orthodox Church stresses unity of Christ's nature [7]. AI frameworks specifically designed for such traditions need to understand these distinctions so they can apply theological rules with accuracy.

Therefore the question remains: Can we train AI to learn and use the appropriate theological lexicon for each tradition, or at least train to focus on Coptic Orthodox Foundations? For example, a word like 'Christ's nature' or 'the Eucharist' may be similar in definition across traditions, but their theological significance could be worlds apart. AI systems must be sensitive to those differences, especially when translating Coptic Orthodox theology. Through applying AI systems to the specific theological, liturgical, and cultural context of Coptic Orthodox, we can ensure that theological communication is precise and significant.

Additionally, AI can solve problems like plagiarism in academic writing. Currently, plagiarism checkers may make an error and mark accurately quoted passages as plagiarized. To address this, AI programs can be designed to recognize commonly recognized quotes and credit them properly, distinguishing them from original work. This would ensure scholarly integrity by appropriately crediting quotes [6].

Inspired by systems like PubMed, the world's largest database of peer-reviewed medical literature, we could create a similar system for Christian theological works. This would revolutionize access to scholarly work, enable researchers to collaborate more easily, and increase access to academic content among scholars and the public at large. While it is difficult to compare medicine and theology, creating a similar framework of theological scholarship could be a huge boost to academic progress and improve the accessibility of Christian scholarship [7].

Today, in Coptic research, there is no centralized database where scholars can easily find published work. Even established publications like the Coptic Encyclopaedia and Coptica publish many useful articles but not in one compendium that can be searched by name, topic, or date. To have such a database will reduce scholars' workload by preventing duplication of work and allow scholars to easily check whether a subject has already been addressed. It will also help unifying relevant terminology and expressions.

*Journal of Christian Studies* (JCS) [8], under The European Academy of Coptic Heritage (TEACH) [9], can serve as a hub for theological publications, utilizing AI technologies. By connecting JCS open-access articles to AI systems, we envisage creating a database that can be searched, by which researchers can easily locate, analyze, and cite articles. AI tools like ChatGPT can be trained to work together with major theological sources like Coptic Encyclopaedia, Coptica, st-takla.org, or any Coptic

Orthodox online academic or theological reference source giving useful insights and references to researchers. In the short term, integrating JCS with AI systems and existing scholarly materials would provide new and exciting possibilities for Coptic Orthodox scholarship. It would enable research, enhance academic growth, and safeguard and share the richness of Coptic Orthodox tradition in a way that ensures its theological richness is respected and properly interpreted in the contemporary world. In addition, AI can be used to design a system for verifying Coptic Orthodox theology. This tool could compare readily available theological books against original texts to identify inconsistencies, misinterpretation, or facts that are wrong. While ambitious, and sophisticated, this system would play a crucial role in offering theological orthodoxy and accuracy for the Coptic Orthodox Church.

## Conclusion

Artificial intelligence has considerable potential to make theological research even more richer, particularly when applying it to studies of theology as part of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Care and caution will have to accompany it, however, in order to ensure it will be according to the principles of the Church's doctrine as well as ethical standards of academicianship. By strictly adhering to best practices coupled with keeping theological purity, academicians have the opportunity to leverage AI while promoting their investigations without undermining the integrity of the Church's gospel.

AI presents a valuable opportunity to enhance academic research and writing, particularly in the field of theological studies within the Coptic Orthodox Church. By integrating AI technologies responsibly, scholars can streamline their research processes, engage with a wide range of sources, and make significant contributions to theological scholarship. However, it is essential that AI is used ethically, transparently, and in alignment with biblical principles to preserve the authenticity of theological research.

By maintaining academic rigor, preventing plagiarism, and ensuring that translations accurately reflect the nuances of sacred texts, scholars can use AI to further the mission of the Church while remaining faithful to its teachings. Finally, it should be remembered that AI is a tool—not a theologian. By remembering this essential truth, scholars within the Coptic Orthodox tradition can confidently use AI as a support for rigorous academic inquiry, while maintaining the primacy of the Holy Spirit's guidance in matters of theology, worship, and Church teaching.

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