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Sommario/riassunto

Though nations are nowadays seen as the product of modernity. comparable processes of community building were taking place even earlier. Thus the history of the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, and Syrian Christians shows that close-knit ethnic groups already existed in Late Antiquity and early medieval times. These communities have endured to the present day. However, there is much debate as to how they came into existence and defined themselves. The role of religion is central to this debate. A major interdisciplinary research project conducted at Leiden University investigated the identity formation of the Syriac Orthodox. It is argued that they started as a religious association. This volume presents the results of the Leiden team together with reactions from a number of other specialists. The cases of the East Syrians, Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, and Byzantine Orthodox are discussed in five additional contributions. Contributors include: Naures Atto, Annemarie Weyl Carr, Muriel Debié, Jan van Ginkel, Wim Hofstee, Mat Immerzeel, Steven Kaplan, Theo van Lint, Glenn Peers, Richard Price, Gerrit Reinink, Bas ter Haar Romeny, Uriel Simonsohn, Bas Snelders, David Taylor, Herman Teule, Jacques van der Vliet, and Dorothea Weltecke.