1. Record Nr. UNINA9910810709503321

Titolo Religious origins of nations? [[electronic resource]]: the Christian

communities of the Middle East / / edited by Bas ter Haar Romeny

Pubbl/distr/stampa Leiden;; Boston,: Brill, 2010

ISBN 1-282-94952-7

9786612949524 90-474-4436-1

Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (384 p.)

Collana Brill ebook titles

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Disciplina 281/.50956

Soggetti Christians - Middle East - History

Christian communities - Middle East

Religious minorities - Middle East - History

Identification (Religion)

Church history - Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600

Church history - Middle Ages, 600-1500 Middle East Church history Congresses

Middle East History Congresses

Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese

Formato Materiale a stampa

Livello bibliografico Monografia

Note generali Proceedings of a symposium held at the castle Oud Poelgeest near

Leiden, Netherlands, 2007.

Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Nota di contenuto Preliminary Material / B. Ter Haar Romeny -- The Formation Of A

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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.