



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The Ottoman State and the Ezidis: a comparative approach

Gökçen, A.

Citation

Gökçen, A. (2026, April 15). *The Ottoman State and the Ezidis: a comparative approach*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4303099>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4303099>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

SUMMARY

This thesis, titled *Yezidis' Resistance to the Modernizing Ottoman Empire*, focuses on the strategies implemented by the Ottoman Empire in Mosul during the 19th century as part of its centralization and bureaucratization policies, and the religious and political tactics developed by the Yezidis in response to these strategies, who can be defined as the smallest religious community within the Ottoman borders.

The main areas of discussion in this thesis include revealing the financial, administrative, and military capabilities of the pre-Tanzimat Ottoman Empire in Mosul and evaluating the impact of these capabilities on the centralization and bureaucratization practices that were attempted after the Tanzimat.

The strategies developed by the Ottoman bureaucracy to establish a multifaceted network of control within the complex equations in Mosul and the surrounding provinces highlight the divisive characteristics of Mosul's "incompatible" and "separate" religious and cultural character within this fragmented structure. Therefore, the encounter of Tanzimat bureaucrats, who sought to produce a policy between coercion and consent, with the Yezidis who were influential in Mosul politics, and the evaluation of the political and military tools they used during this period, is not a choice but a necessity for this thesis.

For this reason, the thesis focuses on the Ottoman bureaucracy's tools for reproducing the state, namely the compulsory military service policies that deviated from being part of the state's defense strategies and turned into a tool of religious assimilation, and the compulsory education policies that constituted the second phase of the effort to "honor" the Yezidis, who were deemed 'savage' and "ignorant," with Islam. "savage," and "ignorant" Yezidis.

This thesis, titled *Yezidis' Resistance to the Modernizing Ottoman Empire*, sheds light on state-subject relations in the outlying provinces, the feasibility of implementing Tanzimat reforms in provinces far from the center, and the financial, administrative, and military ideals of the Ottoman bureaucracy in the 19th century, specifically in the context of the Ottoman-Yezidi dichotomy. By doing so, it sheds light on the historical narrative of two different religious and cultural organizations that were forced to come together in the same geography, based on documents from the Turkish "Directorate of State Archives" and the British "National Archives", as well as 19th-century Yezidi literature. On the other hand, the assessments in this study are not based solely on archival documents but also derive information from the memory of a stateless and "documentless" community (via mythological and historical narratives), bringing them into the arena of historical debate as well.