



A People Without a State: The Kurds from the Rise of Islam to the Dawn of Nationalism

Michael Eppel

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Numbering between 25 and 35 million worldwide, the Kurds are among the largest culturally and ethnically distinct people to remain stateless. *A People Without a State* offers an in-depth survey of an identity that has often been ignored in mainstream historiographies of the Middle East and brings to life the historical, social, and political developments in Kurdistan society over the past millennium.

Michael Eppel begins with the myths and realities of the origins of the Kurds, describes the effect upon them of medieval Muslim states under Arab, Persian, and Turkish dominance, and recounts the emergence of tribal-feudal dynasties. He explores in detail the subsequent rise of Kurdish emirates, as well as this people's literary and linguistic developments, particularly the flourishing of poetry. The turning tides of the nineteenth century, including Ottoman reforms and fluctuating Russian influence after the Crimean War, set in motion an early Kurdish nationalism that further expressed a distinct cultural identity. Stateless, but rooted in the region, the Kurds never achieved independence because of geopolitical conditions, tribal rivalries, and obstacles on the way to modernization. *A People Without a State* captures the developments that nonetheless forged a vast sociopolitical system.

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