

List of Illustrations	ix
Acknowledgements	xv
List of Abbreviations	xvii
Introduction	1
Meeting the Yezidis	5
Geographical Location and Distribution	33
1 Origins, History and Development	35
Yezidis in Mesopotamia and Anatolia	37
Yezidis in Syria	63
Yezidis in Transcaucasia	66
2 Religious Belief System	71
God, Angels and the Trinity	71
God (Xwedê)	71
Angels	72
The Peacock Angel (Tawûsî Melek)	73
Sultan Êzi	81
Sheikh 'Adī	82
Yezidi Mythology	86
The Creation of the Cosmos and the Universe	86
The Creation of Human Beings	87
The Flood	88
Holy Books	88
Religious Hierarchy	91
3 Religious Practices, Observances and Rituals	99
Haircut, Baptism, Circumcision, Brother of the Hereafter, Marriage, Death	99
Prayer	103

Fasting	104
Pilgrimage	104
Festivals and Ceremonies	108
Taboos	112
4 Material Culture	115
Homeland, Landscape, Sacred Places	115
Places of Worship	130
The Sanctuary	131
Mausoleums	146
Shrines	175
The Baptistery	177
Caves	180
Tombstones	182
5 Conclusion	197
Appendices	205
Appendix I: Yezidi Saints	205
Appendix II: Genealogy of the Umayyads and Sheikh 'Adī's Family	211
Appendix III: Genealogy of the Early Shamsani Family	212
Appendix IV: Yezidi Mausoleums in Northern Iraq	213
Appendix V: Typology of Mausoleums in Northern Iraq	216
Appendix VI: Typology of Mausoleums in the Republic of Armenia	217
Glossary	219
Notes	225
Interviews	249
Bibliography	251
Index	269