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- 1 In its analysis of Western views of Yezidism, this article covers some of the same ground as the author's *Yezidism: its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition* (1995) but it sets this in counterpoint with Yezidi discourse and brings the whole up to date. The unusual nature of Yezidism and the oral transmission of its sacred texts posed many problems for early Orientalists who were inclined to construct models of Yezidism on the basis of the great scriptural religions of the region. Their search for the original manuscripts (of which some, of dubious provenance, were duly provided by local informants) led them to overlook the highly allusive oral hymns or *qewls* which, with their explanations by men of religion, were the lifeblood of Yezidi tradition. However, the publication in the 1970s of selections of *qewls* by young Yezidis ushered in a new interest amongst Yezidis themselves in transcription and publication, with far-reaching consequences; the religion is being 'rationalised' and modernised; it is becoming canonical and scriptural, and as the author points out, it is now the Yezidis who define the religion in 'Western' terms, whilst Western scholars focus on the distinctive religiosity of traditional Yezidism.

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Thèmes : 6.3. Autres religions

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