

BRIEFLY NOTED

ISRAEL GERSHONI, ED. *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2014. xii + 359 pages, preface, acknowledgments, notes, selected bibliography, about the contributors, index. Cloth US\$65.00 ISBN 978-0-292-75745-5.

Israel Gershoni's *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism* explores the role of fascist ideologies in the transformation of the Middle East during World War II and the post-war period of decolonization. "A basic assumption... was that Arab contacts and experiences with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany definitively influenced individuals and groups in the Arab Middle East from 1933 to 1945." The conventional narrative explaining this phenomenon cites Arab distaste for French and British colonialism and the idea that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and the fact that Arab-Israeli tensions pushed Arab nations to align themselves with Axis powers. However, in this edited volume, Gershoni presents a selection of writings and political cartoons published by Arab intellectuals during the 1930s and 1940s to demonstrate that there were a variety of opinions about fascist ideologies, and that many Arab intellectuals during this time were anti-Nazi with a preference for stability through democratic government. After an introduction in which the editor outlines his argument, the next four sections present responses to Nazi fascism in Syria and Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and Egypt to support Gershoni's primary thesis that the traditional narrative "fails to reconstruct the diversity of Arab public spheres." ✎

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FRANK L. HOLT. *Lost World of the Golden King: In Search of Ancient Afghanistan*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012. xxi + 343 pages, illustrations, notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth US\$39.95 ISBN 978-0-520-27342-9.

Frank Holt's *Lost World of the Golden King* describes the quest to discover Bactria, one of the largest civilizations in the Hellenistic Period, located in modern Afghanistan. Prior to the eighteenth century, knowledge of Bactria was limited to written accounts from other peoples. It was during the eighteenth century, however, that the collection of ancient coins by Europeans incentivized the search for further knowledge of Bactria. Recounting the struggle of searching for coins during multiple Afghan wars, Holt brings insight into the unique role of numismatics in Bactrian history, as coins were the easiest artifacts to smuggle from the region. Holt's narrative, informed by his experience as both a historian and an archaeologist, includes the historical significance of the discovery of Bactria, as well as the value of specific artifacts. Detailing all of the findings from Bactrian coins over time, Holt details the difficulty of piecing together the history of a people based primarily on coins, citing multiple cases of misinterpretation. Holt also discusses more recent archaeological discoveries related to Bactria, such as the 1960s discovery of the remains of a Bactrian city in northern Afghanistan. Holt's book is a thorough discussion of how the search for Bactrian history in a politically unstable land has progressed.

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RICHARD G. HOVANNISIAN, ed. *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir: The Aegean Communities*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2012. xxi + 301 pages, maps, illustrations, contributors, footnotes, index. Paper US\$35.00 ISBN 978-1-5685-9158-2.

Armenian *Smyrna/Izmir* is a collection of fourteen papers about the city of Smyrna/Izmir, located in current-day Turkey. These papers come from the "Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces" series of international conferences that have been held since 1997. The book strives to contribute to a more robust history of the city, offering perspective on the city and its people through historical, economic, social, and cultural lenses. The editor has preserved the integrity of these papers, enriching the text with the addition of relevant photographs at the end of each section. The authors explore different aspects of the city, using journals, photographs, and recent oral histories to provide context in demonstrating the city's significance during the height of its power in the 1840s and the influence of the city and its expatriates on Armenia today. The book begins with two chapters on the general history of Smyrna, followed by chapters on specific topics such as