

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.