

simply because of their religious beliefs or ethnic origin” (emphasis in original, 181). And his public works and infrastructure projects, along with economic reforms, were lasting: “under his reign Sidon was exporting to Provence and elsewhere in Europe such agricultural commodities as beeswax, olive oil and traditional olive-oil soap, even grapes” (184). One might conclude with the still unanswered question: Will the real Fakhr al-Dīn please stand up? ✂

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2016.51](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2016.51)

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RAYMOND HINNEBUSCH AND TINA ZINTL, EDs. *Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1: Political Economy and International Relations*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2015. 344 pages, black-and-white illustration, map, tables, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$49.95 ISBN 978-0-8156-3377-8. E-Book ISBN 978-8156-5302-8.

Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1: Political Economy and International Relations recounts the roots of the 2011 Syrian uprising from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Written in an accessible style, this volume is a welcome contribution to much needed scholarship on pre- and post-uprising Syria. In the introduction, Hinnebusch and Zintl demonstrate that the regime that Hafiz al-Asad constructed after 1970 had inherent weaknesses with which Bashar al-Asad had to contend upon his succession in 2000. While Bashar al-Asad successfully overcame these flaws by engaging in “authoritarian upgrading,” Hinnebusch and Zintl argue that there were side effects of each self-serving strategy, which planted the seeds of the 2011 uprising. Their elaborate study serves to elucidate the conniving regime response to the uprising, which pushed the people’s demand for dignity and freedom into a bloody “civil war.”

Each chapter is introduced with the main points, which are then summarized at the conclusion of each chapter. While at times repetitive in nature, the central points are explained concisely. Part One: Reproducing Power and Legitimacy is the most effectively organized section of this excellent volume. In the first chapter of this section, “President and Party in Post-Ba‘thist Syria,” Hinnebusch argues that Bashar al-Asad strengthened the presidency in order to consolidate his power at the expense of the old guard of the Ba‘th party. This weakened the regime as a whole by disconnecting it from its rural base and compelling the regime to depend on the *nouveau riche*. In the next chapter, “Locating the ‘Social’

in the Social Market Economy,” Abboud examines how the regime’s social market policies had an adverse effect on social welfare and redistributed wealth to the privileged. In “Nationalism and Reform under Bashar al-Asad,” Sottimano poignantly analyzes the impact of Arab nationalism and populism as the legitimating force of the Ba’th Party, demonstrating its discredited, ahistorical character. This chapter provides the framework for understanding this culture of fear propagated by the regime, which increased in intensity after the uprising as the regime demonized the opposition as terrorists.

Part Two: Reconstructing the Regime’s Social Base commences with Ghadbian’s “Contesting Authoritarian: Opposition Activism under Bashar al-Asad, 2000–2010,” which summarizes the three pre-uprising phases of opposition to Bashar al-Asad’s presidency. This section does not offer much in terms of original analysis and would have been better suited as coming toward the end of the volume. Yet the following chapters of Part Two add well-informed scholarship on pre-uprising Syria. Zintl’s “The Co-optation of Foreign-Educated Syrians” analyzes the regime’s active recruitment of foreign-educated individuals whose loyalty could be guaranteed, thus having the side effect of creating “crony capitalists.” In “To Promote Volunteerism among School Children,” Terc argues that, as economic liberalization became the prime symbol of transformation, entrepreneurship and volunteerism were actively encouraged. Central to this was the fact that upper-class and lower-class initiatives were sharply distinguished thus making socioeconomic class stratification more distinct. Pinto’s “God and Nation: The Politics of Islam under Bashar al-Asad” is a much needed subject for the volume, yet the article itself does not add much in terms of new perspectives. The article would have been better served had it placed its scholarship in the context of Khatib’s and Pierrot’s scholarship on Islam—and the strategy of divide and rule so aptly described in their path-breaking manuscripts. Maktabi’s “Female Citizenship in Syria” and Ababsa’s “The End of the World: Drought and Agrarian Transformation in Northeast Syria (2007–2010) both add important dimensions to pre-uprising Syrian social fabric.

Part Three: Coping with Regional and International Challenges adds an important dimension to pre-uprising Syria. Wieland’s “The Ancient Regime’s Policy Paradox” shows how as Syria emerged on the international scene, gaining acceptance, it increased its repression of the opposition moment at home. According to Wieland, the regime missed the opportunity for enacting the kind of political reform that could have prevented the uprising. “Iraqi Migrants’ Impact on the City” written by Kamel Dorai and Zeuthen describes a phenomenon that has received little scholarly attention.

Likewise, Napolitano's " Hamas's Rhetoric and Mobilization Practices in Palestinian Refugee Camps in Syria " is an essential contribution to Syrian scholarship, with the fieldwork in Yarmouk especially timely.

In the concluding chapter, the editors summarize how the costs of "authoritarian upgrading" planted the seeds for the uprising, but argue that it was unpredictable how far the regime would go to suppress it. Indeed, they posit that the question remains as to how much the Bashar al-Asad decade can explain the divergent direction that the Syrian uprising took from the other regional uprisings. They aptly show that one aspect of Asad's "authoritarian upgrading" that lived on was the nationalist discourse of resistance against imperialism and, in particular, the demonization of the opposition as terrorists. Comprehending the culture of fear delineated in this volume contributes to an understanding of the twisted reality that today—the perceived demon is Daesh—rather than the regime. Indeed, we've arrived ironically at a point where the West is cooperating with Bashar to cancel out the extremist elements. The contradictions—of a decade long policy, so adeptly analyzed in this compelling volume—helps to understand the complexities of Syria's courageous uprising, which the regime pushed into tragic, heartbreaking "civil war." ✂

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2016.52](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2016.52)

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ROBERT G. HOYLAND. *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015. xiv + 303 pages, acknowledgments, figures, appendix, timeline, dramatis personae, genealogical tables, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$29.95 ISBN 978-0-19-991636-8.

This book fills major lacunae in the historiography of the seventh- and eighth-century Arab conquests. Though "intended for a broad audience" (7), it admirably strikes a balance between accessibility and sophistication. Unlike the vast majority of literature which relies predominantly on the post-conquest, ninth- and tenth-century Arabo-Islamic sources, *In God's Path* makes extensive use of non-Arabic, non-Muslim sources. These possess the dual advantage of being significantly closer to the time of the conquests and of reflecting the views and attitudes of the vanquished, allowing Hoyland to juxtapose their narratives against those of Muslim authors so as to verify or correct the latter's accounts—e.g., the "old idea" that native