

of analogous reasoning (*qiyās*) to *ḥadd* punishments—pace Shāfi‘ī claims to the contrary—helped to circumscribe the legitimate application of state punishment. Similar legal attempts were made to qualify the institution of discretionary punishment (*ta‘zīr*) that the Sultan wielded. Lange’s analysis again returns to *tashhīr* as emblematic of this institution, and while the books of *fiqh* ostensibly sought to curb common excesses in the *tashhīr* ritual, they simultaneously legitimized it for its essential social and legal functions in Seljuq society.

Lange’s study is ultimately a story of political outsiders seeking to “mobilize Islamic cultural resources” in response to a repressive state (p. 248). Some readers may be averse to the book’s dissertation-length footnotes, which nonetheless showcase an impressive breadth of sources. Stylistically, the text is burdened by often superfluous orienting statements. In some places theory appears to be injected unnaturally into the historical narratives, though elsewhere theory drives the narrative in a compelling and synergistic manner. In spite of these relatively minor shortcomings, Lange’s study is a solid foundation for future research. ✦

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**BAHMAN MAGHSOUDLOU.** *Grass: Untold Stories*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2009. 310 pages, preface, footnotes, illustrations, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$45 ISBN 978-1568592213.

**Bahman Maghsoudlou** provides an engaging account of the extraordinary lives of the makers of *Grass*, the classic early ethnographic film of the Bakhtiari migration, and of the remarkable work involved in getting the migration on film.

Shot in 1923 and 1924, and released in 1925, *Grass* followed the Baba Ahmedi section of the Bakhtiari as they completed what was surely one of the most physically challenging spring migrations undertaken by Iranian pastoralists. Filming the Baba Ahmedi as they crossed the swollen Karun River and climbed—often barefoot—over the snow packed slopes of Zardeh Kuh, *Grass* records the nomads’ fortitude and skill, casting them in a far more positive light than Africans in Martin and Osa Johnson’s near contemporary works.

Maghsoudlou, however, is less concerned with the describing the Bakhtiari or with undertaking the kind of critical evaluation of the film and its makers previously attempted by Hamid Naficy or Fatimah Tobing

Rony, than he is with telling the story of the film's makers and their work on *Grass*. In the ordinary course of events, this focus on the filmmakers' work and lives might seem an odd choice, but the three Americans, Merian C. Cooper, Ernest Schoedsack, and Marguerite Harrison, who shot *Grass*, were not ordinary filmmakers and they lived anything but "lives of quiet desperation."

By the time he filmed *Grass*, Cooper had been expelled from Annapolis, enlisted in the U.S. Army during WWI, become a pilot in the army air corps and had been shot down by German fire. After the war he had again flown as a pilot, this time with Polish forces fighting the Red Army in the Ukraine, had been shot down again, and was captured and imprisoned by the Soviet forces. Schoedsack had also enlisted in the U.S. Army as a combat photographer; following the war, he too went to Eastern Europe, filming the refugee crisis and the Soviet/Polish battle over the Ukraine. Harrison, raised in Baltimore high society, was a journalist who in the aftermath of WWI worked for U.S. Military Intelligence, reporting (in both senses of the word) from Berlin on the Spartacist uprising and later from Moscow, where she was ultimately held in Lubyanka prison. After *Grass*, Cooper and Schoedsack went on to produce and direct other movies, including the incredibly reflexive 1933 mega-hit about a film expedition and an ape, *King Kong*.

Not surprisingly, Maghsoudlou seems fascinated by the filmmakers' lives, and their biographies comprise roughly half of *Grass: Untold Stories*, which recounts in substantial detail the events I have outlined above. Maghsoudlou breaks little new ground here. His primary sources are Harrison's 1935 autobiography, Cooper's written account of the Bakhtiari migration, also called *Grass* and also released in 1925, Cooper's 1927 autobiography—which Cooper bought up immediately after its publication—and several extensive interviews with Schoedsack. Some of this is readily available in print, and much of the material on Cooper can also be found in Mark Cotta Vaz's (also largely uncritical) 2005 biography.

The second half of *Grass: Untold Stories* primarily describes the filmmakers' efforts to identify and gain access to the people who were to be the focus of their film and then successfully complete the filming project itself. Drawing largely on Cooper's *Grass* and Harrison's autobiography, Maghsoudlou recounts the filmmakers' difficulties in newly independent Turkey, their introduction to the Bakhtiari ruling family—through the offices of Gertrude Bell, Arnold Wilson and other British officials—their gaining permission to migrate with the Baba Ahmedi, and, finally, the actual making of the film. From a purely technical point of view, the filmmakers' work was

extraordinary and their efforts to find, migrate with and film the Bakhtiari were also remarkable. Maghsoudlou's account of the people they met (including Ataturk and Reza Shah) and of the physical challenges of the migration—for the Bakhtiari and the filmmakers—and the physical and technical challenges involved in shooting and completing the film gives the modern reader a good feel for what a venture—indeed what an adventure—the film expedition was. In passing, the book also provides information on the political currents in Iran and Turkey during that tumultuous time.

Maghsoudlou has ably brought together material that lets him tell the story of three extraordinary American adventurers and their excellent adventure filming the arduous Bakhtiari spring migration. The tale itself is a remarkable one, and Maghsoudlou conveniently brings together several sources to provide the non-specialist reader with a fine—if not fully contextualized—account of it. ✨

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GERALD McLEAN, ed. *Writing Turkey: Explorations in Turkish History, Politics and Cultural Identity*. London: Middlesex University Press, 2006. xiii + 160 pages. Paper £15 ISBN 978-1904750574.

“Turkey is something like a hippo in a river. You can see the upturned face of the country squinting under the brutal scrutiny of the European sun and you can see the exposed surface of the back, the skin of urbanization and try to guess how deep that goes, but you can't imagine the torpidity and sluggishness of the solid mass below.” Fazile Zahir aptly sums the situation in this recently edited volume of articles, each of which are highlighting but one aspect of Turkey's cultural, literary, political and historical past and present. The volume is composed of three parts, Writing History, Politics, and Cultural Identity, respectively. The book contains fourteen pieces in total which are, though immensely interesting in themselves, appear to be poorly coordinated with one another in terms of their subjects. Gerald MacLean states that “The continuing negotiations concerning Turkey's accession into the EU provides the immediate context for *Writing Turkey*.... The book does this by focusing on the various ways in which Turkey has represented itself, and has been represented, by scholars, historians, creative writers and journalists” (p. vii). Page after page, the nagging thought presents itself as to whether the same benchmark, which is stated as the EU accession process and the accelerated pace of democratization that seem to