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## Frank L. Holt, Lost World of the Golden King. In Search of Ancient Afghanistan.

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of a family of wealthy Greek *peregrini* in Rome at the time of the persecution of Decius (249–50 CE). They are urged by church officials to give up their vast wealth. They are told: “worldly wealth is an impediment to eternal life,” *facultates istae terrenae impedimenta sunt vitae aeternae*. The Roman authorities react to this use of wealth as a threat to political order. For the Christians, their wealth is for the poor, *pauperes*, and their remaining “treasures are their souls,” *thesauri nostri animae nostrae sunt*. Indeed, in contrast to the city of Rome and its manmade monuments, the text reiterates the claim that the kingdom of heaven is full of real treasures, perfectly laid out streets of gold, and no more destitution. It is like Rome but better, because in this heavenly kingdom it seems that everyone is rich. It remains for others to systematically study such difficult, but rich materials (difficult because of issues of dating and intended audience) for the emergence of Christian heroes of pious giving in the West. Brown’s book will serve as a guide to interpreting these materials and much else. *Through the Eye of a Needle* deserves the widest possible readership. It is a remarkable achievement.

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Frank L. Holt, *Lost World of the Golden King. In Search of Ancient Afghanistan*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2012. Pp. xxi + 343. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-520-27342-9) \$39.95.

In a previous work (*Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions*, Berkeley 2003), Holt demonstrated the capacity to make numismatics an adventure, or in that case an almost Sherlock Holmes style mystery. This book goes much further than that, both in terms of the substance, which deals in depth with the historiography of the subject, and the development of the methodologies involved in the search for ancient Afghanistan (Bactria). This is set in a lively narrative of adventure and discovery caught up in the beginnings of the Great Game between the Russian and British Empires over the region, taking it down to the modern wars and tragedies that still beset Afghanistan. Throughout the work Holt takes the subject very seriously, and displays a magisterial command of the scholarship involved.

*Lost World* opens in chapter 1, “The Adventure Begins,” with the first Western European discovery of Bactrian coins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the first type of numismatic collection and method, “Checklist Numismatics.” This simply identified the names of what one had to presume were monarchs on the coins and the coin types, but with little interpretation. In chapter 2, “A Dangerous Game,” Holt covers the growth of numismatic material, collections, and the expansion of method in the nineteenth century into what is called “Framework Numismatics.” As the chapter title implies, this is the period of the Great Game, filled with colorful characters and marked by what Holt calls “a torrent” of coins from the ancient period (27). The methodology now advances by trying to connect the dots of the names and types of coins found. In chapter 3, “The Gold Colossus,” Holt concentrates on the Eucratidion, a giant twenty-stater gold coin of the Bactrian king Eucratides the Great, the largest gold coin known

from all antiquity. Indeed, this is the piece from which "the Golden King" in the title of this book is drawn, and Holt uses it to introduce the next phase of the methodology: "Novelty Numismatics," arguably also the subject of his book on the elephant medallions.

With the number of coin types and examples now markedly significant, chapter 4, "Telling Tales," takes the methodology into the twentieth century and what is termed "Narrative Numismatics." Here Holt covers the attempt of historians, such as W. W. Tarn and A. K. Narain, to draft the coin types into historical narratives, caught up in trying to establish the Greekness of the Bactrian civilization on the one hand, or emphasizing the role of native cultures on the other. The desire to answer that question in turn enlists a major effort in more archaeology, beyond the coins themselves. In chapter 5, "One Greek City," this ultimately leads to the discovery of the remarkable Ai Khanoum site on the ancient Oxus River, the modern Amu Darya, in 1960. In fact, archaeologists had been anxiously searching for a "Greek City," i.e., the remains of a site that were indisputably Greek, since the early nineteenth century. Alexander the Great had founded or re-founded some two dozen such cities, many of which were known, and continuously occupied, since that time, such as Alexandria Eschate, modern Khojent, or Alexandria Maracanda, modern Samarkand. Excavations began on the Ai Khanoum site in 1965 and continued until 1978. Indeed, excavations spread to other sites and produced significant coin hoards. But Ai Khanoum does not represent simply a Greek city. As Holt states: "Some features of Ai Khanoum appear quintessentially Greek, such as the theater and the gymnasium; other structures bear the hallmarks of unmistakable Mesopotamian influence, such as the palace and the temple" (112).

This archaeological process also provided both formal inscriptions and fragments, equally important because they were not intended for public consumption, that add to the narrative. So in chapter 6, "Letters Here and There," epigraphy is added to the mix. In some cases, these are Greek inscriptions, but there are also inscriptions in native dialects, and in particular from Indian rulers such as Chandragupta, Bindosura, and Ashoka. Holt notes that this was "Extensive epigraphical material from their Mauryan Empire, and particularly from the reign of Ashoka (ca. 269-232 B.C.E.)" (120). Ashoka's monuments are numerous and multilingual, representing Brahmi, Kharoshthi, Aramaic, and Greek.

The politics of empires and wars have always marked this region, and that unfortunately includes the last thirty years. In chapter 7, "A Perfect Storm," Holt states that "Hand in hand with the despoliation of archaeological remains... vast troves of numismatic evidence have been destroyed by a perfect storm of poverty and lawlessness in league with supply and demand" (135). In what is probably the most technical part of book, Holt points out that this led to what he calls "Rescue and Revisionist Numismatics." Holt mentions that over the thirty years since the initial Soviet invasion, some 10,000 Bactrian coins have appeared in auction catalogues around the world, but representing only the tip of the iceberg of what has been lost. Holt also points out that 92% of all numismatic evidence acquired originally was undocumented or not scientifically excavated in the first place. So the techniques used in Rescue Numismatics for looking more systematically at what does exist, looking, for instance, at mint marks more

closely, has also led to new analysis. In turn, this has led to revisionist theories in the twenty-first century that get beyond the old debates of the "Narrative Numismatics" in the twentieth century.

In the concluding chapters, Holt introduces what he calls "Cognitive Numismatics." By pulling together all of the previous disciplines, and taking a New Archaeology approach into what he hopes will be the New Numismatics, Holt goes beyond the kings who ordered the coins' production to look at the process of production itself and the people who operated the mint. The analysis of chapter 8, "A New Beginning," points to the fact that both Greek and native workers figured in the design and minting, and that over time the quality of the Greek elements diminished or were diluted, evidenced by misspellings, for instance. In chapter 9, "Coins and the Collapse of Civilization," Holt discusses how the coins circulated, the fiduciary purposes to which they were put, and the intrinsic values of the coins, and argues that in this theater the images or sentiments on the coins were not really considerations but were secondary to the practical usage by all elements of society in terms of both class and ethnicity. The picture is of a multicultural society operating on a practical level.

*Lost World* is a tour de force in terms of its scholarship, marked, incidentally, by some excellent plates, and charming illustrations by the author's daughter. It takes a complicated subject, and some esoteric methodologies, and makes them accessible to the general reader and the specialist alike. One might call it, mirroring Holt's terminology, "Cognitive Narrative." Holt blends the historiography of the subject, with its necessary disciplines, literature, epigraphy, archaeology, and above all numismatics, into an eminently readable monograph and an excellent introduction to the field and ancient Afghanistan.

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Jennifer Trimble, *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 486. Cloth (ISBN 978-0-521-82515-3) \$125.00.

The inhabitant of any given city in the eastern Roman empire in the second century CE stood a good chance of seeing a larger-than-life marble portrait of an adult woman with a classicizing body and an individualized head as he walked through his city's prominent venues. At the same time halfway across the Mediterranean, an inhabitant of Rome was likely encountering a statue that was virtually identical to its eastern counterpart in gesture, stance, size, and dress, with the only two differentiating aspects being the inscription and the head, maybe. This sameness of the so-called Large Herculaneum Woman statues was deliberate, and shared by well over one hundred examples of the type from the cities and sanctuaries of the Roman empire, mostly in the East, in the second century CE. This replication in no way diminished the value of this portraiture; to the contrary: these were high-status portraits made for elite women in response to their public beneficence to their cities. Jennifer Trimble eloquently argues for