

book offers a fundamentally important and powerful argument that should become part of the arsenal of critical scholars and activists on the Occupation and on contemporary neoliberal globalization as well. This book is ultimately a must-read both for specialists and advanced students, policy-makers, journalists, and politicians.

This book does not offer specific directions for resistance against the massive system he describes. But resistance can only succeed when one has a comprehensive understanding of the system against which resistance is being waged. Halper's book offers crucial information towards that end. For those ready to act after closing the book, they could do a lot worse than joining the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, where presumably Halper's insights are being put most directly into practice. ✂

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Mark Andrew Le Vine  
*University of California, Irvine*

**MICHAEL J. HARROWER.** *Water Histories and Spatial Archaeology: Ancient Yemen and the American West.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. x + 214 pages, endnotes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$110.00 ISBN 978-1-107-13465-2.

On first glance, a book title that compares ancient Yemen and the American West seems like a typist's error, but the author makes a compelling case for the relevance of his choice with regard to "human geographies of water." Harrower is an archaeologist with experience in Yemen and other parts of the Middle East and also one of the leading specialists on the use of spatial technologies, which include satellite imagery and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). When I took archaeology courses in the early 1970s, none of these new technologies were available, but the field of archaeology now has available a variety of new techniques that were only dreamed about back then. This is not only a book for denizens of archaeological research in Yemen, but also an interdisciplinary approach that involves social history and suggestions for dealing with the current political and environmental crises in the Middle East, including the "War on Terror." It deserves a wide audience.

The stage for the thesis of the book is set by comparing the 1928 catastrophic collapse of the St. Francis Dam north of Los Angeles that resulted in the death of six hundred people to the famous destruction of Yemen's Marib dam in the late 6th century, the latter even mentioned in the Qur'an (Surah Saba 34:15-16). "In both cases," argues Harrower, "these important junctures are interspersed throughout long histories of human

toil and struggles to harness water, which illustrate some of the central commonalities and contrasts among human societies of past and present” (2). Aside from the details of water management in a fragile arid environment and a valuable survey of ancient irrigation practices in Yemen, there is a call for an ethic of archaeological research that goes beyond digging into tells, preserving ancient objects for museums, and writing tomes that take decades to produce and grace only the libraries of major universities. In order to move beyond the current cultural impasse, the author suggests that “the ancient past offers powerful means to build shared interests and understandings that resist and counteract East–West framing and serve as a powerful foundation for dialogue, diplomacy, and peacemaking” (4). This is idealistic, to be sure, but such a provocative approach to such a formidable problem deserves a fair reading.

The first of six chapters starts with the background of Orientalism, introducing the water histories of both Yemen and the American West through references to Edward Said, Karl Wittfogel, Buffalo Bill Cody, Western films of John Wayne, the tenth century Yemeni historian al-Hamdani, Lawrence of Arabia, Wendell Phillips, and Ambassador Edmund Hull, among others. As promised by the author, this is definitely a book for “archaeologists and beyond” (28). There is something here for just about every disciplinary dimension of Middle East studies. The second chapter is devoted to a synthetic global overview and explains the approach of more recent historical archaeology’s links to ethnography and cultural theory, as well as human geography. The role of satellite imagery, in particular, is discussed in detail (35–37). The rest of the chapter is devoted to how various technologies and fields have examined the water history of Arabia, including recent findings about the origins of agriculture in the region.

Chapter 3 continues with a global view regarding the “interconnectivities of water, culture, and politics” in ancient Yemen (52). This chapter speculates about the transition from hunting and gathering and pastoralism to agriculture, arguing against the Ibn Khaldunian stereotype of Bedouin herders in harsh desert environments, at least for Yemen (61). The chapter is illustrated by many ethnographic examples, from Africa as well as Native Americans, and a lengthy review of Wittfogel’s hydraulic hypothesis (73–79). The fourth chapter reviews ideas on the origins of Southwest Arabian pastoralism and agriculture, drawing on archaeological research in Wadi Sana of the Hadramawt in which he participated. One of the more interesting finds was a ring of some 40 mid-fifth-millennium cattle skulls, suggesting a ritual sacrifice (92). Once again the evidence for early irrigation in Yemen is compared with that of the American West, including issues of riparian rights.

The fifth chapter continues the analysis of irrigation and water regimes during the historic period of the South Arabian kingdoms. This discusses major dams, such as that at Marib, as well as the many small dams scattered throughout Yemen's countryside with analogies to ethnographic descriptions. The final chapter focuses on the various approaches that have been used to assess the origins of water regimes, especially irrigation, with emphasis on the role of spatial technologies. "The appearance of irrigation and terrace agriculture in Yemen during the mid-fourth millennium BC, like transitions to agriculture in other regions of the world, involved an interacting constellation of social, environmental, political, cultural, and ideological dynamics rather than a simplistically singular prime mover," Harrower concludes (157).

The final section of the concluding chapter is labeled "Xenophobia, water crises, and the War on Terror" (163). A central concern of the author is the current political and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, exacerbated by a future with rapidly declining water resources. He argues that given the complexities of the history of water use in both ancient Yemen and the American West, two seemingly diametrically opposed cultural zones in stereotypical East-West thinking, future scenarios for dealing with both the political and environmental challenges in Yemen should heed the lessons of history. I agree with the author that "confronting and overturning narratives that paint dichotomous and divisive images of the past is among the central undertakings required to more peaceably shape the future" (165), but history, whether archaeological or textual, always remains in hindsight and the current turmoil in the Middle East appears to lack all foresight, at least for the moment.

The reader interested in irrigation and water resource use in Yemen, especially for the pre-Islamic period, will not be disappointed by this work.



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Daniel Martin Varisco  
American Institute for Yemeni Studies

**BILL HICKMAN.** *The Story of Joseph, A Fourteenth-Century Turkish Morality Play by Sheyyad Hamza.* Translated by Bill Hickman. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014. XIX+122 pages, afterword, synopsis, bibliography. Cloth US\$24.95. ISBN 978-0-8156-3357-0.

**Bill Hickman's** translation of Sheyyad Hamza's *The Story of Joseph* is written as primary course material for the fields of Turkish literature, Middle