administration's decision to withdraw American forces, and Nouri al-Maliki's treatment of Iraq's Sunni-dominated regions, he undervalues their contribution to the rise of ISIS, in this reviewer's judgement.

Yet even if Harris does not fully demonstrate his argument about Bashar's key place in the quicksilver war, his book makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by bringing together conflicts that too frequently are treated separately. He carefully documents the rise of the disparate fighting groups that fought for a mélange of purposes. It is difficult to keep track of the hundreds of militias, armies, and political parties that formed, reformed, and sometimes vanished during the long years of the war, but Harris' glossary helps considerably. Harris does a very credible job in dissecting the interests of the various Kurdish groups and Turkey during the quicksilver war, parsing out their ever-shifting positions as the war ebbed and flowed. While the *Quicksilver War* lacks the rich detail of larger studies like Charles Lister's *The Syrian Jihad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), or William McCant's *The ISIS Apocalypse* (New York: St. Martin's, 2015), it covers much broader ground, and its inclusion of the various Kurdish factions is both comprehensive and valuable. The quicksilver war was a true proxy war, which massively contributed to both its duration and lethality.

Not many scholars have had the opportunity to visit the front lines in the quicksilver war, or to interview members of a Kurdish militia in the field as Harris has done. While Harris's select bibliography is slim, he has utilized both Arabic and Turkish language sources, and conducted interviews with many officials and observers on all sides. The maps in the book are carefully crafted to show key locations and events, and the book has a helpful timeline, which is essential given the rapid pace of events in the war. The occasional foray into earlier histories (the Sassanid rulers, the Byzantines, and such) break up an otherwise breathless chronicle. A concluding chapter might have helped wrap up the many threads in the book, and link the chapters back to the conceptual material in the first chapter.

Quicksilver War will be useful for scholars of the Middle East and policy makers, as well as for college courses that study Middle East conflicts. While Harris presses a great deal of information into each page, he has an engaging writing style that keeps the reader's attention. This reviewer would have preferred a longer select bibliography, but the notes are very valuable for their source information.

GINNY HILL, *Yemen Endures: Civil War, Saudi Adventurism and the Future of Arabia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). Pp. 396. $29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780190842369

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Public perception of Yemen has recently been dominated by images of an ongoing humanitarian crisis, a relentless Saudi air campaign, and a civil war between conservative Yemeni tribesmen and a republic in exile. Ginny Hill's colorful narrative brings new life and understanding to events over the past decade in Yemen through countless interviews with Yemeni politicians, civilians, and anonymous respondents. Through investigative

journalism, Hill presents a version of events since 2006 from a Yemeni perspective, rather than one clouded by regional and international conflicts.

After two sparse historical chapters, Hill begins the rich personal narrative with a vivid description of the streets of Sanaʿaʾ in 2006 as Ali Abdullah Saleh announced his decision to accept his party's nomination as presidential candidate, shortly after announcing that he would step down. Hill describes the ambivalent jubilation of a generation of Yemenis who could scarcely remember a Yemeni state before Saleh and who were not ready to replace the predictability of his regime, despite its many faults. In a subsequent personal meeting with Saleh, and during many encounters with political figures and villagers, Hill embraced her role as the outsider and British journalist, exercising the well-trained ability to command the attention and curiosity of her interviewees. In one example, Hill embarked on a rifling expedition with her Yemeni informants, before immersing herself in an in-depth study of guns and Yemeni culture. The narrative that emerges demonstrates the ease with which guns and heavy weapons can be procured in Yemen, a story that is cut short when shopkeepers begin to grow uneasy with the presence of foreigners in an arms market.

Through Hill's hand-on investigations, the book also manages to transport the reader into the hidden lives of Yemen's elite. In perhaps the most descriptive chapter, Hill attends a home movie screening hosted by deputy finance minister Jalal Omar Yaqoub, which she uses as a window into the Saleh family's inner circle of opulence and corruption. This story of wealth disparity in Yemen culminates with Hill's visit to Saleh's grand mosque in August 2008, where she exercises a discerning eye for the expensive, imported building material used in the mosque's construction. These observations underscore the extent of Saleh's penchant for spending on self-aggrandizing public projects while most Yemenis were struggling to feed their families. The pervasiveness of Saleh's corruption is detailed further by the inclusion of interviews with prominent political opponents like former member of parliament Dr. Saad al-Din Talib.

Hill's thorough journalistic investigations were not limited to government officials or arms merchants, but extended out to the Somali refugees in Yemen, one of the most impoverished communities in a country that is already known for its high levels of poverty. She reveals that this was not just a story of desperate people searching for refuge, but a small component of a much larger illicit Yemen–Somalia trade network for munitions, narcotics, and other marketable goods.

Although Saleh's regime is a major focus of the book, there is also considerable attention allotted to growing tensions between southern and northern Yemenis. Hill was able to capture the mood on the streets of Aden through dozens of interviews and free-form interactions with local merchants, government employees and European expatriates. Detailed accounts interspersed with contemporary political analysis help the reader gain a clearer understanding of *al-Hirak*, the southern separatist movement, and its growing popularity. The book presents similar analyses of the growing Houthi opposition, as Hill highlights the legitimate grievances the northern tribesmen had against Saleh for perpetrating a long civil war (2004–10) and the gradually weakening of Zaydi culture by supporting Salafi movements. These opposition groups become more prominent during the 2011 protests around the time when Hill returned to Yemen to witness history through the eyes of prominent politicians like Ali Muhsin, Tareq Saleh, and even Ali Abdullah Saleh himself. These eyewitness accounts of street protests, UN mediation, and regime changes

are filled with personal accounts and observations, characteristic of this book's well-written and lively narrative.

While some misunderstandings may be attributed to liberties taken by her translators, there were several instances where Hill's interviews and analyses were not correctly informed. For example, when she meets Yahya Yousef Mousa, the leader of Yemen's Jewish community, Hill expresses skepticism at their devotion to Saleh and at their grievances against the Houthi aggression in northern Yemen. This minority community, in fact, has a well-documented debt of gratitude to Saleh for his role in providing passports and security during the 1990s, and for offering refuge and stipends in Sanaʿa' when they were forced to flee Houthi violence after 2004.

As vivid and enlightening as most of her interviews and observations were Hill could not be everywhere in Yemen at all times. This leads to significant gaps in the book's analysis of Yemen's recent history. This is most evident in Hill's chapter on Yemen and al-Qaʿida which presents little more than a summary of Lawrence Wright's book *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006) and is missing the personal perspectives and interviews that made the other sections compelling.

The same is true for Hill's effort to contextualize the modern Yemeni conflict within Yemen's 20th-century history. This section relies almost entirely on Paul Dresch's *A History of Modern Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Noel Brehony's *Yemen Divided: The Story of a Failed State in Yemen* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011) and contains many historical errors. For example, Hill cites President John F. Kennedy's 1963 deployment of Operation Hard Surface, a small squadron of fighters sent to Saudi Arabia, as having demonstrated "America's overriding commitment to preserving Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity." The squadron did not actually patrol the Saudi–Yemeni border and was intended merely as a symbolic token of support to encourage Saudi officials to enter peace negotiations with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

For a book that otherwise focuses on the perspective of Yemenis, Hill tells the story of the 1960s civil war almost entirely from the perspective of the International Committee of the Red Cross. This incomplete history of the 1960s does not discuss state formation, lingering political conflicts or any other aspects that could have contributed to her study of contemporary Yemen. In addition, Hill mistakenly attributes Egypt's use of chemical weapons to 1963, rather than to 1967, which bore the brunt of Egypt's use of poison gas.

The book may have been too ambitious in its effort to cover every aspect of modern Yemen including its history, culture, religion and politics, most of which is covered comprehensively by other authors. The real strength of this book, however, is in the informative narratives that Hill provides through hundreds of well-selected interviews and thousands of astute personal observations. The value of this book is not only in elucidating current events, but in providing future historians with a first-hand account of what is undoubtedly one of the most formative moments for Yemen in the 21st century.