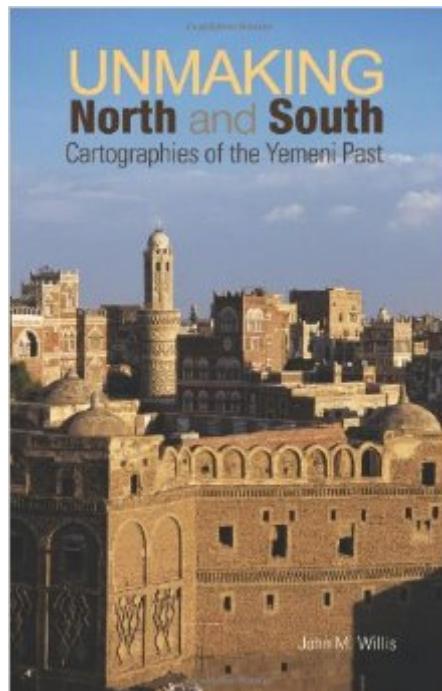


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Unmaking North And South: Cartographies Of The Yemeni Past (Columbia/Hurst)



Synopsis

John M. Willis revisits state formation and religious reform in Yemen during a period of imperialism, transition, and crisis (1857--1934). He focuses specifically on the British Aden Protectorate, which carved a series of "native states" out of Yemen's southern territory based on the princely India model; and the Zaydi-Shiite Imamate of the Hamid al-Din family, which established a hybrid state in the north that combined elements of the Ottoman state model with Sunni reformist ideology.

Treating each of these areas as politically, socially, and morally bounded spaces, Willis traces the extent to which modern Yemeni history is rooted both in the structures of the British Raj and the intellectual debates of the larger Sunni-Muslim world. Willis draws on case studies examining imperial state rituals, arms smuggling practices, cartography and colonial ethnography, the nature of Islamic polity, and the undeclared war between Britain and the Zaydi-Shiite Imamate, emphasizing Yemen's trans-regional history. Deftly moving between local, modern, colonial, and Islamic narratives, Willis challenges the inevitability of historical outcomes during Yemen's postcolonial period and suggests different conceptions of the country's contested past.

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