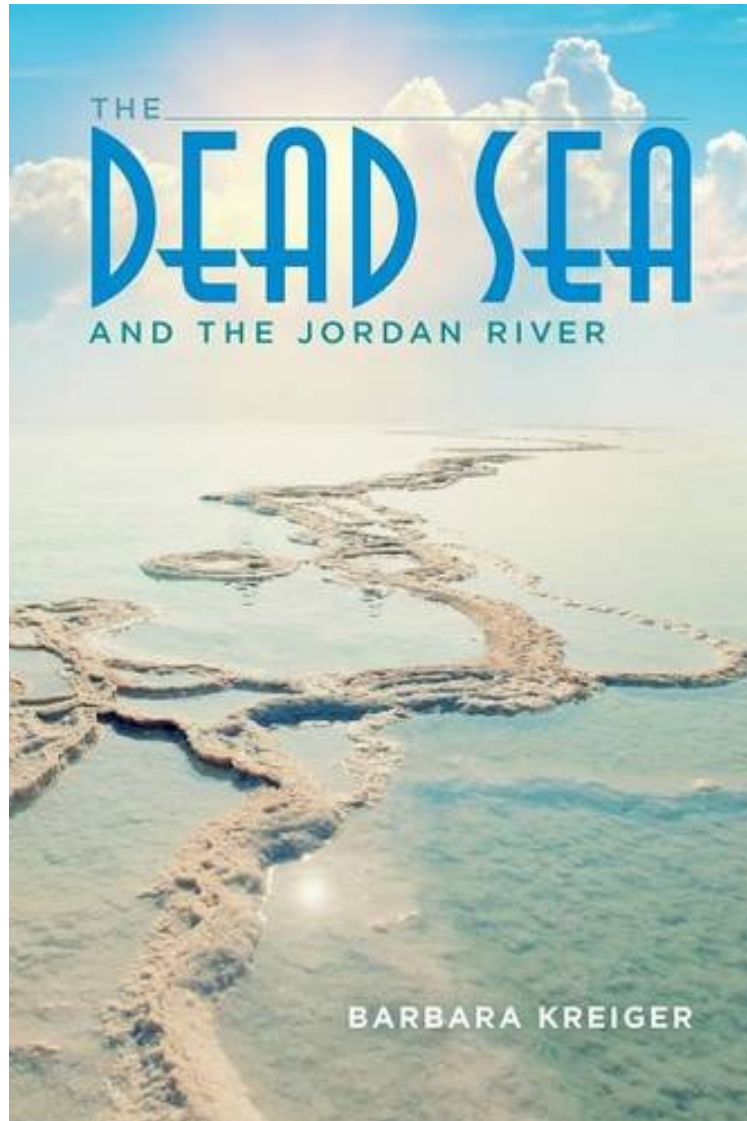


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## The Dead Sea and the Jordan River

Barbara Kreiger

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**Barbara Kreiger : The Dead Sea and the Jordan River** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dead Sea and the Jordan River:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The River Jordan may soon be extinct and the dead Sea is shrinking. Travel, history, some science and lots of current issues. By lyndonbrecht For the right reader this will be an excellent book. It is largely historical context, particularly discussing a number of explorers and travelers who ventured there over a number of centuries, but particularly in the 1800s. There's a fair amount of consideration of the river and sea as

a resource divided among nations (the Dead Sea between Israel and Jordan, the river among Syria, Israel and Jordan, with the Palestinians as a sort of would-be participant). Both river and sea form part of borders, and the Jordan is of considerable religious significance to Christians and Muslims. There's also considerable discussion of economics, how the water has been divided and how the extractive industry based on Dead Sea minerals got started. There is a little on ecosystems and environment and rather more on the basic geology (which is rather unusual). The book ends with Kreiger mentioning some of her own experiences with the sea, some of her concerns and a rather surprising optimism on the possibility of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian state cooperating on managing the river--which she sees in some danger of extinction because of drawdowns for agriculture. For their great significance, the river and sea are surprisingly small. The Dead Sea is essentially a sizable lake, at 233 square miles (I just checked it). The Sea of Galilee is 64 square miles and the length of the River Jordan is 156 miles (it's worth remembering that Israel is not much bigger than the state of Hawai'i). The Dead Sea has over time increased and decreased in volume and gone up and down in level, and is currently decreasing in size due to about 95% of the Jordan's water, all of which historically entered the sea, is now drawn off. According to Krieger, the Dead Sea has shrunk by a third in the last fifty years. Kreiger plainly loves this area, and at times the book is eloquent about it, especially the colors. It's arid, hot and difficult terrain, and the extreme saltiness of the Dead Sea makes it of use in only certain ways--extracting salts from the water, and the medical tourist trade (which draws people because of presumed medicinal value of bathing in the water). The chapters can be read in whole or according to the reader's interest. Chapter 1 discusses early travelers, Chapter 2 later travelers, especially the 1800s. Chapter 3 delves into the shores and other areas around the sea. Chapter 4, "the life of a lake" is the most detailed about the sea's origin and form (it's only 11,000 years old). Chapter 5 details the life and impact of a Jewish Russian immigrant who set up the extraction industry based on salts in the water. Chapter 6. "A Lake Divided," covers the situation of the sea being divided between two antagonistic nations. Chapter 7 thoroughly covers the issues of the Jordan being a water source in a water-starved region. Chapter 8 discusses reclamation and the future. The notes and sources section is quite good.

For centuries travelers have been drawn to the stunning and mysterious Dead Sea and Jordan River, a region which is unlike any other on earth in its religious and historical significance. In this exceptionally engaging and readable book, Barbara Kreiger chronicles the natural and human history of these storied bodies of water, drawing on accounts by travelers, pilgrims, and explorers from ancient times to the present. She conveys the blend of spiritual, touristic, and scientific motivations that have driven exploration and describes the modern exploitation of the lake and the surrounding area through mineral extraction and agriculture. Today, both lake and river are in crisis, and stewardship of these water resources is bound up with political conflicts in the region. The Dead Sea and the Jordan River combines history, literature, travelogue, and natural history in a way that makes it hard to put down.

The Dead Sea and the Jordan River may not be standard reading material for those interested in books about Israel but its format as part travelogue, part history, and part review of the challenges facing this unique natural phenomenon makes it hard to put down. (The Times of Israel) In its sweep of history, Kreiger's book conveys a powerful sense of how the world was once viewed, as a source of never-ending wonder tinged with divinity, how that view shifted to accommodate the curiosity we call science and above all how, throughout several inventive millennia, the practice of subjugation has scarcely changed. (Times Literary Supplement) The Jordan River and its terminal lake the Dead Sea have been on center stage of Middle East mythology, history, and politics for millennia. Barbara Kreiger's story of the modern day demise of these waters and the urgent need for their rehabilitation is a must-read for anyone that wants to understand the relevance of water issues to the continuing turmoil in the region. (Gidon Bromberg EcoPeace Middle East) Students of the Middle East will doubtless find this exhaustive report on the history and geopolitical details of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River indispensable. (Foreword s) When I set out to shoot a CNN documentary on the demise of holywater in the Holy Land, I scoured bookstores and search engines for the best resource material available. A few chapters into Barbara's work, I knew I'd found my definitive source. She kindly agreed to join our production as an expert and guide and from the wadis of Jordan to the top of Masada, we were fortunate to soak up her knowledge and passion. The Dead Sea is a place few people forget but often misunderstand. This book changes that dynamic, empowering explorers and pilgrims alike with insight and context. (Bill Weir CNN Anchor) About the Author Barbara Kreiger is Creative Writing Concentration Chair and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Dartmouth College. Her other publications include *Divine Expectations: An American Woman in Nineteenth-Century Palestine*. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and other publications.