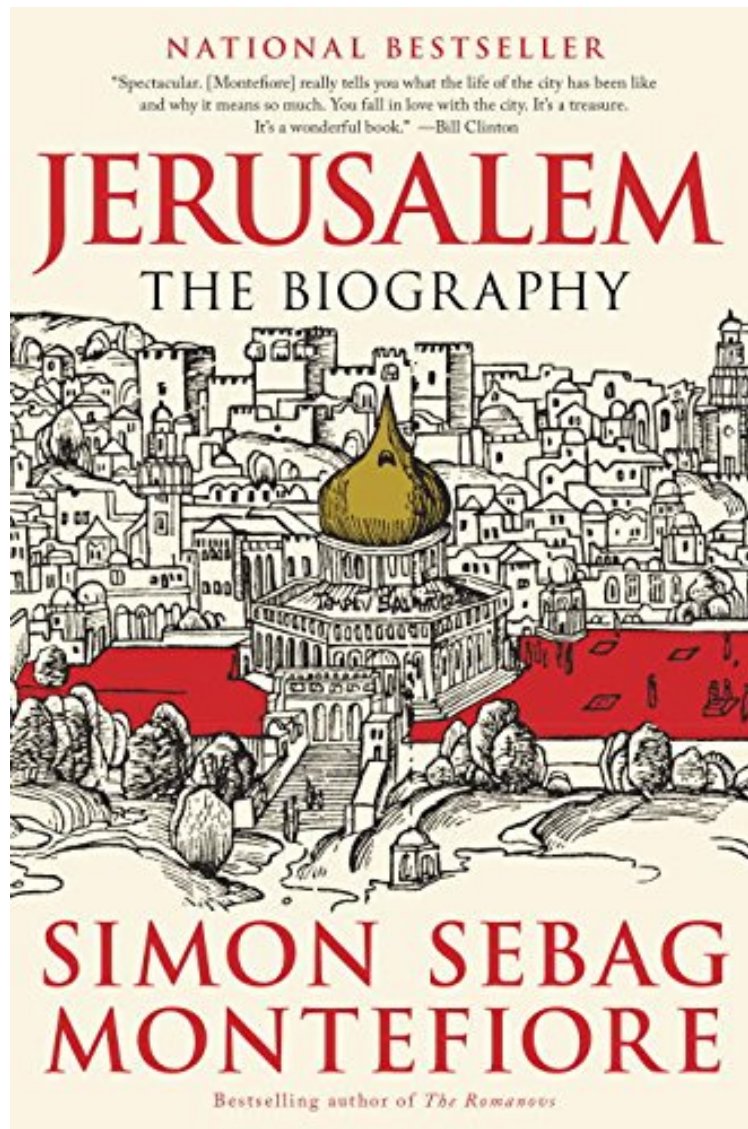


[Free download] Jerusalem: The Biography

Jerusalem: The Biography

Simon Sebag Montefiore

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#22960 in Books Vintage Books 2012-09-18 2012-09-18Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.20 x 1.40 x 6.10l, 2.02 #File Name: 0307280500704 pagesVintage Books | File size: 31.Mb

Simon Sebag Montefiore : Jerusalem: The Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jerusalem: The Biography:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A monumental workBy SascotIf you are a learned scholar, able to analyse the past in all it's minute detail, then I suspect you are going to pull this book apart, whether from a social, cultural, religious or historical stand point. The detail is incredible. Whether the author's motivations for writing this were from a privileged family connection (as claimed by other commentators) is irrelevant because what he has done

is given us ordinary people - of which I am one - access to the confusing, bewildering, tortured background to this city that has riven asunder the peoples of not just the region but the world. Whether you are Christian or Jew or Muslim, whether an Iraqi, Palestinian, Syrian, Roman, Turk, Egyptian, French, German, Brit or any other shape, size or hue of humanity, Jerusalem has pulled and continues to entice those in search of religious comfort and salvation. God in all his glory, whatever cloak he wears stands on its walls beckoning anyone and everyone to control the uncontrollable. This book enables one to place the present ebb and flow of mayhem and slaughter over Jerusalem into context and for that I am extremely grateful to the author. Whether ALL and every detail is true is really irrelevant. I am not interested in whether the Jesus, who was crucified on the cross, in a huff really did tip over the tables of the money lenders but the vision of this grumpy Messiah doing so did make me smile. What is fact is that the religions, tribes, sects and nationalities that all want a slice of Jerusalem will continue to be denied their wishes whilst one of them holds control. How it happened that the Jews finally have Israel and control of Jerusalem is simply part of the city's history. It's their turn but those denied control are grumpy, as they have been for millennia. This book enables one to wonder at why anyone could possibly think (the arrogance of ex British PM Tony Blair comes to mind here) that they could ever mediate all parties with an interest in the city to produce everlasting peace. But what comes out of its pages is the clear fact that man, in search of eternal salvation of his soul, will not hesitate to inflict immeasurable harm on others to achieve his aims. Stand in his way at your peril. This very readable book allowed me a much deeper understanding of the turmoil that is that part of the world and especially allows one to place the atrocities of the current unrest in Syria into context. Disgruntled parties have been lobbing stones at each other - and worse, much worse - for thousands of years, Jerusalem, bombed, bruised and besieged as the ultimate prize. And so it continues. I would have given it five stars but for one fact that I found the amount of detail in names utterly bewildering and in many places, impossible to follow. But this is a learned book, the author to be congratulated on such a monumental work. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, with some small quibbles By Joe Farquest Gripping read. A must-have for lovers of history. On the downside, the author appears to make some errors (or seems to rely on faulty sources) for some religious details on all sides, and labours under the misapprehension that modern religious leaders believe that everything was sunshine and roses back in their religion's heyday. Nonetheless, an excellent resource. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing feat of putting facts together By Bruce C. Amazing feat of putting facts together, still interesting how it unfolds like a thousand lifetimes, despite so many facts. There was many tribes conquering each other and they left a trail of killed, enslaved, tortured, ruined cities, and taxation. Every time the Jerusalemites regained control of the city, they built or rebuilt the sacred temple that had godly presence and gold, then a conquering army would destroy it and take the gold. Author says the history from 1500bc forward is from bible or related divine books some Jewish, there was no other recorded history, the information before then was from tablets, Iraqi It's an amazing book, not a story about the Jews and the Palistnians, not hardly, and most of the many groups, Persians, Babalonians, Cainanites, Syrians, etc. Most countries held religion of Babel, a belief in many gods most of which were angry and had to be appeased or you suffer consequences. The Romans conquered Juerusalem approaching year one (have to check my scribbled pages to know), and they didn't become Christian till many years after Jesus.

Jerusalem is the epic history of three thousand years of faith, fanaticism, bloodshed, and coexistence, from King David to the 21st century, from the birth of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to the Israel-Palestine conflict. How did this small, remote town become the Holy City, the center of the world and now the key to peace in the Middle East? In a gripping narrative, Simon Sebag Montefiore reveals this ever-changing city in its many incarnations, bringing every epoch and character blazingly to life. Jerusalem's biography is told through the wars, love affairs, and revelations of the men and women who created, destroyed, chronicled and believed in Jerusalem. As well as the many ordinary Jerusalemites who have left their mark on the city, its cast varies from Solomon, Saladin and Suleiman the Magnificent to Cleopatra, Caligula and Churchill; from Abraham to Jesus and Muhammad; from the ancient world of Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod and Nero to the modern times of the Kaiser, Disraeli, Mark Twain, Lincoln, Rasputin, Lawrence of Arabia and Moshe Dayan. In this masterful narrative, Simon Sebag Montefiore brings the holy city to life and draws on the latest scholarship, his own family history, and a lifetime of study to show that the story of Jerusalem is truly the story of the world. A New York Times Notable Book Jewish Book Council Book of the Year

Jewish Book Council Book of the Year "Spectacular. [Montefiore] really tells you what the life of the city has been like and why it means so much. You fall in love with the city. It's a treasure. It's a wonderful book." Bill Clinton, #1 Holiday Book Pick on the Today show "Magnificent. . . Montefiore barely misses a trick or a character in taking us through the city's story with compelling, breathless tension." Wall Street Journal "Impossible to put down. . . . Vastly enjoyable." New York Times Book "A powerful achievement. . . . At once a scholarly record and an exuberantly written popular tour de force." New York of Books "Magisterial. . . . As a writer, Montefiore has an elegant turn of phrase and an unerring ear for the anecdote that will cut to the heart of a story. . . . A joy to read." The Economist "Already a classic. Jerusalem is an extraordinary achievement, written with imagination and energy. . . . Simon Sebag

Montefiore tells this modern story with clarity and admirable impartiality. . . . Read this book." Financial Times "Montefiores towering biography of the city relates in fascinating, horrific and sometimes comical detail the wars to annexe its symbolic sanctity and the daily lives of its inhabitants. This monument of scholarly research is also a compelling story: of human foibles, lust, bravery and chicanery." The Times of London "Densely textured. . . . Montefiore embraces Jerusalems paradoxes in his chronological account, which seeks to avoid hindsight and disclaims a political agenda. He succeeds admirably in remaining evenhanded, a particularly notable achievement." Los Angeles Times "A memorable and distinguished history of a city where the truth is much less important than the myth. . . . Splendidly evoked." Richmond Times-Dispatch "Magnificent. . . . A spectacular book for general readers. . . . This is a book about the ages, for the ages." Wichita Eagle "Sweeping and absorbing. . . . Montefiore is a master of colorful and telling details and anecdotes. . . . His account is admirably dispassionate and balanced." Washington Post Book World "In his stunningly comprehensive history, Simon Sebag Montefiore covers 3,000-plus years of the Earths most fiercely contested piece of geography. . . . Not only has Montefiore delivered a piece of superb scholarship, he has done so in an extremely easy-to-read style. The author tells the history of the complex relationships that existed between long-dead peoples in a manner that makes them seem human and understandable. . . . Meticulously researched." The Newark Star-Ledger "Few historians have demonstrated the vision, mastery, and boldness necessary to publish on a subject so vast and in such detail as Montefiore. . . . A marvelous panorama." Library Journal "This is an essential book for those who wish to understand a city that remains a nexus of world affairs. . . . Although his Jewish family has strong links to the city, Montefiore scrupulously sustains balance and objectivity. . . . Beautifully written, absorbing. Booklist (starred) A panoramic narrative of Jerusalem, organized chronologically and delivered with magisterial flair. Spanning eras from King David to modern Israel with rich anecdotes and vivid detail, this exceptional volume portrays the personalities and worldviews of the dynasties and families that shaped the city throughout its 3,000-year history. Publishers Weekly (starred) An essential text, bathed in blood, lit with faint hope. . . . The author sees Jerusalem not just as the setting for some of historys most savage violence but a microcosm of our world. . . . The story is horribly complex, and Montefiore struggles mightily to make everything clear as well as compelling. Kirkus s (starred) Four thousand years of history absolutely romped through a masterwork. The Evening Standard (UK) Immensely readable. . . . Montefiore is that rarest of things: a historian who writes great, weighty tomes that read like the best thrillers. . . . [He] has a visceral understanding of what makes history worth reading. [Montefiore] manages to bring people who have been dead for two millennia alive again and make them breathe, and he has insight into the mind of psychopathic tyrants that makes you wish he were working for the U.S. secretary of state. Newsweek About the Author SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE is a historian of Russia and the Middle East. Catherine the Great and Potemkin was short-listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize. Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar won the History Book of the Year Prize at the British Book Awards. Young Stalin won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Biography, the Costa Biography Award, and le Grande Prix de la biographie politique. Jerusalem: The Biography was a worldwide best seller. Montefiores books are published in more than forty languages. He is the author of the novels Sashenka and One Night in Winter, which won the Paddy Power Political Fiction Book of the Year Award in 2014. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, Montefiore graduated from Cambridge University, where he received his PhD. He lives in London. www.simonsebagmontefiore.com Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Excerpted from the Preface The history of Jerusalem is the history of the world, but it is also the chronicle of an often penurious provincial town amid the Judaeian hills. Jerusalem was once regarded as the centre of the world and today that is more true than ever: the city is the focus of the struggle between the Abrahamic religions, the shrine for increasingly popular Christian, Jewish and Islamic fundamentalism, the strategic battlefield of clashing civilizations, the front line between atheism and faith, the cynosure of secular fascination, the object of giddy conspiracism and internet mythmaking, and the illuminated stage for the cameras of the world in the age of twenty-four-hour news. religious, political and media interest feed on each other to make Jerusalem more intensely scrutinized today than ever before. Jerusalem is the Holy City, yet it has always been a den of superstition, charlatanism and bigotry; the desire and prize of empires, yet of no strategic value; the cosmopolitan home of many sects, each of which believes the city belongs to them alone; a city of many names yet each tradition is so sectarian it excludes any other. This is a place of such delicacy that it is described in Jewish sacred literature in the feminine always a sensual, living woman, always a beauty, but sometimes a shameless harlot, sometimes a wounded princess whose lovers have forsaken her. Jerusalem is the house of the one God, the capital of two peoples, the temple of three religions and she is the only city to exist twice in heaven and on earth: the peerless grace of the terrestrial is as nothing to the glories of the celestial. The very fact that Jerusalem is both terrestrial and celestial means that the city can exist anywhere: new Jerusalems have been founded all over the world and everyone has their own vision of Jerusalem. Prophets and patriarchs, Abraham, David, Jesus and Muhammad are said to have trodden these stones. The Abrahamic religions were born there and the world will also end there on the Day of Judgement. Jerusalem, sacred to the Peoples of the Book, is the city of the Book: the Bible is, in many ways, Jerusalems own chronicle and its readers, from the Jews and early Christians via the Muslim conquerors and the Crusaders to todays American evangelists, have repeatedly altered her history to fulfil biblical prophecy. When the Bible was translated into Greek then Latin and English, it became the universal book and it made

Jerusalem the universal city. Every great king became a David, every special people were the new Israelites and every noble civilization a new Jerusalem, the city that belongs to no one and exists for everyone in their imagination. And this is the city's tragedy as well as her magic: every dreamer of Jerusalem, every visitor in all ages from Jesus Apostles to Saladins soldiers, from Victorian pilgrims to today's tourists and journalists, arrives with a vision of the authentic Jerusalem and then is bitterly disappointed by what they find, an ever-changing city that has thrived and shrunk, been rebuilt and destroyed many times. But since this is Jerusalem, property of all, only their image is the right one; the tainted, synthetic reality must be changed; everyone has the right to impose their Jerusalem on Jerusalem, with sword and fire, they often have. Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth-century historian who is both participant and source for some of the events related in this book, noted that history is so eagerly sought after. The men in the street aspire to know it. Kings and leaders vie for it. This is especially true for Jerusalem. It is impossible to write a history of this city without acknowledging that Jerusalem is also a theme, a fulcrum, a spine even, of world history. At a time when the power of Internet mythology means that the hi-tech mouse and the curved sword can both be weapons in the same fundamentalist arsenal, the quest for historical facts is even more important now than it was for Ibn Khaldun. A history of Jerusalem must be a study of the nature of holiness. The phrase Holy City is constantly used to describe the reverence for her shrines, but what it really means is that Jerusalem has become the essential place on earth for communication between God and man. We must also answer the question: Of all the places in the world, why Jerusalem? The site was remote from the trade routes of the Mediterranean coast; it was short of water, baked in the summer sun, chilled by winter winds, its jagged rocks blistered and inhospitable. But the selection of Jerusalem as the Temple city was partly decisive and personal, partly organic and evolutionary: the sanctity became ever more intense because she had been holy for so long. Holiness requires not just spirituality and faith but also legitimacy and tradition. A radical prophet presenting a new vision must explain the centuries that have gone before and justify his own revelation in the accepted language and geography of holiness—the prophecies of earlier revelations and the sites already long revered. Nothing makes a place holier than the competition of another religion. Many atheistic visitors are repelled by this holiness, seeing it as infectious superstition in a city suffering a pandemic of righteous bigotry. But that is to deny the profound human need for religion without which it is impossible to understand Jerusalem. Religions must explain the fragile joys and perpetual anxieties that mystify and frighten humanity: we need to sense a greater force than ourselves. We respect death and long to find meaning in it. As the meeting-place of God and man, Jerusalem is where these questions are settled at the Apocalypse—the End of Days, when there will be war, a battle between Christ and anti-Christ, when the Kaaba will come from Mecca to Jerusalem, when there will be judgment, resurrection of the dead and the reign of the Messiah and the Kingdom of Heaven, the New Jerusalem. All three Abrahamic religions believe in the Apocalypse, but the details vary by faith and sect. Secularists may regard all this as antique gobbledygook, but, on the contrary, such ideas are all too current. In this age of Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalism, the Apocalypse is a dynamic force in the world's febrile politics. Death is our constant companion: pilgrims have long come to Jerusalem to die and be buried around the Temple Mount to be ready to rise again in the Apocalypse, and they continue to come. The city is surrounded by and founded upon cemeteries; the wizened body-parts of ancient saints are revered—the desiccated blackened right hand of Mary Magdalene is still displayed in the Greek Orthodox Superiors Room in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Many shrines, even many private houses, are built around tombs. The darkness of this city of the dead stems not just from a sort of necrophilia, but also from necromancy: the dead here are almost alive, even as they await resurrection. The unending struggle for Jerusalem—massacres, mayhem, wars, terrorism, sieges and catastrophes—have made this place into a battlefield, in Aldous Huxley's words the slaughterhouse of the religions, in Flaubert's a charnel-house. Melville called the city a skull besieged by armies of the dead; while Edward Said remembered that his father had hated Jerusalem because it reminded him of death.