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Nitza Rosovsky, ed. *City of the Great King: Jerusalem from David to the Present.* Cambridge and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1996. xiii + 562 pp. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-674-13190-3.

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Celebrating Jerusalem

Has any city in the world been more celebrated than Jerusalem? More fought over, more studied, more longed for? It is not the oldest, the most historic, the most beautiful, the most richly endowed with architectural and historic treasures. Cairo, Rome, Istanbul have much more to offer the cultural tourist and the scholar–but Jerusalem has a special place in the hearts of more than half the world, and a unique role in the unfolding drama of world civilization. This work is a celebration of that special place, of that unique role.

It is not an encyclopedia, it is not a history of the city, it is not a "catalogue raisonee" of its cultural property; nor is it a coffee-table book of captivating photographs and fascinating illustrations. It is, rather, a compendium, a compilation of studies of different aspects of the city, of several disciplines and several levels of complexity, containing aspects of all the above mentioned types of book. Inevitably, it lacks the consistency, the thoroughness of city studies by a single author: Janet Abu-Lughod's study of Cairo[1] and Philip Mansel's more recent study of Constantinople[2] spring to the mind of this reviewer as studies which are unsurpassed in these particular fields, and which have, or will, become the definitive work on the city in that field. This work has more in common with Serjeant and Lewcock's study of Sana'a, which is a more successful example of the genre.[3] But then Sana'a is a much less complex city than Jerusalem and lacks several of the layers of perception and meaning that give Jerusalem its unique character.

The preceding paragraph is a preamble to the observation that the purpose of the work under review is unclear. For which market, for which categories of reader is the work intended? What is the motivation that has brought twenty authors and scholars together in this collaborative effort? Neither Nitza Rosovsky's Introduction nor the publisher's dust jacket blurb make this clear. The idea for the book originated with the publishers, as Nitza Rosovsky acknowledges, in celebration of three thousand years of the City's history. But of King David who founded his capital on the site of the Jebusite settlement in Northern Canaan he conquered, in 1004 BCE or thereabouts, little is said, and even less is said about the archeological evidence of Hebrew penetration and settlement in the long remembered hills of Palestine. This is a fundamental weakness of the book, and a surprising one, for Magen Broshi, who writes the opening chapter, on "The Inhabitants of Jerusalem," is an archeologist and historian who knows the archeology of Jerusalem as well as anyone.

Following Broshi's opening chapter, the book is divided into three parts: "The Heavenly City," with six chapters, all comparatively short, but to this theologically-literate layman, well balanced, informative and interesting. The chapter titles–"The Holy Places," "Jerusalem in Jewish Spirituality," "The Holy City," "Christian Thought," "The Spiritual Meaning of Jerusalem," "Islam," "Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," and "Jewish Pilgrimage after the Destruction of the Second Temple," reveal the range of subject matter in this section. Angelika Neuwirth, who writes the chapter on "The Spiritual Meaning of Jerusalem in Islam," starts her chapter with sentences that are worth quoting because they convey sentiments that underlie all six chapters:

Any new attempt by a religion to define its particular relation to Jerusalem builds on the bedrock of a famous ancient text: If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my Tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, If I remember thee not; If I set not Jerusalem Above my chief joy! (Psalms. 137: 5-6) Jerusalem, as evoked in these lines, is the very guarantor of the psalmist's personal integrity, of his legal capacity. Jerusalem, it appears, has never lost its aura of a divine token" (p. 93).

Of the six chapters in this section, F. E. Peters' chapter on "The Holy Places" is particularly illuminating.

The following section, "The Earthly City," is disappointingly thin in comparison with its predecessor. "Jerusalem and Zionism" by Arthur Hertzberg is substantial enough, but chapters on "The Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem," and "Islamic Rule in Jerusalem" are lacking, and the only other chapter in this section, "Palestinian Images of Jerusalem" by Muhammad Muslih, would be more appropriately included in the final section of this book.

"The City in Literature, Art and Architecture," the final section, occupies more than half the book, and its nine chapters provide a multi-disciplinary overview of Jerusalem's cultural heritage and, more broadly, of the city's role in the flowering of the world's culture. Although all the chapters are interesting and informative, and a treat for the cultured reader, they are very mixed in scope and quality. Some chapters make a significant contribution to the stock of human knowledge in the author's field of study and are both scholarly and innovative. Among such are Dan Miron's, "Depictions in Modern Hebrew Literature"; Bianca Kuhnel's "Geography and Geometry of Jerusalem," though the subject matter in this chapter extends way beyond Jerusalem to cover the globe and the cosmos; and, for the present reviewer at least, the most valuable chapter in the book, Sabri Jarrar's dryly titled but authoritatively written and copiously illustrated chapter on the Mamluk architecture on and around the Temple Mount, "Two Islamic Construction Plans for al-Haram-al-Sharif."

Other chapters are more popularly written and serve as general introductions to their cultural theme; others again are disappointingly short and superficial, none more so than Oleg Grabar's "Jerusalem Elsewhere," which barely scratches the surface of what is a very fertile field for research. Even if one ignores the many Utopian settlements inspired by the ideal image of Jerusalem, there are the countless Calvaries and Holy Mountains erected through the pious endeavors of missionaries in North and South America, Africa and Asia, unhinted at by Grabar; the replication of the Temple by the Knights Templars throughout Western Europe; and–the most remarkable recreation of Jerusalem of them all–the World Heritage site at Lalibela in Ethiopia, the series of churches, Holy Places, hewn out of the rock of the Tigrean mountains in realization of the vision of the Emperor Lalibela, who as heir to the throne spent about twenty years in Crusader Jerusalem in close association with the Templars.

There are disappointing gaps in this cultural survey: mediaeval Islamic architecture is included, but not the architecture of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem; "The City in Jewish Folk Art" is included (in a fascinating miniature essay by Nitza Rosovsky) but not the City in the High Renaissance Art of Europe, so ignoring the visions of Piero and Raphael and so many others; "Nineteenth Century (Literary) Portraits through Western Eyes" (another fascinating and wide ranging survey by the editor) but not Jerusalem in pre-nineteenth century European Literature; and of music, scarcely a mention, either of the music of Jerusalem or of the recreation of the Holy City in music, by Bach and Handel.

But for all my carping criticism, there are treasures here, unexpected discoveries to be made, important connections revealed between secular and religious perceptions of the reality of the City, between the researchers and scholars of different disciplines. And for this reviewer, writing in Cyprus, the realization, revealed in the final chapter on the architecture of the last 150 years in Jerusalem ("Architecture of the City outside the Walls" by Ziva Sternhell), that the colonial architecture of Cyprus[4] has many similarities with that of Jerusalem under the British Mandate. George Jeffery, who had already worked in Jerusalem as architect of St. George's Anglican Cathedral and College, moved to Cyprus as Government Architect in 1903, and remained in Cyprus for many years, subsequently becoming Curator of Ancient Monuments. Sir Ronald Storrs, Military Governor of Jerusalem from 1918, moved to Cyprus as Governor in 1926. And St. Austen Barbe Harrison, architect of Government House and the Rockefeller Archeological museum, took as his younger partner the Cyprus resident architect Piers Hubbard; the fruitful outcome of whose collaboration is seen most spectacularly, neither in Jerusalem nor in Cyprus, but in West Africa, in the campus of the University of Ghana, at Legon.

The book is copiously illustrated, with both color and monochrome photographs, and has a useful bibliography. Scholars and general readers alike will be frustrated by the lack of an index. All will find within its covers material to savor and enjoy.

Notes:

[1]. Abu-Lughod, Janet. *Cairo, Yhousand Years of the City Victorious.* Princeton University Press, 1971.

[2]. Mansel, Philip. *Constantinople, City of the World's Desire.* London: St. Martin's, 1995.

[3]. Serjeant, R. B. and Ronald Lewcock, eds. *Sana'a: an Arabian Islamic City.* London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983.

[4]. Schaar, K W, M. Given, and G. Theocharous. *Under the Clock: Colonial Architecture and History in Cyprus,*

1878 - 1960. Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus, 1995.

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