

**Peters, F.E. *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. Pp. xiv, 656. \$35.00 (U.S.)**

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He has ranged widely through a plethora of sources to reconstitute the life of the Bunk. In addition to the chapters mentioned he has others on "Collective Identities," "Ideology, Politics and Forms of Struggle," and "The Family and Social Change" all of which are sharply focused and crisply argued. His book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of working class life in London, particularly of the strained existence of the lumpenproletariat. One of the most interesting features of the book is the skillful blending of oral history into the analysis. The written sources, though plentiful, are not always very revealing, while the lack of census material post 1881 hampers certain avenues of investigation. Oral evidence is therefore vital and White has placed considerable emphasis on it. The total number of oral testimonies is small but each provides insights that would otherwise have been missed. The overall result is a book of rich texture and penetrating analysis.

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F. E. Peters has produced a unique history of the city of Jerusalem, a narrative spanning nearly four thousand years, a synthesis of the observations and reports of visitors to the city, its denizens, and chroniclers of various times. Peters draws upon Jewish, Christian, Muslim and biblical sources. The book is beautifully bound and printed, and contains many illustrations and photographs, both color and black-and-white. The illustrations include a number of nineteenth century engravings, a color reproduction of the Madaba Map (sixth century CE), and photographs of some of the recently excavated sites in the Old City. In addition, there are photographs of most of the important holy sites as they appear today and a number of historical maps reproduced from D. Bahat, *Carta's Historical Atlas of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1983).

Peters may have bitten off, however, more than he can chew. The book is both lacking in balance and seriously flawed. The majority of attention is devoted to the period of the author's expertise, late Roman antiquity and the middle ages. Relatively little weight is given to Jerusalem in the biblical period (less than 130 pages cover the first two thousand years of Jerusalem's history, while nearly 350 pages are devoted to the fourth century CE through the fourteenth century). Short chapters at the end of the book record the observations of visitors and chroniclers of the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Curiously, Peters ends

his treatment in the 1840s. One wonders why he bothered with the biblical period at all, for his treatment of the historical sources is both cursory and almost consistently uncritical. In contrast, his handling of the sources for late antiquity and the middle ages, particularly for the period of Muslim rule, is nuanced, thoroughly critical and often quite insightful. It is clear that had *Jerusalem* been more limited in scope, perhaps devoted only to the period from late antiquity to the end of Turkish rule in 1917, it would have been a better book.

The chapters chronicling the history of Jerusalem in the last two millennia BCE are of little value to the historian. Peters presents a series of biblical texts, for the most part without critical commentary. There is rarely discussion of the purpose, date or provenance of these sources. In many cases even the basic commentaries and histories have not been consulted, and Peters rarely seems aware of scholarly discussion (he assumes, for example, the historicity of the patriarchs and the Israelite "conquest" of Canaan). Archaeological sources are consulted superficially. In discussing the building of Solomon's Temple, Peters follows the biblical text without reference to archaeological evidence, which in this case is crucial. There is no discussion of Neo-Hittite or Phoenician influence on the building projects of David and Solomon. With the Second Temple Period (515 BCE - 70 CE), Peters begins to evaluate his sources critically (eg. Josephus's source material, p. 42; the date and provenance of Daniel 11, p. 53), yet not consistently, and he seems unaware of some significant primary material. He does not discuss the sectarian literature from Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls), where Jerusalem figures prominently as an eschatological symbol (see 11Q Temp and the description of the Heavenly Jerusalem in 1Q32, 5Q15 and DJD 1.134-35, as well as 4Q Flor). The Heavenly Jerusalem is mentioned briefly in the discussion of New Testament sources (pp. 122-23). Why then is there no discussion of the same symbol in Judaism of the period? Peters treats New Testament sources unevenly. One example will suffice. Paul's career is reconstructed almost wholly from Acts, while his own epistles are all but ignored. There is no discussion of Paul's ambivalent relationship to the church in Jerusalem, or the symbolic value of Jerusalem in his writings. In short, Peters's treatment of the biblical material in the first three chapters is seriously flawed. Many important beliefs about Jerusalem arising in the Second Temple Period are left unmentioned, or at least are dealt with only superficially.

Once Peters gets past 100 CE, his scholarship is generally quite impressive. He draws upon the writings of Eusebius, Sozomen, Jerome and various pilgrims to produce an impression of life in Jerusalem in the early centuries of this era. His discussion of the spread of the pilgrimage idea among Christians is interesting, and in particular his treatment of Jewish, Christian and Muslim sources for the medieval period is impressive. The discussions of Jerusalem's status in early Islam (prayer was first directed toward Jerusalem, and only

later toward Mecca, pp. 179-81), western European perceptions of the city in the eighth/ninth centuries (pp. 217 ff), and the rise of the Western Wall cult among Jews (pp. 225 ff) are perceptive and insightful. The First "Crusade" and its legacy are handled well, yet it would have been interesting for Peters to explore the significance of Jerusalem as an eschatological symbol for the masses of pilgrims in 1095-99. Many Latins on the First "Crusade" thought they were marching to the Heavenly Jerusalem (see the discussion of H. E. Mayer, *The Crusades* [Oxford: Oxford University, 1972] 12-13). Generally, the symbolic role of Jerusalem in the lives of Jews, Christians and Muslims is not adequately explored by Peters.

The final chapters of *Jerusalem* cover the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. One wonders why Peters did not extend his narrative to the end of Turkish rule in 1917. This would have been a more logical point to end than the 1840s. The omission of Disraeli's visit to Palestine and Jerusalem in 1830-31 is perplexing. Robert Blake

recently argued that this visit had a profound effect of Disraeli, and helped to shape his views of the East (*Disraeli's Grand Tour* [New York: Oxford University, 1982]).

*Jerusalem* is recommended particularly for its chapters dealing with the medieval period. A significant strength of this work is the balanced approach to the chronicles and reports of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Peters is interested in all three groups. This lack of parochialism is refreshing indeed. The initial chapters of the book are, however, seriously flawed. A grand project such as this would have been far more successful as a cooperative effort of two or even three scholars, each working in his specialty.

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