



Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel

By Eric H. Cline

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"Jerusalem Besieged is a fascinating account of how and why a baffling array of peoples, ideologies, and religions have fought for some four thousand years over a city without either great wealth, size, or strategic importance. Cline guides us through the baffling, but always bloody, array of Jewish, Roman, Moslem, Crusader, Ottoman, Western, Arab, and Israeli fights for possession of such a symbolic prize in a manner that is both scholarly and engaging."

-Victor Davis Hanson, Stanford University; author of *The Other Greeks* and *Carnage and Culture*

"A beautifully lucid presentation of four thousand years of history in a single volume. Cline writes primarily as an archaeologist-avoiding polemic and offering evidence for any religious claims-yet he has also incorporated much journalistic material into this study. *Jerusalem Besieged* will enlighten anyone interested in the history of military conflict in and around Jerusalem."

-Col. Rose Mary Sheldon, Virginia Military Institute

"This groundbreaking study offers a fascinating synthesis of Jerusalem's military history from its first occupation into the modern era. Cline amply deploys primary source material to investigate assaults on Jerusalem of every sort, starting at the dawn of recorded history. *Jerusalem Besieged* is invaluable for framing the contemporary situation in the Middle East in the context of a very long and pertinent history."

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A sweeping history of four thousand years of struggle for control of one city

"[An] absorbing account of archaeological history, from the ancient Israelites' first conquest to today's second intifada. Cline clearly lays out the fascinating history behind the conflicts."

-USA Today

"A pleasure to read, this work makes this important but complicated subject fascinating."

-Jewish Book World

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Cline, an associate professor of ancient history and archeology at George Washington University, begins his history of Jerusalem with mythical, biblical and archeological clues to its past, and the Roman histories of Josephus. Cline's narrative thread is the battles over control of a dusty village that took on increasing emotional content as it became a contested religious site. Cline claims "assimilation, annihilation and acculturation" through 10 empires and occupancies have left no one in the area today with "a legitimate pedigree definitively extending back to any of the original inhabitants." Of the alleged 118 conflicts over Jerusalem, few lacked a religious basis. Until 1917, Cline shows, Westerners controlled Jerusalem for less than a century. Beyond the Solomonic years, Jews have controlled the old city only since 1967. Perhaps no fragment of global real estate has been so volatile over so long a history. Despite sanguinary, even horrific detail from past memoirs and narratives, Cline's retelling is flat and repetitious, and the numerous references to Saddam Hussein, physically absent from this history, overreach in attempting immediate relevance. While a useful, well-annotated, textbookish guide to Jerusalem's violent past and present, it will not replace Karen Armstrong's stylish *Jerusalem. One City, Three Faiths* (1996). 10 color photos not seen by PW, 24 maps.

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Review

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About the Author

Eric H. Cline is Associate Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology in the Department of Classical and Semitic Languages and Literatures at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He is the author of several books and numerous articles on the ancient world, including *The Battles of Armageddon* (University of Michigan Press, 2000), which won the 2001 Biblical Archaeology Society Publication Award.

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