

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE QUARRY OF HISTORY

**O**n Monday, September 4, 1995—the ninth day of the month of Elul in the year A.H. 5755 (according to the Jewish calendar)—the Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin officially opened the celebrations marking the 3,000th anniversary of the establishment of Jerusalem as capital of the Kingdom of Israel. Lasting fifteen months, the festivities focused on the founder of the House of David, who conquered the Jebusite city of Jerusalem and made it the temporal and spiritual capital of his people. “King David’s many-faceted personality—musician, warrior, statesman, poet/singer and dancer, as well as king and lover—,” stated the official program for the festivities, “will provide the inspiration for an entire year of cultural events.” Prime Minister Rabin stood on the stage erected for the occasion at the recently opened archeological park in “David’s City” and declared: “Jerusalem is the celebration of the glory of the Jewish people from the day it was created in the Image of God. She is its heart and the apple of its eye; and our festivities here today are only meant to once again elevate Jerusalem ‘above our chiefest joy,’ as was the custom of our fathers and forefathers.”

The information sheets distributed to the invited guests stated: “No other people designated Jerusalem as its capital in such an absolute and

binding manner—Jerusalem is the concrete historical expression of the Jewish religion and its heritage on the one hand and of the independence and sovereignty of the Jewish people on the other. Jerusalem's identity as a spiritual and national symbol at one and the same time has forged the unique and eternal bond between this city and the Jewish people, a bond that has no parallel in the annals of the nations. Israel's rule over the united city has allowed her to bloom and prosper, and despite the problems between the communities within her, she has not enjoyed such centrality and importance since her days as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel."

The ceremony that launched the events marking "3,000 Years of Jerusalem, City of David" took place in the presence of some 200 invited guests, all of them members of the Jewish establishment from Israel and abroad. For "security reasons" a solid wall of security personnel barred entry to the residents of the Arab neighborhood in which the park is situated. After all, the site of the City of David is located in the heart of Silwan, an Arab neighborhood with a population of 30,000. Ironically, the houses nearest to the site where the opening ceremonies took place have recently been the scene of sporadic violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs, and in 1991-92 a group of Jewish fanatics, assisted by the police, took over several Arab buildings and forcibly ejected their inhabitants.

One Arab resident of Silwan, who had Jewish settlers forced upon him as neighbors, watched the proceedings in bewilderment. He had no idea of the nature of the sudden visit by the prime minister and the mayor. An Israeli journalist who was recording the reactions of the Arab population to the "Jerusalem 3,000" celebrations explained the meaning of the ceremony to him. The Arab, an employee of an East Jerusalem research institute, pulled out a Palestinian history book and read the following passages aloud: "The Philistines, who came from Crete and Asia Minor, merged with the Canaanites, who originated from the Arabian peninsula, and gave the land its name, Falastin. The Jebusites, a Canaanite people, are the ancestors of the

Palestinians. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a 'believer in one God.' The twelve sons of Jacob fled to Egypt, interbred with the Egyptians there and became numerous. Moses and his followers wandered in the desert; they were not endowed with any scientific or artistic talents and made no cultural achievements whatsoever. Hence they were influenced by the Canaanites and imitated their religious beliefs. . . .

"Warfare between the Israelites and the Philistines (Palestinians) continued for hundreds of years, and the Bible confirms that the land's inhabitants, who were of Arabian origin, succeeded in zealously maintaining their independence and culture. Jerusalem has been the capital of our Palestinian Arab homeland ever since it was built by our ancestors, the Jebusites and the Arab Canaanites, in the heart of Falastin. The Arab presence in Jerusalem was never interrupted, in contrast to the Jewish presence, which disappeared. The Arabs tenaciously remained under the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Byzantines. There has been Arab rule in Jerusalem and in Palestine ever since the seventh century (except for the Crusader period). The Arab-Muslim tradition was preserved, and flourished under the Muslim Arab dynasties—the Omayyads, the Abassids, the Fatamids, the Seljuks, the Mamluks, the Ottomans . . . until the British conquest of 1917.

"Even your prophets say that you and your king, David, were foreign occupiers," commented the Arab. "This is what the prophet Ezekiel says: 'Thus saith the Lord God to Jerusalem: Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite'" (Ezek. 16:3).

Had circumstances been reversed and had Jerusalem been under Palestinian sovereignty, the authorities would have been organizing a "Jebusite Festival" to mark Jerusalem's 5,000th anniversary. During this festival, they would have depicted their historical myths in speech and music, exactly as the Israelis did with their celebration of 3,000 years of the City of David. Who is right? The question is superfluous. The chronicles

of Jerusalem are a gigantic quarry from which each side has mined stones for the construction of its myths—and for throwing at each other.

The Museum of the City of Jerusalem is located in a fortress called David's Citadel. The citadel, which guards Jaffa Gate and the western section of the Old City walls, is, in its present form, a Mamluk-Ottoman structure, built in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. But its foundations, and one tower in particular, date back to earlier periods: Hasmonean, Herodian, and Crusader. The largest of the site's six towers is the Tower of Phasaël, which was built by King Herod and was not destroyed at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple in A.D. 70. The Romans left this huge tower as evidence of the strength of the Jewish city's fortifications, which they had succeeded in overpowering. The architecturally most famous part of the fortress is a mosque crowned by a minaret, used for hundreds of years by the soldiers stationed here. This structure, called the Tower of David, has come to symbolize the city of Jerusalem, its silhouette adorning numerous engravings, paintings, and posters. The museum catalogue emphatically states: "This is the symbol of the longing and yearning for the Holy Land. Life has gone on here continuously for two thousand years." The catalogue does not mention *whose* life.

And indeed, it is this continuity of life in Jerusalem that the Museum of the City of Jerusalem depicts. The earliest date mentioned on the chronological charts that guide the visitor through the museum is 3150 B.C., which is designated as the beginning of the Canaanite period (approximately 3000–1200 B.C.). Perhaps as a way of combatting the Canaanite-Philistine myth, the space devoted to this period—located before the entrance to the first exhibition hall—is small and exposed to sun and rain. Copies of two or three Canaanite and Egyptian artifacts sum up a period of some 2,000 years and together serve as an introduction to what the museum's designers perceive as the real beginning of Jerusalem's history: its conquest by King David.

It is hard to estimate the extent to which the Palestinians themselves believe the Canaanite-Philistine myth, and one hopes that this absurd

attempt to give a historical basis to their claim to Jerusalem is simply a political argument that they themselves do not take seriously. After all, some of their Jewish rivals, calling themselves “the Canaanites,” have also sought to identify themselves with the indigenous tribes of the Land of Israel/Palestine while dissociating themselves from the “diaspora Judaism” of the intervening period, of which they are ashamed. The myth of the healthy and complex-free “native-born Israeli” who springs from the soil of the homeland involves rejection of the diaspora and has led a number of Israeli intellectuals to erase the memory of 3,000 years of Jewish history and to view themselves as the direct descendants of the Canaanites. Similarly, Maronite Christian Arabs in Lebanon, wishing to deny the Arab connection, have declared themselves to be Phoenicians—descendants of the ancient seafaring people who ruled the Mediterranean from Tyre to Carthage.

But even if the Palestinians take the Canaanite connection with a grain of salt, they have good reason to reflect—as they tour the Museum of the City of Jerusalem—on the fact that history is written by victors, and not the vanquished. On the chronological charts and in the exhibits, the name “Arab” does not appear. Even the accepted designation of the period beginning with the Arab conquest in A.D. 638 and concluding with the Crusader conquest of 1099—the Early Arab Period—was changed not long ago to the Early Muslim Period: it is easier to define the Arabs as Muslims, for there is no “Muslim nation.” But there is, of course, a Jewish nation. The Omayyad, Abbasid, Fatamid, Ayoubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman dynasties—all of them Muslim—which ruled Jerusalem for nearly thirteen hundred years (638–1917, except for the Crusader period) appear in the museum chronology by their individual names, thereby turning the city’s history into what appears to be a chronology of “foreign” conquerors. Thus one may ignore the Arab identity of the city’s inhabitants throughout all that time and the fact that the Arab community played an integral part in the administration of this “foreign rule.” There is no need to chronicle the history of the city itself, its institutions, and its public

figures; nor is there any need to come to terms with the fact that in the pre-nationalist era, Arabs from Jerusalem held positions throughout the entire Arab world—as government officials in Damascus, Cairo, Istanbul, and beyond, some even serving as governors of Ottoman districts in Iraq and Yemen. Hence, this was not merely a “foreign regime,” as it is portrayed in David’s Citadel.

In contrast to this historical perspective, when the subject is the Jewish connection to Jerusalem, the museum emphasizes the physical presence of the Jewish community, providing demographic data and describing the nationalist and religious aspirations of the Jewish people in the diaspora toward Jerusalem. This is not surprising. After all, if one treats the history of Jerusalem in terms of regimes, it becomes clear that Jewish rule in Jerusalem spanned only some 600 of the past 3,000 years. In fact, classifying Arab-Muslim rule according to the various conquerors who captured the city from one another is quite convenient; the resulting chronology is miraculously divided into units of time all of which are shorter than the period of Jewish rule in the city.

One of the exhibition halls in the museum is, as previously mentioned, a mosque in which soldiers prayed until the Israeli occupation of the Old City in 1967. The front section of the mosque is now devoted to an exhibit on Islam in Jerusalem. The praying niche and pulpit have been cleaned and whitewashed, but the ancient dedications in Arabic script affixed to the wall have not been given a Hebrew or English translation. The main portion of the mosque is actually devoted to the Crusader period; the 88-year rule of these European knights (1099–1187) gets sympathetic and detailed treatment, including thirteenth-century music playing softly in the background. Not that this prominent reminder of a short episode in the life of the 5,000-year-old city occupies a disproportionate place in the narrative. On the contrary, it emphasizes the universality of the Holy City without impinging on Jewish-Israeli claims, and it reinforces the religious aspect of the city’s history. Just as there is no “Muslim nation,” there is no “Christian

nation” and no fear that the Christians will launch a new crusade to deliver Jerusalem from the hands of the Jews.

The last in the long list of foreign occupiers was Christian—imperial Great Britain. The chronicles of the struggle to liberate Jerusalem from the yoke of the British conqueror are depicted in the final, most dramatic exhibit. A series of slides back-projected onto a large screen illustrates that the struggle and the evolution of the Jewish community, including the bombing of the King David Hotel by the *Irgun* (the underground “National Military Organization”) in 1946, the punishment imposed by the British army, and the Jews’ eventual victory in their struggle for independence (a large Union Jack is lowered and its place on the flagpole is taken by the flag of Israel). The part played by the Arabs in the history of the British Mandate is depicted as “riots” and as “opposition to the partition of Palestine.” Then the Jordanian Arab Legion invaded, and Jerusalem was divided in two for nineteen years.

The lowering of the British flag and raising of the Israeli flag is a concrete example of the standard Israeli point of view, which by now has become a “historical fact”: the War for Independence, in whose wake the State of Israel was established, was a struggle against British colonialism and the invading Arab armies. The most critical and cruel stage of the struggle—the bloody communal warfare between Jews and Palestinians—was marginalized and swallowed up in the classic anti-colonial, national struggle for independence. The 100-year feud over every residential neighborhood, field, and road, and the killing and expulsion of civilians and looting of their property that accompanied it, were obliterated from the national consciousness. The Jewish victors endeavored to forget that embarrassing chapter: a war against the Palestinian community with whom they had formerly shared the city and the country. The Palestinians, a national community and not a Muslim religious sect—who, vanquished, had disappeared from sight—resurfaced nineteen years later, with the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967. But even then they were not recognized as a national collective, and their struggle against the Israeli occupation is characterized in the

catalogue of the Museum of the City of Jerusalem as “municipal and political problems.” However, “despite these problems,” states the catalogue, “the city is unified, and living in it side by side are Jews, Christians, and Muslims, secular and religious.”

This, then, is the narrative recounted at David’s Citadel: Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish people, where they established their kingdom and set up their capital 3,000 years ago. For 2,000 years the city was subjected to the rule of foreign conquerors and the Jewish people were exiled from it. In recent generations they have returned to their capital, expelled the foreign invaders, and reestablished the capital of their sovereign state. Each of the conquerors left a mark, and billions of Muslim and Christian believers have embraced the sanctity of Jerusalem—an attachment they appropriated from the Jewish people. No competing national claim to the city exists, since there is no national collective in Jerusalem aside from that of the Israelis.

A museum is not a political pamphlet, in which one carries on a direct debate with one’s interlocutor. In a museum one grapples with the opponent via chronological charts and through the emphasis and deemphasis of exhibits. History is a vast quarry from whose stones a magnificent edifice dedicated to the cult of Israeli Jerusalem has been constructed. In it there is no room for the other—Palestinian-Arab—collective. Its designers, who invested millions of dollars in it, hope that this message will accompany the hundreds of thousands of visitors who go out into the alleyways of the Old City. Those they will meet there are “Muslims and Christians,” but not Palestinians, since they have just learned in David’s Citadel (whose motto is “here begins Jerusalem”) that there was no Palestinian nationality in Jerusalem in the past and there is none in the present. Upon leaving the last exhibition hall, this writer encountered an American tourist couple who were arguing over which of the six towers of the citadel was the real Tower of David. The woman pointed at the mosque with the minaret soaring above it, while the man insisted that it was the massive herodian tower. “But this is the one shown in the catalogue,” said the woman. “Maybe you’re right,”



responded the man, “but if so, how is it that David’s Tower is shaped like an Arab structure?”

David’s Citadel is not Alhambra in Granada, from which the Arabs were long ago expelled, and whose builders can be identified without the identification having political significance. In Jerusalem and its vicinity live one million Palestinians for whom David’s Citadel is not a silent monument to a romantic past that has faded, but a living symbol of identity, and its mosque not an exhibition hall, but a holy place. The contradiction between the citadel’s being an expression of the Palestinians’ attachment to Jerusalem and its being “the symbol of the longing and yearning for the Holy Land” of the Jews makes it truly symbolic of Jerusalem: a conflict-riven city, where each side strives to appropriate for itself both the physical and the chronological space.

History may be written by victors, but the vanquished have not relinquished their version and are diligently cultivating it. Persons wishing a glimpse of the other side’s perspective may visit the Museum of Islam on the Temple Mount. There they will find no trace of the Jews. The Palestinians’ insistence on promoting their sacred history and geography makes the Israeli victors uneasy. The need to justify their continued dominion over a cohesive Palestinian community, proud of its heritage, has compelled the Israelis to develop symbols and ceremonies aimed at fostering their own legitimacy. They also feel a need to justify the status quo to the outside world—particularly to the liberal Western public.

These needs planted the seeds of the inspired idea of leaping backward 3,000 years in time to anchor Israel’s claims to Jerusalem and the legitimacy of its rule over the entire city in a sovereign act by King David at the dawn of history. The “Jerusalem 3,000” celebrations were understood exactly as those who conceived the idea intended, that is, in the immediate political context, and no one took their official rationale or their cultural-historical content seriously. Nonparticipation in the celebrations or pertinent criticism of their content was perceived as a challenge to the legitimacy of Israeli rule and as evidence of an

unpatriotic or even anti-Israeli stance. When the ambassador of the United States dared to be absent from the opening ceremonies, the U.S. Jewish community was alerted and protested to the secretary of state. The secretary made assurances that the ambassador's chance absence from the opening did not imply either support for the Arab position or opposition to the status of Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital. Israeli scientists took issue with the date specified by the organizers as the beginning of King David's reign, arguing that it did not match established scientific chronology, whereas historians protested that the program of events intentionally erased thousands of years of the city's history and glossed over other ties to the Holy City. All of these protestations were dismissed on the grounds that they were not pertinent but were simply being used to camouflage political support for the redivision of "unified Jerusalem."

It is worthy of mention that members of the scientific community in Israel—historians, geographers, and archeologists—have not responded to the unceasing efforts to enlist them in the campaign to provide a basis for nationalist political allegations. The days when research on Jerusalem and the Land of Israel could be used as a means of establishing Jewish ownership claims are gone forever. In the not-too-distant past, the dominant approach of such research was to focus exclusively on periods when there was a massive Jewish presence in Jerusalem and the Land of Israel / Palestine. Archeologists and historians intensively studied the periods of David's kingdom, the Second Temple, and the Mishnah and Talmud. The periods that followed—from the Byzantine era through the time of Ottoman rule—were neglected, since they did not directly touch on the history of the Jewish people.

This disregard for thousands of years in the history of non-Jewish Jerusalem has been replaced by a desire to treat the city's past outside of its ethnic context. Israeli scholars have recently published studies of the history of Jerusalem during the Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods. They have delved into the archives of the Muslim courts of law in the Old City and elucidated the day-to-day life of the city during peri-

ods when the Jewish and Christian communities were under Muslim rule—something that has been given no mention in the official Israeli narrative. Indeed, several of these Israeli scholars have dealt with subjects of particular sensitivity from a political point of view, thereby furnishing the Palestinians with some of their strongest arguments. This liberation from the bonds of politically committed research reflects the scholars' feeling that Israel's claims are accepted as a matter of course and need no reinforcement from selective history. The younger Israeli scholars approach their research with a simple sense of belonging to the city, without dependence on Zionist ideology, feelings of guilt, or the need to vindicate one's own claims.

The problem is that these studies are accumulating in scientific libraries or have been published in professional journals to which the public does not have ready access. Most important, this scholarship has not found its way into school texts, where the ethnocentric Israeli and Palestinian approaches continue to flourish. The stonecutters have proceeded with their work in the quarry of history, but they have no control over the architects of intercommunal strife, who continue building their respective cult sites.

Nevertheless, as we peer into the quarry, the wondrous panorama of Jerusalem's 5,000 years becomes clearer, and the images that give this city its human dimension begin to stand out. Here is Melchizedek, the king of the Canaanite city of Shalem, "and he was a priest of the most high God" who blesses Abraham: "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:18-20). Here is King David, conqueror of Jebusite Jerusalem—"Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion: the same is the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:6-9)—the king who did not slaughter the Jebusite inhabitants of the city, and who, upon bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the city, unabashedly "danced before the Lord with all his might" (2 Sam. 6:14).

Here is King Solomon, the wisest of men, who built the city and the temple and in so doing established Jerusalem as the political and religious center of the people of Israel. And here is Zedekiah, the last king

of David's lineage, who fell into the hands of the soldiers of Nebuchadnezer, King of Babylon, following the conquest of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple (586 B.C.): "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with fetters of brass and carried him to Babylon" (2 Kings 25:7).

Following the Jews' return from Babylonian exile and the completion of the construction of the Second Temple (515 B.C.), the most prominent images are those of Nehemiah, a vizier in the court of the King of Persia who built the walls of Jerusalem (444 B.C.), and Ezra the Scribe: "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites . . . said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: For this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:9-11). A hundred years passed from the days of Nehemiah until the advent of Alexander of Macedon (332 B.C.), and approximately 200 years of corrupt and repressive Hellenistic rule led to the Hasmonean revolt, where Judah the Maccabi stands out: "He was like a lion in his exploits, like a lion's whelp . . . he pursued and tracked down the renegades, he consigned those who troubled his people to the flames" (1 Macc. 3:4-5). In the year 165 B.C., Judah the Maccabi restored the Temple "to the sound of zithers, harps and cymbals, at the same time of year and on the same day on which the pagans had originally profaned it. And all the people fell prostrate in adoration, praising to the skies him who had made them so successful" (1 Macc. 4:54-5).

From 37 B.C.-A.D. 4, following approximately 100 years of Hasmonean rule, Herod the Edomite reigned over Jerusalem, and the city and the Temple reached the peak of their greatness and splendor. Jesus of Nazareth looked down on this glorious city from the heights of the Mount of Olives "and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy

peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke 19:41-42). And forty years later (A.D. 70), the great Jewish revolt against the Romans culminated in total defeat and exile: “Then one of the soldiers, without waiting for orders, without a qualm for the terrible consequences of this action . . . Snatched up a blazing piece of wood and climbing on another soldier’s back hurled the rand through a golden aperture. . . . As the flames shot into the air the Jews that watched the calamity sent up a cry. . . . The Temple Mount, enveloped in flames from top to bottom, appeared to be boiling up from its very roots: yet the sea of flames was nothing to the ocean of blood” (Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Book 6, Chap. 4).

The eradication of Jewish Jerusalem was accomplished by constructing a Roman city on its ruins (A.D. 130) and by changing its name to Aelia Capitolina. Its transformation into a Christian city was the doing of the Emperor Constantine (A.D. 324) and his mother, Queen Helene: “The pious emperor judged it incumbent on him to render the blessed locality of our savior’s resurrection [on the Mount of Olives] an object of attraction and veneration to all . . . [then] he adorned the sacred cave [of Christ’s burial place] itself as the chief part of the whole work and hallowed monument . . . with rare columns and profusely enriched with most beautiful decoration of every kind” (Eusebius).

Constantine’s mother, Helene, found the holy cross upon which Jesus had been crucified and the sacred tomb, after digging in “a mound of garbage that was piled upon them.” In the course of the next 300 years, dozens of churches and monasteries were built in Jerusalem, including the gigantic “New Church” (Nea), whose builder, the Emperor Justinian, said upon its completion: “I am greater than you, King Solomon.” The image of this magnificent Christian city was immortalized in the famous mosaic floor of a church in the city of Madaba in Moab (now in the Kingdom of Jordan). The armies of the Persian Empire destroyed the churches in 614, but they ruled Jerusalem for only fifteen years, and shortly afterward a new era in the annals of the city commenced with its conquest by Caliph Omar in 638.

The Arab conquest was accomplished without bloodshed. It bore the stamp of an Arab commander blessed with generosity, integrity, and simplicity. The terms of surrender he dictated were generous: security was granted to the city's inhabitants, their children, their churches, and their right to worship. But some humiliating conditions were imposed upon them as well: they were forbidden to ring the church bells, to wear crosses, or to conduct religious ceremonies in public; non-Muslims were forbidden to bear arms or ride horses; a head tax was imposed, and they were even obliged to shave the front of their heads.

So began a period of more than 400 years of Arab rule, during which the Temple Mount mosques were built (see Chapter 3). The makeup of the population changed and Jerusalem became an Arab city, even if Christians were numerous. The Jews, permitted to return and live there after hundreds of years of Christian rule during which they had been banned from the city, were grateful to the Arab regime. The Jerusalem-born Arab historian Al-Muqadassi describes his city at the close of the tenth century: "And as to her being the finest city, why, has any seen elsewhere buildings finer or cleaner, or a mosque that is more beautiful? . . . Still, Jerusalem has some disadvantages. . . . In this city the oppressed have no succor; the weak are molested and the rich envied; also schools are unattended [and] everywhere the Christians and the Jews have the upper hand" (quoted in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems* [Beirut: Khayats, 1965]).

The buildings of this lovely city fell into the hands of the Crusaders in 1099, almost without being damaged, but their Muslim and Jewish inhabitants perished in an orgy of killing the likes of which have seldom been seen. A Crusader chronicler describes the scene: "It was impossible to look upon the vast numbers of slain without horror; everywhere lay fragments of human bodies, and the very ground was covered with the blood of the slain . . . still more dreadful it was to gaze upon the victors themselves, dripping with blood from head to foot, an ominous sight which brought terror to all who met them" (William of Tyre, *A*

*History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea.* Trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey. [New York: Columbia University Press, 1943], 372).

Eighty-eight years later, Crusader Jerusalem was besieged by the Muslim army commanded by Sultan Salah al-Din (Saladin). The besieged Jerusalemites trembled for fear that the Muslims would make them pay for the slaughter of their people. But the sultan was made of different stuff. He was humane, generous, sensitive, merciful toward the weak, honest, skillful in statesmanship, and courageous in war. In short, the image of Saladin the infidel matched the ideal of the Christian knight. Saladin set generous terms of surrender, and no Christian was killed. The Christians left the city after paying a ransom, the mosques that had been turned into churches were ritually purified, and several churches were made into mosques. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was closed for a short time, after which it was reopened and Christian worship restored. The image of the generous enemy, the unbeliever who demonstrated the Christian spirit more than the Christians themselves, kindled the imagination of the Europeans. They merged the romance of Saladin with that of another ideal knight of the Middle Ages, Richard the Lion-Hearted. These two fearless and irreproachable knights fought one another, conducted negotiations, and respected each other. When Richard left the shores of the Holy Land, he sent Saladin a message that he was returning home only in order to raise money to enable him to complete the liberation of Jerusalem. Saladin responded: "Truly, if God wills that Jerusalem pass into other hands, it cannot fall into any more noble than those of the great *Malik Rik* (King Richard)."

The Holy City remained in Muslim hands for 730 years (1187–1917). During those centuries Christian pilgrims visited the city, splendid Mamluk structures were built, and a large Jewish community gathered there. From time to time Christian rulers called for the "deliverance" of Jerusalem, and Muslim monarchs fought each other for control. "However," states an English historian writing in the 1870s, "during the interval of five hundred years Jerusalem has been without a