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**Book note:**

**Asali, K. J., ed. *Jerusalem in History*. Brooklyn, NY: Olive Branch Press, 1999.**

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# Jewish Thought

**JERUSALEM IN HISTORY.** Edited by K. J. Asali. North Hampton, MA: InterLink, 1998. Pp. 295. \$16.95, ISBN 0-940793-44-X.

Surveys the history of Jerusalem from 3000 BCE to 1987 CE. Given Jerusalem's prominence in the major Western religions and the increase in recent publications on Jerusalem, the need for a universal history of the city is clear. Nevertheless, synthesizing five thousand years of history and centuries of scholarship into 295 pages by necessity demands that some aspects of Jerusalem's history be left out. Thus, not every essay includes the relevant archaeological data and others are sociohistorical in scope. As a scholar of the ancient Near East, I must comment critically on G. Mendenhall's "Jerusalem from 1000-63 BCE." In it one finds that Jebusite scribes introduced the "Phoenician alphabet to the Yahwist administration," as well as assumptions, like the low level of literacy in ancient Israel, all of which cannot be substantiated. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the other essays, nor from the book's overall utility. Intended for nonscholars, the essays collectively demonstrate a long and continuous political and religious interest in the city and underscore the gaps in our knowledge concerning certain periods in Jerusalem's history. Recommended as a supplemental textbook for introductory courses on Jerusalem.

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