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Before Saladin besieged Jerusalem, in 1187, the city had been subject to other sieges—most famously in 70 AD when the city was besieged, then sacked, by the Romans under Titus. This image depicts a lithograph of an 1849 painting, by David Roberts, which is now lost. Its title is "The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans Under the Command of Titus, A.D. 70." Click on the image for a full-page view.

Inside the city, the besieged were unimpressed with the sultan's threat. They would, indeed, fight until all was lost. And because they would, Balien saw a way to limit the bloodshed:

O sultan, be aware that this city holds a mass of people so great that God alone knows their number. They now hesitate to continue the fight, because they hope that you will spare their lives as you have spared so many others, because they love life and hate death.

But if we see that death is inevitable, then, by God, we will kill our own women and children and burn all that we possess. We will not leave you a single dinar of booty, not a single dirham, not a single man or woman to lead into captivity.

Then we shall destroy the sacred rock, al-Aqsa mosque, and many other sites; we will kill the five thousand Muslim prisoners we now hold, and will exterminate the mounts and all the beasts.

*In the end, we will come outside the city, and we will fight against you as one fights for one's life. Not one of us will die without having killed several of you! (Ibn al-Athir, quoted in *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, page 198.)*

Unimpressed by the threat, but swayed by Balien's fervor, Saladin discussed the situation with his advisors. They agreed he could be relieved of his oath to destroy everyone because the destruction of Islam's holy places was at stake.

In exchange for their freedom, however, Saladin demanded compensation: Ten dinars for every man, five for every woman, and one for every child. At the time, twenty dinars represented about a year or two of family income.

Balian agreed, and the people in Jerusalem laid down their arms.

The deal was struck on Friday, the 2nd of October, 1187. On the Muslim calendar, the date was 27 Rajab 583. The timing, to a Muslim, was significant since it was the very day that Islam celebrates Muhammad's night-time journey to Jerusalem.

Balien, himself, lost his lands but was allowed to flee to Tripoli. In 1192, he helped Richard the Lionheart negotiate a treaty with Saladin which ended the Third Crusade. He apparently died the following year.

Sibylla joined her husband, Guy de Lusignan, at Acre where he was besieging the city. When an epidemic spread through the camp in 1190, Sibylla and her daughters succumbed to the disease. Guy died in 1194.

More Crusades would follow. All were unsuccessful in regaining territory that had been lost to Saladin. All damaged relations between Christianity and Islam.

Hundreds of years later, in 1967, another battle erupted over possession of the land. During June, the Six-Day War even included a battle for the old city of Jerusalem. Once again, its ancient walls were a target, but strict orders were given not to destroy any religious sites.

The results of that war (depicted in this documentary with actual footage and recreated scenes) are still felt today.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-FALL-OF-JERUSALEM-Kingdom-of-Heaven>

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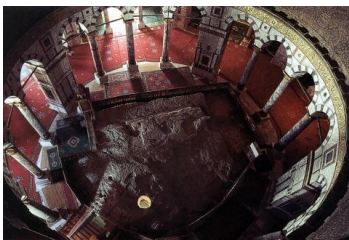


Dome of the Rock

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Sacred Rock in Jerusalem

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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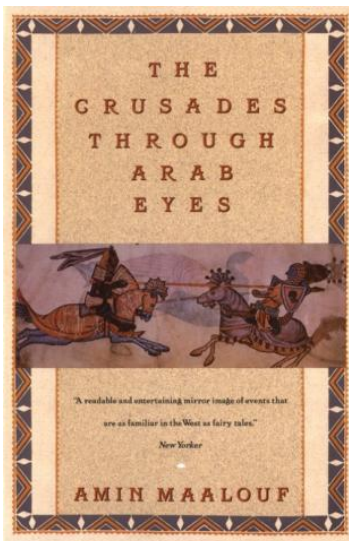


al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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The Crusades Through Arab Eyes - by Amin Maalouf

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Six Day War - 1967 Battle for Jerusalem

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