

Holyland Model of Jerusalem

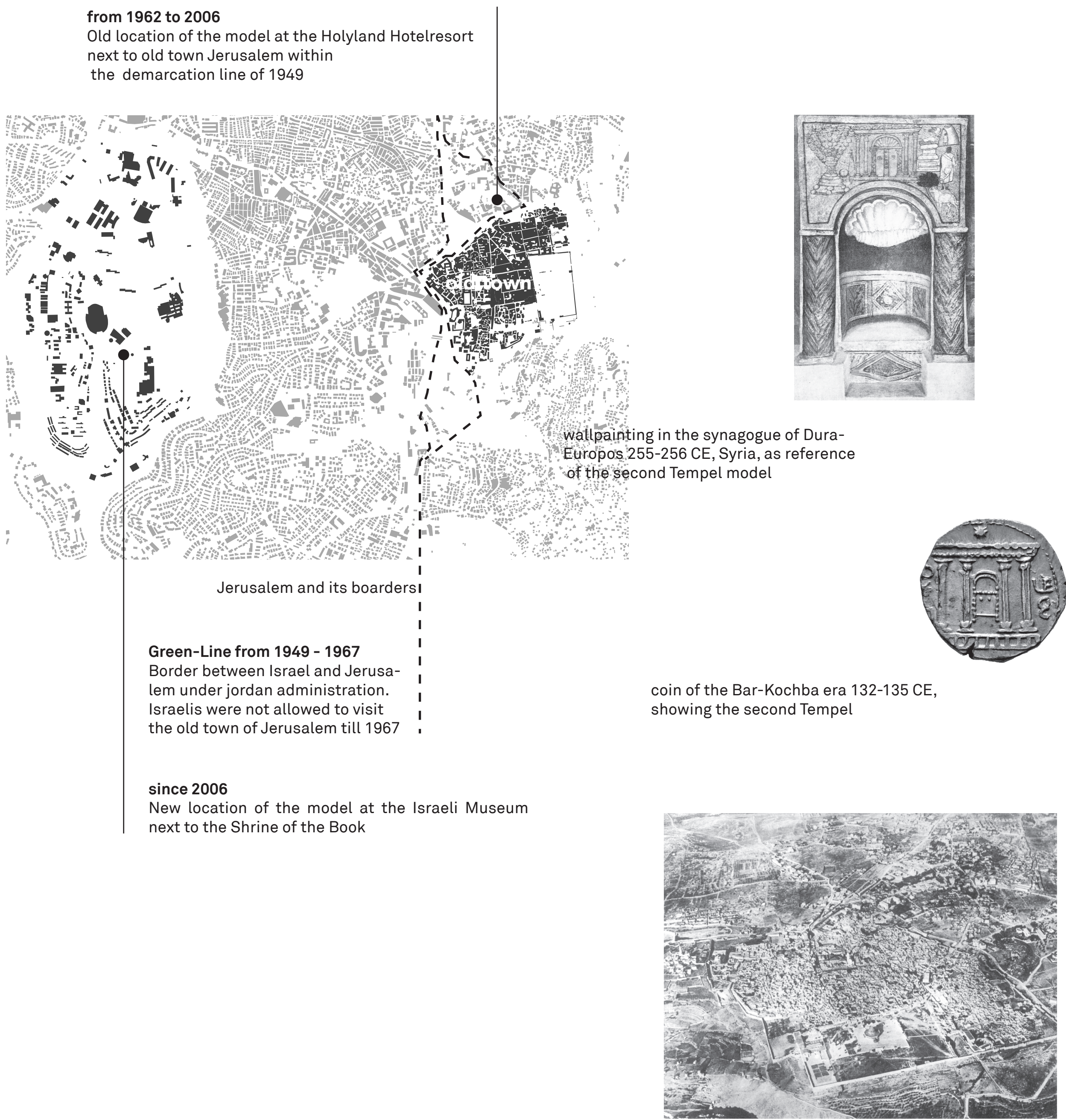
*questions of authenticity in forming
a nations identity*



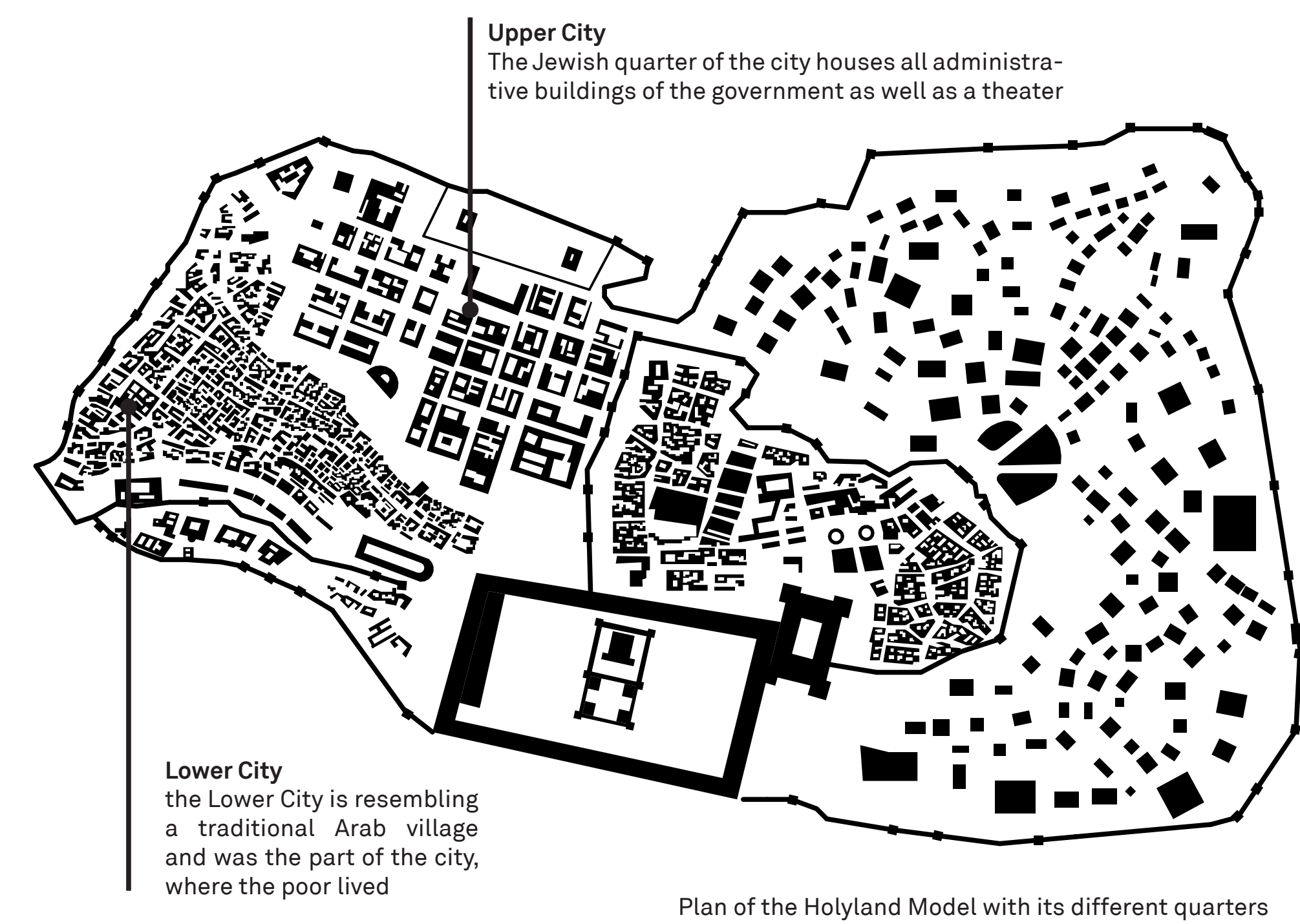
Children standing in the Model at the second Tempel reproduction

The model was built in 1962 and opened in 1966. Since Israel had until then no access to the old town of Jerusalem due to the United Nations partition plan for Palestine, Kroch had approached Michael Avi-Yonah, Professor of Archaeology to construct a memorial for Israel and its sequestered capital. Lacking archaeological evidence, Avi-Yonah constructed the model from different biblical and textual references as well as archaeological quotes. Clearly identifiable by informed experts as a collage of historical metaphors, in the eyes of a tourist the model seems to be an authentic representation of Jerusalem in 66 CE.

When the Israelis gained access to the old city during the Six-Day war in 1967, the model was set in a new context. It served as a promise of salvation for the disenchanted Jewish visitors to the Arabic old town that had nothing to do with their authentic image of a Jewish Jerusalem. The model became a symbol for the discrepancy between Zionist expectation and the reality of modern day Jerusalem.



*»But for the State of Israel there has always been and always
will be one capital only – Jerusalem the Eternal. Thus it was 3000
years ago – and thus it will be, until the end of time.«*
- Ben Gurion (first prime minister of the state of Israel), 1949



Plan of the Holyland Model with its different quarters



Group of Tourist and a Group of Israeli Soldiers at the Model, 2019



Mograbh quarter after demolition to make space for a plaza in front of the Western wall, 1970



Muslim Mograbh quarter in front of the Western Wall, 1937

This ideologist approach in the creation of the model can be analyzed in the development of the Arabic and the Jewish quarters. The Arabic quarter is presented as chaotic and primitive in its building typologies. The Jewish quarter is built in reference to the advanced civilizations of the Romans and the Hellenistic and is therefore presented as not only superior to the Arabic quarter in terms of topography but culture. This orientalist and colonialist attitude towards the Arabic history of Palestine, imported as a relic of European culture, also manifests itself in build interventions inside old town of Jerusalem. In 1967 parts of the Arabic city were demolished to create a plaza in front of the western wall. The plaza corresponds to the model, which only shows a few Jewish buildings in front of this part of the Western Wall.

With the relocation to the model to the area of the Israel Museum in 2006, it was connected to the official national narrative of the state. Visited primarily by groups of tourists as well as student and groups of newly recruited soldiers, the model stills serves its part in the education of the national identity of the state of Israel.

Even the official guides of the Israel Museum claim that the Model is an accurate replica of the Jerusalem of 66 CE and praise its authenticity. This discrepancy between the archaeological accuracy and the assumed authenticity in the context of the national Identity can only be explained with the importance of the second Temple and its representation through the model for the national narrative of the state of Israel.