

# The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Religion, Violence and Peacebuilding



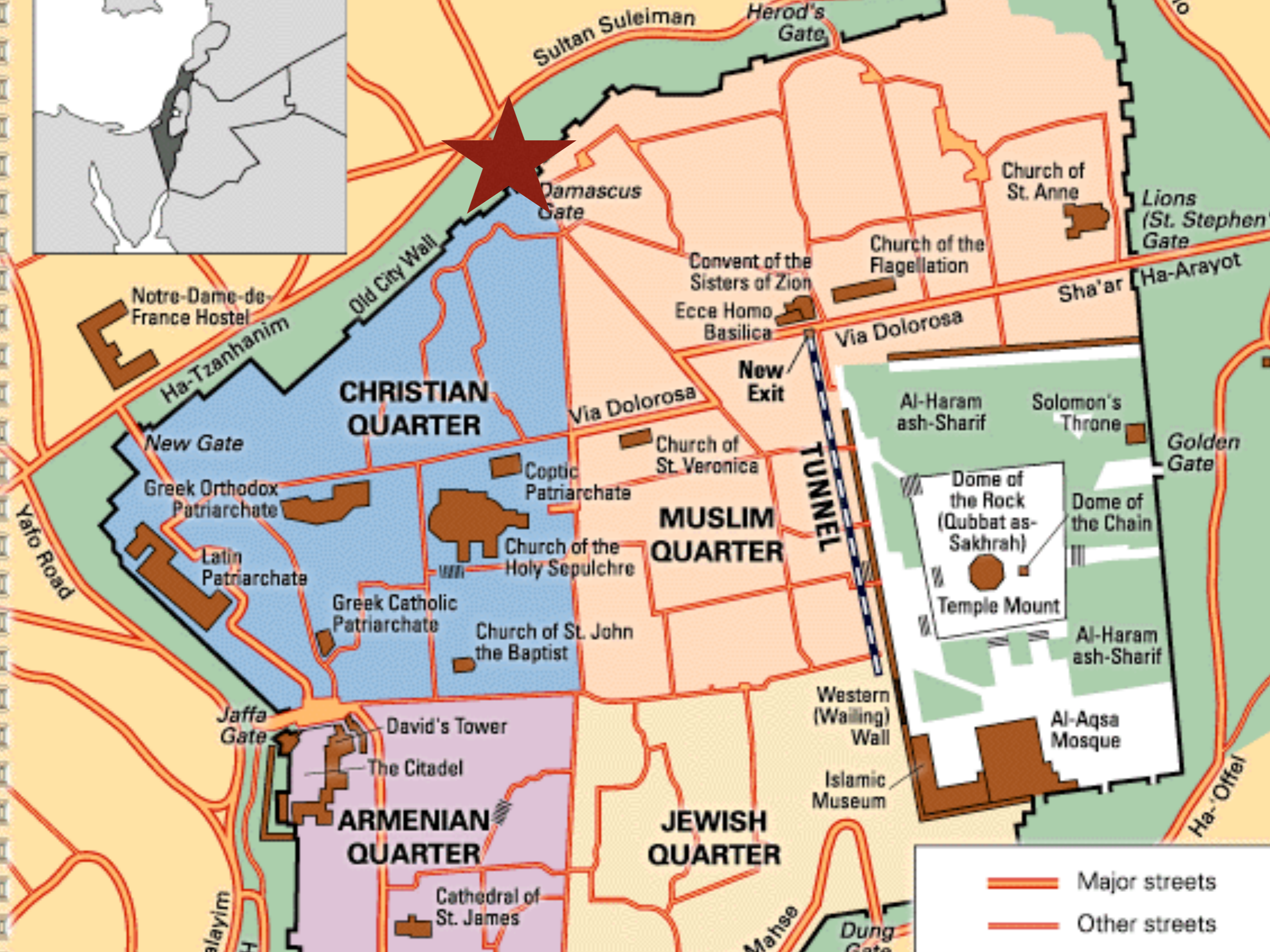
**Jolyon Mitchell**





**What role can religion play in building peace?**





- Major streets
- Other streets





**Border Police officers outside the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem,**  
(*Times of Israel* Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)







# DAMASCUS GATE

It's one of 7 accessible gates leading into Jerusalem's Old City.



**Old City**  
Jerusalem





Searching for Weapons, September 1938

(Thanks to Ben David)





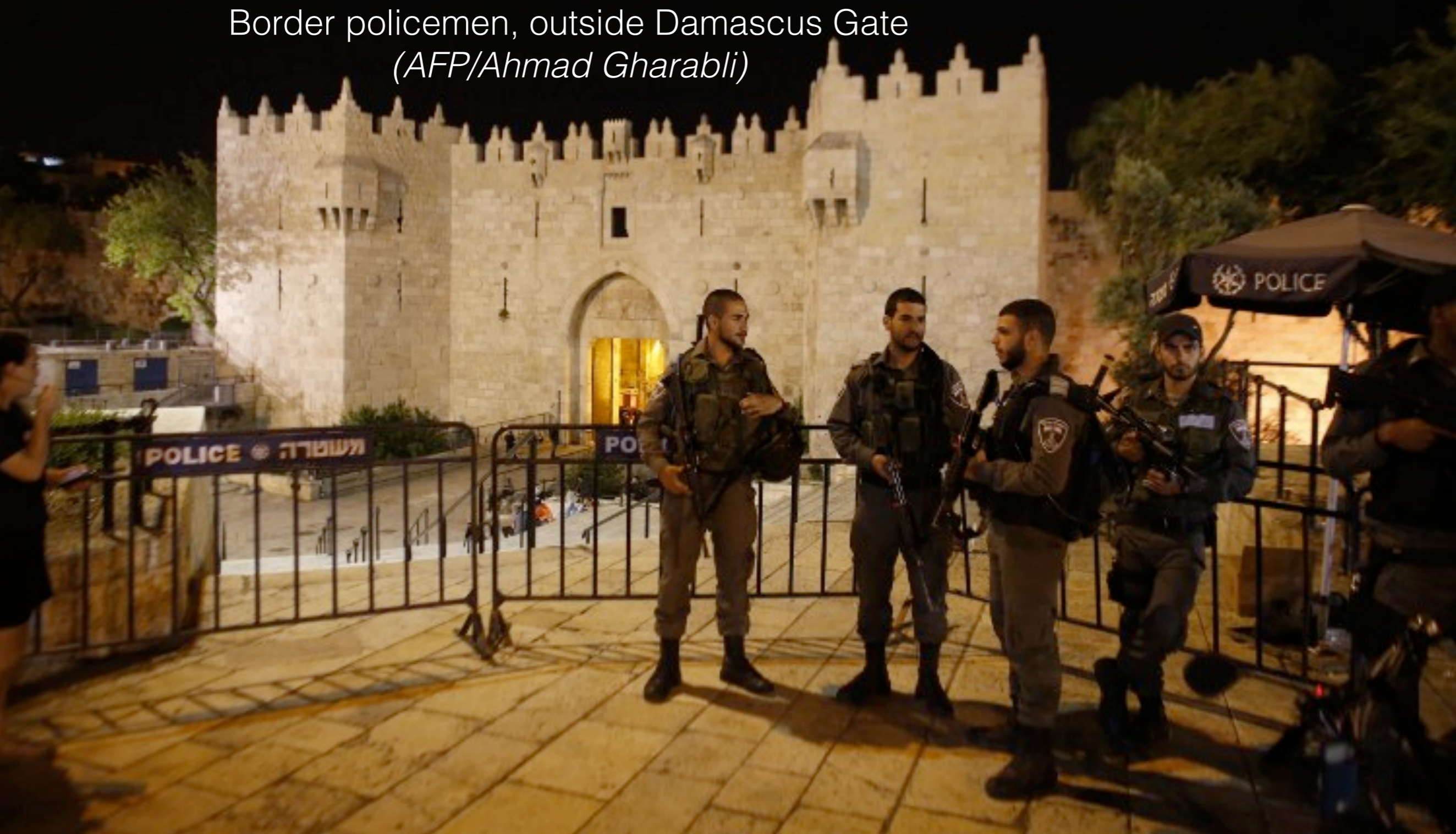
Jerusalem, Damascus Gate, 1920s

Arabic name, *Bab el-Amud*, "gate of the column".

The Jews call it Sha'ar Schechem, or Nablus Gate



Border policemen, outside Damascus Gate  
(AFP/Ahmad Gharabli)



“It has become a symbol for the Palestinian national struggle because of its accessibility to Palestinians and the main connecting point for both worshippers and for markets.”  
*Professor Nazmi Jubeh, Birzeit University,*





(AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)



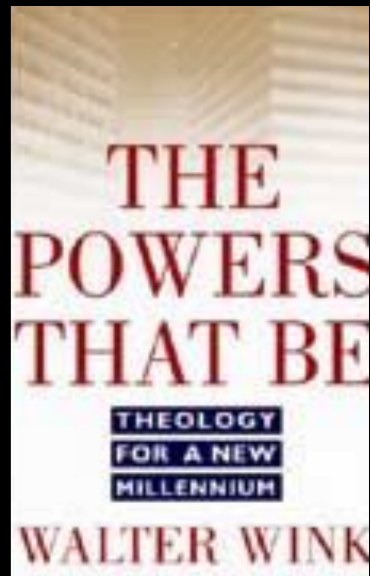
# The Myth of Redemptive Violence

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‘enshrines the belief that violence saves, that war brings peace, that might makes right.

It is one of the oldest continuously repeated stories in the world.’

Walter Wink, *The Powers that Be*, p.42.

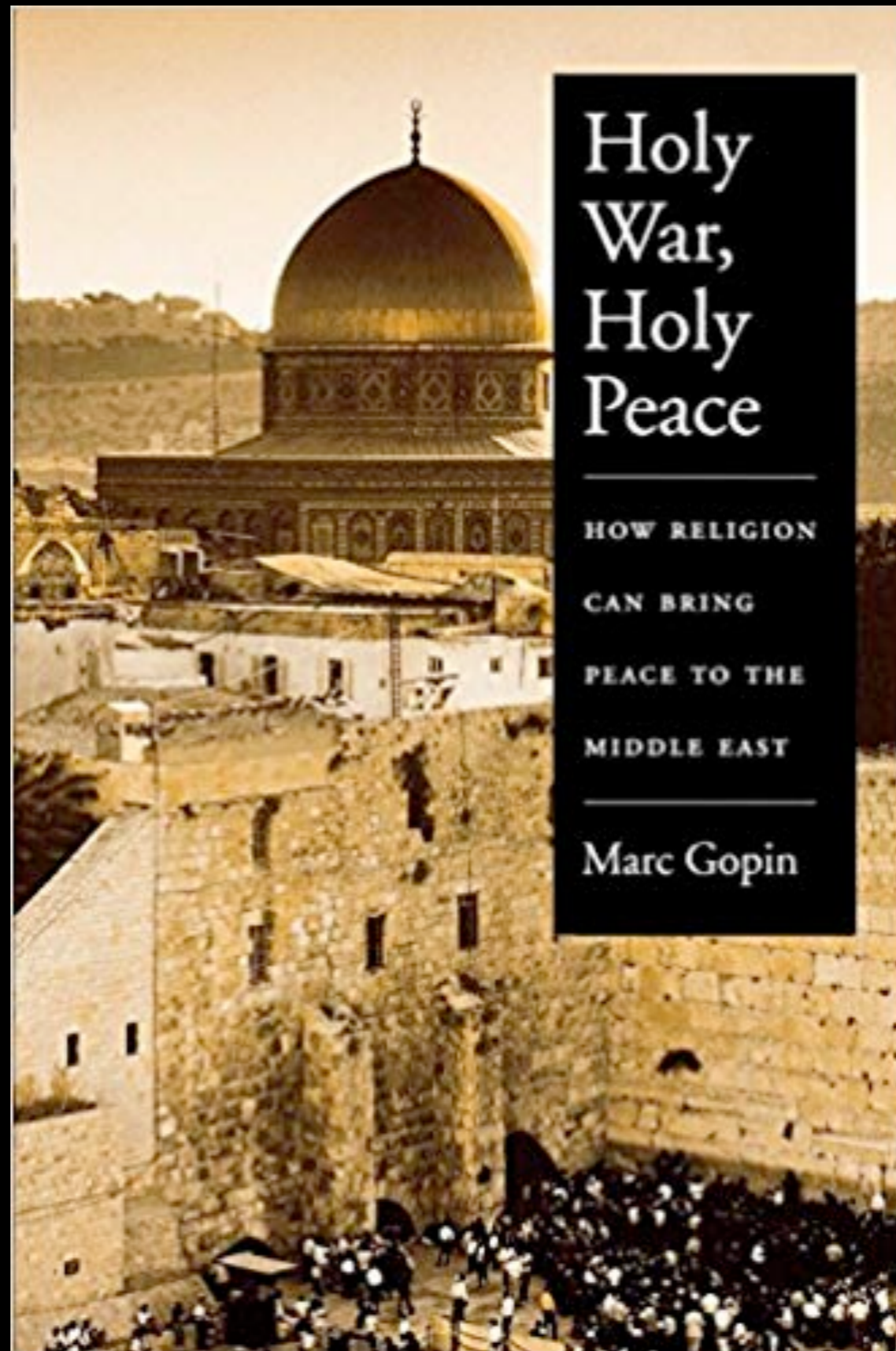




# Religious Violence

1. Religion is inherently violent.
2. Religion is peaceful, violence is an aberration.
3. Religion contributes to mimetic conflict.
4. Religious violence does not exist.
- 5. Religion can both incite violence, and promote peace**





Mark Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002.

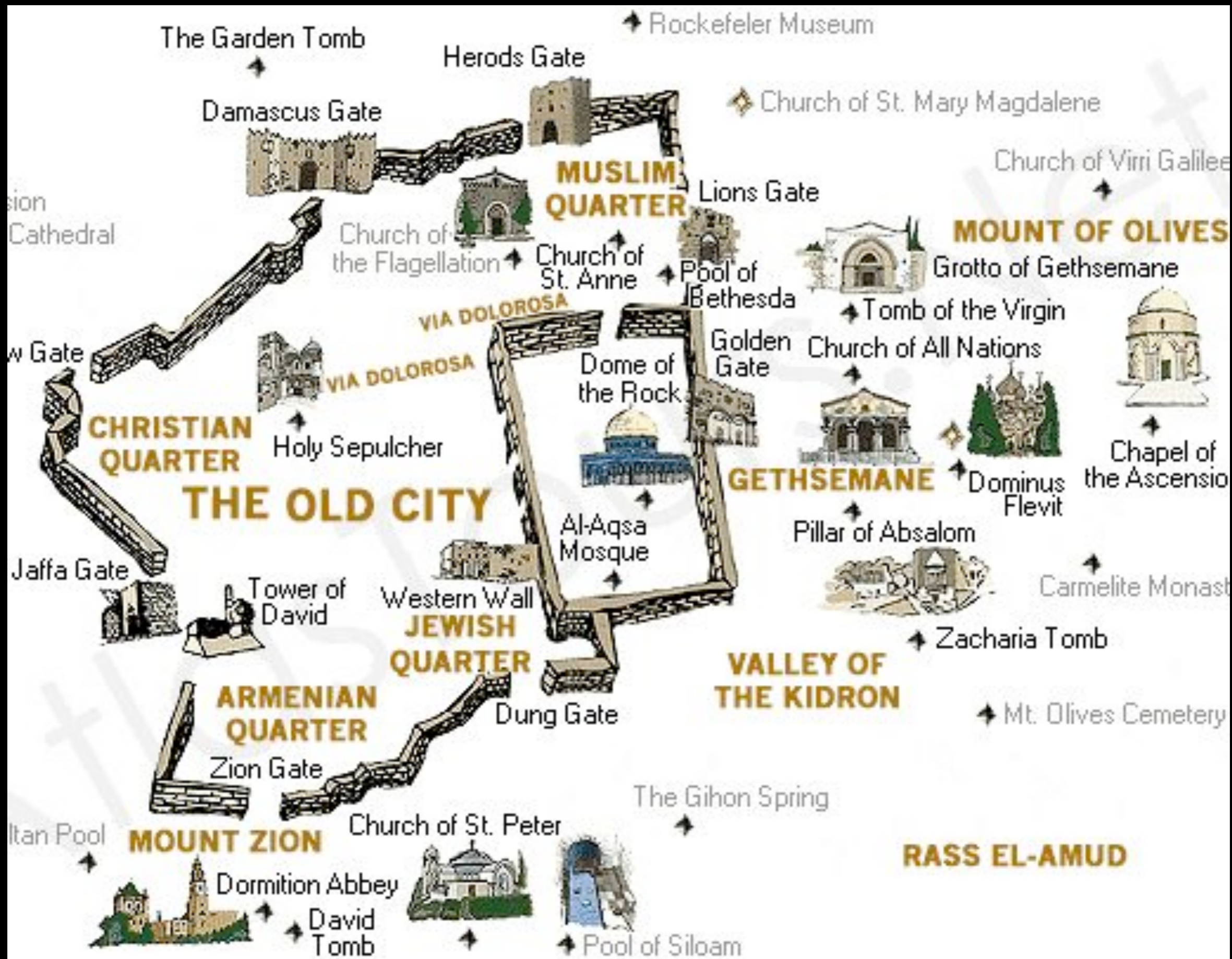


# Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land



**Washington**









تھیل حجاری و اور  
طابون - شرابہ - حلویات - معجنات

25





Credit: Bungie



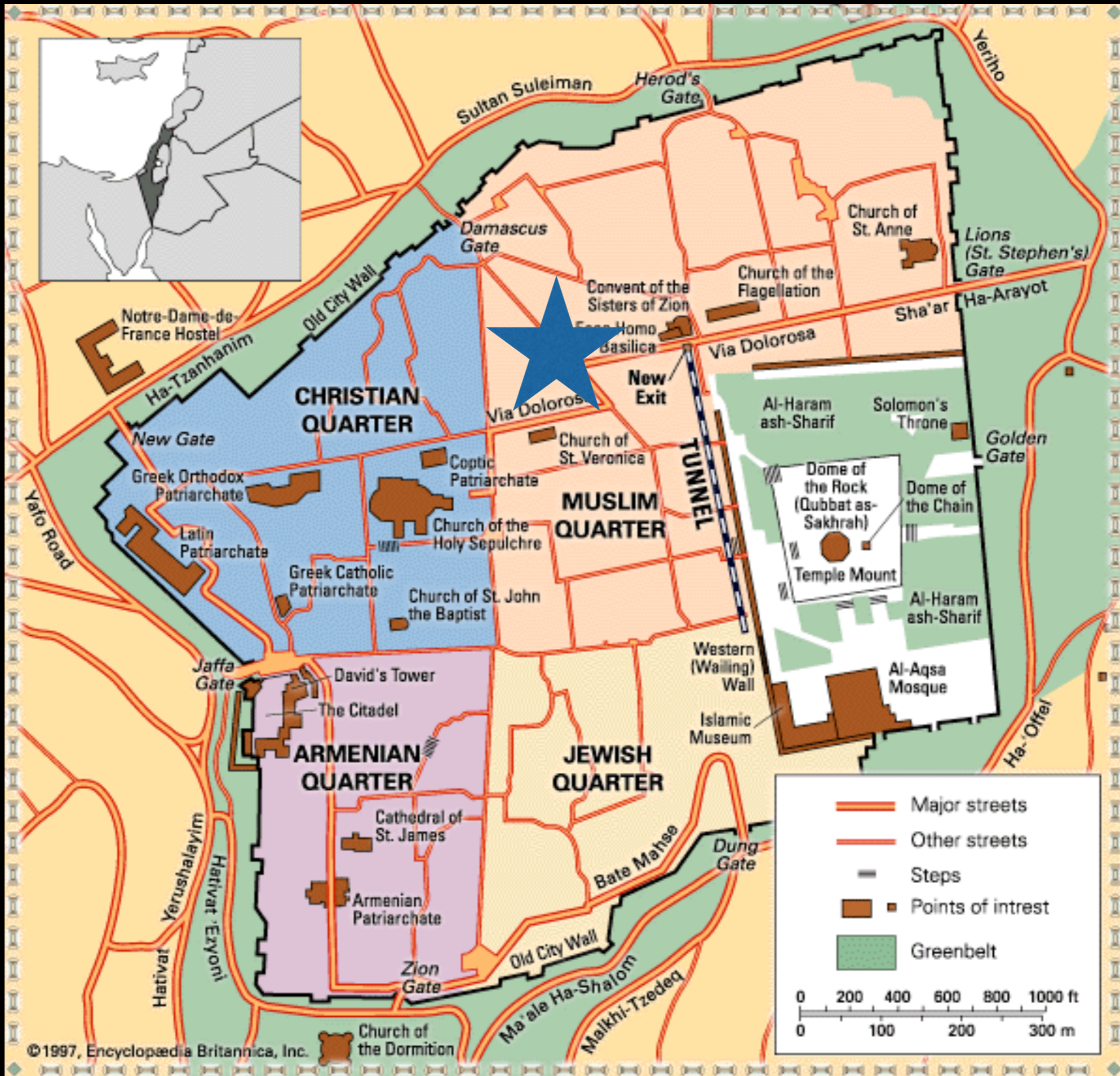
Jerusalem Old City, 2017, Lucy Lyon





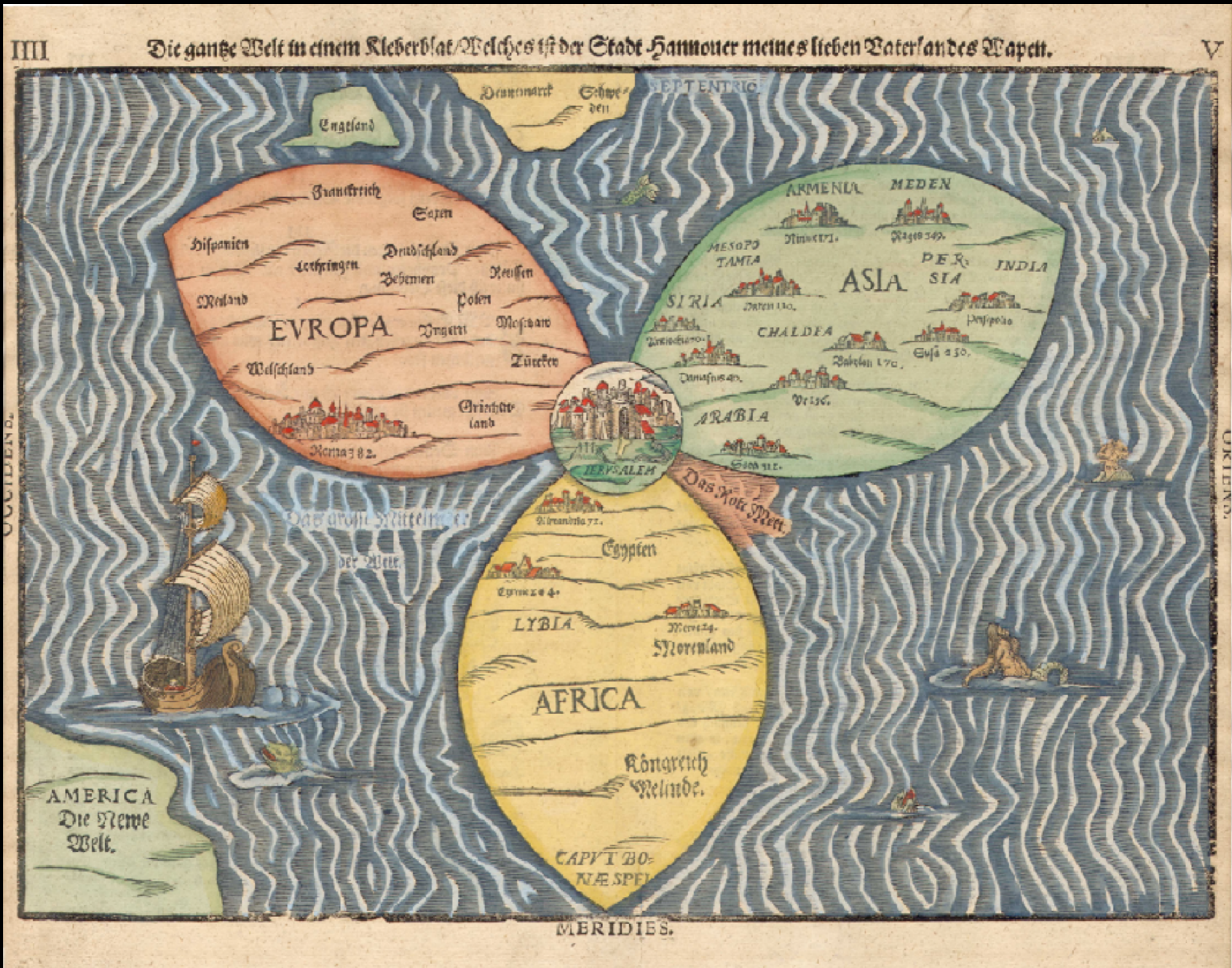
Credit: Bungie







'The Whole World in a Cloverleaf, Which Is The Coat of Arms of Hannover, My Dear Fatherland'.



Heinrich Bunting (1545-1606)





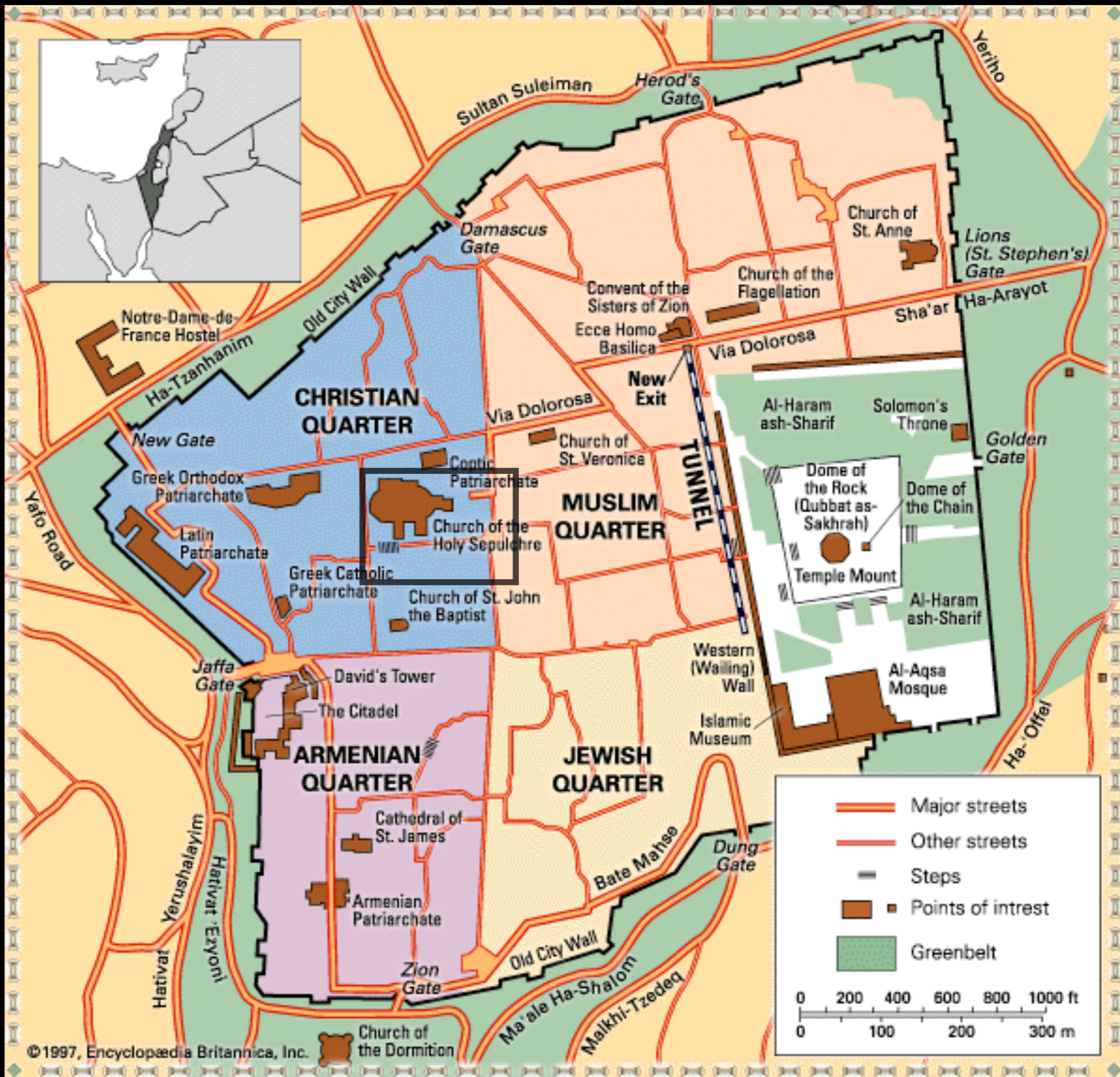
An Illustration from the Ottoman book Tarih-i Hindi-i Garbi, dating from 1650 and show the Ka'ba in Mecca as as the centre of the world.



***Hereford  
Mappa Mundi  
(c.1300)***











Holy Sepulchre Church, Jerusalem









# Church of the Redeemer

Credit: Holly Hayes





Bishop Munib Younan

Pope Francis

(Arabic: منيب يونان, Hebrew: מוניב יונאן; born 1950 in Jerusalem) is a Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land since 1998, and former President of the Lutheran World Federation (2010-2017).





Bishop Munib Younan





**How do we live together in our difference?**



How do we live together in our difference?



Jerusalem is a city for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. And it's dear for them. And we have to respect the historical status quo of the holy places of these faiths.





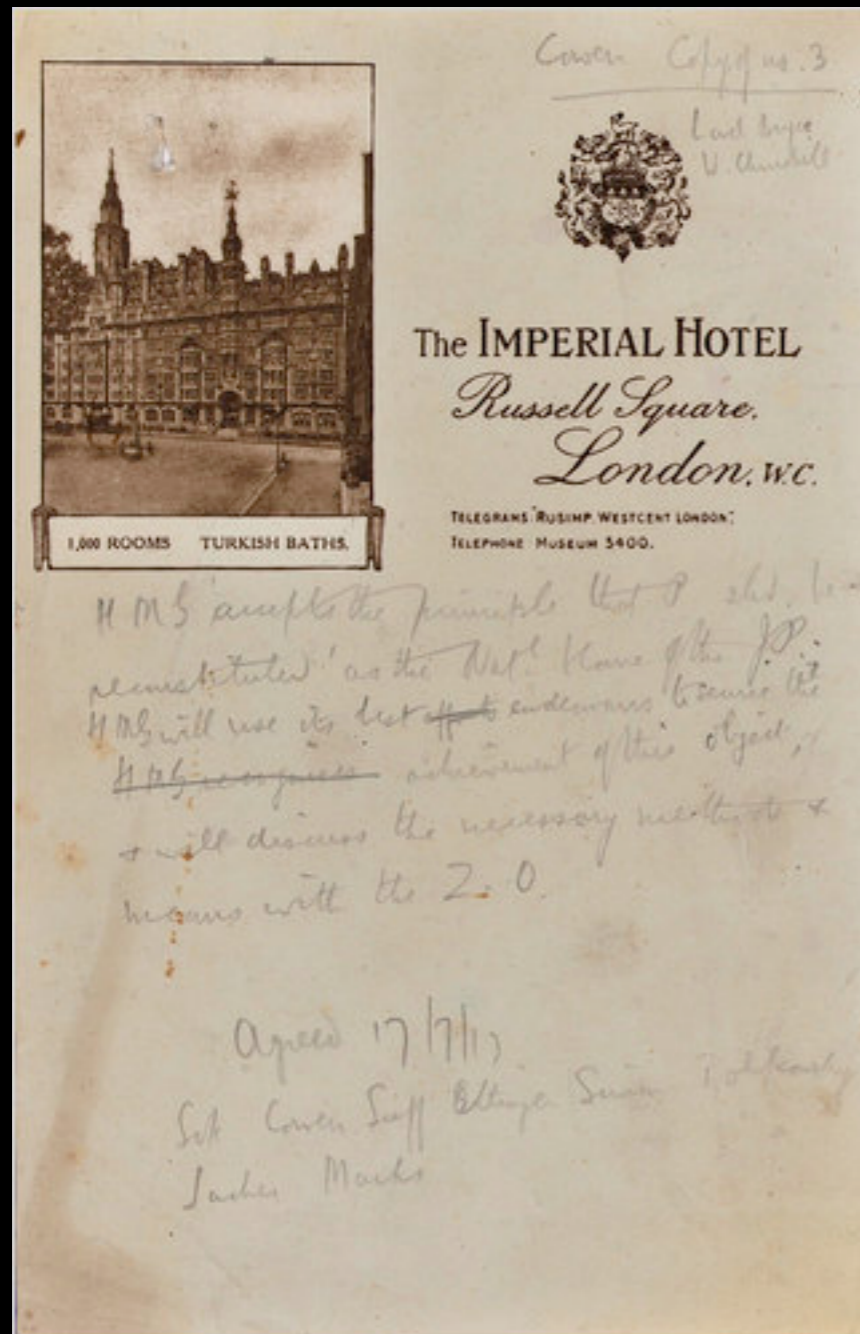
# THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

THE ORIGINS OF THE  
ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT



JONATHAN SCHNEER





The only known surviving handwritten draft of the Balfour declaration.

Foreign Office,  
 November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country'

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. very truly  
 Arthur James Balfour



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*Y. L. ...*  
*Arthur Balfour*



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# THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

THE ORIGINS OF THE  
ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT



JONATHAN SCHNEER





Henry McMahon and Hussein bin Ali

The McMahon–Hussein Correspondence, or the Hussein–McMahon Correspondence, was a series of ten letters exchanged from 14 July 1915 to 30 January 1916



# Sykes-Picot Agreement (Secret)

MAP OF EASTERN TURKEY IN ASIA, SYRIA AND WESTERN PERSIA



**A** carving up the entire Middle East between them.



# During WWI, the British promised Palestine to three different groups:



## The Zionists

The Balfour Declaration in 1917 promised to support Jewish settlement in Palestine



## Themselves

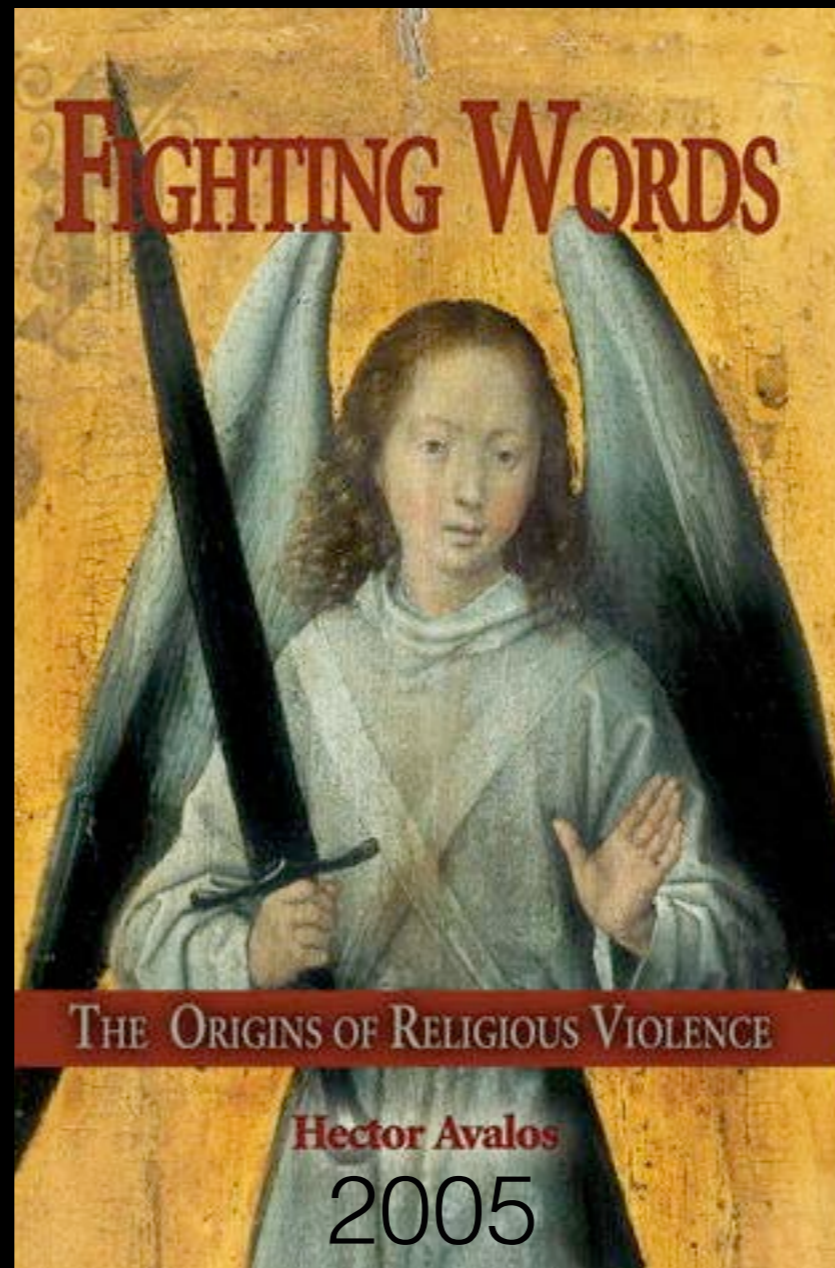
The Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1917 divided up the Arab world between Britain and France



## The Arabs

The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence in 1915 promised a united Arab kingdom under Sharif Hussein of Makkah





## **Most Violence Due to Scarce Resources**

- i) Scarce Texts
- ii) Scarce Spaces
- iii) Privileged Groups
- iv) Scarce Salvation



# Jerusalem's holy sites



MUSLIM QUARTER

Dome of the Rock

Western Wall Tunnel

Temple Mount  
Haram al-Sharif

al-Aqsa Mosque

OLD CITY

Western  
(Wailing) Wall

JEWISH QUARTER

Getty Images



**“I only believe in peaceful ways in achieving justice. So, for me, war is the space for more hatred, for more killing, for more taking the life of others, and not achieving anything. In this country, I have lived, survived over ten or eleven wars. What did we achieve?”**

**More hatred; no solution. If we have put all our money, all our efforts, to build peace, what kind of a country this would be. This would be a real country of milk and honey, if we make peace for it. War is always, it's the antithesis of love, antithesis of accepting the other, it's the antithesis of living together.**

**War means, ‘I want to prevail, to crush the others.’ And that is not the way of God. This is only peaceful means can bring peace to this country.”**





**Bishop Munib with Sheikh Abed Atheem, Imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque and M. Azam Abed Alkhatib Altamimi, Head of the Islamic Waqf of Jerusalem.**



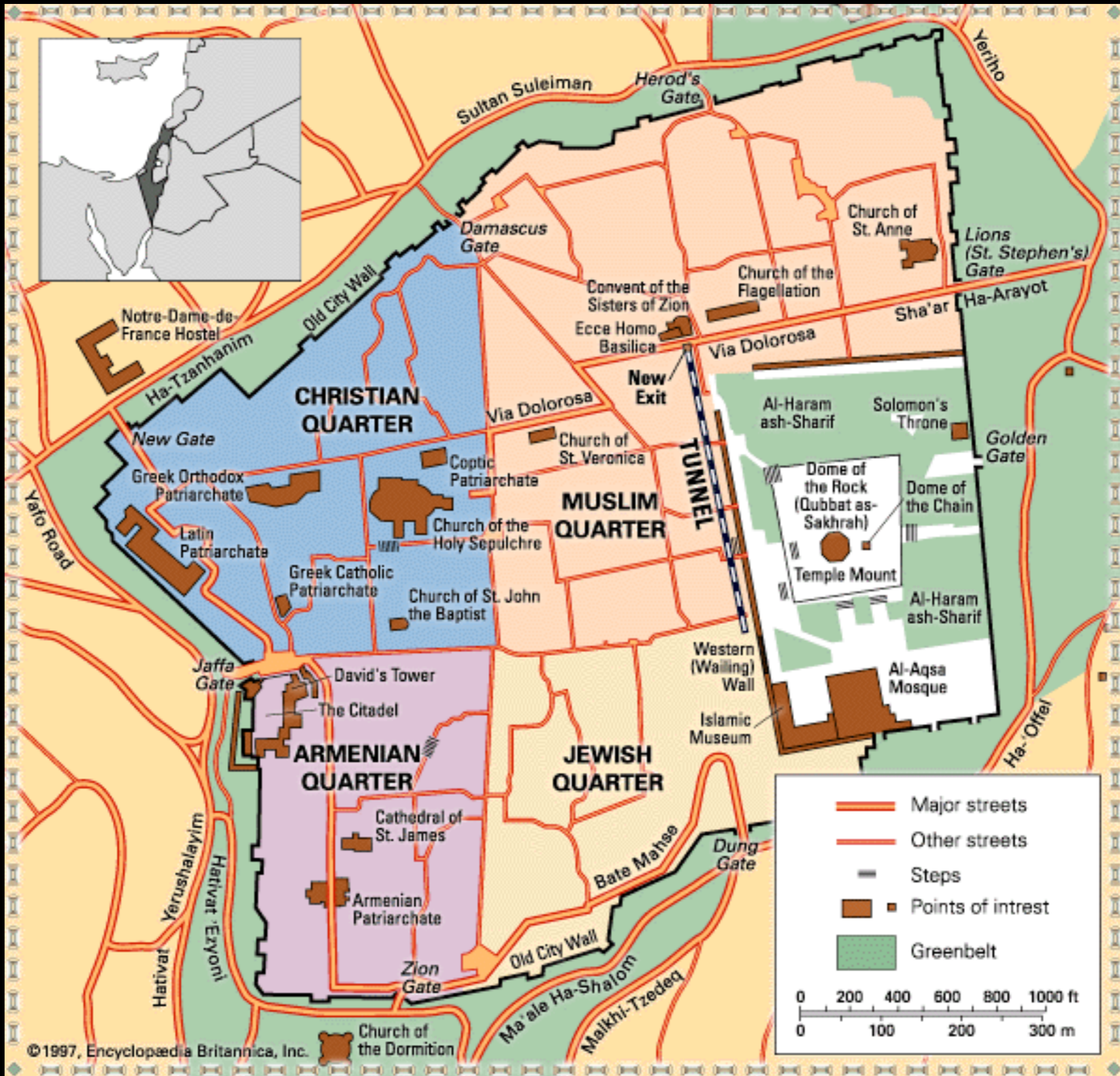


*Saleh Zuheikah,*

**Palestinian  
Ministry of the  
Waqf and  
Religious Affairs**

When I grew up, my dad kept taking me to the Mosque, to Al-Aqsa, to pray there, especially on Fridays. So, in my childhood, when I got conscious about life, I go to know the Al-Aqsa, I know the Mosque. So, from that point of view, you can't just separate this place from your life, from your heart. **So, I can't see Jerusalem without the Al-Aqsa Mosque.**









Credit: Bungie



**“ We don’t see Jews as enemies.  
The enemy is the occupation.”**



**MAHMOUD AL-HABASH**

**The supreme sharia judge in the Palestinian Authority and  
President Mahmoud Abbas’s  
adviser on religious and Islamic affairs  
(photo credit: UDI SHAHAM)**



## Oslo II Map Outlining Areas A, B, and C

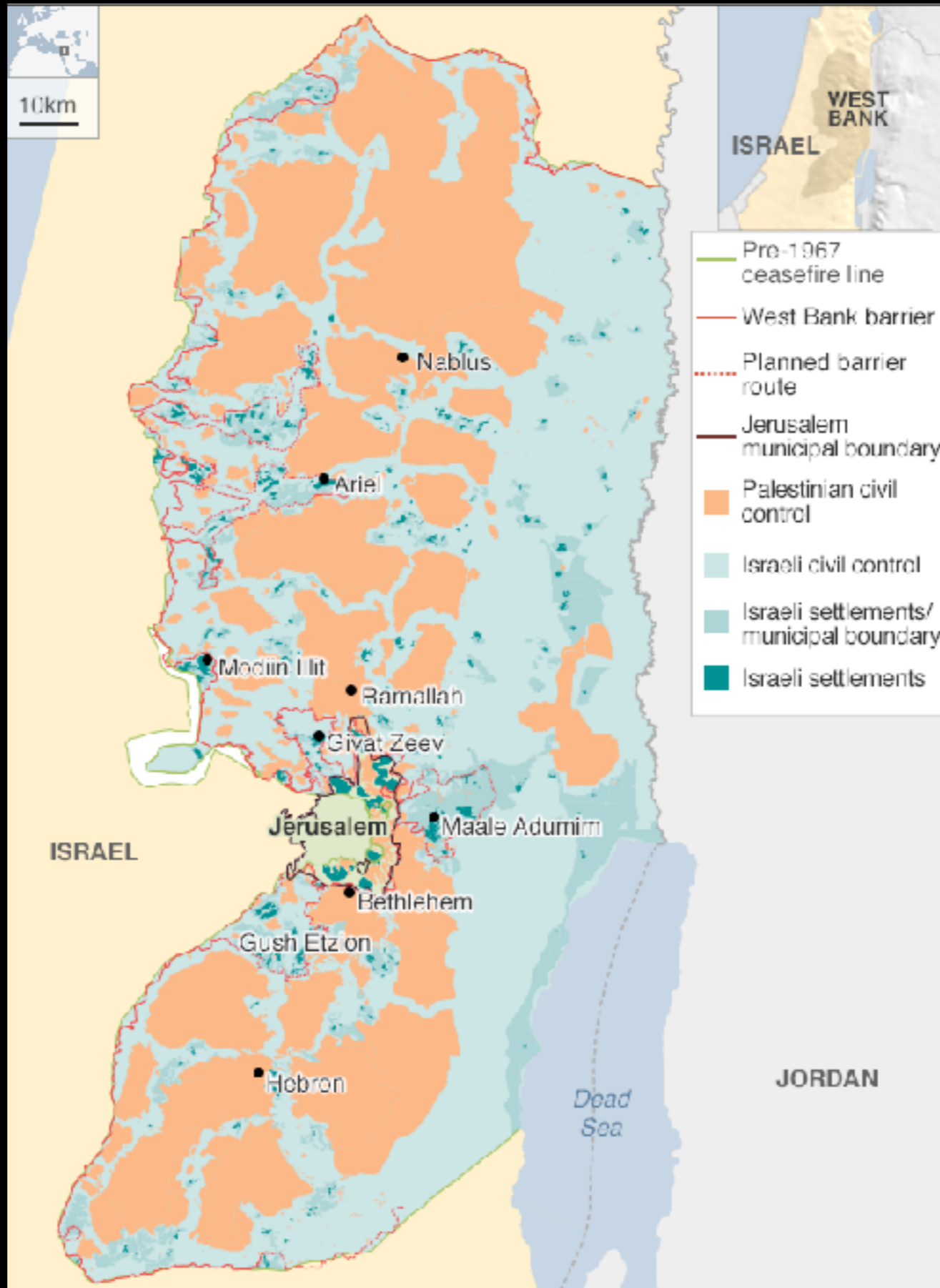


**The Oslo Accords** are a set of agreements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (the PLO):

**Oslo I Accord**, signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993;

**Oslo II Accord**, signed in Taba, Egypt, in 1995.





Source: B'Tselem

BBC



# Israeli and Palestinian Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

## Control areas set up by the Oslo Accords

### Palestinian autonomous areas

- Full Palestinian civil and security control
- Full Palestinian civil control; joint Israeli-Palestinian security control

### Israeli-controlled areas

- Israeli civil and security control

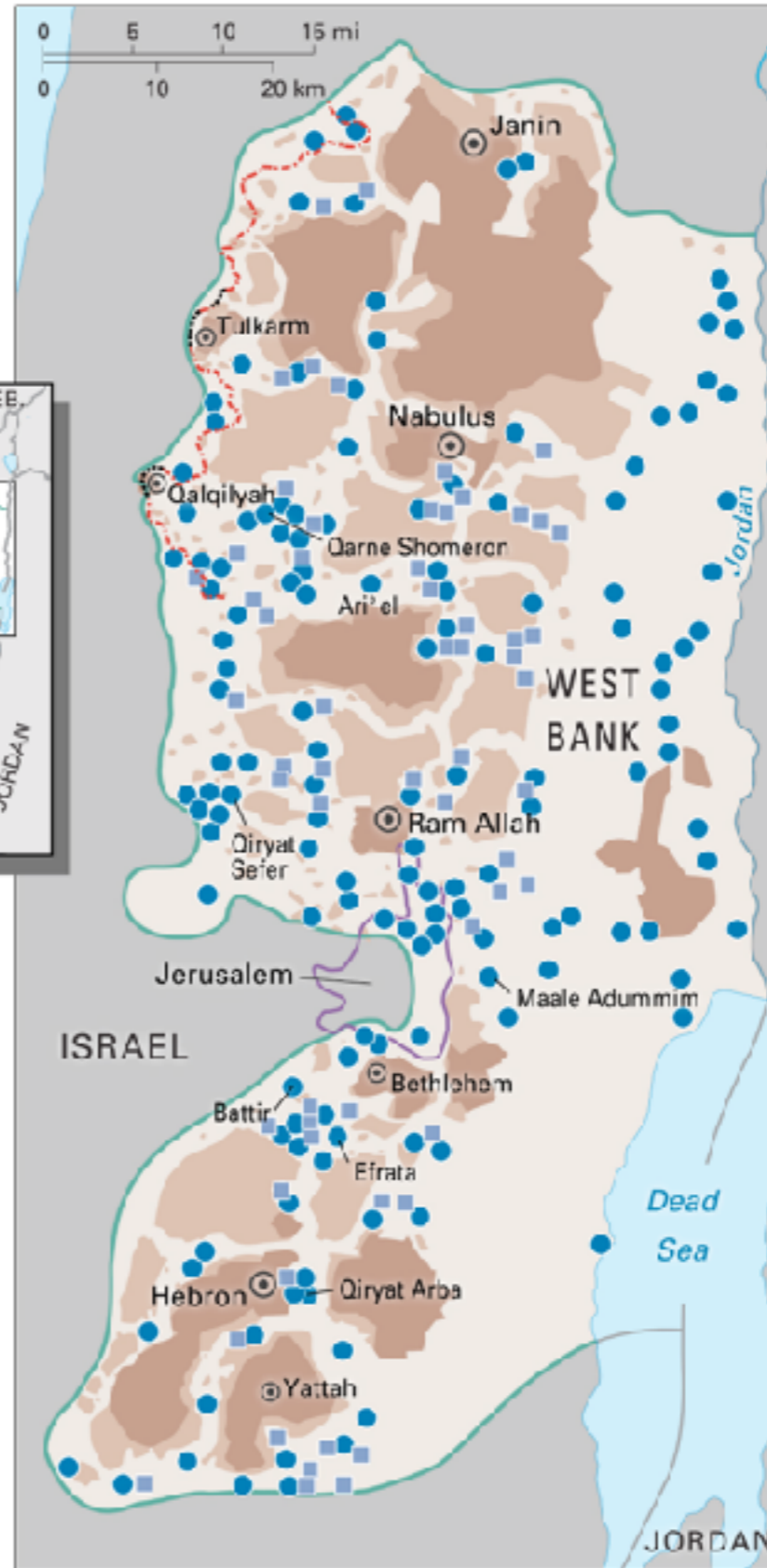
- Planned West Bank security fence
- Planned West Bank concrete wall
- Green Line (1967 boundary)

### Cities

- Cities over 100,000
- Cities 30,000 to 100,000
- Jerusalem municipality (international city)

### Israeli settlements

- Settlements
- Settlement outposts





‘We don’t hate the  
Israeli’s.  
We hate the occupation.’

‘ Without Justice  
there can be no peace.’





**Israeli policemen detain a young Palestinian demonstrator after protesters tried to break the lock on a gate at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City on 18 February 2019 (AFP)**



June 09, 2017

TRANSLATED BY  
**MEMRI** ميمري TV

قاسم  
مباشر

<>  
Embed

**Our position stems, first and foremost, from ideological and religious considerations,**



02:28 / 03:22

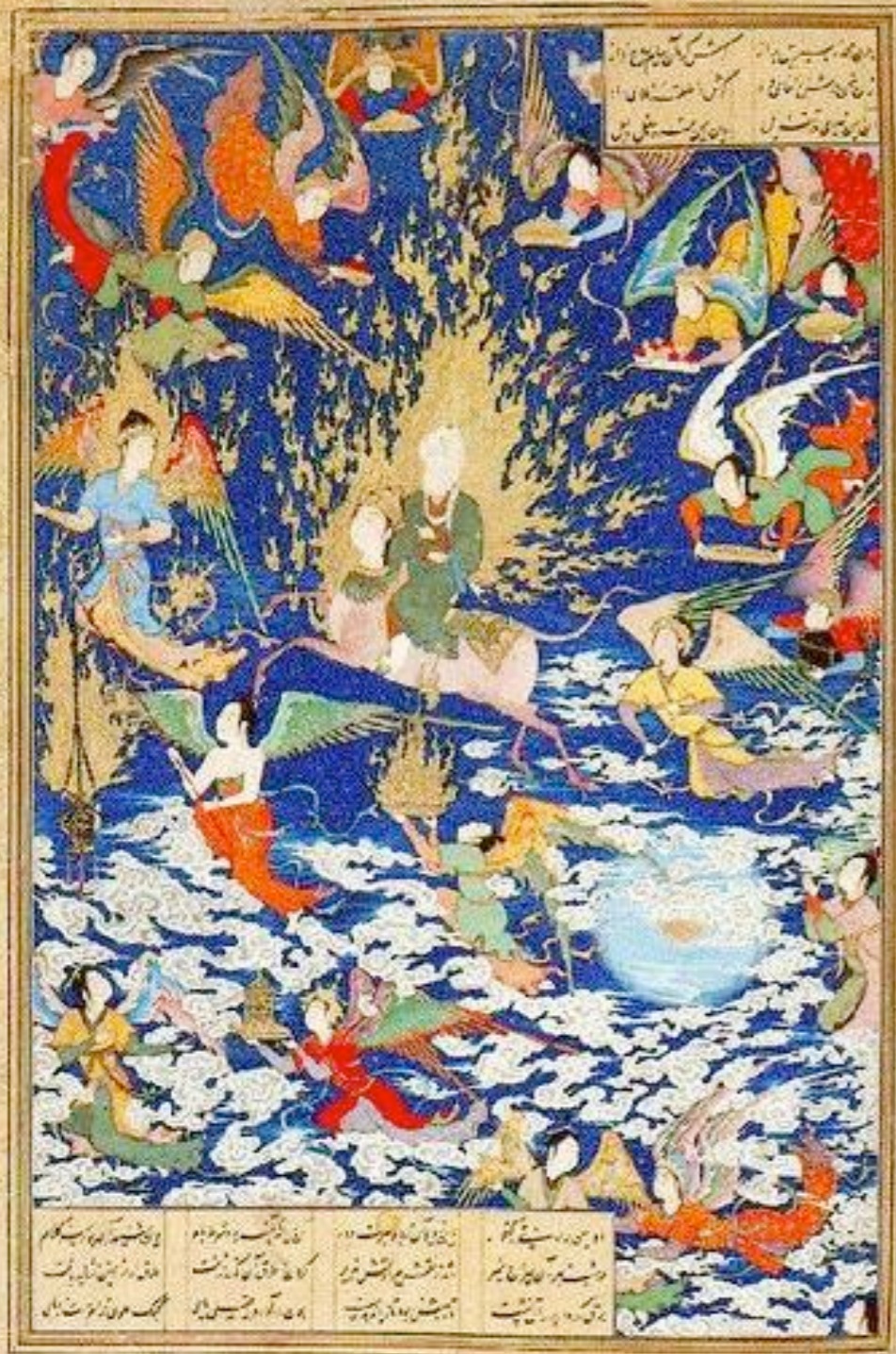






“We cannot possibly relinquish a single millimeter, a single stone, a single micromillimeter of the Al-Buraq Wall and of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque,”  
Habash sermon, which was broadcast on official Palestinian Authority TV. (9 June 2017)





**Isrā'**, in Islam, the Prophet Muhammad's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem.

As alluded to in the Qur'ān (17:1), a journey was made by a servant of God, in a single night, from the “sacred place of worship” (al-masjid al-ḥarām) to the “further place of worship” (al-masjid al-aqṣā).

**Ascent of Muhammad to Heaven** (c. 1539–1543), from the Khamseh of Nizami.







# *Mimesis: Imitation*



**René Girard (1923 - 2015)**

- Mimetic Desire
- Mimetic Rivalry
- Mimetic Conflict
- Scapegoat
- Peace

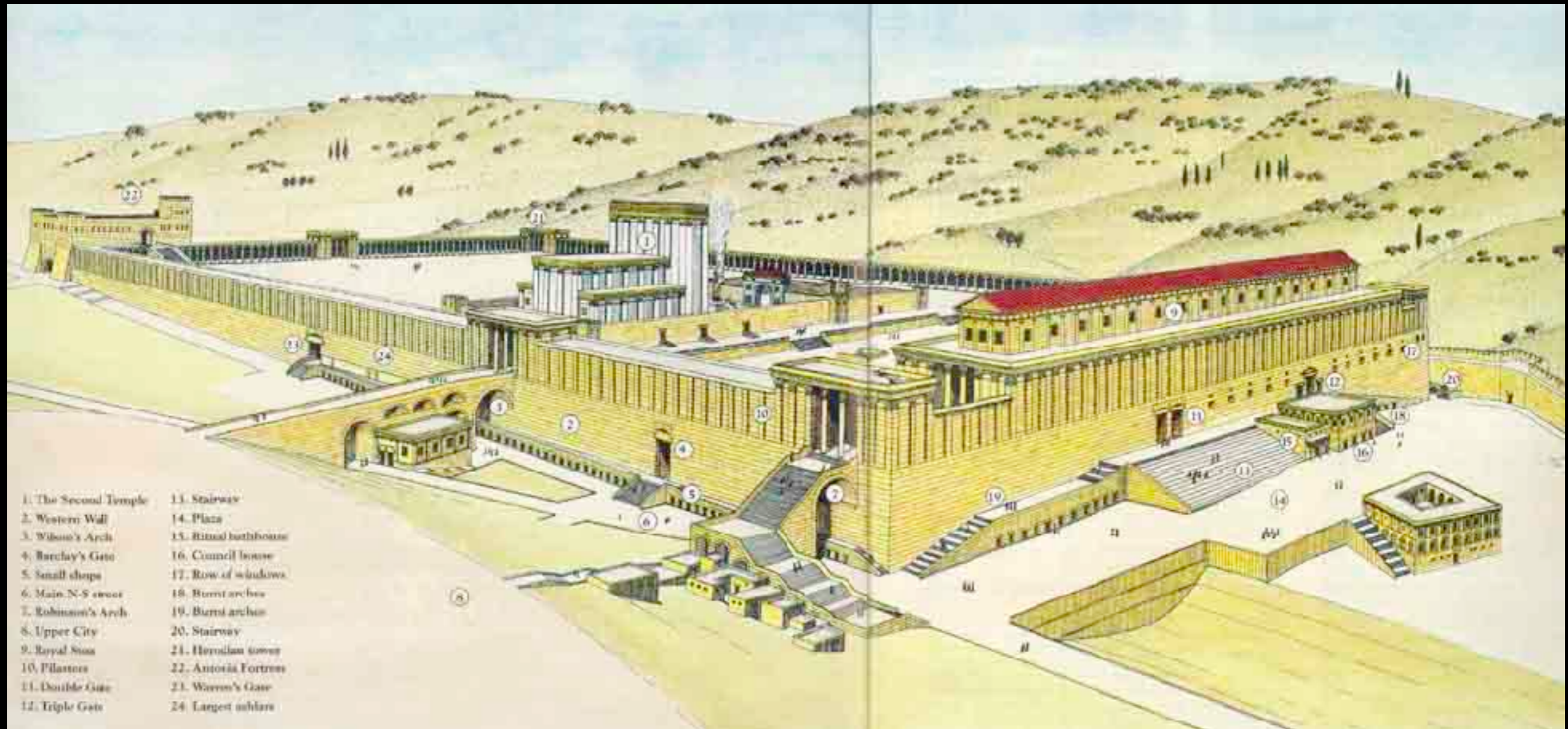




**Shlomo Moshe Amar** is the current Sephardic **Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem**. He served as the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel and the Rishon LeZion from 2003 to 2013.



“This is Jerusalem:  
The city of peace, city of prayer, city of the temple.”



Second Temple





Second Temple -  
destroyed 70 CE



Shlomo Moshe Amar is the current Sephardic **Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem**. He served as the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel and the Rishon LeZion from 2003 to 2013.



“There is also a small minority of Jewish extremists that go the Temple Mount, even though we have determined, according to *Halakha*, that this is forbidden because it is a holy place. But [the Jewish extremists] worry that if they do not go there and make their presence known, it will be taken from us...





Rabbi Amar: “There are also Arab extremists who say this does not belong to the Jews. In my opinion, it is easier to deny the Holocaust, or to say that the earth is a hexagon, than it is to say that the Jews were not once here, that it does not belong to them. But, we keep silent, because we have patience, and we trust and have confidence that God will do as he wills. Let’s leave it up to him.”

Lucy Lyon





**Yad Vashem**





Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, Pope Benedict, David Rosen and Wandé Abimbola of Nigeria at interfaith meeting in Assisi, Italy.





Rabbi David Rosen, CBE



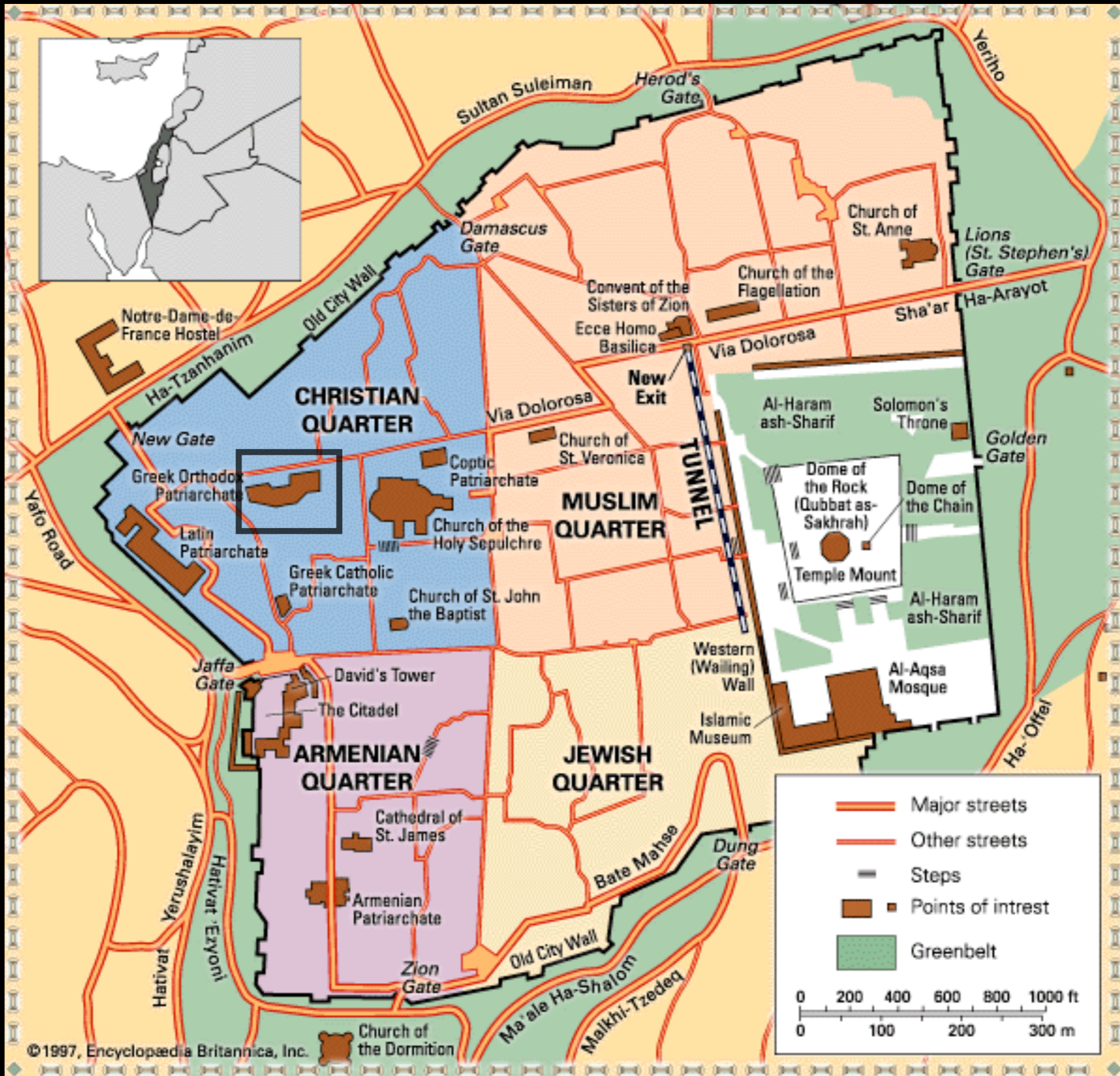


**“Interreligious dialogue is an essential component in facilitating peaceful reconciliation in international relations, for the wellbeing of our world as a whole.”**













Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem **Theophilos III** leads the Orthodox Easter ceremony of the 'Holy Fire' as thousands gather in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City on 15 April, 2017.

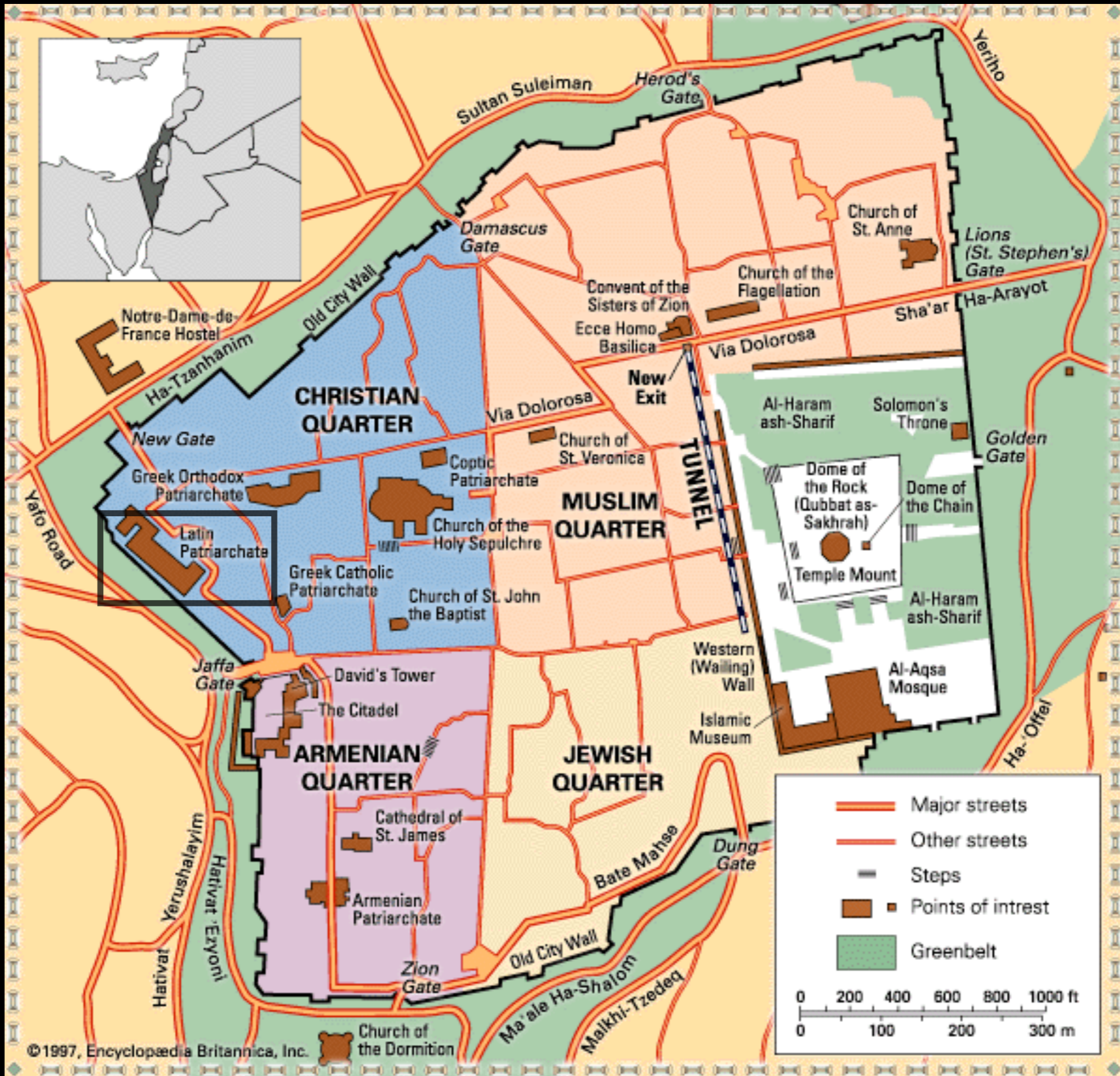
*(Times of Israel - AFP/Gali Tibbon)*





**Theophilos III**  
Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem









**Pierbattista Pizzaballa,**  
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.



Lucy Lyon, *The Gate*, c. 2017

























You show me a 50-foot wall and I'll show you a 51-foot ladder.

**JANET NAPOLITANO**

Former secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, USA





Lucy Lyon Film



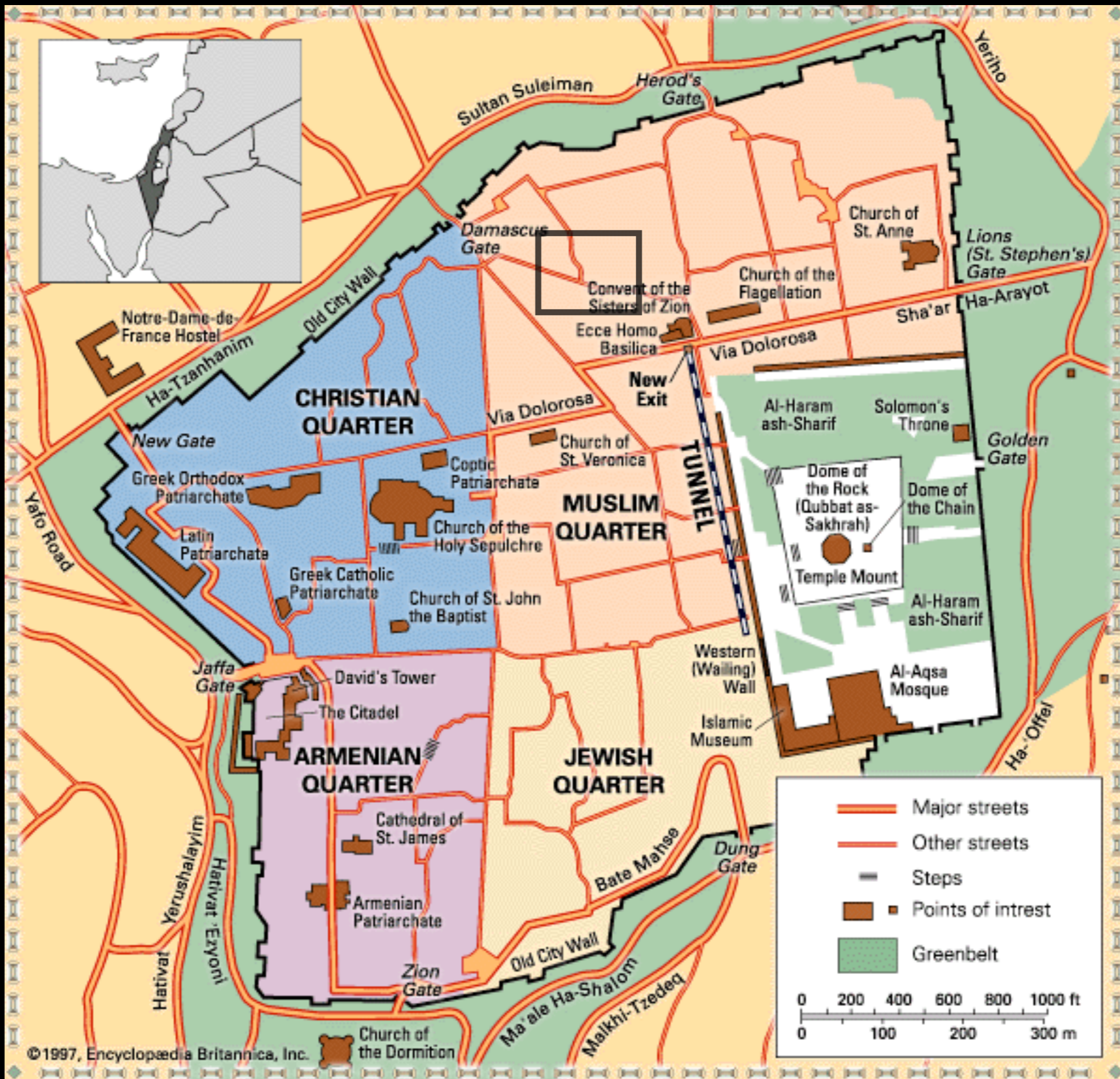






Credit: Bungie









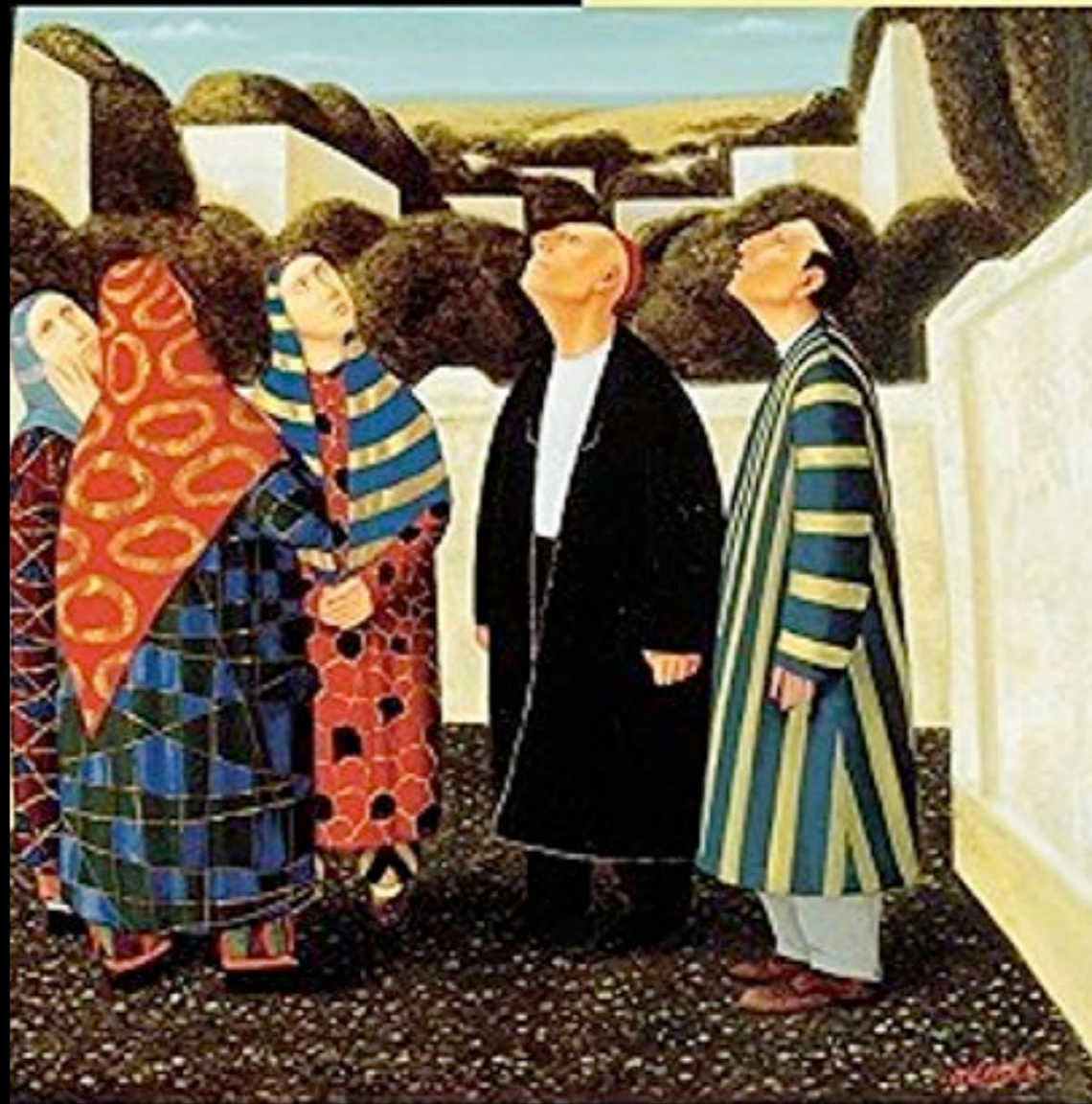


The  
Moral  
magination

THE ART AND SOUL

OF BUILDING

PEACE



John Paul Lederach





**The moral imagination** requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity;"



"In this richly textured memoir, Oz... has created a powerful portrait of coming of age amid conflict, loss and independence." — *Chicago Tribune*

# A M O S O Z

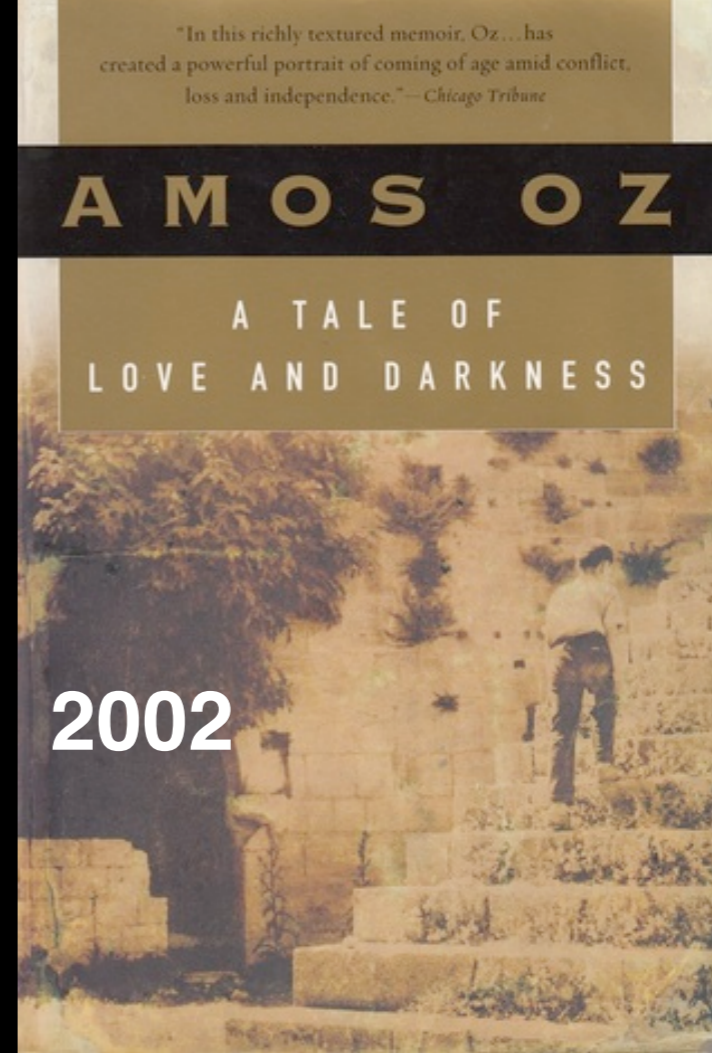
A T A L E O F  
L O V E A N D D A R K N E S S



**"Out there, in the world, all the walls were covered with graffiti: 'Yids, go back to Palestine,' so we came back to Palestine, and now the world at large shouts at us: 'Yids, get out of Palestine.'"**

2002





**“The city has been destroyed, rebuilt, destroyed, and rebuilt again. Conqueror after conqueror has come, ruled for a while, left behind a few walls and towers, some cracks in the stone, a handful of potsherds and documents, and disappeared. Vanished like the morning mist down the hilly slopes.”**



WITH A FOREWORD BY EDWARD W. SAID

# I SAW RAMALLAH

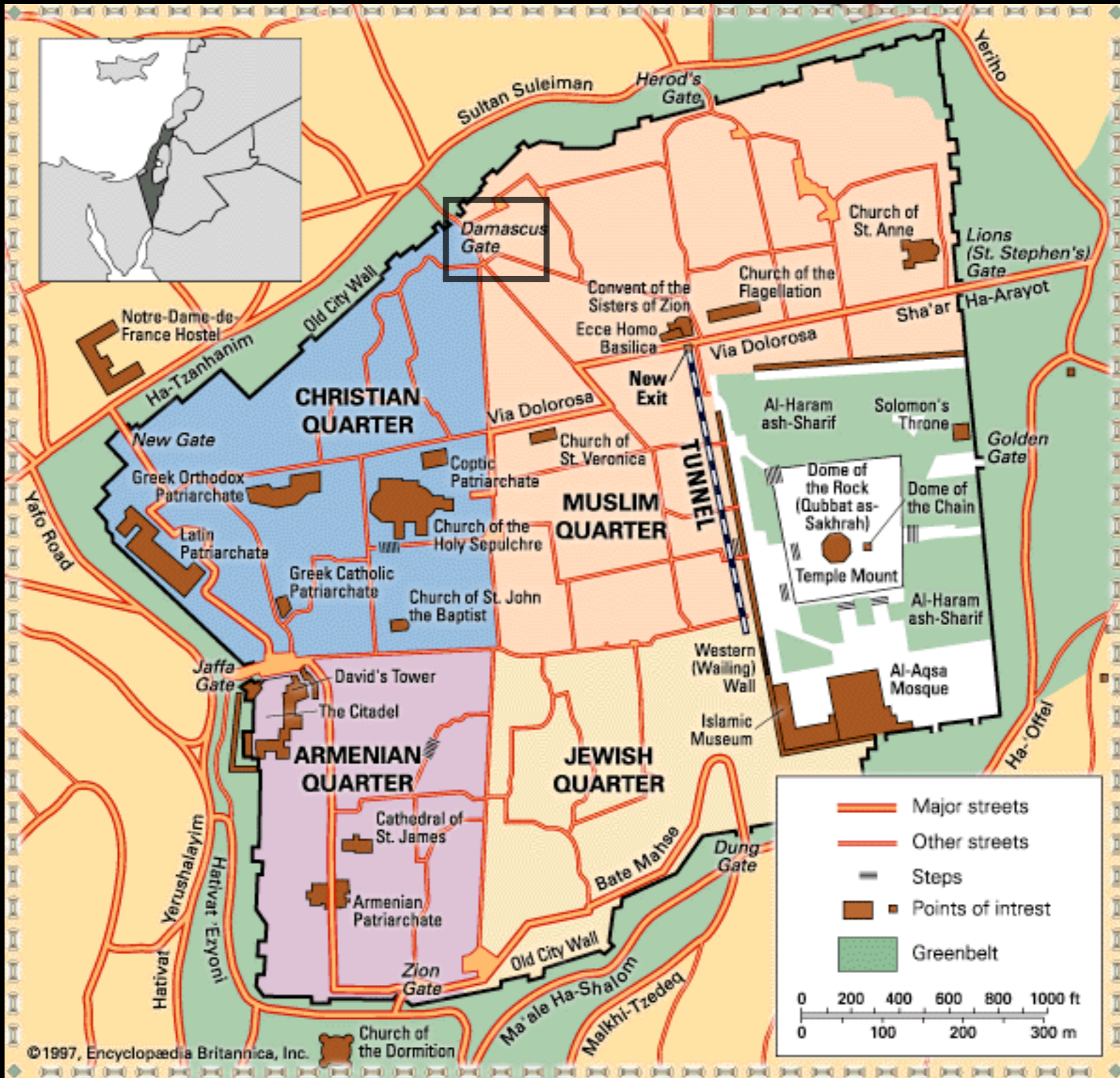
MOURID BARGHOUTI

*Translated from the Arabic by Ahdaf Soueif*

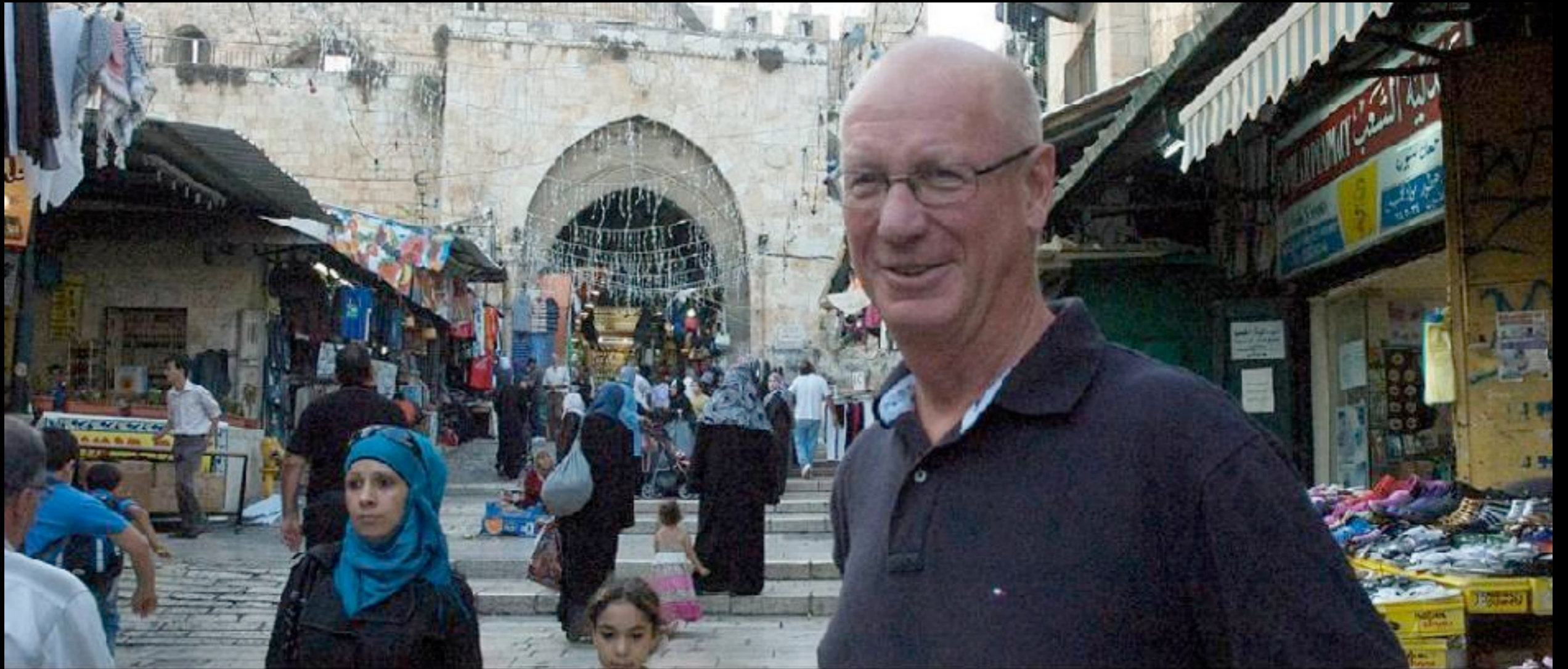


All that the world knows of Jerusalem is the power of the symbol. The Dome of the Rock is what the eye sees, and so it sees Jerusalem and is satisfied. The Jerusalem of religions, the Jerusalem of politics, the Jerusalem of conflict is the Jerusalem of the world. But the world does not care for our Jerusalem, the Jerusalem of the people. The Jerusalem of houses and cobbled streets and spice markets... The terminals of the buses that trundle in every morning from all the villages with peasants come to buy and to sell. The Jerusalem of the white cheese, of oil and olives and thyme, of baskets of figs and necklaces and leather and Salah al-Din Street. Our neighbor the nun, and her neighbor, the muezzin who was always in a hurry...(142-3).







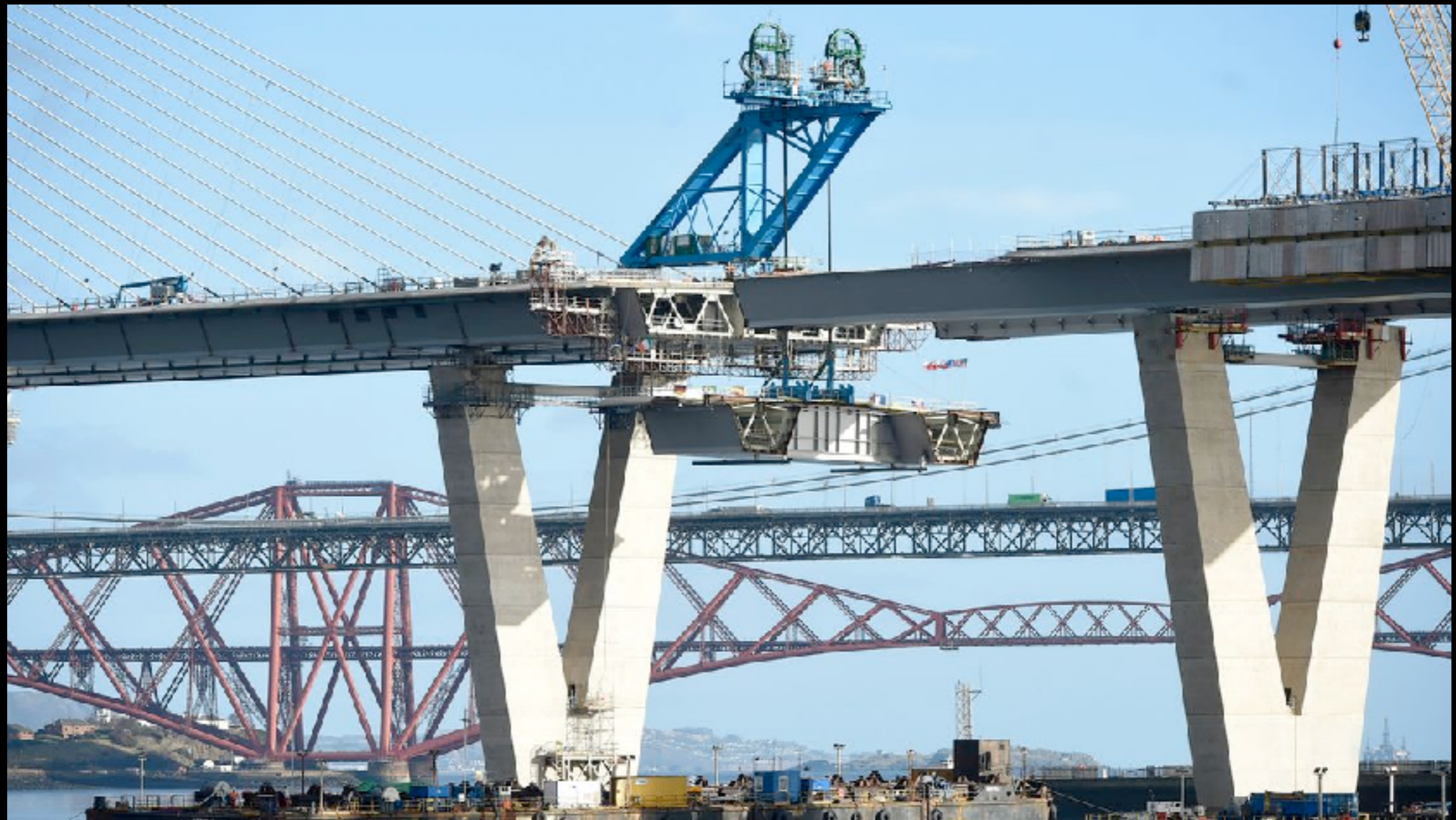






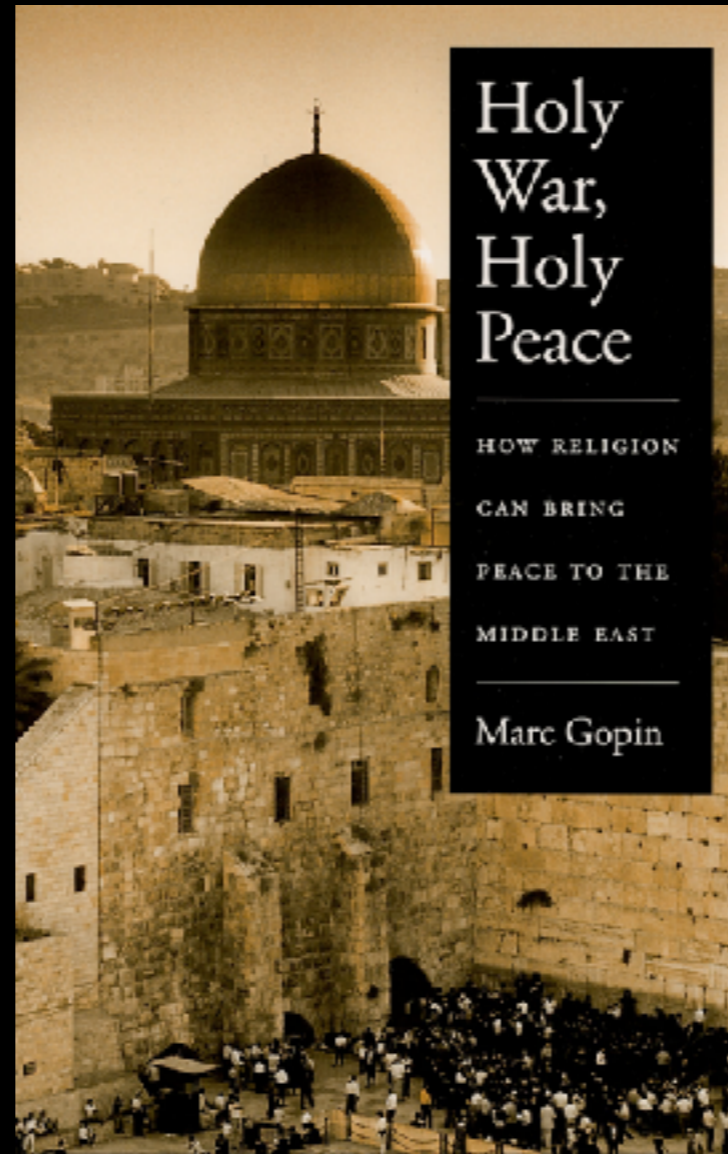
**“ Religious dialogue  
can clear the way for political decisions.”**







# Justice, Remorse and Forgiveness



**Religious peacebuilding track (parallel to the political one) that focuses on religion, culture, symbolic gestures, moral commitments, justice and transformation of relationships.**



**“Better have the pains of peace  
than the agonies of war”?**



**Bereaved Families Forum**





**“Hierarchy of holiness” that places sanctity of human lives above holy land and holy places.** (Y. Landau in *The Routledge on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*)







# Tree of Hope



Sculpture by Mark Coreth

*See Lucy Lyon Film (c. 2016)*







