

Luke 22:53: “When I Was With You Daily in the Temple”—What Did the Jerusalem Temple Look Like in the Time of Jesus? Some Reflections on the Façade of Herod’s Temple

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The façade of Herod’s temple is well known to scholars and general viewers alike. It is a large square temple with a flat roof typical of Near Eastern temples, a white building trimmed copiously with gold. This image appears on tourist paraphernalia, and postcards, on key chains and tee-shirts, in bible commentaries and in religious sites. A large model of this temple appears at The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, and in less expansive sites across North America. In fact, the model that has become so popular and even canonical was created only in 1966, the brainchild of Israeli archaeologist and historian, Michael Avi-Yonah. Set in the Holy Land Hotel in western Jerusalem, this temple was part of a vast model of Jerusalem during the years leading up to the destruction of the city by the Roman armies of Vespasian and Titus in 70 CE.¹ Avi-Yonah was working within a tradition of temple models that reaches back centuries, but which had gained momentum with the rise of Zionism and the series of models created for fairs—both regional and world fairs.² Avi-Yonah’s, however, was

1 M. Avi-Yonah, *Pictorial Guide to the Model of Ancient Jerusalem at the Time of the Second Temple in the Grounds of the Holy Land Hotel, Jerusalem Israel* (rev. ed. Yoram Tsafrir; Herzlia, Israel: Palphot, 1993); idem, “The Facade of Herod’s Temple: An Attempted Reconstruction,” in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. Jacob Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 326–35; D. Amit, *Model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2009). On the historiographic context of this model: A.J. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2006), 220–3; Maya Balakirsky Katz, “Avi-Yonah’s Model of Second Temple Jerusalem and the Development of Israeli Visual Culture,” in *The Temple from Moses to the Messiah*, (ed. Steven Fine; Boston: Brill, 2011), 349–64; Y. Tsafrir, “Designing the Model of Jerusalem at the Holy Land Hotel: Hans Zvi Kroch, Michael Avi-Yonah and an Unpublished Guidebook,” *Cathedra* 140 (2011): 47–86, (Hebrew).

2 Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, 220–3.

a permanent exhibition, the equal of Mussolini's model of imperial Rome at the Museo della Civiltà Romana.³

Avi-Yonah's model was a creative act of profound scholarship, erudition and caution⁴ A historian of the first order, Avi-Yonah pieced together scattered references to the temple in the writings of Josephus (who had served in Herod's temple as a priest), memories preserved in later rabbinic literature and the New Testament along with his deep knowledge of both Herodian architecture at Masada, Herodion, Caesarea Maritima and Sebastia and of Roman architecture and architectural writings from the age of Augustus, Herod's patron.⁵ The resulting model was so successful, that it has become the iconic image of the Second temple for Jews and Christians worldwide.⁶ A mark of its success is the large number of models constructed in recent years based upon Avi-Yonah's, yet "fixing" this standard by imagining a Temple that conforms to the beliefs of each interpreter.⁷

Herod's Temple: Between Rome and Jerusalem

Josephus's *Jewish War*, completed around 75 CE and *Antiquities*, completed around 90 CE, provide long and discursive descriptions of the temple, including the shrine itself. Neither individually nor taken together do these passages

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- 3 On the context for the construction of this model, A. Notaro, "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)," *GeoJournal* 51/1–2 (2000): 15–22. P.A. Gibson, "Rituals of a Nation's Identity: Archaeology and Genealogy in Antiquities Museums of Rome" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2008), 251–4.
 - 4 It is a pity that Avi-Yonah did not write a full narrative describing his process. See L. Ritmeyer, *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006), 317–400; idem, "Envisioning the Sanctuaries of Israel—The Academic and Creative Process of Archaeological Model Making," in *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah: In Honor of Professor Louis H. Feldman* (ed. S. Fine; Leiden: Brill, 2011), 91–104; J. Schwartz and Y. Peleg, "Notes on the Virtual Reconstruction of the Herodian Period Temple and Courtyards," in *The Temple of Jerusalem*, 69–90.
 - 5 For a summary statement, see H. Geva, N. Avigad, "Jerusalem: Second Temple Period," *NEAEHL* 2:717–57, and the various reports in 5:1806–26. More recently, see O. Peleg-Barkat, "The Herodian Architectural Decoration in light of the Finds from the Temple Mount Excavations," (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007) (Hebrew).
 - 6 See M. Balakirsky Katz, "Avi Yonah's Model of Second Temple Jerusalem and the Development of Israeli Visual Culture," 349–64; J.R. Branham's suggestive article, "The Temple that Won't Quit: Constructing Sacred Space in Orlando's Holy Land Experience Theme Park," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 36/3 (2008): 8–31; Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, 189–97.
 - 7 Balakirsky, "Avi Yonah's Model of Second Temple Jerusalem," 358–64.