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 prototype of salvation for the disenfranchised Jewish visitors to the Arab old town that had nothing to do with their authentic image of a Jewish Jerusalem. The model becomes a symbol for the discrepancy between Zionist expectation and the reality of modern day Jerusalem.

Following his first visit to Jerusalem in 1898, Theodor Herzl, one of the founding fathers of the Zionist movement, expressed his disappointment in his book Alt-Neuland that Zionist hopes did not accord with Arabic reality. In 1966, Hans Kroch, a German Jew, sought to enact Herzl’s hope in a model of a Zionist dream Jerusalem at the Holyland Hotel complex.

>“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

The ideologist approach in the creation of the model can be analyzed in the development of the Arabic and Jewish quarters. The Arab 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 Arab 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 building interventions inside old town of Jerusalem. In 1967 both the Arab and Jewish 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 still 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.