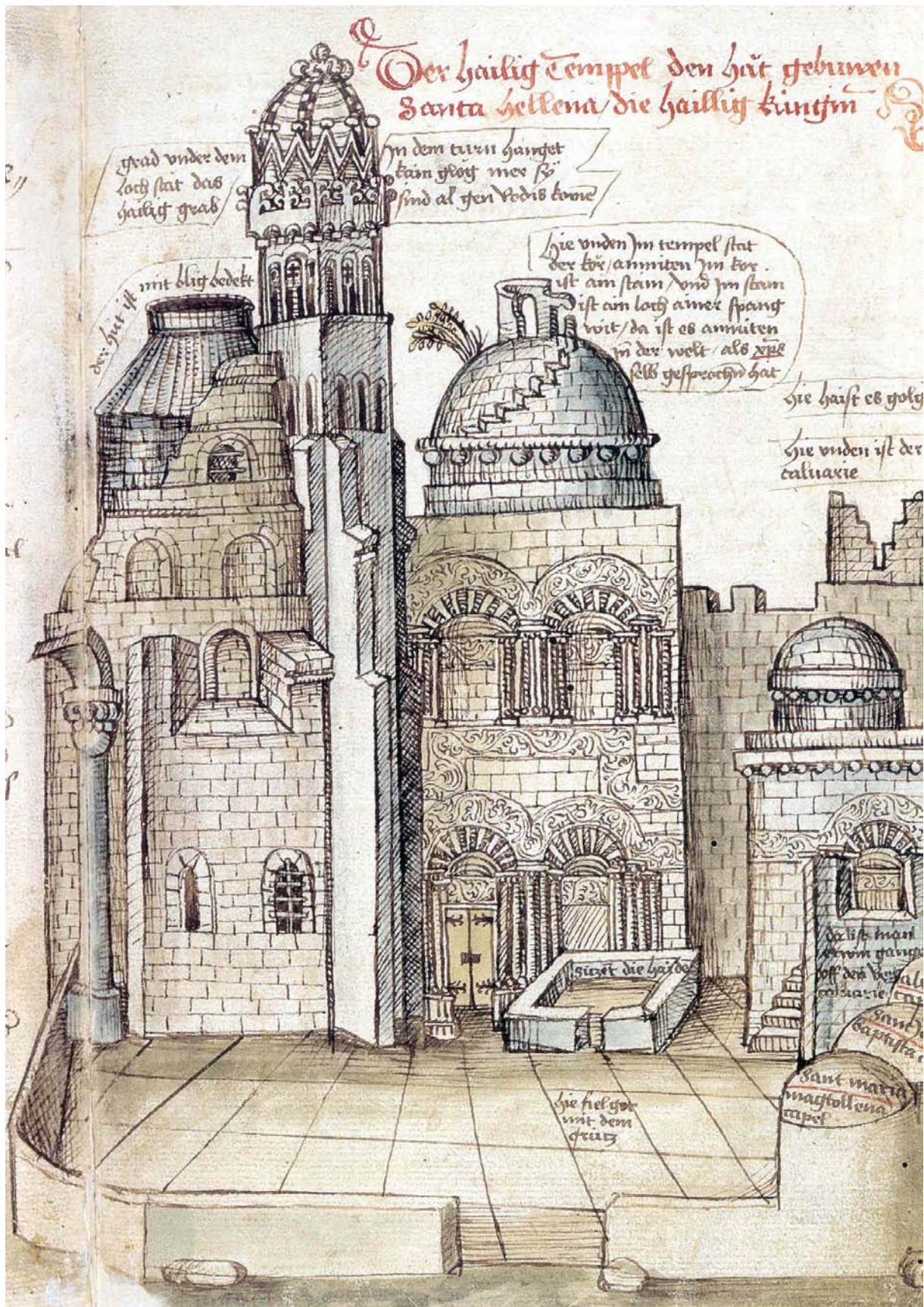


University of Notre Dame
Department of History
The Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre
March 22, 2002
Tiffany L. Burke

Copyright © 2001 by Tiffany Burke
All Rights Reserved





Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian – these churches at the Holy Sepulchre are the living stones who care for the dead stones and give them life.

J. Robert Wright, *The Holy Sepulchre: The Church of the Resurrection*, 1995. Page 12.



Table of Contents

❧

List of Figures	page 5
The Purpose of this Paper	page 6
An Introduction to the Holy Sepulchre Before the Crusaders	page 9
The Crusaders	page 21
After the Crusaders	page 32
Bibliography	page 35

List of Figures

❧ ❧

Front Cover	Medieval rendering of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Figure 1	Reconstruction of the rock-cut tomb described in the Gospels.
Figure 2	The Cardo Maximus and the Forum of <i>Aelina Capitolina</i> .
Figure 3	Plan of the Constantinian Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Figure 4	Axometric of the Constantinian rotunda.
Figure 5	Section and Plan of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem.
Figure 6	Plan of Constantin IX (Monomachus) Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Figure 7	Holy Fire ceremony.
Figure 8	Medieval rendering of the Crusader conquest of Jerusalem.
Figure 9	Plan of the Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Figure 10	Longitudinal section of the Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Figure 11	Bell tower rendering.
Figure 12	Latin inscription of text from the door entablature.
Figure 13	Interior paneling of the Church.
Back Cover	South Façade of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

✂ The Purpose of this Paper ✂

The main focus of this essay is to describe in great detail the events leading up to and following the predominant architectural changes of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem. More precisely, this essay will focus on Crusader Jerusalem and what the Franks brought to the Holy Sepulchre and how it was forever changed after their departure. Attention will be given to the architectural detailing, constant change and regeneration of the building, including the ways in which it was used throughout its history.

With many historical sources and perspectives about the Holy Sepulchre, this essay will make use of the general histories of Jerusalem, in which the author cites various instances involving the Holy Sepulchre not only in the Crusader period, but also throughout history. In addition to detailing the Crusades, this essay will also provide information about the Constantinian Church (320), the Arab period of domination over the Holy City (638-1099), and post Crusader period (1187-present) as a way of forming an introduction and conclusion to this most revered and most complex history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Jerusalem – One City, Three Faiths by Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem – City of Mirrors* by Amos Elon, and *Jerusalem* by F. E. Peters are examples of this genre of Jerusalem texts, which describe major events in the Holy City in lieu of focusing solely on one time fame. These texts focus little on the Holy Sepulchre or on how the Crusades influenced it. Rather, these books focus on the general historic events of the Church, providing a great resource for the general history of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre's place in the big picture of Christian domination during the Crusades and suppression during the Arab conquests.

In a second group of historical sources about the Holy Sepulchre, there are various archeological accounts and findings of the modern excavations. Beginning in the nineteenth

century, various historians, archaeologists, and sketch artists and artisans visited the church. During this period in 1860, De Vogue published his watershed examination of the churches of the Holy Land in which the church was given its first lengthy analysis. Since the early twentieth century, however, there have been many more in depth and much more precise excavations into the deep foundations of the Holy Sepulchre, allowing historians to delve further into the Crusader Church than ever before. The first of these sources was *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre* by H. T. F. Duckworth. First published in 1922, this text not only goes into the various minor excavations of the nineteenth century, but also takes into account a lengthy description of the total history of the church up to the present time (1922). The historical information one can gather from this text is priceless, but the obvious lack of a more precise archeological dig is evident where many of his hypotheses of the original foundations of the Constantinian church and Crusader apses were proven false by other archeological sources.

With the advent of modern technology and a grant to conduct excavations on the foundations of the Holy Sepulchre in the late 1950's and early 1960's, greater insight has been gained, proving former hypotheses false. In the midst of these modern excavations, the text *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* by Charles Couasnon was created as a guide to the new findings of the church. The precise account of these excavations as well as a brief historical timeline make this text a wonderful resource, as evident through the quantity of praise to Couasnon for his research and findings. Gibson and Taylor provide a more modern addition to Couasnon in their 1994 account entitled *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem*, an archaeological and early historic account of the church and the

tradition of Golgotha. It contains accounts of excavations from 1970-1980, which strengthen the priceless information of Couasnon.

Thirdly, pilgrimage accounts provide excellent sources about the Holy Sepulchre. Two such texts take place during the Crusades and during the period directly following the Crusades as an account of pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. The text *The Ancient Churches of Old Jerusalem – The Evidence of the Pilgrims* by Elinor Moore provides an excellent account of multiple pilgrims, more precisely three pilgrims who journeyed to the Holy Land during the Crusader's occupation and immediately following this occupation. A man known as Saewulf, however, provides the most concrete information of these pilgrims. According to Moore, Saewulf was one of the first pilgrims to follow in the wake of the Crusaders, and his journey to the Holy Sepulchre is an excellent example of pilgrimage in the Crusader period (1099-1187).

The most valuable texts focused solely on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, so as to view the considerable change of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the coming of the Crusaders and the drastic reduction of its architectural detailing. In Sabino de Sandoli's *Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre*, as well as in Martin Biddle's *The Tomb of Christ*, one will find descriptions of these changes in lieu of the Church's first restorations.

Greeks, Armenians, Latins, Copts, and Georgians are just a few of the numerous groups which hold a place within the walls of the Holy Sepulchre Church. With such a diverse group of people, the church has had many different vocabularies. The church was not titled the 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre until the time of the Crusaders. This fact was stated in J. Robert Wright's *Ecumenical Guide to the Church of the Resurrection*. The church was mainly known as the Church of the Resurrection, an Eastern Orthodox name.

Wright also notes the specific architectural style of the Crusader church, *Romanesque*, or Roman-like. Yoram Tsafir in *Ancient Churches Revealed* also describes this architectural style. The south Façade of the Holy Sepulchre Church, built around the middle of the 12th century, represents a perfect blending of Eastern and Western styles and motifs of architectural decoration in a single elevation.

In addition to the various Christian sects and various architectural styles brought together under one unified structure, the Crusader church of the Holy Sepulchre also brought together all the holy places under one roof. Instead of pilgrims traveling from place to place on a very small site, everything was placed under one roof, and it was the Crusaders who accomplished this feat of genius engineering.



✧ An Introduction to the Holy Sepulchre Before the Crusaders ✧

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is a building with a colorful history. From Christian theology to common folklore, the Church contains a story which is much more vivid than many other such buildings. Known as the Church of the Resurrection in Eastern or Orthodox churches and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Western or Latin churches, this house of prayer is the most probable location of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. It is the only church in Christendom that can boast of a tomb that is empty, and the principal church building in which the ancient separated churches of East and West still worship under the same roof.

The Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics of Latin rite, and the Armenians are the three great Christian traditions that share the major privileges of care and worship within this building. These Christian faiths place great importance on gathering in a 'house of prayer'. In Palestine, moreover religions placed great emphasis on the act of pilgrimage to the holy

places. Within the buildings that house these holy places, there is a distinction made between ‘memorial’ religious buildings and ‘congregational’ religious buildings, i.e. between buildings built to commemorate an event or person - places to which pilgrims would come, and buildings that were built for normal congregational use. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an example of the former.

For the Christian faith, no other place in the world is more central. It is symbolically the ultimate goal of every Christian pilgrim. For this reason, one would think that this is the most marvelous Christian building on the earth, as it had been in the past. Instead, the church is dilapidated, and extremely confusing architecturally after the numerous renovations and reconstructions of the past one and a half millennia (Tsafrir, 117).

Modern archaeology confirms that we know the place of Christ’s death and burial as described in the Gospels (Gibson, 10). As noted in the Gospel of John, “Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never a man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jew’s preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (Jn 19:41-2) In addition Joseph, in the act of burying the body of Jesus is said to have done so, “in a sepulcher which was hewn out of rock.” (Mk 15:46b)

For approximately a century after the burial of Christ and his resurrection, the tomb was left alone. In the year 135, however, the pagan Roman Emperor Hadrian had different plans in store for this hallowed structure. He had discerned information about the tomb of Christ, and knew that it posed a certain threat, so he

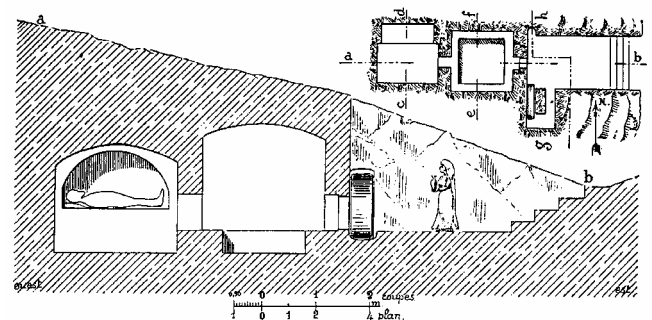


Fig. 1: Reconstruction of the rock-cut tomb described in the Gospels.

decided to completely bury it.

The whole area around Cavalry was subsequently transformed into the capitol of the Roman Jerusalem province *Aelina Capitolina*. To add insult to injury, a pagan temple to the Roman god Aphrodite was constructed on the site of the Holy Sepulchre. Because the Sepulchre was buried, not destroyed, the dirt and soils that made up the foundations for the new pagan temple ultimately served to preserve the tomb. In this time of pagan possession (Tsafrir, 103), the Judaeo-Christians preserved the traditions associated with the Calvary and the tomb in secret.

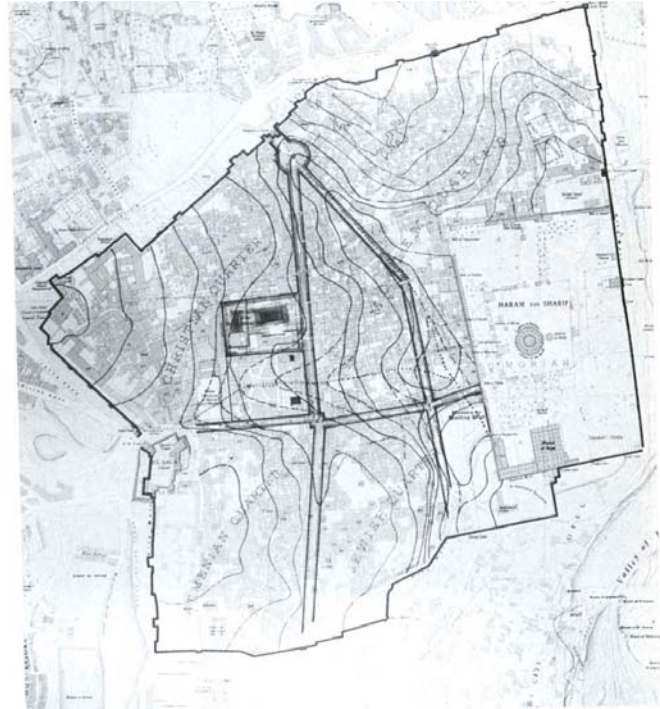


Fig. 2: The Cardo Maximus and the Forum of *Aelina Capitolina*.

It was not until the fourth century after the Council of Nicaea, in 325 that Marcarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, persuaded the emperor that, “the most sacred of Christian places should be sought once more.” (Wright, 8) Under the keen discretion of the newly converted Christian Emperor Constantine, the bishop asked that the tomb be resurrected from beneath it’s shallow pagan grave. Although Constantine agreed to the Bishop’s request, it was ultimately the emperor’s decision to build a great church in which to house the relic in. This decisive step in the design of Christian churches was the first of many taken under Constantine’s rule.

The tomb was found approximately three years after the Council of Nicaea, and plans were drawn up for a church to match the importance of this significant relic. The full design of Constantine's basilica provided a gradual, majestic introduction by architecture to the central meaning of Christianity. Our knowledge of the plan of the church is mainly based on historical sources, especially on Eusebius' description of it in The Life of Constantine. "Make provisions," Constantine had written to Marcarius, "that not only shall this basilica be the finest in the world, but also its details shall be such that all the most beautiful structures in every city shall be surpassed by it." (Wright, 9)

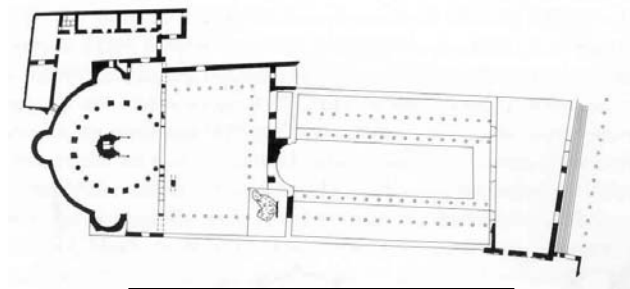


Fig. 3: Plan of the Constantinian Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

While most architects would try to fit a new building into its surrounding site, Constantine's architect Zenobius adopted the opposite cause: clear the site to make way for the new structure. In addition to these non-existent site constraints,

Zenobius' basilica was crudely built. An example of this is seen in its eastern wall which is not at right angles to those adjacent to it (Tsafirir, 11). The Constantinian church was about three times the length and size of the present Crusader church, the atrium of its entrance extending out as far as the ancient Roman *Cardo* (Main Street) or the present 'Khan ez-Zeit Suk' (Market Street).

The building emphasized its circular center. In contrast to the basilica known as the *martyrion*, or place of witness, this plan was not based on the apse end of the building, but rather the geometrical center of the church which was accentuated by the height of its dome. The architectural typology was that of the classical Roman *mausoleum*, where ideally a circle

of columns is supporting a dome over a tomb. As recent excavations show, however, Constantine's architect did not follow through the full detail by placing another circle of columns around the first eighteen. Instead, he only half completed this outer row, thus creating a great half-dome (Bushell, 97). The area left free by the incomplete outer circle was used for assembly purposes and therefore visitors could walk around the *ambulatory* surrounding the tomb. (A Muslim example of this in Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock.)

Twenty windows let in a flood of light, which was reflected on the smooth marble walls. Lamps of gold and silver were also utilized to illuminate the space. The abundance of light was seen as a symbol of the resurrection, the victory of light over darkness (Bushell, 99). This element is no longer in existence, unfortunately, since the many renovations and reconstructions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The *Anastasis* was a decorated block with columns as well as a roof and a porch. The modern successor to this structure was later enclosed in a semi-circular building. Commonly called the *rotunda*, this building was at first was open to the sky and eventually was given a domed roof. The Constantinian *rotunda* was completed mid fourth century. Parts of it still remain today and served as the foundation walls for the Crusader's *rotunda*.

The exterior front of Constantine's church had an interior courtyard, or *atrium*. In the corner of the *atrium* stood a high jagged mound of rock, identified with *Calvary* – the place where Jesus was crucified. Later, in 420, a large golden cross inlaid with precious stones was placed on top of this spot by the Emperor Theodosius II.

Facing west towards the *atrium*, Constantine's workmen then built a large basilica-style church called the *martyrion*. Inside there were four rows of columns – one main room with four aisles. Three openings led from the *atrium* to the basilica. Recent excavations show

the apse of the basilica beneath the floor of the Greek Cathedral or *Katholikon*. Originally, unlike its present orientation and in contrast to the practice in most churches, it faced west towards the tomb of Christ.

Emperor Constantine was known for combining architectural typologies such as the congregational basilica and the venerating tholos structures. The difference between the *rotunda*, with its single focus – built for veneration of the tomb – and the *martyrion* – which was used for congregational worship – is clear in both plan and use. This duality emphasizes the relations between the arrangements of the building and the functional content and spiritual meaning it is intended to represent (Tsafir, 107).

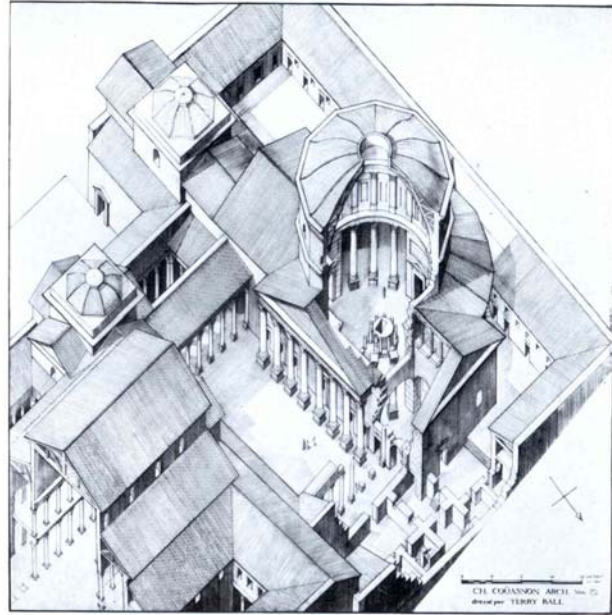


Fig. 4: Constantinian Rotunda axonometric.

The beauty of this Constantinian church was preserved until 614, when Zoroastrian Persian troops lead by Chosroes destroyed most of Constantine's church by setting it afire. Although the Holy Sepulchre Church was the focus of many antichristian acts, the magnificent dome atop of the *rotunda* has inspired many architectural buildings. It was said that the Dome of the Rock was erected, and its shape was determined in an open attempt to compete with the dome atop of the Holy Sepulchre (Goitein, 172). Another architectural feature which the Muslim mosque adapted from the Christian church was the abundant lighting, an innovation in Muslim prayer-houses that apparently began here.

In 629, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius defeated the Persians and restoration of the Holy Sepulchre began almost immediately. He followed Constantine's plan faithfully, but the Christian control did not last long. The victory of the Arab Caliph Omar began the long domination of Islam over Jerusalem (638-1099, and again from 1187-1917).

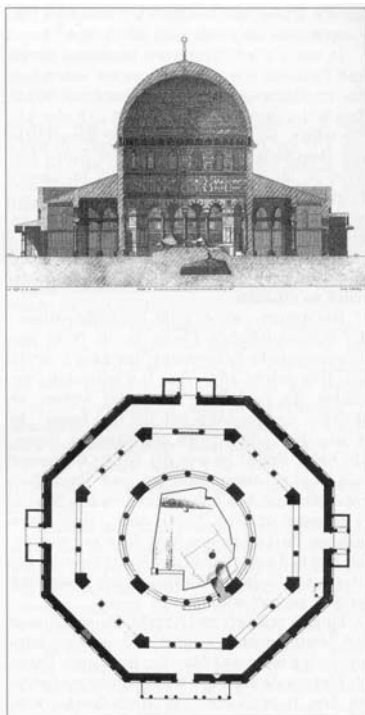


Fig. 5: The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem.

Caliph Omar was very tolerant of the Christians and mindful of their desires for their faith (Wright, 10). For this reason, Omar declined to pray inside the Holy Sepulchre after he took it. When the Patriarch Sophronius asked him why he refused to pray in the Holy Sepulchre, Omar answered, "If I had prayed in the church it would have been lost to you, for the Believers would have taken it out of your hands, saying Omar has prayed here." (Wright, 10) Later, Sophronius asked Omar that no mosque be built in close vicinity to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Omar's response to Sophronius contained the promising words, "You are assured of complete safety for your

lives, your goods, and your churches. The latter will not be occupied by Muslims, nor destroyed, provided you do not rise in a revolt together." (Wright, 10) And it is because of this prerogative right of the Muslims that the Muslims sequestered the southwest part of the atrium of the basilica (Hospice of Alexander) and created the small Mosque of Omar. Partly blocking access to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the mosque marks the spot where Omar prayed. Sophronius's ungranted request was apparently committed to writing only after the mosque was already standing.

In the mid-eighth century, the Church was existing in its Arab surroundings quite well, but an earthquake in 749 soon struck Jerusalem and major damage was done to the cupola of the *rotunda*. The cupola was restored by Patriarch Thomas I in 796, at the beginning of the reign of al-Mamun. Thomas not only renovated the cupola, but also enlarged its size. By doing this he was subject to great scrutiny. The Muslims complained that the Christians had built a bigger dome over the church than that over the Dome of the Rock (Goitein, 174). Only the Patriarch's craftiness saved him from being punished for this serious offense.

In the year 800, the Patriarch of Jerusalem sent the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the flag of the city to Emperor Charlemagne for his inauguration in the year 800. The precise nature of these marks of respect cannot be determined, however, it is clear that the firm bond between Jerusalem and Western Europe (that later was to glorify and inspire the Crusader movement) was formed in this period (Goitein, 174). The rebel Tamim Abu Harb threatened the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with destruction in 841. The Patriarch, however, paid him off with gold, and the church was once again safe.

Though impeded and poor for years, there is no conclusive evidence to indicate it was because of Muslim domination. Constantly subject to arson, raids, and ransacks, the Christians sought ways as best they could to repair and renovate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. "It is true that the West had seen Palestinian monks asking alms on behalf of their Church, seeking to arouse the pity of the faithful, but that was nothing new; it had long been a practice." (Cahen, 13) The Muslims called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre *al-Qamama*, or Church of the Dung, instead of *al-Qiyama*, or Church of the Resurrection. It is obvious by these comments and the destruction of the Christian churches and hospitals that the Muslims were not always on the best terms with the Christians. The Muslims denied the miracle of the

Holy Fire which at Easter every year came down to light a candle in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In 938, this denial led Muslims aided by Jews, to set fire to the doors of the Holy Sepulchre on Palm Sunday. The fire spread throughout the church and extensive damage occurred. It was later looted and burnt completely to the ground. In 966, Arabs burnt the cupola of the *rotunda* and the outbuildings of the basilica. They then proceeded to kill the Patriarch – they burnt him because of their anger over the defeat and loss of the provinces of Cilicia and Syria to the Greek general Nicephorus Phocas (Goitein, 175).

It was not, however, until the reign of the Fatimid caliph of Egypt al-Hakim bi-amr-illah – ‘the mad’ – that the spirit and strength of the Christian belief for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was definitively tested. On 28 September 1009, al-Hakim administered a sinister order which demanded the demolition of the Holy Sepulchre. The order was to be signed by a Christian, the vizier Ibn-Abdun, and it ran as follows, “The Imam commands you to destroy the temple of the Resurrection, so that its heaven may become earth and its length may become breadth.” The *Anastasis* and its companion churches were, “laid in heaps.” (Duckworth, 196)

Under the pretext of destroying the deception that the Holy Fire promoted (the fire descending from Heaven), al-Hakim gave the order to destroy all the sacred edifices of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, right down to its foundations. Al-Hakim stated, “Destroy without a trace, the church of the Qiyama (Resurrection), and root up its very foundations.” (Bushell, 99) The destruction started on 25 August and did not end until 16 October. The Rock of the sacred tomb was attacked with great zeal, in such a way to make it impossible to ever restore it. But the hardness of the limestone tomb proved impenetrable to their demolition, so they gave up on its destruction once they had removed its upper part. The

cupola, tympana, and upper gallery of the *rotunda* were smashed with pick axes. Only the foundations of the porticos which stood between the *rotunda* and the *martyrion* remained along with three sets of steps leading up to the *martyrion*. Christian worship was banned at the Holy Sepulchre altogether from 1009 to 1021.

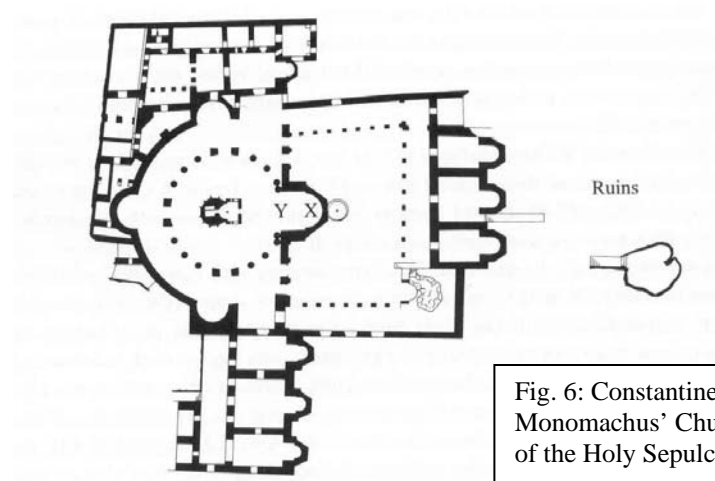
Another reason that al-Hakim gave for the destruction of the church was to clear any thought in the Muslim mind that he was a 'Nazarene' (Wright, 10). This had been brought against him because his mother was a Christian and it was under her protection that Christians had prospered in Egypt in the rein of al-Hakim's father Aziz. His father had appointed his mother's brothers Greek patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria.

Possessing despotic power, al-Hakim became obsessed by the power which he exercised with stringency and rigor. For him, the implementation of his power was an end in itself. "He delighted in imposing his will upon his subjects and the thought that they groaned under him." (Duckworth, 192) Muslims suffered just as much as Christians, and two years later, al-Hakim diverted his activities of oppression completely from the Christians to the Muslims. "Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike must have wondered whether God indeed beheld the things done upon earth when the homicidal maniac who claimed to be his highest representative among men proclaimed himself an incarnation of the Supreme Being, and called upon them all to worship his name!" (Duckworth, 198)

Once the Christians obtained relief from the persecution of al-Hakim, they were permitted in 1010 to rebuild some of their churches. While many Christians had become nominal converts to Islam and resumed the worship of Christianity, many others remained faithful to the Qur'an. It was not until 1020 that Christians were allowed by al-Hakim to pray at the sacred tomb again, and in 1031 after the murder of al-Hakim, the new caliph the

reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre. The reconstruction ultimately did not get very far, however, and a mere three years later in 1034, a severe earthquake rocked the Holy Land and destroyed what little had been done to the Holy Sepulchre.

Eight years later, Emperor Constantine IX (Monomachus) ordered reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to resume, and was completed in 1048. The tomb and floors of the Church were no longer made of wood, but were



converted to masonry. The upper gallery of the *rotunda* was rebuilt with an oculus in the center of the cupola. The *rotunda*, colonnade and Holy Garden were rebuilt and redone. A new wall was added on the east along with three new chapels. The chapels have recently been reconstructed on the eastern side of the Holy Sepulchre garden. Today, their foundations are buried under the Crusader building, and have not been uncovered.

Monomachus made many provisions on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The windows were blocked in the upper galleries, and it was at this point that the building began to lose some of its charm. The *Anastasis* was shaped like a tholos with a gallery and large apse to the east. The ambulatory and the gallery had intersecting stone roofs which replaced previous wood ones. Slightly pointed arches spanned the piers and columns of both levels of the gallery. Only the columns of the north portico remain *in situ*, as part of the Crusader building. These columns help to create the so-called 'Virgin's Arches' (Tsafrir, 108).

Constantine's *martyrion* was given up for good, and the crypt of the basilica transformed into the Rock Chapel.

In this time of regeneration for the Holy Sepulchre, pilgrimage was on the rise. Easter was the greatest season of pilgrimage, and it was possible that the ceremony of the Holy Fire was invented for the purpose of persuading pilgrims to travel to the Holy Sepulchre. This was especially true for the pilgrims from Western Europe, encouraging them to brave the hardships of traveling to the Holy Land. One of the pilgrimages where we learn the most about the Holy Fire ceremony is from a man named Daniel (Moore, 38). His descriptions are of the Church ceremonies, and in particular that of the Holy Fire at Easter, which until that time only Bernard the Monk had described.

Pilgrimages to the Holy Land were constantly subject to taxation. Just as the pilgrims had paid a tax to cross Byzantine territory (Sandoli 1986, 14), pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem had to pay a tax at the gate of the city and an even higher tax to visit the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Chronicles of pre-Crusader writers recounted that the Turks perpetrated illicit overtures at the church.

Typically, two visits were made to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Timing was dependent on the Muslims guarding the building. One of these two visits was made at



Fig. 7: Holy Fire ceremony.

nightfall. “When they were all safely in, the Muslim guardians locked the doors. The candles with which they had been furnished were lit and, led by friars of Mt. Sion, the devout visitors formed a procession to visit the many holy sites.” (Savage, 57) Though the pilgrims may have wanted to entertain their thoughts and prayers in the Holy Sepulchre for much longer than a night, early in the morning the Muslim guardians of the church opened its doors and ordered them out.

It was because of a Christian belief that the people of Western Europe summoned the first Crusade. The Westerners wanted to not only overthrow the Turks, but to end the persecution of the Christians, maltreatment of pilgrims, and degradation of the Holy Places. It is also noted, however, that the summoning of the Crusades was due to the Turkish conquest of the Near East, which is said to have constituted a very real threat to Christendom (Cahan, 13). It was this conquest which had to be countered by military action. But truth be told, the Christians who lived in Jerusalem were unaffected by the Muslims. “The Seljuks, heirs of orthodox Muslim tradition, applied to their non-Muslim subjects the legal protection afforded by Islam.” (Cahan, 9) Either way, the first Crusade did happen, and with it, the Holy Sepulchre was changed forever.



✂ The Crusaders ✂

In the latter half of the 11th century, the Holy Sepulchre was again in danger of being destroyed by the Turks. However, only in the West did the idea of defending Christianity and liberating the holy places in the East through holy war grow substantially. Both the idea and practice of Christian holy war developed under the papacy. They were moved by the desire to liberate the Holy Sepulchre from the Muslims. Words such as ‘pilgrimage’, ‘the expedition to

Jerusalem', 'the road to Jerusalem', 'the way to the Sepulchre', or 'the way to our Lord' were used to describe the first Crusade (Pernoud, 29).

Crusader folklore tells of a Jerusalem pilgrim named Peter the Hermit, who had summoned the first Crusade. The story tells of a dream that came to Peter while he slept in

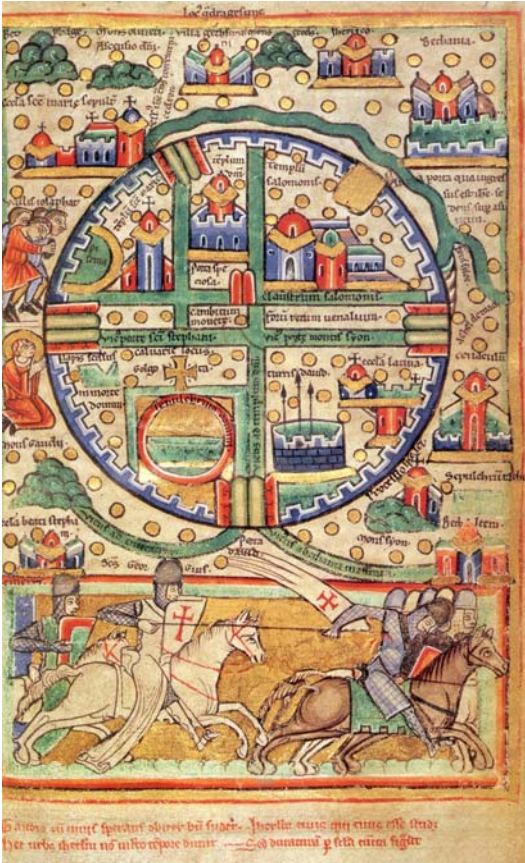


Fig. 8: Crusader conquest of Jerusalem.

the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Lord appeared to him and told him to go to the Pope, Urban II, in Rome and beg him to undertake the reconquest of the Holy Land (Pernoud, 33). Urban II soon called for a new papal edict with approval of an offensive war against Islam, but it is not certain that it was because of this humble hermit.

Within a few years, the Crusaders had taken siege on the holy city of Jerusalem. The aim of the Crusade from the outset had been to return the Holy Sepulchre to Christianity, and this was accomplished with great zeal. The Crusaders overran the whole city. "They swept up gold and

silver, horses and mules, and they stripped the houses of all their treasure. Afterwards, exhilarated and crying with delight, they went to worship at the Sepulchre and discharged their debts towards Him." (Pernoud, 62) It was through these 'exhilarating' acts that the question of justification of the holy war was pondered. Were the French only in this war for profit, the approval of God, or to return the church to Christianity? Whatever the true answer

may be, it was for this that men had left their homes and endeared hardships. Once Jerusalem had been taken, the majority of the Crusaders considered that they had fulfilled their vow to God, and went back home.

Godfrey of Bouillon, Tancred of Sicily, and Raymond of Toulouse led the First Crusade. Godfrey led the crusade in Jerusalem, and Crusaders and all Christians alike regarded Godfrey as 'the Advocate of the Holy Sepulchre'. When he was to be crowned king at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Patriarch stood at the door and asked the crowd if the man whom he was about to consecrate was indeed rightful heir to the throne. When the crowd answered him with a mighty shout, his question was affirmed and Godfrey was allowed to enter and be anointed as king (Pernoud, 74).

The Crusaders, following their seizure of Jerusalem in 1099, were the first to begin to call the church which housed the tomb of Christ, 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre'. The Church had a place in its liturgical use for the annual celebration of the date of the entry of the Christian army into Jerusalem on the 15 July. A procession was made to the place where the first soldiers had forced their way over the city walls and a sermon recalling the event was preached there (Pernoud, 80). The liturgical calendar was to be enriched with feast days celebrating the solemn transition of some pieces of the True Cross fragments to the churches in the West. It was not until the Crusaders took Jerusalem that the entrance tax to the city and the holy places was abolished. The Crusaders took great care in protecting the pilgrims in their movements from sanctuary to sanctuary and starting the work of their restoration. Ironically, it was in this first year of Christian rule that the miracle of the Holy Fire never took place.

Architectural historians and archaeologists agree on all the essential points when describing the Church as the Crusaders first saw it. The group of buildings already in existence in 1099 – i.e. the buildings of Constantine Monomachus – consisted of the following members:

A circular domed church, containing the Sepulchre and flanked on the north by a chapel of St. Mary the Virgin, on the south by a chapel of St. John, beyond which were chapels of the Holy Trinity and St. James the Brother of the Lord.

A church or chapel enclosing the traditional place of Crucifixion, having to the south of it a chapel of St. Mary the Virgin marking the place where the body of the Lord was embalmed and robed for burial.

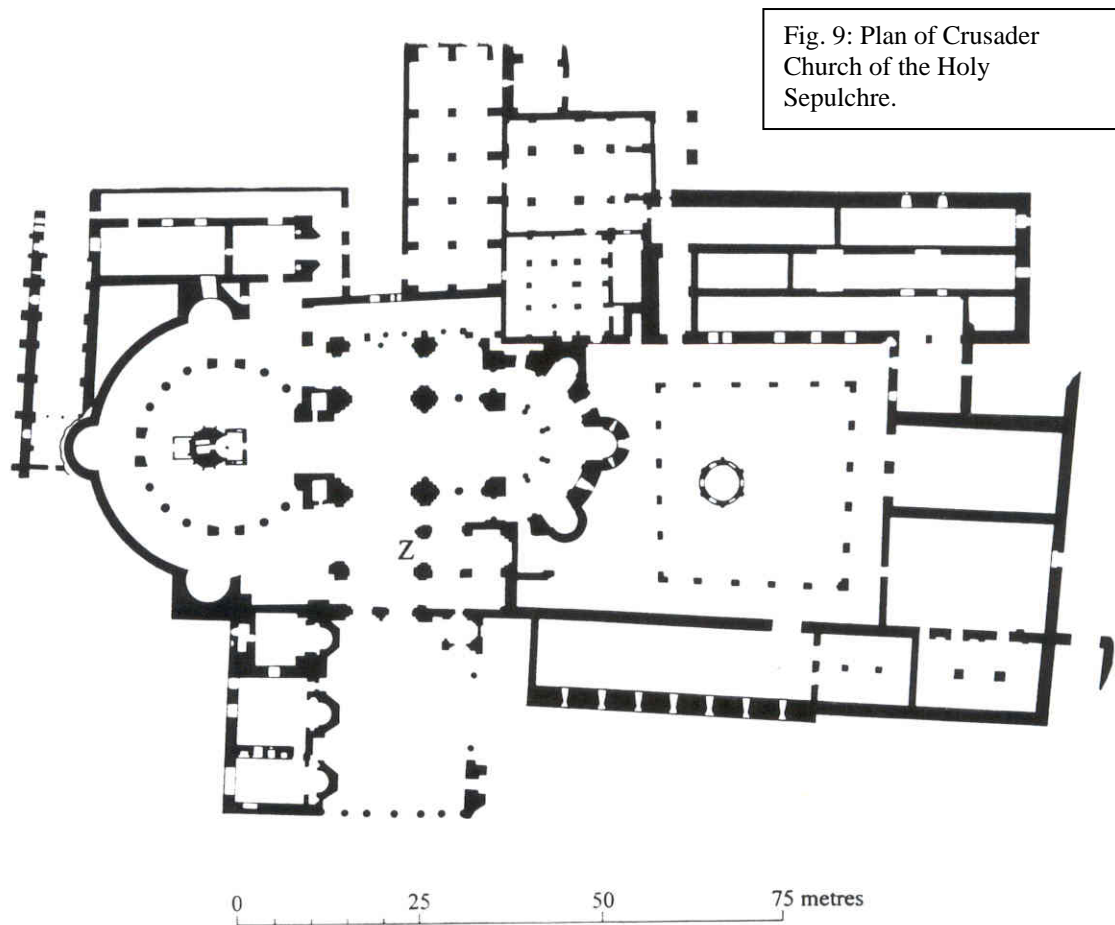
A small chapel over the place of the Finding of the Cross; between the circular church or *Anastasis*, the Church of Golgotha, and the place of the Finding of the Cross. There lay an atrium or open court. Around this court were certain oratories which mark places associated in history or legend with the Passion of Christ.

Across the street, which formed then as it does now, the south boundary of the precinct within which lay Golgotha, the Sepulchre, and the Crypt of the Cross, stood 2 churches dedicated to the same deity, but named 2 different names: St. Maria Latina and St. Maria Parva. (Duckworth, 208)

The Crusader passion of architecture and building, focused above all on the site of the Holy Sepulchre. The architects embellished the existing plan of Monomachus greatly. The Crusaders, passionate builders as they were, replaced the lost *martyrion* with a Romanesque cathedral (Tsafrir, 117). It had a rib-vaulted roof, the earliest of its kind after that of the Durham Cathedral (1092). The crossing is crowned with a great dome. The *Anastasis* was given a new dome as well. The all-inclusive work on the church was that of reorganization and unification.

Over the years 1099-1149, the Crusaders covered the courtyard with a roof, removed the front of the *Rotunda*, rebuilt, but also reoriented the Church so that it faced east – away from the tomb – rather than west towards it, and moved the entrance towards the southern façade side. The recent restoration work has not only revealed the beauty of the medieval shrine, it has also shown that far more exists of the Constantinian original than was previously

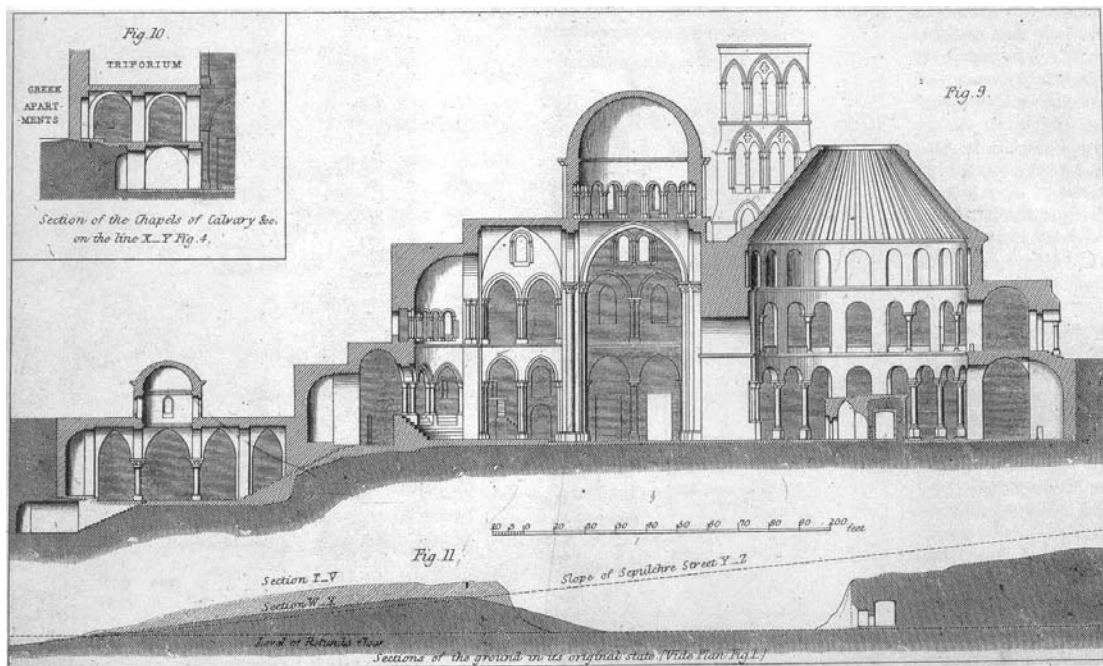
supposed. The eastern extremity of the new church was set nearby upon the line taken by the west wall of Constantine's *martyrion*.



The Christians enlarged the building by constructing a new choir and a transept to the east, thereby enclosing all the sacred spaces associated with the passion under one roof. The area of the Holy Garden was wonderfully suited to such a purpose and it was here that the church was rebuilt in the Romanesque style, with a transept that stretched from the Constantinian colonnade to that on the north. Over the church stood a graceful limestone and airy cupola in the very center of the building. Direct communication between the *Anastasis* and the new building was provided through the destruction of three apses, including the apse of Modestus (AD 528) and that of Constantine Monomachus (AD 1048), and the replacement

construction of a great triumphal arch was built above the side walls, making it possible to see the aedicule of the Holy Sepulchre and the *Anastasis* from the Cannon's Choir. North and south of this apse, other apses were constructed, which provided direct communication between the aisles of the Crusader church and the ambulatory of the *Anastasis*. The oratory, which lay to the north of the Constantinian façade of the *Anastasis* – where the famous painting of the Madonna was venerated – was set aside as the place where the relic of the True Cross was kept (Sandoli 1979, 50).

Fig. 10: Longitudinal section of the Crusader Church.



A new atrium was laid out, extending from the south wall of the new structure to the street running east and west between the Market and Patriarch streets. Along the west wall of this *atrium* projected the apses of the chapels of St. John, the Trinity, and St. James, as they

still do to this day. A new façade was raised to the south, with two great doors at the center, and was decorated with fine sculptures and mosaics.

For the first time, a bell tower of five stories – approximately 160 feet – was erected by the Spanish architect Jordano, in 1167 over the chapel of St. John the Evangelist in the southwest corner. It had small columns and arches around the windows and was crowned by a small 8-sided polyhedral cupola with a cross above. The Crusaders brought in bells, which were forbidden by the Muslim religion, during the first years they were there. They were initially mounted on a wooden turret, until the bell tower was constructed.



Fig. 11: Bell tower rendering.

Between 1111 and 1115, three new chapels were also erected along with a new Canon's residence and Patriarchate. "It was for the service of a *Priory* of Augustinian Cannons which was founded according to Albert of Aix in 1100 under Godfrey of Bouillon, but according to other authorities it was founded under King Baldwin II in 1120." (Duckworth, 215) The refectory, dormitory, and other chambers and offices provided for the canons were built on the north, east, and south sides of the cloister. The *Priory* of the Holy Sepulchre, with its noble church, was a manifestation of Provincial activity in religion and art. The architectural style in which the *Priory* and its church were built had been developed in Provence, and the master-builder, Magister Jordanus, was a Provençal (Wright, 11). A staircase was built in the western chapel courtyard from the Patriarch's Gate, a new gate

which connected Patriarch Street with the Holy Sepulchre. The gate is now blocked, but its decorations are still visible.

The existing *Golgotha* chapel, now Chapel of Adam, was taken down, and the Place of the Crucifixion was enclosed in the south transept of the new church. Inside the tomb of Christ, a large piece of the rock of the Holy Sepulchre was put back into its proper place. The piece had been cut out and hidden along with the relic of the Holy Cross. To protect the sacred rock from the collectors of relics, and from the commercial spectators, it was covered with a marble sarcophagus with three openings on it which allowed pilgrims to see the rock. Two doors were installed to facilitate pilgrims in the chapel.

The decoration of the aedicule was greatly improved. It was given its original round appearance, and was embellished on the outside with ten finely worked, small columns. Arches were constructed with cornices inscribed with Latin texts. A baldachino was placed above the aedicule. It had a cupola gilded with silver surmounted by a silver, life-size statue of the Risen Christ.

The area of the two chapels of the *Calvary* was extended to four times its original size, spreading out to the east. The south entry of *Calvary* rises sheer from the ground, “about the height of a lance,” as the Crusaders had seen it, and supports two chapels – the Orthodox and Latin (Perowne, 65). On the north side of the *Katholikon*, there are some very old Byzantine pillars which were re-used by the Crusaders. The south façade of the Holy Sepulchre Church, built around the middle of the 12th century, represents a perfect blending of Eastern and Western styles and motifs of architectural decoration in a single elevation.

The buildings added by the Crusaders were completed and dedicated on 15 July 1149 - 50 years after the capture of Jerusalem by the armies under the command of Godfrey of Bouillon. It is believed that this work was completed in a span of 20 years, due to the fact that the Crusaders did not immediately begin work on restoring the holy structures. A Latin inscription carved on the cornice line of one of the Church's two doors denotes this specific date of dedication:

.....SPNMSARA
)DIM°S...SED DOMIAC
 SAR CIRCVM SVPER.....
 ALVICH ERICO PATARCHA
 CUI° ENQVAT° PATR
 CHAS.....SEVEL VN°
 ABVRBE QVAE SIMILIS
 ERANT
 PVR(.....
 EXORT DNINVMERBAN
 TVR SIMVL ANN.....
VINDE
 CES...IVDICES.....

Fig. 12: Latin inscription of text.

*This place is holy, sanctified by the blood of Christ,
 By our consecration we add nothing to its holiness.
 But the house built around and above this sacred
 place
 Was consecrated on the fifteenth day of July,
 With other fathers present, by Fulcher the
 patriarch,
 Who was then in the fourth year of his patriarchate,
 The fiftieth year since the capture of the City,
 Which then shone like pure gold.
 From the birth of the Lord there were numbered
 Eleven hundred and forty nine years. (Biddle, 94)*

Besides the beautifying of the basilica by the use of marble, mosaics, paintings, and sculptures, there was an architectural grandeur of character of the whole structure. Pilgrims were in full praise for the dignified appearance of the Crusader basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. A merchant named Saewulf was one of the first pilgrims to follow in the wake of the Crusaders. He describes the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at some length, and most of his description still holds true today. The reason why most pilgrims went into such great detail of the Holy Sepulchre was because it was the high point of the whole pilgrimage. He tells us that the Holy Sepulchre itself, had been given, “a strong roof, lest rain should fall upon it, for it used to be open to the sky.” (Moore, 35) In another part of the church is the, “Chapel of St. John and to the Holy Trinity, in which is a place of Baptism, near which is a chapel of St.

James, who first held the See of Jerusalem.” (Moore, 36) The Church was as it had been enclosed and strengthened by the Crusaders.

A Muslim writer, Idrisi, saw the church in 1154, and thought the Crusader basilica was, “one of the marvels of the world.” More remarkable than the architectural monument was the generous way in which the Crusaders proved themselves ecumenical, and faithful to the universal Christian tradition (Bushell, 100). They kept all the main features of the former Eastern construction, and took over customs in use at the time. They wrote their inscriptions in both Greek and Latin, and left the rights of the Easterners intact so that they were free to worship at their own alters in peace. As the pilgrims entered they went on a procession around the structure starting where the Saviors’ body was laid.

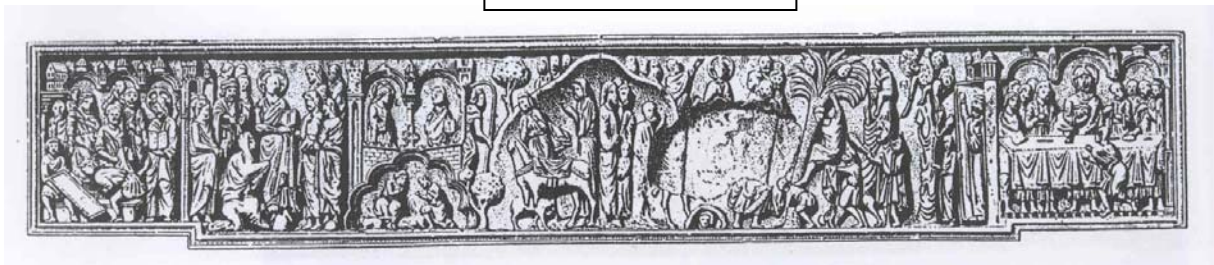
One entered the little vestibule to the tomb called the chapel of the Angel (10 by 7 feet), because it was believed that on that spot the angel announced to the holy women the fact of the resurrection. At the end of this chapel there is an opening four feet high by which one enters the Sepulcher chamber, which had room for four or five persons and no more. The tomb of the Savior is covered by a marble slab, to guard against such souvenir hunters as James of Verona or Leonard Frescobaldi. On that slab it was allowable to say mass. When a large body of pilgrims visited the church, it was necessary for the Franciscan guides to separate the group into three companies, select from each a priest to say mass, and allot to each company one of three alters, that of Calvary, that of the chapel of the Virgin, or that of the Sepulchre. One can well believe that the traveler who heard mass at the Sepulcher of his Lord enjoyed the *summum bonum* of his entire journey – perhaps all of his life. (Savage, 58)

The craftsmanship and finely articulated imagery that was used to a great extent in the new Crusader church was constantly praised and written about. The building programs undertaken in Palestine in the 12th and 13th centuries provided opportunities for the architects, artists, and artisans from both East and West. In the architectural sculpture of the 12th century Crusader church, there are stylistic borrowings from contemporary Romanesque schools in Provence, Burgundy, Aquitaine, and Tuscany, while there is evidence of inscriptions and

certain masonry marks which also reveal the presence of Greeks, Armenians, and Native Syrian Arabs among the masons (Tsafrir, 117).

The image of the Cleansing of the Temple appears in a central panel of a lintel in the basilica, and this reference to this is used repeatedly in 12th century writings dealing with the Crusades. It appears in The Praise of the New Chivalry by Bernard of Clairvaux, in the call for the second Crusade by Pope Eugene III, and in William of Tyre's version of the Clermont Address (Goitein, 326). Flanking this central panel of the Cleansing of the Temple are two panels elaborating Christological dogma. On the right is the true Triumphal Entry of Jesus – which in fact symbolizes the triumphal entry of the Crusaders, and the Last Supper – which conveys the human nature of Jesus (Goitein, 327). This reading of the lintel enables us to regard it as a message of Christological dogma of the two natures of Jesus, with the Cleansing of the Temple as its focus.

Fig. 13: Panels above lintel of doors.



The Jews and Muslims alike looked at this as a period of Crusader domination as a time of angst. They were all of driven out of the city, and many of their mosques and synagogues were destroyed, while some of them (like the Dome of the Rock) were converted into Christian churches. This act of converting mosques and synagogues to churches, however, was just as bad as destroying them in some cases. The city was carved into districts based on the nationality of the Christian settlers, the knightly orders, and various eastern Christian communities. The Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem was sent to Constantinople not

to return until about 1250 – after the fall of the Crusader kingdom in 1187 – and the Roman Catholics assumed the *praedominium* or right of pre-eminence, over the holy places (Wasserstein, 8).

One sphere in which Crusader architecture did have a discernible influence on later buildings was the architecture of the Ayyubids and the early Mamluks in Palestine itself. In some cases, such as the south façade of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, this may simply be the result of the reuse of architectural elements derived from disassembled Crusader buildings. It seems very probable, that many of the Christian and Muslim masons of Eastern origin who had worked for the Franks in the 11th or 12th century would have continued working for Muslim patrons as Palestine was gradually brought back under their control.



After the Crusaders

Although the Crusaders had officially left the city in 1187, some returned during the temporary truce made in 1228 between Emperor Frederick II and the Muslim authorities. A pilgrim who went by the name of Michael noted that pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre during this time was strictly forbidden. He tells us that Saladin, “shut the Church of the Resurrection and others also, and Christians, whether slaves or not, constantly gathered to pray and weep at their doors.” (Moore, 38) The church doors were kept shut until 1192, except to a few Latin priests who were allowed to officiate there.

The Crusader structure has suffered much impairment since its inauguration – earthquakes, fires, and intentional destruction. As the Crusades waned and the period of Islamic domination resumed, the keys to the church were given by the Sultan to two Muslim families – the Nuseibeh and the Juden – who have continued this custodianship to the present

day (Wright, 11). This was done to stop the constant petty skirmishing between the Christian churches over *praedominium* of the Church.

The *Priory* and Canons of the Holy Sepulchre were repossessed. The *Priory* church was handed over to the Greek Orthodox, and ever since that time, with the exception of the transitory Latin occupation of Jerusalem from 1229-1244, it has been the cathedral of the Greek Patriarchs. The rest of the *Priory* buildings passed into Muslim hands.

In 1244, the Kharizmians sacked Jerusalem, later using the priory buildings as a rock quarry for rebuilding the city walls. They also defaced the Anastasis, Golgotha chapel, and the Canon's church, but fortunately, did not destroy them. Since this time the Holy Sepulchre church has fallen into great misfortune.

In the year 1342, it was established for the Roman Catholic church by papal bull that the Franciscan order would be the official custodians of the holy places in the Holy Land that were under the Roman Catholic stewardship. For Greek Orthodox, the Brotherhood of the Tomb (*taphos*) has been its official custodian for the church of the Resurrection since the 16th century, although during the period of Ottoman Turkish Rule (1517-1917) the Greek patriarchs resided again in Constantinople.

In 1808, a great fire destroyed the aedicule. The repairs of 1810 were authorized by a special *firman*, or edict, obtained by the Greeks from Sultan Mahmud II. These repairs were widely concluded as a disaster. They were supervised by the Greek architect Komnenos of Mitylene, who has been harshly judged for his work on the building by introducing heavy, dull pilasters, erecting many dividing walls, and blocking up most of the windows. "The lack of taste in this whole reconstruction is uniformly still displayed in the aedicule, or little chapel, over the tomb, the central but most miserable feature of the modern basilica."

(Bushell, 101) Structurally it was not a success, except in the important sense that it saved the building from collapse until a thorough restoration became possible.

The whole church was again refaced in 1829, which survives today, but further renovation of the *Rotunda* was carried out in 1863-68 under the supervision of the French and Russian governments. The architect Mauss supervised this renovation of the Holy Sepulchre. The plan and dimensions of the medieval structures were retained, but their beauty was not restored. An earthquake in 1927 caused extensive damage and buttressing, beams, and scaffolding covered much of the interior until it was restored in 1979.

Until the recent renovations in the late 1960's, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was severely dilapidated – joints were becoming dislodged from rainwater deterioration, and the whole site was in disarray, especially the aedicule. Before the dome was again rebuilt in 1868, rain water poured down through the *oculus* of the dome on to the aedicule. The rain water rotted the iron cramps holding the blocks of the aedicule together, with the result that the weight of the upper vaults, has settled down on cladding of the lower walls of the aedicule (Biddle, 108). This is forcing the facing stones, no longer retained by their cramps to bulge outwards.

After the earthquake in 1927, there was a fire in 1934 which caused terrible damage to the building that was already in danger of collapsing. Another fire in 1949 prompted an agreement between Roman Catholics, Armenian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox to start a restoration on the building beginning in 1960. “The present state of the unsupported east and west walls is parlous, elements in the east front having moved as much as 3 cm in the years 1990-93.” (Biddle, 108) It is only with the hope of possible further reconstruction and renovation on the ailing church that we can assure its continued survival.



Selected Bibliography



- Armstrong, Karen, *Jerusalem – One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997).
- Benvenisti, Meron, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1970).
- Biddle, Martin, *The Tomb of Christ* (Gloucestershire, England: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999).
- Bushell, Gerard, *Churches of the Holy Land* (London: American-Israel Publishing Company Limited, 1969).
- Cahen, Claude, “An Introduction to the First Crusade,” *Past & Present* 6 (1954): 6-30.
- Couasnon, Charles, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).
- Duckworth, H.T.F., *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1922).
- Elon, Amos, *Jerusalem – City of Mirrors* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989).
- Gibson and Taylor, *Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1994).
- Goitein, Shlomo D., “Jerusalem in the Arab Period (638-1099),” *The Jerusalem Cathedra: Volume 2* (1982): 168-196, 325-26.
- Harvey, William, *Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem – Structural Survey Final Report* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).
- Kruger, Jurgan, *Die Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem* (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2000).
- Moore, Elinor A., *The Ancient Churches of Old Jerusalem – The Evidence of the Pilgrims* (Lebanon: Khayats Press, 1961).
- Orlandi, Tito, *Eudoxia and the Holy Sepulchre – A Constantinian Legend in Coptic* (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1980).
- Pernoud, Regine, *The Crusaders* (Philadelphia, PA: Dufour Editions, 1964).
- Perowne, Stewart, *Holy Places of Christendom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- Peters, F.E., *Jerusalem* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- Sandoli, Sabino de, *Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1979).
- Sandoli, Sabino de, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre – Keys, Doors, Doorkeepers* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1986).

Savage, H.L., "Pilgrimages and Pilgrim Shrines in Palestine and Syria after 1050," in Kenneth M. Setton, ed., *A history of the Crusades, Volume IV: The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 199-220.

Tsafir, Yoram, *Ancient Churches Revealed* (Jerusalem: Old City Press Limited, 1993).

Wasserstein, Bernard, *Divided Jerusalem* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

Wright, J. Robert, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre/The Church of the Resurrection: An Ecumenical Guide* (Jerusalem: Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity, 1995).

