# The Basilica and the Rotunda
# Type, Analogy and Ritual in Medieval Europe

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Temple Church of the Knights Templars (1185 AD), City of London.
Photo by the author, 2019

Jerusalem is more than just a city; it's an idea. In the paleo-Christian world, Jerusalem was an immaterial place, existing only in the minds and souls of those who believed in Christ—accessible only through imagination, meditation and prayer. This sense of universality (or *Catholicity*) was radically egalitarian, creating a form of worship that was unbound by geographic constraints, allowing Christianity—an illegal monotheistic cult within a pagan Roman empire—to spread widely across Asia Minor and Europe.[01] Christianity was initially composed of autonomous units operating in hiding from the domestic setting of the house-church (*Domus Ecclesiae*).[02] In the fourth century AD, upon Christianity's legalization by Emperor Constantine, the religion was transformed into a public, hierarchical and powerful institution.[03] This transition shifted the Empire's attention to Jerusalem, which would be reinstated as a physical place where Constantine's victory could be made visible, monumental and territorial by defining the boundaries of the new Holy Land through a sequence of churches, chapels and baptisteries built over locations from the Old and New Testaments.

01 Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 77; E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land pilgrimage in the later Roman Empire 312-460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 115.

02 The *Domus Ecclesiae,* or house-church, was the first place of Christian congragation. It was a place befitting intimate rituals, such as the Eucharist which commemorates the Last Supper, while providing protection from pagan prosecution. Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1986), 27.

03 This process was described as a move from "lay democracy to a clerical authoritarianism." Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Penguin; Revised edition, 1993), 48.

This state project established Jerusalem as a physical destination for Christian pilgrims where they can recite Biblical scriptures in their original geographic context.[04]

The Jerusalem liturgy emerged in this new sacred territory with a set of site-specific rituals. Leading the faithful between the various locations of Christ's life, death and resurrection, it ritualized the collective memories of the Christian religion *in-situ*.[05] Among these sacred sites, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was the most spatially complex and theologically charged.[06] Erected in 335 AD, it commemorates Christ's crucifixion and resurrection at the site where these two dogmatic events took place. The church is made up of two types, a basilica and a rotunda, which are connected by a large atrium, a shared axis, and a walled enclosure.[07] On the east side of the complex, the Martyrium Basilica terminates in the Hill of *Golgotha*, or Calvary, the place where Christ was crucified. On the western end, the free-standing Anastasis Rotunda enshrines the empty stone tomb where Jesus was buried and from which he was resurrected. In order to understand the idiosyncratic rituals that were performed in and around these two spaces, it is crucial to explain their typological origin in Roman architecture.

The word *basilica* appeared in Latin in the second century BC[08] to describe a large hall for public gatherings that included markets, military facilities, courthouses and domestic reception halls, functions that can all be anachronistically referred to as secular.[09] The Basilica enclosed could take many forms—it had wide or narrow proportions, single or multiple entries, a central nave with or without multiple aisles that were separated by arcades or colonnades, and topped with clerestory windows or an upper gallery.[10] These utilitarian buildings initially constructed a field condition in which every direction was possible; the lack of orientation maintained its egalitarian character.[11] By the third century AD, a particular form of basilica was gaining favor in imperial Rome: a timber-roofed structure consisting of one or three naves, with a longitudinal composition that stretched, on an axis, from the entrance on the short end to a semi-circular apse on the other. This directionality was reinforced by arcades or colonnades that led the visitors' movement and gaze to the raised platform on the apse, the *tribunal,* which was the seat of the emperor whose roles extended to civic, judiciary, and religious responsibilities.[12] This basilica befitted Christianity's practical, theological, and political needs: it was easy to construct and flexible in scale, it positioned

04 John Eade, and Michael J. Sallnow (eds.), *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (Champaign: Illinois University Press, 1991), 8.

05 These sites include: the Basilica of the Apostles on Mount Zion, the Chapel of St. James (352 AD), the Martyrium of John the Baptist on the Mount of Olives (363 AD), an octagonal church on the site of the Ascension, and a church in memory of the Agony (358 AD). Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* ed. And trans., Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

06 Although the church commemorates events that had an inherently spatial dimension in religious recollection—the crucifixion and entombment of Christ—they were not readily visible as material traces or artefacts in fourth-century Jerusalem. The process of their discovery and designation is described in the biography of Emperor Constantine, written by Eusebius of Caeseara in 337 AD: *Vita Constantini* (*The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine*), Chapter XXV.

07 Carlos Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity: Type in Architecture,* ed. Claudia Mion, trans. Team Olistis (Éditions Cosa Mentale, 2021), 93.

08 Such as the Basilica Porcia, built in 184 BC in the forum of Republican Rome. Ward Perkins, "Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 22 (1954), 71.

09 Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (London: Penguin Books, 1965), 42.

10 Richard Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1976): 122.

11 In, *Rituals and Walls: The Architecture of Sacred Spac*e, Pier Vittorio Aureli argues that while sacred space is dictated by a clear orientation, the essence of secular space is the absence of a defined sense of direction. Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Rituals and Walls: The Architecture of Sacred Spac*e (London: Architectural Association, 2016).

12 Aureli, *Rituals and Walls,* 22; Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica," 125; Carlos Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity: Type in Architecture,* ed. Claudia Mion, trans. Team Olistis (Éditions Cosa Mentale, 2021), 25; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* 42; Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity,* 39.

Christian architecture at the highest rank of public monumental buildings, and, most importantly, its axial orientation could be instrumentalized to construct a hierarchy between clergy, faithful and catechumens (baptismal candidates) during rituals.[13]

In Jerusalem, Constantine ordered the bishop to construct, "a basilica superior to those in all other places," over the sites of Christ's crucifixion.[14] Accessed from the Roman Cardo, it was a monumental five-nave basilica complete with marble floors and a gilded ceiling spanning 22 meters wide.[15] On a slight offset from the basilica's axis stood *Calvary*, the hill of Christ's crucifixion, which was exposed to its bedrock. About the rituals performed there, we can learn from the diaries of the Spanish nun Egeria who stayed in Jerusalem from 381 to 384 AD.[16] During lent, she writes, the bishop sits in the center of the basilica with the presbyteries standing on either side; those who wish to be baptized, walk up to the bishop across the central axis of the church to be interrogated on their moral compatibility with the Church.[17] When he wishes to teach the bible, the bishop sits in the center of the basilica while the *catechumens* (baptismal candidates, both men and women) sit around him in a circle and engage in a dialogue about the meaning of each scriptural passage.[18] When preaching to a large audience, the bishop stood in the raised apse, where he could conduct the loud exclamations of prayers by the faithful.[19]

Across from the large open-aired atrium stood the Anastasis Rotunda—a double-shell, freestanding structure measuring 33.7 meters in diameter. Inside, a circular arcade was supported by a ring of alternating piers and columns surrounding Christ's empty tomb.[20] This spatial layout was modelled after Sepulchral architecture of the second and third centuries, the Roman *mausolea* and the Christian *martyria*. While often indistinguishable, these funerary buildings differed in their religious meaning: a mausoleum sheltered the grave of an imperial ruler, not a god, and was therefore theologically neutral. The Martyrium, on the other hand, commemorated the life of a saint who sacrificed their life for Christianity and was thus religious in character.[21] These two types were united formally and theologically in the Anastasis Rotunda, which was both a *mausoleum* and a *martyrium* for Christ who was both the emperor of heaven and a man who sacrificed his life as the greatest martyr on earth.[22]

13 The first church to be built as a basilica was erected in Rome by Emperor Constantine I, in the immediate aftermath of his 312 AD conquest. The single-nave basilica terminated in a semi-circular apse, with a pair of aisles on either side separated by arcades.# Measuring 75 m by 55 m, it could hold a congregation of a several thousand worshippers and at least two hundred members of the clergy.# This strictly longitudinal space proved ideal for the needs of the early church: the procession of the bishop and his presbyteries could move through the central nave; readings could be directed from the apse and across the aisles; and offerings could be given one at a time before the apse altar. Perkins, *Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica*, 85; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture,* 48; Krautheimer, "The Constantinian Basilica," 135.

14 Perkins, *Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica,* 69.

15 Eusebius, *The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine,* Chapter XL.

16 Ibid.

17 Egeria 45.1–6, in Wilkinson, John, *Egeria's Travels* (Oxford: Oxford Books, 1999), 161–162.

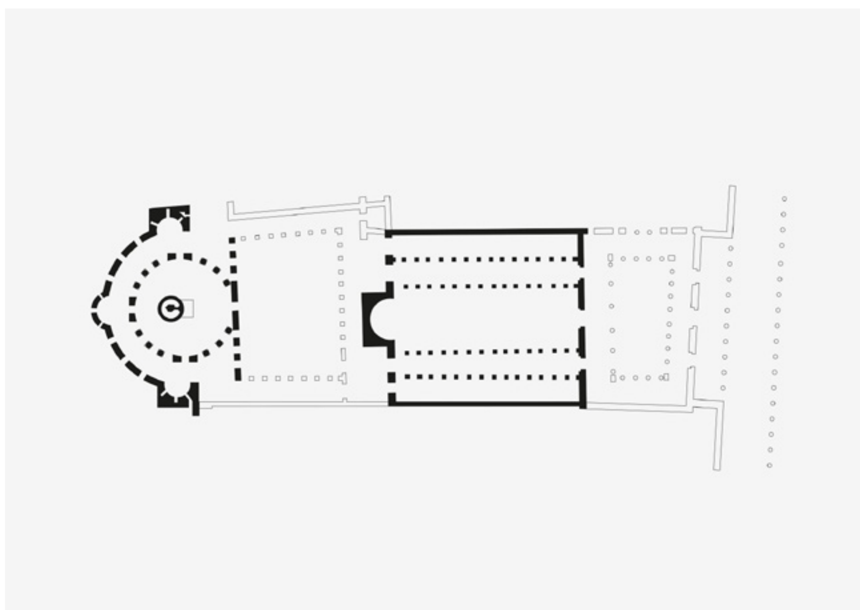
18 Ibid., 46.2.

19 Ibid., 46.4.

20 Eugene W. Kleinbauer, "The Anastasis Rotunda and Christian architectural invention," in *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art: Studies in Honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Bianca Kühnel (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Center for Jewish Art, 1998), 140.

21 Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to 'An Iconography of Medieval Architecture'," *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes* 5 (1942), 13.

22 Ibid., 64.



Eusebius' description of the church on Golgotha.
Drawing by the author, after John Wilkinson

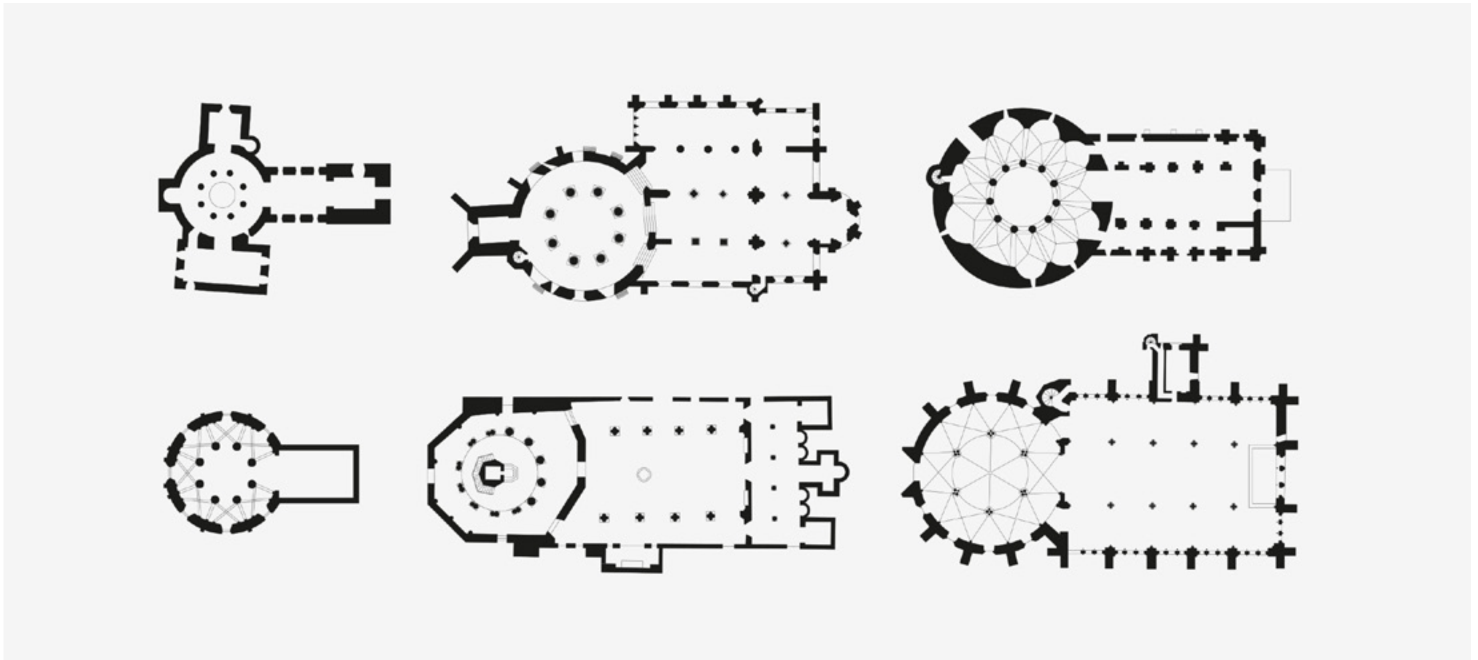
Located at the pinnacle of the spatial and spiritual hierarchy of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Rotunda held services that tended to be more exclusive and contemplative. Its space accommodated a service around the tomb, separated from the barrel-vaulted ambulatory used for circulation. This double-shell composition allowed for an intimate and undisturbed proximity to Christ's grave, and thus fostered a higher degree of affectivity and immersion. Egeria describes the ritual of communion, where the bishop leads the procession out of the Basilica, across the atrium, and into the Anastasis Rotunda through its eight doors, which were then closed shut. The bishop entered the railings of Christ's grave, while the faithful—only those that had been baptized—encircle him entirely within the internal ring of support. The catechumens, meanwhile, waiting in the atrium, cannot see the mysteries of Christ's resurrection—but can hear the loud applause coming from within.[23]

The spatialization of these rituals reveals what is at stake in Jerusalem: the tension between the hierarchical and universal characters of the early church, as it is embodied in the linear and round architectural types. In the basilica, the axiality of its walls, columns, arcades and apse constructed a linear rhythm, facilitating rituals with a varying degree of distance and interaction between the bishop, his congregation, and the faithful. Moving from the center of the nave to the apse, speaking to rows of audience or a circle of listeners, or leading a precession to the Anastasis, the bishop instrumentalizes his power in space and time.[24] In the Rotunda, however, hierarchy diminishes; all those inside the inner ring of columns share an equal proximity with Christ, whose death is ritualized through stillness, meditation and prayer. The spatial tension between the two types also encapsulates the ambiguous character of Christianity at the time of its rise to power: its victory is celebrated in the basilica, while its greatest sacrifice is commemorated in the rotunda. These private and public forms of worship draw lines of horizontal and vertical axiality that intersect through the choreography of the worshippers, whose bodies construct the new Jerusalem type: a juxtaposition of two distinct functions that symbolize and spatialize the tension between victory and sacrifice.

23 Egeria, 46.6, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels,* 163.
24 Aureli, *Rituals and Walls,* 22.

In his seminal study on typology, Carlos Martí Arís argues that type is "understood as a principle of organization by which a series of elements, governed by specific relationships, acquire a certain structure."[25] It is a formal constant that can be found in a series of structures that share the same *essential* composition of architectural elements. This means that identifying a type allows us to see similarities between buildings that are otherwise dissimilar, focusing on the structural conditions of a building rather than its superficial appearance.[26] By identifying what Martí Arís calls a "deep structure," one can find "etymological roots" between architectural objects and thus establish analogical links across time and space.[27] Type, as the essence of a structure, expresses something that is permanent and stable, a generalization found beyond a building's construction technique, decorative style, means or scale.[28] As Martí Arís writes, "through the idea of type, then, we are seeking an approach to architecture that is somewhat different to chronology. This momentary suspension of historical time enables us to identify structural analogies between buildings of different styles and appearances, boiling them down to an essential idea.[29]

Following this interpretation, I argue that the combination of a linear and a round space emerged as a new type in fourth-century Jerusalem. The use value of this type extends beyond the city's liturgy and into Medieval Europe at a time when the physical city of Jerusalem grew less amenable to visitors under the Persian and Islamic conquests of the seventh century. In their desire to build an alternative to the Holy Land, Western institutions replicated the Jerusalem type in the construction of local churches, thus setting the stage for the local liturgy to perform rituals that were analogous to the ones performed in the real city. The following paper focuses specifically on two churches constructed during the twelfth century, in Bologna and London, in order to understand how the Jerusalem type was instrumentalized to construct a metaphor for the holy city. These "local" Jerusalems did not only change the liturgical condition of the city, but also shaped civic consciousness, urban fabric and political power.



From left: St. Michael's Church, Fulda (820 AD); The Holy Sepulchre, Northampton (1100 AD ); Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre (1049 AD); Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Cambridge (1130 AD); Santo Stefano, Bologna (1141 AD); Temple Church, London (1185 AD). Digital line drawing by the author, not to scale.

25 Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity,* 46.
26 Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity,* 30.
27 Ibid., 26, 67.
28 Ibid., 26.
29 Ibid., 36.

## BRANDING BOLOGNA: THE CHURCH OF SANTO STEFANO

The church of Santo Stefano is a complex of religious buildings in Bologna commonly referred to as *Santa Gerusalemme* or *Sette Chiese* (Seven Churches). It was built in the twelfth century following two devastating events—a massive earthquake in AD 1117 and the great fire of AD 1141—that destroyed many of the city's monuments, including its cathedral, and left it in a state of civic and religious vacuum.[30] This void was filled in AD 1180 when a miraculous manuscript appeared as the *Deus ex Machina* of Bologna. This manuscript chronicles the life of St. Petronius, bishop of Bologna between AD 432 and 450, who was said to have visited Jerusalem in the fifth century to measure the real tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Upon returning, the manuscript states, Petronius built Santo Stefano's church, where he erected, "with much labor," a replica of Christ's tomb that was, "marvelously constructed, like the Sepulcher of the Lord."[31] This Bolognese Sepulcher later housed the relics of St. Petronius (which were also discovered in the twelfth century), who became the city's new patron.[32]

In reality, the tomb itself has little in common with the one in Jerusalem. It is located at the center of Santo Stefano's "Holy Sepulcher," an irregular octagonal structure covered by a dodecagonal dome, and is encircled by a ring of twelve supports and an ambulatory that is surmounted by a gallery. Like in Jerusalem, the centrally planned structure in Bologna is accessed through several doors from a porticoed courtyard. With its arcades on the long sides, its plan recalls that of a three-nave basilica, creating a linear rhythm that culminates both visually and physically in an octagonal structure. At the other edge of the courtyard is a shallow structure that terminates in three reliquary chapels, two of which take the form of a semi-circular apse while the central one is cruciform in plan and contains an artificial mound with a wooden cross to mark the hill of Calvary.[33] In addition to this central composition of elements, the complex also includes the aisled Church of St Giovanni Battista, located to the south of the Octagon; the Crypt, with its central nave and double aisles, housed the relics of the saints; a Benedictine cloister; and an additional chapel.

Much like the Jerusalem type, the central components in Santo Stefano—the octagon on the one side and the cruciform chapel on the other—are built to house a commemorative tomb and a theologically-charged site, respectively. Analogous to the Sepulcher of Christ and the Hill of Golgotha in Jerusalem, Petronius' tomb and the Bolognese Calvary set the stage for a ritual where worshippers can ritualize the movement from the site of crucifixion to the shrine of burial. On Good Friday, for example, a replica of the Cross was enclosed within the tomb of St. Petronius. Saturday through Monday men and women, on alternating days, were invited to enter the tomb. A line stretched through the courtyard as visitors waited to see the Cross in a private manner, thus preserving the original function of the centrally planned structure as a place for individual commemoration.[34] On Easter morning a procession of monks, carrying candles and singing *Aurora Lucis rutilat,* walked single file across the middle axis of the courtyard and into the octagon of the Holy Sepulcher. This ritual—which involves an axial procession into a domed funerary

30 Robert Ousterhout, "Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination: Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Images," *Gesta* 48, no. 2 (2009): 162–163.

31 *Vita Sancti Petronii,* quoted in Morris, Collin, "Bringing the Holy Sepulchre to the West: S. Stefano, Bologna, from the Fifth to the Twentieth Century," in *The Church Retrospective*, Volume 33, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 36.

32 Robert Ousterhout, "Flexible Topography and Transportable Geography," in *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art; Studies in Honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday,* Ed. Bianca Kühnel. (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1998), 399.

33 Robert Ousterhout, "The Church of Santo Stefano: A 'Jerusalem' in Bologna," in *Gesta*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 312.

34 Ibid., 318.

structure—recalls the service in Jerusalem by the bishop and his clergy.[35] On the other edge, the Bolognese "Calvary" hosted the service of the *Adoratio Crucis*, whereby worshippers could kiss the Cross in a small chapel adjacent to the open-air courtyard.[36]

The retroactive invention of the journey of St. Petronius to Jerusalem and the subsequent foundation of Santo Stefano was crucial in the aftermath of the disasters that struck Bologna in the twelfth century. Erecting and ritualizing a local Jerusalem did not only boost civic pride and unite its citizens through public rituals, but also attracted an influx of pilgrims who revived the city's economy.[37] Indeed, about a decade after the construction of the church, Bologna began an urban revival that lasted for a century, growing the city from 23 to 100 hectares.[38] Despite having neither a basilica nor a rotunda, the Church of Santo Stefano constructed a typological interpretation of the Jerusalem type, combining the double-shell octagon and the arcaded courtyard, acting as a roof-less basilica. Santo Stefano thus strengthens Martí Arís' claim that type, "is not concerned by the physiognomic aspects of architecture. A type emerges when we recognize 'structural similarities' between certain architectural objects, regardless of their differences at the most obvious, superficial level."[39] In the case of Santo Stefano, the structural resemblance to Jerusalem surpasses its superficial dissimilarity. For the Medieval mind, these two Jerusalems became indistinguishable. Emerging as a pilgrimage site, the Bologna church branded Bologna as a proxy for the holy city and changed the urban conditions of Medieval Europe.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, (ca. 12th Century),
Basilica of Santo Stefano, Bologna.
Photo by the author, 2019

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 316.
37 The monks of the Celestial Order in Santo Stefano granted indulgences for those making a pilgrimage to Santo Stefano equal to those received after traveling to the holy city itself. During the Middle Ages, the church provided indulgences—a religious currency that freed one from purgatory—given to a sinner in return for confession, donation or pilgrimage. Jonathan Sumption, *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2003), 8, 136, 168.
38 J.K. Hyde, *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973), 38.
39 Martí Arís, *Variations of Identity,* 30.

## LONDON'S HARAM EL SHARIF: THE TEMPLE CHURCH

The second case study is the Temple Church in London. It was built in the twelfth century by the Templars, Christianity's first monastic-military order who ruled by force and by faith.[40] Established during the First Crusade—the first in a series of religious wars waged by the Latin Church to conquer the Holy Land—the Order of the Templars was intimately tied to Jerusalem, power and violence. In AD 1099, when the First Crusade captured Jerusalem, the city had been under Islamic rule for over 400 years.[41] The religious focal point of this city was the man-made plateau of the Temple Mount, then dominated by two Islamic shrines: the Al-Aqsa Mosque, a rectangular seven-aisled structure that could accommodate up to 3,000 worshippers,[42] and the Dome of the Rock, an Octagonal structure with a golden dome.[43] The Dome of the Rock, like the Anastasis Rotunda, encircled a mythical site: the exposed bedrock that is believed to be Muhammad's point of dispatch to heaven, which previously stood at the base of the Jewish Temple of Solomon, and later where the Israelite Patriarch Abraham nearly sacrificed his first son, Isaac. While the two structures were physically separate from each other, the enclosure could nevertheless be perceived as one religious site, the Haram al-Sharif.

When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, their focus was not only on reclaiming the destroyed grounds of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, but also to appropriate the shrines on the Haram al Sharif for Christianity.[44] It is on the site of the *Templum Domini*—formerly the Haram al Sharif—that the Order of the Templars was established. Officially *The Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon,*[45] the Templars converted the basilical mosque into an armory and lodging, and added a chapel for St. James and a sanctuary for Mary in the Dome of the Rock. While officially charged with safeguarding pilgrims to the Holy Land (they even held the keys to the Holy Sepulcher), they quickly spread through Europe where they became incredibly powerful by mobilizing manpower across the continent, acting as money lenders to kings and collecting their alms in gold, jewelry and land.[46] By the twelfth century, they had accumulated so much wealth that their power had to find a physical base that could give visibility and credibility to that power, reflecting their control of both resources in Europe and of Jerusalem itself.

40 The monastic life of a Templar was regulated by a set of rules: times of meals, types of foods, the carrying of any possession, sending and receiving letters, clothing and even one's speech was limited. In appraisal of their modest appearance as monastic knights, the rule dictates*: "You cover your horses with silk, and plume your armor with I know not what sort of rags; you paint your shields and your saddles; you adorn your bits and spurs with gold and silver and precious stones, and then in all this glory you rush to your ruin with fearful wrath and fearless folly […]. Do you think the swords of your foes will be turned back by your gold, spare your jewels or be unable to pierce your silks?"* Robert Wojtowicz, "The Original Rule of the Knights Templar: A Translation with Introduction," (Master's thesis, Western Michigan University, 1991), 14; Helen J. Nicholson, "At the Heart of Medieval London: The New Temple in the Middle Ages," in, *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, eds. Robin Griffiths-Jones and David Park, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 1.

41 Islam's spiritual connection to Jerusalem is prescribed in the Quran, when Muhammad embarked on a nocturnal journey (*Isra*) from Mecca to "the further sanctuary" (*al-Masjid al-Aqsa).* [Quran, 17:1]. It is there that Muhammad meets Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Jesus, before ascending to heaven. This mythical excursion ties the two cities together: the emerging religion with the origin of monotheistic faith, and Muhammad himself to the Biblical prophets. Uri Rubin, "Muhammad's Night Journey (isra') to al-Masjid al-Aqsa: Aspects of the Earliest Origins of the Islamic Sanctity of Jerusalem," *Al Qantara* 1, (January 2008): 148–164;, Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem, the Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012), 205.

42 According to Arculf's Pilgrimage.

43 Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 44–46.

44 In this violent process, the basilical Al-Aqsa Mosque was renamed the, "Temple of Solomon," and the octagonal Dome of the Rock the, "Temple of the Lord," attempting to bypass Islamic history by claiming a direct connection to the days of the Temple of Solomon and the Israelite Kingdom of David. Annabel Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 57.

45 *Pauperes commilitones Christi templique Salomonici.*

46 The Templars were essentially powerful bankers: for example, they loaned money to King Baldwin in order to secure a relic of the True Cross, and in 1215 they loaned King John 1,100 marks to obtain troops. William Page, *A History of the County of London: Volume 1, London Within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark* (London: Victoria County History, 1909). Regarding their wealth, "[t]hey are said to have vast possessions, both on this side of the sea and beyond. There is not a province in the Christian world today that does not bestow some part of its possessions upon these brethren, and their property is reported to be equal to the richest of kings." William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* 1: 524–526.

The Templars arrived in London in AD 1128.[47] Their first church was built in Holborn, yet they were given bigger land in 1161 by King Henri II (1154–1189) on the banks of the Thames, just off the River Fleet between Ludgate and Westminster.[48] The Templars' new site—which had both access to maritime transportation and the prestige of the river exposure—was built as an enclaved precinct protected from the city by walls and gates.[49] Inside, the Templars planted orchards and built a cloister, stables and lodging for three groups: knights, priests and servants.[50] At the center of the precinct was the Temple Church, the order's focal point, where they celebrated mass, conducted business and welcomed pilgrims.

As in Jerusalem, the Temple Church is composed of two distinct types: a rotunda, known as the "Round," and a rectangular choir. In the Round, an inner ring of six marble piers (each consisting of a cluster of four columns) is encircled by a lower vaulted ambulatory; eight arched windows puncture the thick mass of the drum, which is supported by exterior buttresses.[51] The protruding choir was a hall-church type with a central nave and two aisles, which terminate in a raised altar on the flat wall of the eastern edge.[52] Both the nave and aisles are topped by ribbed pointed arches that rise to an equal height, and the supporting columns consist of four shafts that are connected to the arcade's arches and the vault's ribs.[53] Eugene Viollet le Duc specifically associated this type of church with the Templars: "one gave the name of Temples, during the Middle Ages, to chapel of the commanderies of the Templars; these chapels were habitually built on a circular plan, as a reminder [*souvenir*] of the Holy Sepulchre."[54]

However, Viollet le Duc focuses on the superficial similarities and ignores the *deep structure* of both the Holy Sepulcher and Temple Church as they are understood by reading the rituals enacted within them. Like in Jerusalem, the circular space in London was reserved for events that were of a higher rank while the rectangular space was commonly used for public occasions. The Templar's infamous initiation ceremonies, for example, took place in two stages across the entire church: first, the novice was surrounded by his family and friends in the choir; then, only the ordained brothers would escort him on a procession into the Round, where he would recite his vows of chastity and poverty to God and the Order.[55] Hence, there was a clear hierarchical distinction between the basilica-like space of the choir, where all believers were invited to partake in public services, and the Round, where members were perceived as superior to the rest yet equal amongst themselves. The Round is also where the brother-knights would hold their chapter meetings every Sunday, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, sat in a circle with their backs to the perimeter wall of the rotunda, without a hierarchical division between them.[56]

47 William Page, *A History of the County of London: Volume 1, London Within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark* (London: Victoria County History, 1909).

48 Ben Quash and Aaron Rosen, *Visualising a Sacred City: London, Art and Religion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

49 Christopher Wilson, "Gothic Architecture Transplanted: The Nave of the Temple Church in London," in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, eds. Robin Griffiths-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 23; Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem,* 79.

50 B., Honeybourne, "The Templar Precinct in the Days of the Knights," *Ancient Monument Society* 16 (1968–1969): 34.

51 Robert W. Billings, *Architectural Illustrations and Account of the Temple Church* (London, 1838), 9.

52 Virginia Jansen, "Light and Pure: The Templars' New Choir," i *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, eds. David Park and Robin Griffith-Jones (London: Boydell Press, 2010), 45.

53 Christopher Wilson, "Gothic Architecture Transplanted: The Nave of the Temple Church in London," in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, eds. Robin Griffiths-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 25.

54 Eugene Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire Raisonné du Architectura Française,* 9:13, trans. Annabel Wharton, in *Selling Jerusalem,* 88. Historian Virginia Jansen follows Viollet le Duc's interpretation and argues that as much as the Round is an obvious import from Jerusalem, the choir is distinctly local. She compares it to the Trinity Chapel in Salisbury Cathedral (1220), the Castle Hall of Henri III in Winchester (1222–1236), and Archbishop Chapel at Lambeth Palace, who all employ a similar use of columns, lancet windows, and Purbeck marble.# In fact, the Choir's stylistic elements are reminiscent of those undertaken in southern England under the patronage of the king in the 1220s, and the construction of the Temple's choir began when Henri III decided to be buried there in 1231, when a generous grant was offered to the Order. Jansen, *Light and Pure: The Templar's New Choir*, 49-65.

55 Ibid., 5.

56 Nicholson, *At the Heart of Medieval London: The New Temple in the Middle Ages,* 4.

Outside/Inside the Rotunda of the Temple Church of the Knights Templars.
Photo by the author, 2019

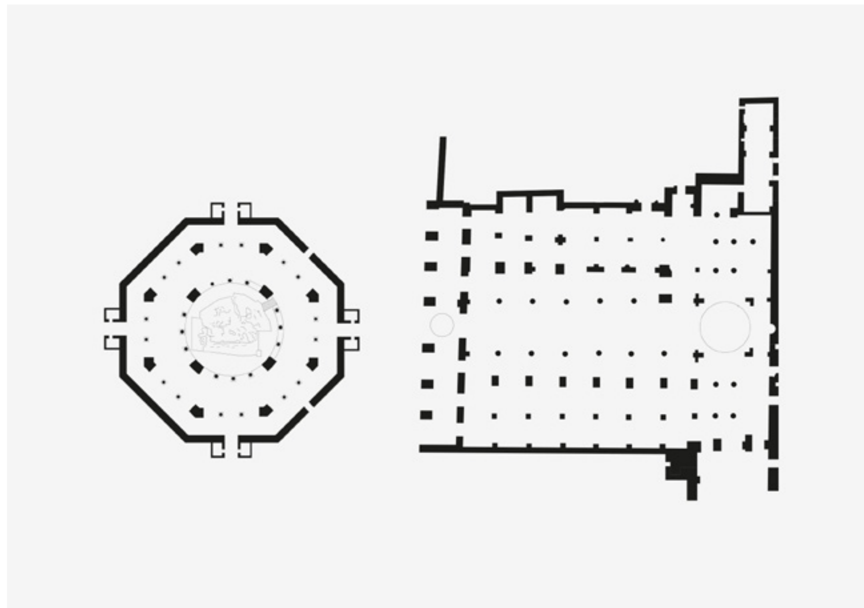
Despite the clear analogies to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Temple Church constructs a condition in which the spatial tension between the basilica and the rotunda is negated by its own architecture. The Round, which encloses several graves in the form of effigies, lacks a central element to rule its universal composition; the choir, with its uniform field of supports, evenly diffused light, and equal height of nave and aisles, constructs a field condition without a clear axial hierarchy. Furthermore, the tension initially found between the rotunda and the basilica is softened by the identical marble piers that continue from the Round into the choir, an element that fuses the two spaces together as one harmonious structure. This condition is exacerbated by the location of the entrance from the long edge of the church, rather than the short as common in basilical churches. This results in an ambivalent orientation: rather than constructing an axial movement through the basilica and into the rotunda, the entrance to the Temple Church positions the visitor between two focal points: the round on the west and the altar on the east.

Considering these architectural variations, I argue that the Temple Church is a typological variation not only of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, but also of the mosque in the Haram el Sharif. This can be best understood by observing the rituals performed there: during prayer, Muslim worshippers face the Qibla (the direction of Mecca), which orients them away from the centrally planned Dome of the Rock. This is analogous to the bi-polar condition in London, when the Eucharist is performed at the altar on the flat eastern wall, and the congregation turns its back on the Round.[57] Similarity can also be identified in the spatial composition of each structure: the Dome of the Rock encircles not one mythical grave

57 Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem,* 84.

but an exposed bedrock that covers a large footprint, similar to the plot of effigies in the Round. The Temple Choir, with its diffused light and lack of axial orientation, is reminiscent more of a mosque than a basilica, where longitudinal movement is no longer part of the ritual, but rather a field condition in which universality and stillness are key. Lastly, one can compare the urban condition of the two structures: rather than a religious enclosure within a dense city, both the Temple Church and the Haram el Sharif are part of a larger compound that is *set apart* from the city, serving not only liturgical functions but also the ritualization of everyday life.

In their desire to spatialize their power over Jerusalem in the heart of Europe, the Templars transported not only the original type, but also its Islamic variation as it was appropriated by the Crusades and ritualized by the liturgy of eleventh-century Jerusalem. For them, constructing an analogy of Solomon's Temple (as was appropriated from Islam) signaled not just a spiritual victory, but also a military one. Indeed, the Templars did not only import an architectural typology from Jerusalem to Europe; they were also responsible for mobilizing money, goods, and manpower back from the west to the east. Their rise to power coincided with the monetization of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and more broadly with the development of the urban realm, a condition that benefited those who, like the Templars, were familiar with money and its abstraction.[58] The Temple Church in London was thus a representation of their symbolic and literal possession of Jerusalem's multiple shrines; their desire to give form to this power created a type that was no longer about theology, but commodity, appropriating Jerusalem for political rather than spiritual charisma.



Details of the Islamic shrines on Temple Mount (Haram El-Sharif).
Left: Temple of the Lord or Mosque Dome of the Rock.
Right: Temple of Solomon or Al Aqsa Mosque.
Drawings by the author.

58 Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem,* 94.

## TYPOLOGY AND ANALOGY

While none of the above examples showcase the typical basilica-and-rotunda coupling, they nevertheless portray the spatial translation of the tension between the linear and round as it manifested in Medieval architecture. Their differences in scale, materiality, and style diminish when observing their shared typological *etymology*, what Marti Aris calls a *deep structure.* These case studies reveal that the intelligence of typological thinking is not confined to the transfer of formal relations, but extends to a socio-spatial system of analogical rituals. Given that services in both examples are mobile and hierarchical, the typological transfer of central and linear space encapsulates the Church's need to spatialize forces of attraction and opposition. As Martí Arís argues, type, "always remains, always comes back under different manifestations. The identity of architecture comes down to formal constants perceived through endless examples, each materializing in a different way."[59] By identifying this type we can understand not only the spatial logic across a religious landscape, but also the power of typological thinking to generate legible architectural forms.

Initially two separate forms, the basilica and rotunda gradually fused over the course of history, a process described by Martí Arís as, "a reconciliation characterized by the penetration and infiltration of one type into the other."[60] In the Renaissance, there was an attempt to dissolve this tension by erecting churches that were both centralized and axial, such as the Santissima Annunziata in Florence by Leon Battista Alberti or the San Bernardino in Urbino by Francesco di Giorgio. In the latter, we can see the ultimate abstraction of the basilica and rotunda, combining a wide transept with a centralized plan, where the dome is only supported by four monumental columns. The plan of San Bernardino shows how, through imagination and abstraction, something that is entirely different can still harbor an idea of the original source where universality and hierarchy don't clash, but fuse into one by spatializing this tension without losing their individual identities.

In an attempt to draw a line between the architecture of the Middle Ages and today, one can consider the intelligence of typological thinking as a constant process of observation and comparison that offers meaning beyond the superficial reading of a structure. Before the invention of print media, builders in the Middle Ages relied on rituals to conceive the architecture that could host them; they used imagination and analogical thinking to lay out complex structures according to their physical memory rather than visual signifiers. Today, architectural understanding strays away from typological knowledge; being primarily image-based, it generates superficial connections that lack the ability to link itself typologically to that which is constant and consistent. Acknowledging type, however, can, "encapsulate hope for a new recomposition of the discipline that condenses historical experience without schematising it and codifies knowledge without denying its development."[61] Typological thinking allows us to understand a building without readings its immediate, superficial traits, and thus find links that transcend historical or stylistic evolution. Recovering it can therefore inform not only how we read structures, but also how we design them through rituals, memory and analogy.

59 Martí Arís, 34.
60 Ibid., 92-93.
61 Ibid., 25.

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