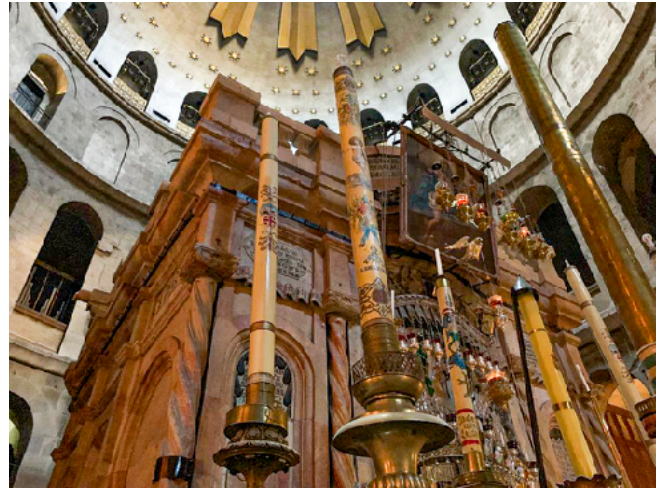

The Temple Church — London

A visit with Robin Griffith-Jones,
Reverend and Valiant Master of the Temple

by The Rev. Dr. Lynne Alcott Kogel - BOMC Surety, Class of 2020



*Dome of the Rotunda, Temple Church,
also known as the Round Church, London*



*Dome of the Rotunda over the shrine of Christ's empty tomb,
Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Old Jerusalem*

Introduction

Circular holy architecture visualizes and replicates the idea that Jerusalem was the center of the ancient known world (Ezekiel 5:5; *Adomnán's Diagram of the Holy Sepulchre* in *De locos sanctis*, Vienna Codex 458, f.4v, 9th century; *Mappa Mundi*, Hereford Cathedral, c. 1300). Circles and concentric circles represented the world view of the structure of the universe, as exemplified by Ptolemy, and, later, by Copernicus. Biblical literature often was written chiastically, where the focal point was at the *center* of a writing rather than at the end; examples include the first seven chapters of the Book of Daniel taken as a corpus, and many Psalms. Homer used chiasmus in the retaliation of Ulysses, *The Odyssey*, Books XVII-XXIII. In art, God was shown as architect of a circular universe (*Bible moralisée*, Vienna Codex 2554, f.1v, 1220 - 1300). The Bayeux Tapestry was laid out in recursive and reciprocal sequence, before and after the pivotal death of King Edward (d. 1066). It wasn't until Galileo's telescope (1609) that linear thinking really began to take hold of the Western visual imagination, when we could look through the telescope *here* and see the planets *there*. Astronomers Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler further shifted away from a single center of concentric circles to a more complicated illustration of the universe. Literature modulated to a linear style, for example, even today, not knowing how a story turns out until the *end* of the book. The Crusaders lived before all of these momentous changes in world view occurred, so, like Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel in Aachen, they built a vivid replica of everything that was holy, expressed in the iconic symbol of their world view, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the rotunda and dome represented one LORD and one baptism, and where hagiographic architecture memorialized the saints while encircling and embracing the crucifixion and empty tomb.

Temple Church and the Norman Door

Consecrated in 1185 by Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem, London's Temple Church, Robin tells us, "...was built by the Knights Templar, an order of knights who took monastic vows. The Templars were founded in 1118 to protect pilgrims [as they journeyed] to the Holy Land; they became one of the most powerful orders in Christendom. Here in the Temple the London Templars had their Church, two halls, cloisters and domestic buildings, leading in the 12th century straight to the River Thames... Our Round Church was built to recreate, here in London, the sanctity of the Sepulchre itself" (Griffith-Jones, hereafter G-J, 2009).



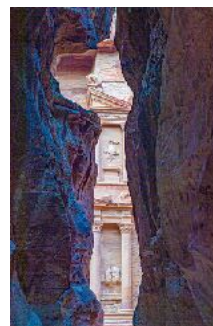
CENTER AND RIGHT: *The west Norman door leading to the sanctuary; Robin Griffith-Jones and Lynne Alcott Kogel*

LEFT: *"Just the opposite of what you might think," Robin explains, "the most heavily damaged areas in the masonry are from repairs; the least damaged areas are original 12th century Norman stone." After 1066, William the Conqueror imported limestone from quarries near Caen to build some of England's most famous fortresses, including the Tower of London. Known for its durability, Caen limestone became widely used to build churches, abbeys, and cathedrals.*

No better storyteller about the Knights Templar and London's Temple Church than Robin Griffith-Jones, Reverend and Valiant Master of the Temple! Robin met us (my husband, Ross, and I) at the newer entry of The Temple Church - newer, that is, than the original Norman doorway that is much in need of repair. Templar Church, the burial place of William Marshal (c. 1147-1219), 1st Earl of Pembroke and the greatest knight of his generation, was built with stone from Normandy, but was largely destroyed in the 1941 blitz, WWII. During the hour that Robin spent with us, we learned about the history of The Temple Church and the Norman Door, the crusades, the Knights Templar, William Marshal, and the Magna Carta.

The Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller

Robin continues, "The Knights Templar were one of the two most powerful military-religious orders of medieval Europe. Only the Knights Hospitaller rivalled them. The Templars evolved from the call by Pope Urban II for the Christian kings and knights of Europe to recover for Christians the burial place of Christ in the holy city of Jerusalem and to 'liberate the Church of God'. The Templars' rise and their equally dramatic fall in the 1300s have intrigued historians and popular myth-makers alike" (G-J, 2018). The Crusaders had entered an ancient land with a complex history.



Images of the Ancient Near East

LEFT: *Siq entrance to Petra, Jordan According to William, Archbishop of Tyre (1127 - 1135), Crusaders arrived in Jordan when Christian monks asked Baldwin I to protect them from Saracen attacks.*

RIGHT: *Bicephalous 'Ain Ghazal Statues, Pre-Pottery Neolithic C, Jordan Museum, Amman*

B

The story of the Knights Templar, Robin explains with delight, “...began with the First Crusade, when Europe’s kings and nobles led armies to answer the pope’s call to arms. After they captured Jerusalem in July 1099, the Crusaders founded the Kingdom of Outremer, ‘Beyond the Sea’. Christian pilgrims could again visit the Holy Land, though the way was not safe. In or around 1120 a small group of knights took the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and undertook to keep the pilgrim routes safe for Christians. The king of Jerusalem gave them headquarters on the ‘Temple Mount’, built by Herod the Great over one thousand years before; and so the new Order of knighthood became known as the Knights Templar” (G-J, 2018).

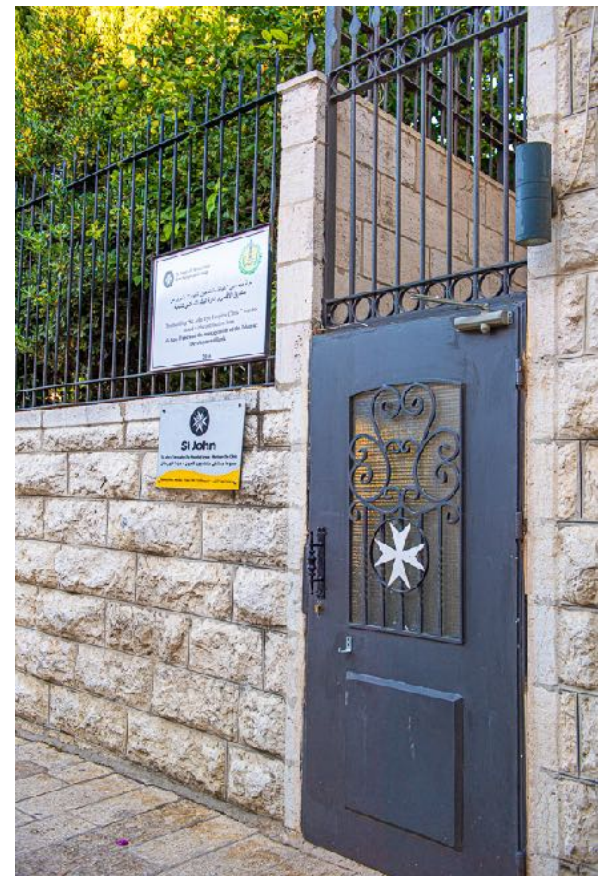


LEFT: *Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, Old Jerusalem, a shrine, powerfully beautiful with its golden Dome and Turkish faience tiles*
Just 300 feet away is Al-Aqsa Mosque (see photo in Appendix below), which served as the Templars' palace headquarters from 1099 until 1187 when Saladin, founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, restored it as a mosque.

LEFT BOTTOM: *Refectory, Knights Hospitaller's hospital, Acre Fortress, Acre*
Brethren and bailiffs ate together with medical doctors and surgeons. The poor, who were served the best food, ate before the brothers who then ate in silence.

RIGHT BOTTOM: *Entrance to St John of Jerusalem walk-in eye clinic, Muristan Street, Old Jerusalem, just a short walk from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

Founded in 1170 in Jerusalem, the Knights Hospitaller built hospitals in Jerusalem and Acre where weary pilgrims arriving on the shores of the Holy Land and sick or wounded crusaders, fatigued from battle, received medical attention. Continuing the work of the Knights Hospitaller, the Most Venerable Order of St John of Jerusalem provides eye care to this day, including a walk-in clinic, opened in 2017, located in the same place where the Order's first hospital was built in the 12th century.



William Marshal; Two Magna Cartas, 1215 and 1216; and the Charter of the Forest, 1217



LEFT: *Lincoln Cathedral as seen from the entrance to Lincoln Castle*

RIGHT: *In 2017, Lincoln Cathedral celebrated the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest.*



William Marshal lived an extraordinary life. The most prestigious knight in the kingdom, he: unhorsed Richard Cœur de Lion in what Robin describes as “a skirmish”; mediated between King John and the 25 Barons assuring

the King’s seal on the 1215 Magna Carta; served as Crusader, Justiciar, and as Regent for the nine year old King Henry III; edited and reissued an adapted Magna Carta under his own seal in 1216; created a companion document in 1217 - the Charter of the Forest; and masterfully commanded King Henry III’s forces to victory over 46 English rebel barons and 300 knights in the Battle of Lincoln. Lincoln Cathedral has a display in the transept honoring William Marshal, and recently celebrated the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest. William Marshal became a Knight Templar on his deathbed. And, wonderfully, he is my great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great... grandfather.



William Marshal’s effigy lies in state at Temple Church, next to his son, William Marshall the Younger, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, one of the 25 Barons.

RIGHT: *Victorian stained glass window by Clayton & Bell, 1860, Gloucester Cathedral, showing the coronation at Gloucester Cathedral in 1216 of the nine year old Henry III. The boy king, for whom William Marshal served as Regent, was crowned again in 1220 at Westminster Abbey.*



End of the Templars

The Templars were in trouble on two fronts: in the East they lost Jerusalem in 1244 for the third time, Acre in 1291, and the Isle of Ruad in 1302. In the West, the political tide was rising against them. Philip IV of France, who envied the Templars' vast assets, became aggressive. In 1307, Pope Clement V ordered an inquiry into the allegations rumored against the Templars. Philip - without notification - had every Templar in his realm arrested. In 1310, outside Paris, fifty-four were burned at the stake. A skilled storyteller, Robin thoughtfully finishes the history of the Knights Templar noting that England's Edward II was reluctant about using torture. "Edward II of England had the English Templars questioned, without torture; there were no confessions. In December 1309, Edward seemed to give permission for some torture but there was no enthusiasm for it. The inquisitors even urged that the prisoners be sent across the



Channel to Ponthieu (in English hands, but not subject to English law). By 1311, some substantive confessions were extracted: not, for the most part, confessions of guilt but admissions that the defendant had been so badly defamed by the pope's declarations that he could not purge himself. The Master in England continued to deny all the charges against himself and his Order" (G-J, 2018). In 1312, the pope dissolved the Order. But in France, the purge against the Templars continued; they were imprisoned and, in 1314, the last Grand Master, Jacques de Molay who had retracted his confession, and another Templar, Geoffrey de Charney, were burned at the stake. Robin concludes the story in a somber tone, "The Knights Templar were at an end" (G-J, 2018).

ABOVE: Chapter House, York Minster, where Templars were brought to trial

LEFT: When unsuccessful in their attempts to extract confessions in York or Lincoln, inquisitors moved Templars to the Tower of London where they were further examined.

Robin Griffith-Jones, Reverend and Valiant Master of the Temple

Robin - charming, articulate, and knowledgeable - is good company. His story-telling gifts do the best thing of all: Robin gets you to think, to put together disparate puzzles of history into a meaningful pattern, enlarging your world view. Robin is also the author of many books, including those from which the quotations in this article are taken: *The Temple Church: Mother-Church of the Common Law, A Pilgrim's Guide* (2009); *The Temple Church: A History in Pictures* (2011); *The Knights Templar* (2018); *William Marshall: The Greatest Knight That Ever Lived* (2019); as well as editor with Mark Hill QC of *Magna Carta, Religion and the Rule of Law* (2015), and contributor to *Magna Carta: 1215-2015* (n.d.). It is my hope that he will soon be a guest speaker at an annual BOMC/MOC/DTK meeting during Heritage Week in Washington, D. C.



LEFT TOP: Exterior of The Templar Church showing the rotunda and chancel. The chancel was added in the early 13th century. As a Royal Particular Church, it is subject to the jurisdiction of the Crown. Robin was appointed Master of the Temple by Queen Elizabeth II in 1999.



ABOVE: Interior of the Early English Gothic chancel

LEFT BOTTOM: Effigy recast c. 1850, on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum, shown here inside the rotunda



*Southwest qanatir (arches)
and Qubbat al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock)
on al-Haram al-Sharif (The Noble Enclosure,
the Muslim sacred precinct)*

LEFT BELOW: Entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre
For the Crusaders, Jerusalem wrapped full circle around the life of Jesus: his presentation at the Temple as an infant, and his crucifixion and burial. The Crusaders believed that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre commemorated the location of the cross and empty tomb.

INSET: Inside The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a dome over one of the chapels for venerated saints, including Joseph of Arimathea who provided the burial chamber



APPENDIX

More Images of Old Jerusalem

The Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount (c. 691 C.E.), built on the site of the Temple conceptualized by David (c. 1000 B.C.E.), built by Solomon (d. 922 B.C.E.), destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II (587 B.C.E.), rebuilt by Zerubbabel (515 B.C.E.), expanded during Herod's reign (37 - 4 B.C.E.), and torn down by Titus and the Tenth Legion Fretensis (70 C.E.), was believed by the Crusaders to have been the location where the infant Jesus was presented at the Temple (Luke 2:22-40). The first "Candlemas," the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ and the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was first celebrated in Jerusalem in the 4th century.



Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount was believed by the Crusaders to have been Solomon's Temple.



*Shabbat שַׁבָּת at the Western Wall
The faithful tuck their written prayers into the wall's crevices.
When no room is left, which happens frequently, they are collected and buried for eternity in the soil of Israel.*

More Images of Acre



ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: *The Port of Acre (also called Akko)*

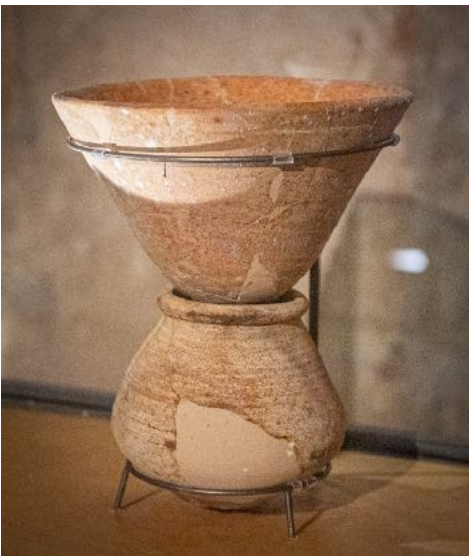
Pilgrims arrived in Acre by boat. Exhausted from their long journey, they took refuge in the care of the Hospitaller brethren. According to Pelrinages et Pardouns d'Acre (Harley MS 2253, f.68, British Library), a portion of which is a guidebook for pilgrims taking the journey from Acre to Jerusalem and other holy sites, the Hospitaller brethren's hospital was a place where pardon for sins was granted.



LEFT *Acre Castle Courtyard*

Knights trained for battle in the courtyard where they held combat drill practices three times a week, including archery and wrestling.

RIGHT BELOW: *Acre Castle is filled with historic, beautiful, and spacious rooms where Hospitallers attended as many as a thousand sick and wounded. Visitors can take their time to enjoy many exhibitions, from which some of the information on this page is taken.*



LEFT: *Vessel for crystalizing sugar*
Sugarcane was crushed for its juice, filtered, boiled, poured into cone shaped vessels where it crystalized, and then was processed for medicine used by the Hospitallers to sweeten its bitter flavor. Right now you are probably humming along with Mary Poppins, "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down!"

PHOTO CREDITS:

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 Photo of Robin Griffith-Jones and
 Lynne A. Kogel taken by Ross T. Kogel

