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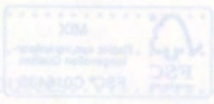
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# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE AND ITS RECEPTION

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# 5



## Charisma – Czaczkas

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bench reserved for the clergy that was built against the inner wall of the apse. The scriptures were read in the course of the liturgy from the *ambo*, a raised pulpit, located outside the *bema* and reached from within it.

Many of the churches have rooms on one or both sides of the central apse, or adjacent to the main church building in various locations. These rooms, or *pastophoria*, were the *diakonikon*, where the liturgical vessels were stored, and the *prothesis*, where the preparation of the bread and chalice for the Eucharist took place. Occasionally, one or more than one of the rooms adjacent to the main church building was used as the baptistery, or as a chapel for conducting burial or memorial ceremonies. The atrium, a forecourt often located to the west of the church and surrounded by covered porticos, separated the outside world or the street from the sacred space of the church. In most churches there was a large water cistern or a fountain in the center of the atrium that was used for drinking as well as for cleansing and ritual purposes. A less common architectural feature was the narthex, a sort of an enclosed entrance porch preceding the nave and aisles. It was the place where the catechumens (Gk. *κατηχούμενοι*), a yet uninitiated crowd, gathered before the Eucharist inside the church.

The above-mentioned church components were typically richly furnished with marble columns and capitals, various kinds of stone or marble relief panels, mosaic floors, as well as wall paintings. The latter, however, were rarely preserved.

The basilical church of the St. Catherine Monastery, located in the Sinai peninsula, is among the most outstanding Christian monuments of the Justinian era. Its apse vault above the altar was embellished between 548 and 565 CE with a superb mosaic, the main theme of which depicts the transfiguration according to Matt 17:1–13. What is probably the earliest representation of the *Deesis* is depicted on the triumphal arch above the apse. At the top-right and top-left of the *Deesis*, two mosaic panels portray Moses in front of the burning bush and his reception of the Law.

The Persian invasion (614–17 CE), followed by the Islamic conquest of Palestine around 636–40 CE, mark a decline in church building activity. Yet phases of rebuilding and mosaic decorations detected in places such as Umm al-Rasas, dated by inscriptions to the 8th century CE, show that such activity did not cease to exist. However, in the course of the 8th and 9th centuries – until the crusader period – Christian architecture in the Holy Land receded into insignificance.

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Fig. 5 Church of Baqira/Syria

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Sebastian Ristow

## B. In the West

Like the East, the West did not think of building proper churches until the late years of the reign of Constantine I. The western part of the empire did

not claim ideas that differed from the eastern regions. Any building may be a church. Jesus made it clear that true worship is independent of location (John 4:21: "you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem"); besides, "yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands" (Acts 7:48). Therefore, after Constantine and Licinius had proclaimed religious tolerance in the entire Roman Empire in 313 CE and the building of legal churches was allowed, in all Christian communities, use and function prescribed the essential elements for church architecture. Inside, liturgy and ritual dictated its inner structure and decoration. The columned basilica (see above, "Church II. Archaeology and Architecture In the East") was the perfect type of building to hold a large number of (lay) people listening to, and participating in, a ritual together. Thus, from now on, most often, the parish church is the basilica in its simplest form: a longitudinal rather than central plan, having a central nave with an aisle on either side separated by a colonnade, possibly a transept, and a half round apse at the east end of the nave (Ravenna, San Apollinare in Classe, 549 CE). The aisles are lower than the central nave, allowing the daylight coming in directly from windows in the upper part of the nave (clerestory) (see fig. 6).

Before 312 CE, remnants of ecclesiastical buildings in the West are scant (*Memoria Petri*, ca. 200 CE, Rome; first memorial church, and earlier Roman houses underneath San Crisogono, Rome). However, shortly after his defeat of Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE, Constantine initiated the building of the Basilica Salvatoris in Rome, which would be the official seat of the Bishop of Rome, St. John in the Lateran (de Blaauw 1994: Part IA). The original church was replaced by a 17th- and 18th-century building. The Constantinian church is known only through the foundations archaeologists uncovered in the 1930s. Old Saint Peter's in Rome (begun 326–33 CE) is also of 4th-century CE foundation, though nothing of that appears above the ground. It was one of the largest in the world before it was demolished in the 16th century to make room for an even more impressive one. Fortunately, Santa Maria Maggiore still stands in Rome with her original nave and triumphal arch covered in 5th-century CE mosaics (Krautheimer et al.: 3.258). It was constructed over a Roman domus at lower level (de Blaauw 1994: Part IIA). Elsewhere in the empire, building activities followed soon, as in Aquileia (double cathedral, 313–19 CE), Milan (San Lorenzo and Sant'Aquilino, mid 5th century CE), Trier (double cathedral, after 325 CE) and Ravenna (e.g., San Apollinare in Classe, San Apollinare nuovo, San Vitale, the now demolished San Michele in Affricisco, with its apse mosaic reconstructed in Berlin Bode Museum, two baptisteria, etc., all dating 5th–7th cents. CE). Less prestigious ecclesiasti-

cal structures can be found everywhere in the Christian realm (cf. Rodwell, esp. English archaeology).

Variations of the basilica plan are boundless. The mendicant orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans will find in the large specimens of the basilica the ideal preaching halls or "sermon barns" (Florence, Santa Maria Novella, 1246–1470; and Santa Croce [begun 1294]). An abbey church does not need a huge audience, and thus the emphasis is placed upon choir and choir stalls (London, Westminster Abbey, 1245–72). A cathedral requires room for the prerequisite of a bishop's principal church in Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, Anglican Communion and Lutheran churches: the cathedra (Rome, Saint John Lateran, 1644–55 with late 19th century cathedra; Canterbury Cathedral, "Chair of Saint Augustine," 6th–12th cents.). If tombs or relics are there to be venerated, a crypt is constructed (Rome, crypt of Old St. Peter's, ca. 600 CE; Hildesheim, St. Michael's church, ca. 1022; Washington, D.C., United States, Capitol Crypt, after 1799); large entrance doors help to guide a herd of pilgrims in an orderly way (Conques, Sainte-Foy, completed 1120). The larger numbers of faithful flock together to attend the service, the more side wings and bays are added. In short, church buildings do adapt where necessary, and grow and shrink with the quantity of their congregation. A memorial church, built with a distinctly other purpose may have a central ground plan, different from the basilica (Stanford Memorial Church begun 1899).

**1. Additional Structures.** As in the East, along with tradition, use and time, additions were made to the main building. An atrium or colonnaded forecourt to the church is reminiscent of the similar open court in the middle of the Roman villa (Rome, San Clemente; Rome, Old and New St. Peter's; Pisa, cathedral and *Campo santo*). In early Christian and medieval times the place was also referred to as paradise (ca. 790 CE: Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Long.* 5.31: "*locum, qui paradisus dicitur, ante basilicam B. Petri*"; and later, ca. 1140: *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* 19 and 20; *In paradiso Sancti Petri*; cf. Onofrio 1988). A fountain in the middle of the courtyard served as the place to wash face and hands, as Paulinus of Nola wrote to Pammachius in 396 CE (*ubi cantharum ministra manibus et oribus*; *Letters of Paulinus of Nola* 13.13 [PL 61:215A and 849B]). In fact, this tradition is continued in the courtyards of mosques (Cairo, Al-Azhar Mosque; Istanbul, Sultanahmet Mosque; Bukhara, Kalyan Mosque), following the prescription that faithful should clean themselves before entering a holy place.

Through the atrium the faithful enter the church via the narthex. Traditionally the narthex was a part of the building, but was not considered part of the church proper. It was reserved for those not eligible for admittance into the general ser-

vice – catechumens and penitents – to enable them to hear and partake in the service.

A chapel can either be a small side room with an altar in a church, or a separate building, modest in size. Chapels have usually special functions, for instance they can be dedicated to a (patron) saint, serve as a memorial or private chapel, or used as a baptisterium. If a series of apses or chapels are curved around the area of the altar, radiating from the ambulatory, it is called a chevet.

**2. Church Building: Symbolic Features.** By its usage, the church building reflects the religious and historical polemics of its time (Laderman/Furstenberg; Krautheimer 1942). In the beginning, the idea that the church was the dwelling of God was not part of the concept: its main usage was to hold a congregation. Already in the 4th century CE, this is changed and the building became now not only the place for worship, but also a visualization of heaven, God's place, and paradise. Orientation became an essential symbolic feature with a congregation praying towards the center of the Christian world, Jerusalem. St. Michael's church, Hildesheim was designed to be the image of the heavenly Jerusalem by its patron, Bishop Bernward (ca. 960–1022). He is buried in the crypt, expecting to become an angel himself, or at least *coequalis angeli* (Brandt/Eggebrecht: 42). In medieval Byzantine architecture, the highest part, the dome, represents heaven and therefore its murals and mosaics show Christ Pantocrator (Lehmann 1945). In the ground plan of western churches of the 13th century, the nave is the symbolic place of the body of Jesus, the transept his arms, and the chevet, the Old French term for "head end," represents his head (Amiens, Beauvais, Reims).

Only occasionally did architects try to vary the essential architectural elements and pursue different meanings. One of the most notable examples is the New Church in Haarlem, The Netherlands (1649). Discarding all traditional – i.e., Roman Catholic – ideas, the architect Jacob van Campen designed a square ground plan based on the structure of the temple of Jerusalem, as reconstructed by François Vatable a hundred years earlier and depicted in 16th and 17th century Reformed Bibles in northwestern Europe (Van der Linden: 6–9). As Solomon had the temple in Jerusalem built in a time of peace after a long period of war (1 Kgs 5: 1–6), so the governors of the new Dutch Republic sought to erect a worthy monument in remembrance of their 80-year war with – and subsequent victory over – the Spanish Empire. Pieter Saenredam painted its austere and perfectly balanced interior in 1652 (now Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum; see → plate 4).

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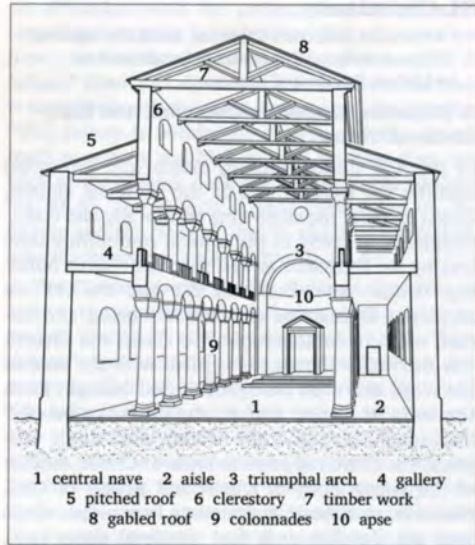


Fig. 6 Interior view of an ancient basilica

*Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri* (Rome 1994). ■ Brandt, M./A. Eggebrecht (eds.), *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen* (Exhibition Catalogue, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum; Hildesheim 1993). ■ Cross, F. L./E. A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford/New York 2005). ■ Dale, T. E. A. (ed.), *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Painting: Essays in Honour of Otto Demus* (London 2004). ■ Davis-Weyer, C., *Early Medieval Art 300–1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1971). ■ Krautheimer, R. et al., *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae: The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV–IX cent.)*, 5 vols. (Rome 1937–77). ■ Krautheimer, R., "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942) 1–33. ■ Krautheimer, R., *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, N.J. 1980). ■ Laderman, S./Y. Furstenberg, "Jewish and Christian Imaging of the 'House of God': A Fourth Century Reflection of Religious and Historical Polemics," in *Interaction between Judaism and Christianity in History, Religion, Art and Literature* (eds. M. Poorthuis et al.; Leiden/Boston, Mass. 2009) 433–56. ■ Lehmann, K., "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27 (1945) 1–27. ■ d'Onofrio, C., *Visitiamo Roma mille anni fa: La città dei Mirabilia* (Rome 1988). [Available at [www.thelatinlibrary.com](http://www.thelatinlibrary.com); accessed August 29, 2011] ■ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* (ed. G. Waitz; MGH.SRL 48; Hannover 1878). [Esp. 12–187] [Available at [www.oeaw.ac.at/gema](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/gema); accessed August 30, 2011] ■ Piva, P. (ed.), *Arte medievale: Le vie dello spazio liturgico* (Milan 2010). ■ Rodwell, W., *The Archaeology of Churches* (Stroud 2005). ■ Swift, E. H., *Roman Sources of Christian Art* (New York 1951). ■ Van der Linden, C. J. R., "Die symboliek van de Nieuwe Kerk van Jacob van Campen in Haarlem," *Oud Holland* 104 (1990) 1–31. ■ White, J. F., "The Spatial Setting," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (eds. G. Wainwright/K. B. Westerfield Tucker; Oxford 2006) 793–816. ■ White, L. M., *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Baltimore, Md. 1990).

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