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978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:  
Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

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### The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem

Born in Scotland, James Fergusson (1808–86) spent ten years as an indigo planter in India before embarking upon a second career as an architectural historian. Despite his lack of formal training, he became an expert in the field of Indian architecture. The topography and temples of ancient Jerusalem also fascinated him. This 1865 collection of two lectures summarises his controversial topographical and architectural argument that the location where Constantine erected the original Holy Sepulchre was the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. Fergusson then describes the Temple in its successive forms, arguing against the view that the rock known as the foundation stone was the site of the Jewish altar. The work is illustrated throughout with plans and drawings. Fergusson's *Cave Temples of India* (1880) and the two-volume revised edition of his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1910) are also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection.

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James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108080637](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108080637)

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This edition first published 1865

This digitally printed version 2015

ISBN 978-1-108-08063-7 Paperback

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

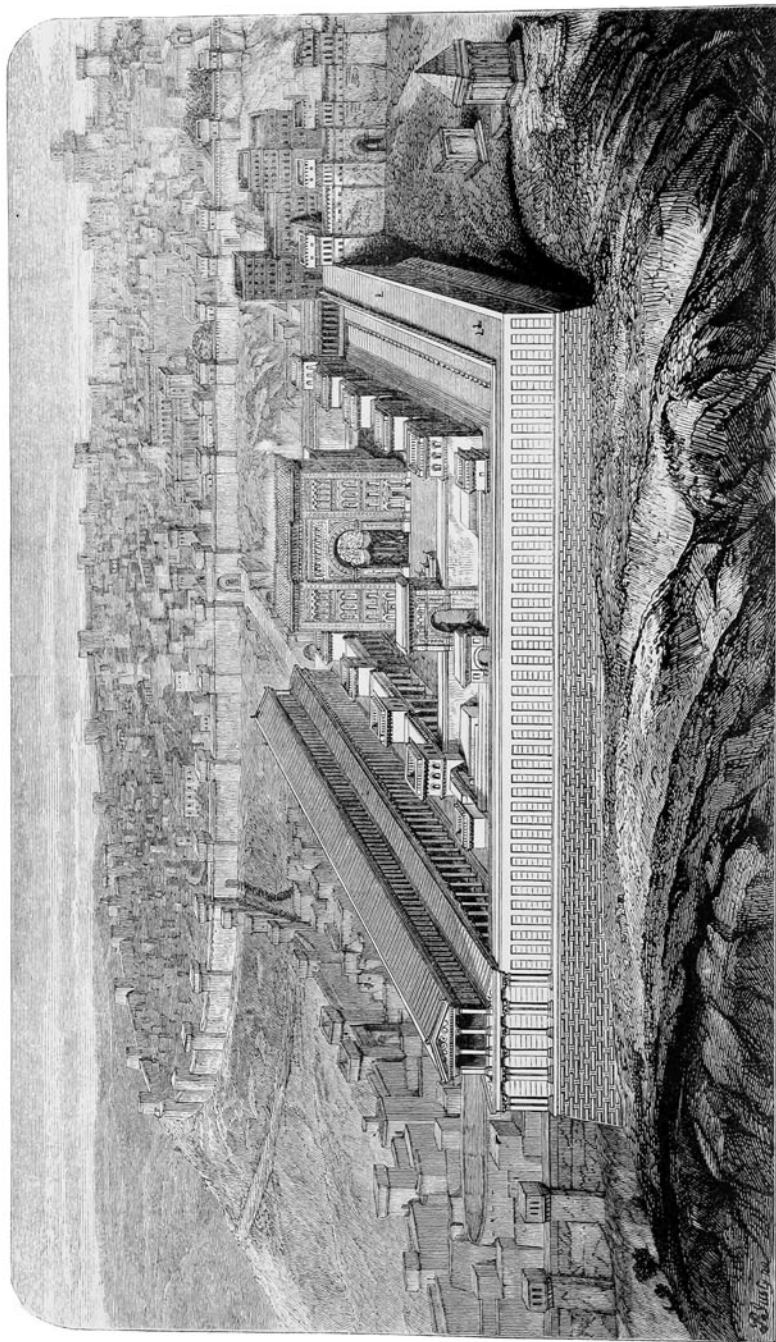
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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



VIEW OF THE TEMPLE AS IT APPEARED AT THE TIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

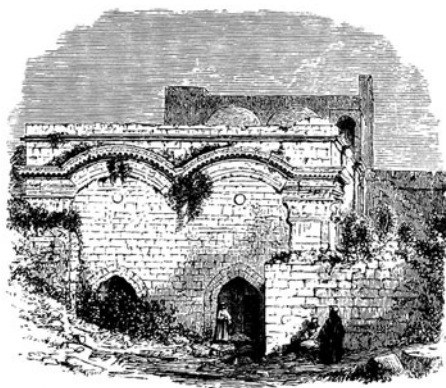
THE  
HOLY SEPULCHRE  
AND THE  
TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE  
ROYAL INSTITUTION, ALBEMARLE STREET, ON THE  
21ST FEBRUARY, 1862, AND 3RD MARCH, 1865.

BY JAMES FERGUSSON, F.R.S.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL INST. BRIT. ARCH.;

AUTHOR OF 'AN ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM,' ETC. ETC.



Golden Gateway. From a Photograph.

LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.  
1865.

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Works by the same Author.



- AN ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM; with restored Plans of the Temple, and with Plans, Sections, and Details of the Church built by Constantine the Great over the Holy Sepulchre, now known as the Mosque of Omar. 16s., or 21s. half Russia. London, Weale, 1847.
- THE ILLUSTRATED HANDBOOK OF ARCHITECTURE. Being a Concise and Popular Account of the Different Styles prevailing in all Ages and all Countries. With 850 Illustrations. 8vo. 26s. London, Murray, 1859.
- HISTORY OF THE MODERN STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE. Being a Sequel to the 'Handbook of Architecture.' With 312 Illustrations. 8vo. 31s. 6d. London, Murray, 1862.
- AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF BEAUTY IN ART, more especially with reference to Architecture. Royal 8vo. 31s. 6d. London, Longmans, 1849.
- THE PALACES OF NINEVEH AND PERSEPOLIS RESTORED: An Essay on Ancient Assyrian and Persian Architecture. 8vo. 16s. London, Murray, 1851.
- ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ROCK-CUT TEMPLES OF INDIA. 18 Plates in Tinted Lithography, folio: with an 8vo. volume of Text, Plans, &c. 2l. 7s. 6d. London, Weale, 1845.
- PICTURESQUE ILLUSTRATIONS OF ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE IN HINDOSTAN. 24 Plates in coloured Lithography, with Plans, Woodcuts, and explanatory Text, &c. 4l. 4s. London, Hogarth, 1817.
- AN ESSAY ON A PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM OF FORTIFICATION, with Hints for its Application to our National Defences. 12s. 6d. London, Weale, 1849.
- THE PERIL OF PORTSMOUTH. FRENCH FLEETS AND ENGLISH FORTS. Plan. 8vo. 3s. London, Murray, 1853.
- PORTSMOUTH PROTECTED: with Notes on Sebastopol and other Sieges during the Present War. Plans. 8vo. 3s. London, Murray, 1856.
- OBSERVATIONS ON THE BRITISH MUSEUM, NATIONAL GALLERY, and NATIONAL RECORD OFFICE; with Suggestions for their Improvement. 8vo. London, Weale, 1859.
- NOTES ON THE SITE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE AT JERUSALEM. An answer to 'The Edinburgh Review.' 2s. 6d. London, Murray, 1861.
- THE MAUSOLEUM AT HALICARNASSUS RESTORED, IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REMAINS RECENTLY DISCOVERED. Plates. 4to. 7s. 6d. London, Murray, 1862.

LONDON: PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD-STREET, AND CHARING-CROSS.



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978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## P R E F A C E.



DURING the eighteen years that have elapsed since the publication of the ‘Essay on the Ancient Topography of Jerusalem,’ a considerable amount of accurate information has been collected, bearing on the questions therein discussed. This would be sufficient, under ordinary circumstances, to justify a second edition of the work; but there are several reasons why this should hardly yet be attempted.

First—There is a survey now in progress at Jerusalem, which will rectify our knowledge of the topography to a very considerable extent, but, though completed on the spot, it will not be published and available to the public for some time to come.

Secondly—The works of De Vogüé and De Sauley are still incomplete, and will no doubt throw important light on many points of interest; and there are other researches in progress which have a more or less direct bearing on the points at issue.

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978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The most important reason, however, for deferring the second edition is, that the questions raised on the original work have not yet reached that stage which entitles them to the consideration of earnest and competent inquirers.

When a question of this kind is first brought forward, it meets only with contempt, and sneers supply the place of arguments. When these will no longer suffice, misrepresentation of the facts of the case, and abuse of the author who brought it forward, serve to keep back the truth for some time. If it survives these, it is then taken up by those who ought to have investigated it when first promulgated, and what is good in it established, what is erroneous put on one side.

My own impression is, that the theory, that the Dome of the Rock was built by Constantine, has passed through the first two of these stages of its existence; but whether it has reached the third is by no means so clear. It is so much easier to criticise than to investigate; so much safer to deny than to admit an hypothesis which may afterwards be proved to be untenable; so much pleasanter to detect another in error, than to acknowledge his success even in the slightest degree, that from one or all of these causes the great difficulty of such a case as this, is to obtain for it a fair hearing.

It would have been as easy to point out any flaw in arguments adduced eighteen years ago, as it may be now. The facts and the arguments were so simple and so broadly stated, that the refutation, if it could be made, must have been

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

vii

distinct and crushing; but it has not yet been brought forward. The question therefore remains exactly where it was eighteen years ago, except in this respect—if I am not mistaken—that it is now attracting a certain amount of public attention; and if so, unless the heresy can be uprooted, it will inevitably come to be accepted in the course of time.

Under these circumstances, it appears expedient to lay before the public a short and compendious statement of the case, in order that those who wish for information may obtain it in the clearest manner, and with the least amount of trouble to themselves, and may be enabled to judge how far the arguments generally employed to disprove it really meet the merits of the case.

For these purposes, it has been determined to print two Lectures on the subject, which were delivered at the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street—one in February 1862, the other in March last. These do not, of course, pretend to be exhaustive statements of the case; but they do contain a *résumé* of all the main points of the argument, with a sufficient amount of illustration and references to make it intelligible.

Those who wish for further information are referred to the ‘Essay on the Topography of Jerusalem,’ above referred to; to the articles ‘Jerusalem’ and ‘Temple,’ in Smith’s ‘Dictionary of the Bible;’ and to the ‘Notes on the Site of the Holy Sepulchre,’ published in 1861, in answer to an attack in the ‘Edinburgh Review.’

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

viii

PREFACE.

These may be considered as the pleadings on one side of the question, but it need hardly be added that they do not suffice to enable any one to form an independent opinion on the subject, unless he is also familiar with what has been written on the opposite side. Even after mastering these, no one is properly entitled to judge who has not had previous education in matters of this sort, and unless he is prepared to study the original authorities, and to investigate the topographical details for himself. All this may require more leisure and more enthusiasm than most people are willing to devote to such a subject. If they try, however, they will probably find it intensely interesting, and, if I am not mistaken, worthy of all the pains that can be bestowed upon it even by the first class of minds.

Whenever it is so investigated, I have no fears of the result; until it is so taken up, it is only a waste of time and temper to attempt to struggle against the indifference of many, and the special pleading of those who cling to a tradition which has no logical basis to rest upon.

Since this work was in the press, a small volume has been received from abroad, entitled 'Theodericus de Locis Sanctis,' with appendices, edited by the well-known Dr. Titus Tobler, of St. Gall, one of the most staunch supporters of the present traditional Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Though too late to admit of all the use being made of it which might have been done had it been received earlier, the principal

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

ix

passages bearing on the argument have been reprinted at length in the Appendix to this work.

The first extract from the description of an anonymous traveller\* settles the long-disputed question of the site of the Porta Neapolitana. This was the only historical difficulty that really existed, which, though not important in itself, was still sufficiently so to render its removal satisfactory. The second,† giving the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock, as they existed A.D. 1172, renders it nearly certain that the Arabic inscriptions which now adorn that building are as late as Saladin's time, as suggested in the text; and the reiterated assertion of Theodericus that that building was erected by Constantine and his mother Helena, as Dr. Tobler says, "takes the blush of novelty off Mr. Fergusson's theory," though in a manner which may be considered most satisfactory.

A third extract, quoted below,‡ is as important as either of these, and would be more so if the indication of the locality were a little more precise. As it stands, it proves, however, that the "lapis pertusus" of the Bordeaux Pilgrim and the Innominatus (Appendices A and B) still existed in his day, and that it stood within the limits of the Temple, as determined in the second Lecture contained in this volume.§

\* Appendix B.

† Appendix D.

‡ Inter templum quoque et duo latera atrii exterioris, orientale scilicet et meridianum *lapis magnus situs est in modum altaris* qui secundum quo-

rondam traditiones, os est piscinarum ibidem consistentium, secundum aliorum vero opinionem Zachariam Barachiae filium ibidem peremptum fuisse designat (p. 37).

§ The interior court of the text is

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

## PREFACE.

The tradition, that it covered the entrance of the great cistern, is sufficient to prove that it stood in front of the Aksah, though whether on the exact spot where the Jewish altar once stood, is not clear, neither is it important, because it certainly was not the altar itself, and whatever it originally represented may have been moved from its original locality.

The circumstance which renders the knowledge of the existence of this stone in the 12th century of importance to our present inquiry, is the fact that it almost certainly was the Sakhra of Mahometan historians; although here again the vagueness that attaches to some of their traditions as we now possess them, detracts somewhat from the precision of their indications.

The stone which the Jews in the 4th century annually repaired to, to anoint and weep over, the Christians in the 5th and 6th centuries had covered with a dunghill, in order to show their contempt of the hated race. In the 7th century this filth was removed by the Moslems, and the stone again restored to honour; and Omar built his mosque immediately behind it, as related in the text (pp. 51 and 105). It is not to be wondered at, that, in the Christian times of Theodericus, the tradition regarding it should again have become as indistinct as that regarding the origin of the Mosque el Aksah itself; but its existence at all is sufficient for our present purposes. It is a direct testimony that the Sakhra which Omar crept through the Gate of Mohammed

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the platform on which the Dome of *court*, the remainder of the Haram Area  
the Rock now stands; the *exterior* | which surrounded it.

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978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.

xi

on his hands and knees to look for, was not the Sakhra under the Dome of the Rock, but this Lapis Magnus of Theodericus, which still may exist, and perhaps may still be found when looked for.

There is yet another indication in the passage printed in Appendix D, from this work, which is nearly as important in fixing the true site of the sacred localities.

After completing his description of the Dome of the Rock, Theodericus next describes the circular chapel containing the Tomb of St. James, which stood where the Dome of the Chain now stands, within twenty feet of the eastern entrance of the so-called Mosque of Omar. Even if we assume this to be a mere legend, it seems impossible that such a tradition could have existed if there had been a suspicion that the Dome of the Rock was built by the Mahometans, or that it stood within the Temple precincts. Indeed, it does not seem possible to account for the juxtaposition, except on the supposition that those who erected it desired that the sepulchre of St. James should be in the closest possible proximity to that of Him who, in the text, is called his brother.

Taken altogether, this little volume is by far the most valuable contribution to the history of the Holy Places which has been made of late years; and it is extremely creditable to the candour of its editor that he should have published a work which tells so seriously against the views he so long and consistently maintained.

The publication of this little work has done so much to

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Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

PREFACE.

remove the disputed questions regarding the topography of Jerusalem beyond the limits of discussion, that it is to be hoped that, if any more such treatises exist in manuscript, they will before long be given to the world. The real difficulty of this inquiry hitherto has been, not that the authorities usually quoted contained anything opposed to the views I have been advocating, but that the written evidence was so fragmentary, and frequently so ambiguously expressed, that it could not be considered as conclusive. So long, therefore, as those who wrote on the subject insisted on resting the whole case on the *littera scripta* as it has hitherto existed, the controversy was, and might for ever have remained, incapable of final adjustment.

The architectural argument was clear, distinct, and irrefragable, and ought to have been considered final, but few of those who have taken up the question are capable of expressing an opinion on such evidence, having no such knowledge of the art as would justify their judgment from it alone.

The topographical argument was equally clear, and ought to be considered equally decisive; but this again required great local knowledge, and more familiarity with details than can be acquired without a great amount of study, and better opportunities than are always easily obtainable.

The written argument, on the contrary, is accessible to any scholar of moderate attainments; consequently nine out of ten at least, it might almost be said ninety-nine out of a hundred, of those who have taken up this question,



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978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xiii

have been inclined to rest the whole argument on this, which, in this peculiar case, is, and must always be, practically, the least valuable branch of the evidence.

As this state of affairs will probably continue some time longer, it makes the publication of such a work as that of Theodericus most opportune. It is the only really careful and detailed description we have of Jerusalem during the first Latin kingdom. Sæwulf was an ignorant savage, who believed whatever he was told, and was incapable of forming an independent judgment; and Benjamin of Tudela was a credulous Jew, much more interested in legends pertaining to his own race than in general questions of topography. So that Arculfus and Theodericus are the two authorities on which the literary part of the argument must be based in future, and the latter, though only now available, is nearly as important as the former. It cannot, however, be too often repeated that the literary branch of the argument is, from the nature of the case, necessarily the most indistinct, and therefore the least valuable. The architectural evidence is the clearest and most direct, and consequently the most important. The topographical proof ranges next to the architectural. Till these two are disposed of, the historical argument may safely be put aside to wait for further elucidation.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:  
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James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE .. .. .	v

## LECTURE I.—FEBRUARY 21, 1862.

Part I.—INTRODUCTORY .. .. .	1
Part II.—ARCHITECTURE .. .. .	9
GOLDEN GATEWAY .. .. .	28
EL AKSAH .. .. .	36
Part III.—HISTORY .. .. .	45

## LECTURE II.—MARCH 3, 1865.

Part I.—INTRODUCTORY .. .. .	61
Part II.—THE TEMPLE .. .. .	74
TEMPLE OF SOLOMON .. .. .	78
TEMPLE OF EZEKIEL .. .. .	82
TEMPLE OF ZERUBBABEL .. .. .	88
TEMPLE OF HEROD .. .. .	91
Part III.—LOCAL INDICATIONS .. .. .	97
Part IV.—HISTORY .. .. .	102
CONCLUSION .. .. .	114
APPENDIX .. .. .	117

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-08063-7 - The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem:

Being the Substance of Two Lectures, Delivered in the Royal Institution

James Fergusson

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

No.	PAGE
View of the Temple as it appeared at the time of the Crucifixion ..	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
Golden Gateway. From a Photograph .. .. .	<i>Title-page.</i>
1. Plan of Jerusalem .. .. .	2
2. Plan of the Dome of Rock at Jerusalem. From Catherwood and Arundale ..	7
3. Peristyle in Palace of Spalatro. From Sir Gardner Wilkinson's 'Dalmatia'	14
4. Golden Gateway at Spalatro. From Sir Gardner Wilkinson's 'Dalmatia' ..	15
5. Lower Order of the Church of Sta. Sophia. From Salzenburg .. .. .	17
6. Upper Order of Sta. Sophia. From Salzenburg .. .. .	18
7. Plan of Haram Area at Jerusalem, showing the buildings which now exist ..	19
8. Arches in St. Demetrius at Salonica .. .. .	22
9. View in Aisle of Dome of Rock. From a drawing by Catherwood .. .. .	22
10. Order of the Dome of the Rock. From a drawing by Arundale .. .. .	23
11. Interior of the Golden Gateway. From a drawing by Catherwood .. .. .	28
12. Order of the Golden Gateway. From a drawing by Arundale .. .. .	29
13. Pillar in Church of St. John, Constantinople .. .. .	31
14. View of Golden Gateway from the Haram Area. From a drawing by Arundale .. .. .	33
15. View in the Mosque el Aksah at Jerusalem. From a drawing by Arundale	36
16. Plan of the Mosque el Aksah at Jerusalem .. .. .	39
17. Plan of Haram Area at Jerusalem, showing the position of the Jewish Temple and Christian buildings .. .. .	41
18. Capital in Dome of Rock. From De Vogüé .. .. .	68
19. South-East View of the Tabernacle, as restored. From Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible' .. .. .	75
20. Diagram of the Dimensions of the Tabernacle in Section .. .. .	76
21. Plan of the Outer Court of the Tabernacle .. .. .	77
22. Plan of Solomon's Temple, showing the disposition of the chambers in two stories .. .. .	79
23. Plan of Ezekiel's Temple .. .. .	83
24. Plan of Ezekiel's Temple, with outer boundary wall .. .. .	86
25. Temple of Herod restored .. .. .	91
26. Section of Vaults in S.E. angle of Haram, showing what would be the position of the pillars of the Stoa Basilica if it extended over them .. .. .	98
27. Jews' Wailing Place .. .. .	99
28. Frontispiece of Julian in south wall of Haram .. .. .	104
29. Plan of the Mosque at Hebron. From a sketch by the Author .. .. .	140, 141