

The tomb of Zechariah in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Colored lithograph by Louis Haghe after David Roberts, 1842



Call for papers

Jerusalem: Between East and West

The Eighth Jerusalem Days Conference in Memory of Asher and Shoshana Halevi: Builders of Jerusalem in Material and Spirit

Tuesday-Friday, July 7-10, 2026, at Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi Auditorium, 14 Ibn Gabirol Street, Jerusalem

Since the dawn of history, Jerusalem has been situated between various cultures and empires. In the ancient Near East, it was influenced by ancient Egypt bordering on the south, the Mesopotamian empires to the north, and the diverse peoples and cultures that sojourned in other parts of the region.

Beginning with the days of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, Hellenistic influences gradually permeated Jerusalem, resulting in a fascinating blend of East and West in the realms of culture, daily life, religion, and worship. The ensuing Roman conquest ushered in novel social and cultural trends further enhancing Western influences in a variety of areas: city planning, public space planning, architecture, and the temple which was reconstructed anew during the reign of King Herod carried affinities with Roman public structures.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE facilitated the conditions for establishing the city as a Roman colony, named Aelia Capitolina, an event that significantly impacted the town's planning for many generations. The Christian-Byzantine Jerusalem combined Western characteristics with Eastern-Christian influences under the rule of the Byzantine emperors. The Arab-Muslim conquest in the seventh century transformed Jerusalem into an important religious center placing it among the leading cities of the Middle East: Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo. The arrival of the Crusaders and the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the 12th century renewed and strengthened the connections between Jerusalem and Christian Europe, making it a city exemplifying the integration of Western and Eastern influences in architecture, art, and daily life.

The conquest of the city by Salah al-Din at the end of the 12th century shifted it back in to the embrace of Islam for centuries to come, that of the rule under the Ayyubids, Mamluks,

and Ottomans. In the 19th century, Europe rediscovered Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and European and Western influences reshaped the city's landscape until the British conquest in 1917.

During their thirty years of rule, the British sought to transform Jerusalem into a modern city that preserves its past and historical uniqueness as a sacred city for the Abrahamic religions. The political and religious conflict surrounding the city during the mandate period, its division in 1948 between Israel and Jordan, and its physical reunification in 1967 under Israeli rule created new challenges and dilemmas regarding the city's character and status between East and West, which continue to accompany its development to this day.

The question of Jerusalem's stance between East and West (alongside clarifying and analyzing these terms), from antiquity to the end of the 20th century, will be the central focus of the Eighth Jerusalem Days Conference, to be held at Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi from July 7-10, 2026. The conference will include three days of lectures and a half-day tour (on Friday, July 10, 2026).

We invite scholars to submit proposals for lectures and sessions relating to the main theme of the conference. The conference is intended for researchers in the fields of history, religious studies, archaeology, geography, art history, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines addressing the variegated aspects of the conference topics.

Lecture proposals should include a title, an abstract of no more than 300 words, and the speakers' details (name, academic affiliation, and email). Session proposals should include three lectures, a title for the proposed session, abstracts, and details of the chair, speakers, and session organizers (name, academic affiliation, and email).

Proposals should be submitted by April 15, 2026

[To submit a proposal](#)

Responses will be provided by May 3, 2026. Questions may be directed to Sharon Zamir-Goldfarb at machonei@ybz.org.il or to Dr. Amnon Ramon at ramon@ybz.org.il.