



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Easter 1914, Matson Collection, Library of Congress, Washington



Call for Papers

Conference on the History of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre On the 1700th Anniversary of its Founding

12.3.2026 at Yad Ben-Zvi, 14 Ibn Gabirol St., Jerusalem



The Institute for the Study of the Land of Israel at Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, in cooperation with the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies at Bar-Ilan University, intends to hold a conference on the 1700th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (in 326 CE, in conjunction to the visit of Empress Helena).

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was a central pillar of the "Holy Land" plan, established by Emperor Constantine the Great, and since its founding in the fourth century has served as a pilgrimage and liturgical center of the highest order in the history of Christianity. The Byzantine church - with its various parts - was destroyed in the early 11th century, rebuilt later during the reign of Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus and again in a new format during the Crusader period.

Since its foundation until today, the church has undergone various disasters and transformations that have made it one of the most sacred and fascinating sites in the world, reflecting the changes and upheavals that took place in the history of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The church with its various sections and the religious rituals practiced in it have been the subject of extensive research by scholars from various fields of study:

history, archaeology, art history, religious studies, anthropology, international relations, and more. The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers who deal with the history of the church from different aspects from its founding stages in the fourth century to issues pertaining to the status quo and the renovation of the church in the early 21st century.

On Thursday, March 12, 2026, we will hold a seminar for scholars and the general public (tour guides and interested audiences) that will deal with central issues in the history of the church over the past 1700 years.

We invite scholars from all fields to submit proposals for lectures and formed sessions (three lectures) on a range of topics related to the history of the church for the seminar to be held on March 12, 2026 at Yad Ben-Zvi. Proposals should include a title coupled with an abstract of up to 300 words, and the lecture's shortened bio (name, academic institution, and email).

Proposals for sessions will include a title of the proposed session, summaries of three lectures, and the essential info on the chairperson, speakers, and the organizer of the session (name, academic institution, and email).

Proposals must be submitted by January 19, 2025 at the following link:

[proposals to the conference](#)

Questions can be directed to Sharon Zamir-Goldfarb machonei@ybz.org.il
or to Dr. Amnon Ramon ramon@ybz.org.il

The Organizing Committee: Prof. Jacob Ashkenazi, Dr. Yuval Baruch, Prof. Oded Irshai, Dr. Amnon Ramon, Prof. Jonathan Rubin.