

“... and see this thing
which is come to pass,
which the Lord hath
made known unto us.”

— Luke 2,15

The 4th International Symposium on Biblical Exegesis

TIMIȘOARA, ROMANIA
11-12 NOVEMBER 2024



סְתַחֲוּ עַד בֵּית־לֵחְם

“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem...”
The City of David in the Holy Scripture
and Early Jewish and Christian Literature

Διέλθωμεν δὴ ἕως Βηθλεεμ . . .

link: meet.google.com/odx-xyvt-ktr



Topics

The reception of Bethlehem (“the city of David”) in Holy Scripture and Judeo-Christian literature (up to the 5th–6th century AD).

- Bethlehem in the Bible (Old Testament and New Testament)
- Bethlehem and its surroundings in Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation
- Bethlehem and Sacred Geography
- Bethlehem in Early Jewish and Christian Literature
- Bethlehem in Liturgy, Hymnography and Poetry
- Visual Representations of Bethlehem
- Keeping Bethlehem’s Biblical Past Alive

Other topics are also welcome.

ISBE Committee



Fr. Dr. Iosif Stancovici
(Timișoara, Romania)

Dr. Maria Cioată
(Manchester, England, UK)

Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc
(Timișoara, Romania)

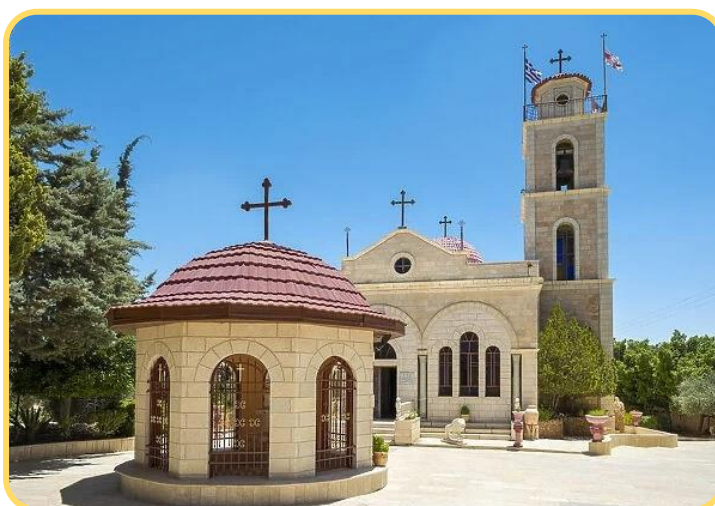


with the assistance of

Fr. Dr. Constantin Jinga
(Timișoara, Romania)

Fr. Dr. Marian Vild
(Bucharest, Romania)

Fr. Dr. Nichifor Tănase
(Timișoara, Romania)



Greek Orthodox monastery in Shepherds' Field, Beit Sahour. ▲

Schedule

Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology
West University of Timișoara, Romania
November 11–12, 2024, online.

Day 1, Monday, November 11th, 2024

Symposium Inauguration
with welcome speeches (English): 09:00–09:20

Session 1 (English/Romanian): 09:20–11:00 [chair: Dr. Maria Cioată]

- 09:20 Fr. Dr. Alexandru Moldovan (Alba Iulia)
- 09:40 Fr. Dr. Srećko Koralija (08:40 Amsterdam)
- 10:00 Dr. Alexandru Mihăilă (Bucharest)
- 10:20 Fr. Dr. John Applegate (08:20 Manchester)

Q & A 10:40–11:00

Short break 11:00–11:20

Session 2 (English): 11:20–13:00 [chair: Fr. Dr. Iosif Stancovici]

- 11:20 Dr. Mihai Handaric (Arad/Oradea)
- 11:40 Fr. Vjekoslav Jovanović (10:40 Foča/Sarajevo)
- 12:00 Fr. Dr. Olimpiu Nicolae Benea (Cluj)
- 12:20 Fr. Dr. Cătălin Vatamanu (Jassy)

Q & A 12:40–13:00

Short break 13:00–13:20

Lunch break 13:20–15:00

Session 3 (English): 15:00–16:40 [chair: Fr. Dr. Constantin Jinga]

- 15:00 Dr. Marek Iréneusz Baraniak (14:00 Warsaw)
- 15:20 Mihailo Milenković (14:20 Belgrade)
- 15:40 Fr. Dr. Ionuț Daniel Băncilă (14:40 Berlin)
- 16:00 Fr. Dr. Iosif Stancovici (Timisoara)

Q & A 16:20–16:40

Summary of the Conference Day 1. 16:40–17:00

Day 2, Tuesday, November 12th, 2024

book release: Conference proceedings
ISBE 2022 (Romanian): 10:00–10:20

Session 4 (Romanian/English): 10:20–11:40 [chair: Fr. Dr. Nichifor Tănase]

This session will be held in situ in the Rotonda Hall of the Faculty.

- 10:20 Fr. Dr. Adrian Ioan Murg (Arad)
- 10:40 Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc (Timisoara/Sibiu)
- 11:00 Fr. Capodistrias Hämmerli (Fribourg/Sibiu)

Q & A 11:20–11:40

Short break 11:40–12:00

Session 5 (Romanian/English): 12:00–13:20 [chair: Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc]

- 12:00 Dr. Eusebiu Borca (Baia Mare)
- 12:20 Fr. Dr. Marian Vild (Bucharest)
- 12:40 Fr. Dr. Constantin Horia Oancea (Sibiu)

Q & A 13:00–13:20

Short break 13:20–13:40

Lunch break 13:40–15:00

Session 6 (English/Romanian): 15:20–16:40 [chair: Fr. Dr. Marian Vild]

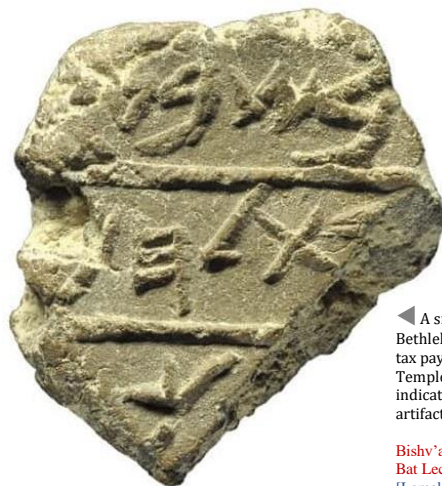
- 15:00 Dr. Kees den Biesen (14:00 Rome)
- 15:20 Fr. Dr. Ilie Melniciuc-Puică (Jassy)
- 15:40 Fr. Dr. Ion Resceanu (Craiova)
- 16:00 Dr. Irina Marinela Deftu (Bucharest)

Q & A 16:20–16:40

Summary of the Conference Day 2. 16:40–17:00

וְאַתָּה בֵּית־לְחֶם אֶפְרָתָה
צְעִיר לְהֵיחֹת בְּאַלְפֵי יְהוּדָה
מִמֶּדָּ לִי יֵצֵא לְהֵיחֹת מוֹשֵׁל
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּמוֹצְאָתוֹ מִקְדָּם
מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם:

“But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days.” (Micah 5,2)



◀ A small clay seal called a 'bullae', used by Bethlehemites to seal an ancient shipment of a tax payment to Jerusalem during the First Temple period of the kings, is the oldest indication of Bethlehem among archaeological artifacts. (Israel Antiquities Authority)

Bishv'at [in the seventh]
Bat Lechem [Bethlehem]
[Lemel]ekh [for the king]

Hershel Shanks, “History of Bethlehem Documented by First Temple Period Bulla from the City of David: Jesus’ Birthplace in Ancient Bethlehem Confirmed as an Israelite City Centuries Earlier,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May 23, 2012, n.p.



▲ Rachel's tomb. (Dr. Steven L. Smith 2016)

CONFERENCE DAY 1 Monday, November 11th, 2024

09:00 Symposium Inauguration with welcome speeches

- His Eminence, the Most Reverend **Ioan Selejan**, Archbishop of Timișoara and Metropolitan of Banat.
- Fr. Dr. **Nichifor Tănase**, Education Counsellor, Archbishopric of Timișoara. Associate Lecturer in Spirituality and Patristics. Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara.
- Dr. **Valy Ceia**, Vice-Rector of the West University and Associate Professor of Classical Philology. Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara.
- Fr. Dr. **Constantin Jinga**, Associate Professor in Old Testament Studies. Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara.
- Fr. Dr. **Srećko Koralija**: *Abun d'bashmaya*, "The Lord's Prayer" from the Peshitta (Syriac-Aramaic).

09:20 First Session

- Chair: Dr. Maria Cioată
- Working Language: Romanian/English

09:20 Fr. Dr. **Alexandru Moldovan**, Professor in New Testament Studies. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, The 1st of December 1918 University of Alba-Iulia.

"You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger (Lk 2, 12): The Paradoxical Sign of Acknowledging God Made Man"

► Fresco, Rachel Weeping for Her Children, Marko's Monastery, Markova Sušica, North Macedonia, 14th century.

09:40 Fr. Dr. **Srećko Koralija**, Assistant Professor of Theology and Leadership. School of Business and Economics. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

"Reception of Charisma in the Early Arabic Translations of the New Testament"

10:00 Dr. **Alexandru Mihăilă**, Associate Professor in Old Testament Studies. Justinian the Patriarch Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, Romania.

"Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem: History and Tradition"

10:20 Fr. Dr. **John Applegate**, Archdeacon Emeritus. Honorary Research Fellow in Religions and Theology, University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

"Bethlehem? In Jeremiah? Or: Why Does Matthew Refer to Jeremiah 31:15 in Relation to the Slaughter of the Innocents in Matthew 2:16-18?"

10:40 **Discussions (Q & A)**
Short break 11:00-11:20



11:20 Second Session

- Chair: Fr. Dr. Iosif Stancovici
- Working Language: English

11:20 Dr. **Mihai Handaric**, Associate Professor in Old Testament Studies. Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences, Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, Romania.

“The Importance of Bethlehem as the Birthplace of the Messiah in the Old and New Testaments”

11:40 Fr. **Vjekoslav Jovanović**, Ph.D. candidate. Saint Basil of Ostrog Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Foča, University of East Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“The Doctrine of Predestination and Romans 8:29-30”

12:00 Fr. Dr. **Olimpiu Benea**, Assistant Professor in New Testament Studies. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, Romania.

“*Plērōma* in the Epistle to the Colossians and the Symbolism of Bethlehem: Fullness, Christology and Early Judeo-Christian Reception”

12:20 Fr. Dr. **Cătălin Vatamanu**. Lecturer in Old Testament Studies. Dumitru Stăniloae Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași.

“Bethlehem as the *House of Bread* and its Theological Meanings”

12:40 Discussions (Q & A)

Lunch Break 13:00–15:00

▼ Bethlehem landscape. William McClure Thomson, *The Land and the Book* (1894).



▲ Detail from the Madaba Mosaic Map, part of a floor mosaic in the early Byzantine church of Saint George in Madaba, Jordan.

15:00 Third Session

- Chair: Fr. Dr. Constantin Jinga
- Working Language: English

15:00 Dr. **Marek I. Baraniak**, Associate Professor of Ancient Orientalistics. Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland.

“The Bethlehem of the Gospel from the Perspective of the Rabbinic Targums”

15:20 **Mihailo Milenković**, Ph.D. candidate. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Belgrade.

“The Role of Gnosis in the Interpretation of the Old Testament in the *Epistle of Barnabas*”

15:40 Fr. Dr. **Ionuț Daniel Băncilă**, Lecturer in Religious Studies. Theologische Fakultät, Humboldt Universität, Berlin, Germany.

“Bethlehem in Mandaeism: Religious Critique and an Alternative Nativity Story”

16:00 Fr. Dr. **Iosif Stancovici**, Associate Lecturer. Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara, Romania.

“Where was Ephrathah?: Searching for an Enigmatic Biblical Toponym”

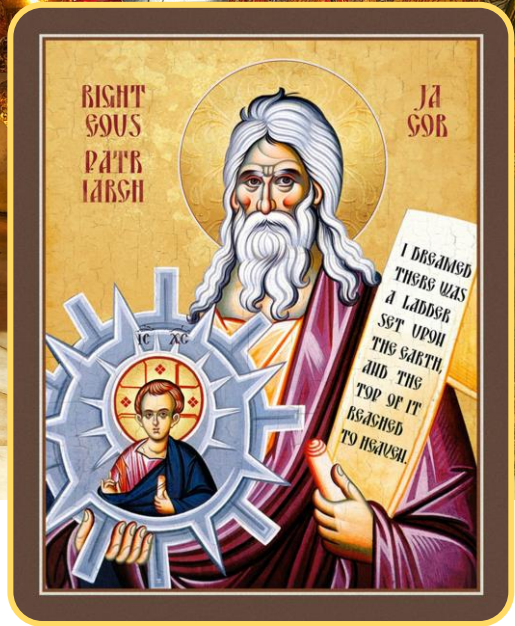
16:20 Discussions (Q & A)

16:40 Summary of the Conference Day 1.





▲ A 14-point silver star on the marble floor of the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem bears the words *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est* ("Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary").



CONFERENCE DAY 2 Tuesday, November 12th, 2024

10:00 BOOK RELEASE

- Chair: Fr. Dr. Constantin Jinga and Fr. Dr. Iosif Stancovici
 - Working Language: Romanian
- This session will be held in situ in the Rotonda Hall of the Faculty.*

10:00 Conference proceedings ISBE 2022

Papers Presented at the 3rd International Symposium on Biblical Exegesis, held in Timișoara, Romania, between the 10th and the 12th of November 2022, ed. Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc and Fr. Dr. Adrian Murg (*Teologia* 28.2 [99], 2024), Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad Publishing House.
ISSN 2247-4382 ISSN-L 1453-4789



◀ Kathisma palm mosaic from the Arab period, Church of the Seat of Mary, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. (Israel Antiquities Authority)

10:20 Fourth Session

- Chair: Fr. Dr. Nichifor Tănase
 - Working Language: Romanian/English
- This session will be held in situ in the Rotonda Hall of the Faculty.*

10:20 Fr. Dr. Adrian Ioan Murg, Lecturer in New Testament Studies. Ilarion V. Felea Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, Romania.

“The Star of Bethlehem and the Star of Jacob: Patristic Exegetical Associations from the First Three Christian Centuries”

10:40 Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc, Lecturer in New Testament Studies. Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timișoara, Romania.

“Bethlehem and the Incarnation: Perspectives from Justin Martyr and Origen”

11:00 Fr. Capodistrias Hämmerli, Ph.D. candidate. Theologische Fakultät. University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

“From King David to the Messiah: Bethlehem, Pivot of Sacred History”

11:20 Discussions (Q & A)
Short break 11:40-12:00





▲ Nativity icon, Armenian illuminated manuscript by T'oros Roslin, c. 1210–1270.

μη φοβεῖσθε, ἰδοὺ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην ἣτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ,
ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτὴρ ὃς ἔστιν χριστὸς κύριος ἐν πόλει Δαυὶδ.

'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people.
Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'
(Jerusalem Bible Luke 2,10-11)

12:00 Fifth Session

- Chairs: Fr. Dr. Ioan Mihoc
- Working Language: Romanian/English

12:00 Dr. **Eusebiu Borca**, Lecturer in Old Testament Studies. Justinian the Archbishop Faculty of Letters, North University Centre of Baia Mare, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

"A Typological Perspective
on Benjamin's Birth and Rachel's Death:
Foreshadowing the Incarnation"

12:20 Fr. Dr. **Marian Vild**, Associate Professor in New Testament Studies. Justinian the Patriarch Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Bucharest, Romania.

"Bethlehem and Giscala:
Jesus of Nazareth and Saul of Tarsus"

12:40 Fr. Dr. **Constantin Oancea**, Associate Professor in Old Testament Studies. Andrei Șaguna Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Lucian Blaga University of Iași.

"Motifs from the Legend of St. Simeon the God-Receiver
in Byzantine Hagiographical Sources"

13:00 Discussions (Q & A)
13:20–15:00 Lunch Break

15:00 Sixth Session

- Chair: Fr. Dr. Marian Vild
- Working Language: English/Romanian

15:00 Dr. **Kees den Biesen**, Independent Scholar of Early Christian Literatures. Visiting professor at the Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome, Italy.

"Bethlehem in Ephrem the Syrian's Poetry"

15:20 Fr. Dr. **Ilie Melniciuc**, Associate Professor in New Testament Studies. Dumitru Stăniloae Faculty of Orthodox Theology, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Jassy, Romania.

"Latin Christian References to the Town of Bethlehem
from the 4th–5th Centuries"

15:40 Fr. Dr. **Ion Resceanu**, Lecturer in Old Testament Studies. Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Craiova, Romania.

"The Nativity in Illuminations
of Slavic-Byzantine Biblical Manuscripts"

16:00 Dr. **Irina Marinela Deftu**, Associate Lecturer in Comparative Linguistics and Biblical Translation Studies. Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania.

"Some Issues Related to Polish Orthodox Terminology:
Terms Used for 'Priest' in Orthodox Polish Bible
Translations: *baciuszka*, *prezbiter*, *ksiądz*"

16:20 Discussions (Q & A)

16:40 Summary of the Conference Day 2.