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Staff Training Mobility Report

Erasmus+ Programme

Institution Visited: Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS), Cvjetkova 32, HR-31000 Osijek, Croatia

Dates: 6–10 October 2025

Training Theme: *Old Testament: Contemporary Perspectives & More*

Purpose and Context of the Visit



As a lecturer at the Luther Academy (LA), I am responsible for all Old Testament courses, including both general surveys and exegetical studies. Upon learning about the theme of the ETS intensive study week, *Old Testament: Contemporary Perspectives & More*, it immediately appeared highly relevant to my professional field. I was particularly interested in observing how the Old Testament is taught and interpreted within another academic and ecclesial environment – outside Latvia, in a non-Lutheran yet closely related Evangelical context. Consequently, participation in this programme was an excellent opportunity for academic and professional development.

And here we are boarding a plane to go on an exchange of experiences.

Programme Overview

The event offered an extensive and intellectually demanding schedule, with opportunities to attend a wide range of lectures, workshops, and discussions. The organisers ensured a well-balanced structure, combining periods of intensive academic engagement with time for reflection and informal exchange. Participants could select specific sessions based on their academic interests.

Lectures Attended

In accordance with my research and teaching interests, I attended the following lectures:

- **Dr Marc Cortez (Wheaton College, USA):** *Dealing with the Dark Side of Imago Dei* (1.5 hours)

- **Dr Aleksandar Apostolovski (ETS Osijek, Croatia):** *The Things We Lost: The Old Testament between Theodicy and Victimhood* (4.5 hours)
- **Dr John Walton (Wheaton College, USA):** *Theological Importance of the Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds* (3 hours)
- **Dr John Walton:** *Not the End of the World: Daniel 7–12* (3 hours)
- **Dr John Walton:** *World as the Temple: The Lost World of Genesis (Gen 1–11)* (3 hours)

Each of these sessions provided valuable insights into contemporary approaches to Old Testament interpretation, the theological implications of the Ancient Near Eastern background, and the ongoing dialogue between biblical theology and cultural contexts.



Institutional Collaboration and Networking

A major objective of the visit was to strengthen cooperation between the LA and other higher education institutions participating in the Erasmus+ programme. ETS facilitated several networking events designed for both faculty and students. I participated in the following meetings:

- Introductory meeting for all participants (6 October 2025)
- Faculty networking and exchange session (8 October 2025)
- Meeting of LA representatives with the ETS administration (10 October 2025)

These meetings offered valuable opportunities to exchange experiences and discuss potential avenues for collaboration, particularly in academic mobility, joint research, and publication activities.

Cultural and Academic Impressions

An ETS-organised guided tour of the historical centre of Osijek (7 October 2025) provided valuable insight into the local context. Osijek revealed itself as a vibrant university town, with a youthful atmosphere visible in its public spaces even during late evening hours. The University of Osijek ranks among the largest in Croatia ([University of Osijek](#)), while ETS, though smaller in size – with approximately 40 full-time and 200 part-time students ([ETS website](#)) – plays a significant role in the advancement of theological education within the Evangelical tradition.



During discussions with ETS colleagues, several parallels emerged between our institutions, including shared experiences concerning theological education under and after communist regimes. This topic may form the basis for a future comparative study, for example, analysing theological education in Latvia and Croatia during the 1960s–1990s or exploring comparative perspectives on Old Testament interpretation.

Outcomes and Future Prospects

Throughout the visit, both in official meetings and informal settings, ETS faculty members were exceptionally welcoming and supportive. We discussed various possibilities for LA students and staff to benefit from Erasmus+ mobility, including research visits, participation in intensive study weeks, individual courses, and semester-long studies. ETS representatives also expressed openness to publishing contributions from LA scholars in their academic journal, which is indexed in the SCOPUS database.

Conclusion

Participation in this Erasmus+ training mobility has been a highly enriching experience, academically, professionally, and culturally. It has expanded my understanding of theological education in a wider European context and strengthened institutional links between the Luther Academy and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek. The Erasmus+ programme continues to serve as a valuable framework for fostering international collaboration, broadening academic horizons, and deepening intercultural understanding.

