

Tuesday, May 8, 2018 at 13:15
Department of Man in the Desert Seminar Room

ES Seminar

"Byzantine Monasticism in the Negev: Physical, Architectonic, and Socio-Economic Context"

Rachel Bernstein

Ph.D Thesis presentation



The goal of this research is to better understand the socio-economic context of monasteries and the lives of monks in the Byzantine Negev, as well as their role within the Negev towns. Early Christian monasticism was a phenomenon that began in the deserts of Egypt and spread onward to the provinces that formed Byzantine Palestine, Syria, and Transjordan. Historically, these movements have been studied and described as regional trends, however, almost no attention has been paid to such activity in the Negev. This research attempts to fill in the informational gap on the Negev's monastic movements by identifying their physical and socio-economic characteristics.

Hypotheses include: The socio-economic context of Negev monasticism is different than that of other parts of Palestine, i.e., Judean Desert or Gaza; there are physical characteristics of monastic sites that are specific and often employed in the Negev, and the integration of monastic properties in/near Negev Desert towns influences socio-economic context. This research uses a variety of resources, including various written sources, as well as critical review of the construction techniques of monastic structures, both through archaeological surveys, reports, and *in situ*.