

האוניברסיטה העברית
הפקולטה למדעי הרוח, החוג לתולדות האמנות

הסמינר החוגי

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Locality in Byzantine Art: the Case of St Anne

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St Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was an apocryphal figure which made her way to the Byzantine religious life especially from the ninth century onwards as a result of the official end of Iconoclasm in 843, which promulgated the dogma of Christ's Incarnation. Since then, numerous depictions appeared throughout the empire and the areas artistically influenced by Byzantium. Although the main reason for her veneration is her birth of Mary that opened the way for Christ's future birth, and it is with this in mind that one understands her imagery, it is easy to acknowledge that her repertoire differs from region to region, which apart from donor's preferences, mirrors contemporary theological perceptions attributed to the saint.

Examples will be drawn from Nubia, Cappadocia, Constantinople, Eastern Europe, Ethiopia and Greece to show that the iconography of St Anne is characterized by standard features such the promotion of parenthood, healing, and the glorification of Christ but as mentioned above, different characteristics are emphasized in different locations. In Lower Nubia, Anne makes the gesture of silence, which will not be repeated ever-after in Byzantine art and follows the iconography of ancient Egyptian deities. In Cappadocia, her iconography offers various theological associations as Anne is a martyr and defender of the Christian faith, a parent and a healer saint. In Constantinople, the Byzantine capital, elements from the court ceremonial are infused into her iconographical repertoire, while in Eastern Europe and Ethiopia, *hapax* associations were made in the scenes of the Ascension and Christ Reclining.

Overall, the study of St Anne's iconography in Byzantium infiltrates deeply into the way the Byzantines 'manipulated' their saints whom they often depicted accordingly depending on various perceptions of female sanctity.