



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Religious and Secular Spaces in the Eastern Mediterranean - 5805

Last update 16-04-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: History of Art

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Rina Talgam

Coordinator Email: rina.talgam@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, following an appointment.

Teaching Staff:

Prof Rina Talgam

Course/Module description:

In Late Antiquity (A.D. 200-800) the Southern Levant became a central arena where Greco-Roman polytheist cults, Judaism, Christianity and Islam met, conversed, competed and conflicted with each other. The traces of these encounters are found not only in historical and literary texts, but also in architecture and art. The course will shed light on the comprehension of the close cultural interaction between faith and art in this critical part of the Mediterranean.

In a multi-cultural society, different religious groups share a common mental and physical space, yet, at the same time, they all strive to define their separate identities. The distancing and segregation from one group sometimes heightened the similarity to another religious group. In ancient societies, where few were literate, art played an important role as a means of proliferation and amplification of the religious experience, as an instrument of political propaganda and as a tool for the promotion of social agendas. Works of art are historical documents that sometimes confirm what we know from written sources, and at other times, make us aware that the picture is complex or different from what we supposed. The course examines methodological aspects relating to the complex connection between art and text. It touches on a long list of questions: Who had the authority to dictate the content of works of art decorating religious public spaces? Were there tools that ensured a "proper" view of the art? What happened when two religions, as a result of the veneration of the same text, began to draw from a common reservoir of images and topics? How can one determine which texts are the relevant ones for interpretation of a certain visual imagery? Could it be that it was the work of art that influenced the text and not the other way around?

Main Topics:

Art and Text

Ways of viewing art in Late Antiquity

The Classical Heritage in Late Antiquity among Jews, Christians and Muslims

The Second Sophism and its reflection in works of art

Religious competition and decoration of sanctuaries

The bath house and its decoration

Non-figurative attitudes among polytheists, Jews, Christians and Muslims

The defacement of figures

Course/Module aims:

The course traces the intricate visual dialogues between paganism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the eastern Mediterranean in Late Antiquity. It focuses on

temples, synagogues, churches, buildings that were not intended for the activities of institutional religion and Muslim edifices. We shall examine the role played by works of art in constructing the ethnic and religious identity of the various groups and examines both the intimate links, as well as the disjunctions, between art and text.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

The students will be acquainted with to the dynamic relationships between the various communities in the Middle East in Late Antiquity

The participants will be able to conduct an interdisciplinary research that relies on close readings of both visual and textual evidence

The students will aware to a range of critical theories and methodologies from various field of knowledge

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: research seminar.

Course/Module Content:

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments:

Lesson 1: Introduction

The Temple and the Synagogue

H. W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship* (Hague: Mouton Publishers,1979), 57-65.

L. Doering, "The Synagogue at Magdala: Between Localized Practice and Reference to the Temple," in L. Doering and A. Krause (eds.), *Synagogues in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods; Archaeological Finds, New Methods, New Theories* (in co-operation with H. Löhr), *Ioudaioi; Schriften des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* 11, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage, 2020), 127-153.

Recommended reading:

J. Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978.

Lesson 2: Dura Europos and its cults, Polytheism, Judaism and Christianity

J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and subjectivity in Art and Text*, Princeton 2007, 253-287.

L. Dirven, "Religious Competition and the Decoration of Sanctuaries: The Case of Dura-Europos", *Eastern Christian Art in its Late Antique and Islamic Contexts 1* (2004), 1-20.

Recommended reading:

K. Weitzmann and H. L. Kessler, *The Frescoes of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art*, Washington, DC, 1990, 143-183.

T. K. Thomas, "Art Historical Frontiers: Lessons From Dura-Europos", in: J. Y. Chi & S. Heath (eds.), *Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews, and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos*, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York, 2012, pp.41-61.

A. Wharton, "Good and Bad Images from the Synagogue of Dura Europos: Contexts, Subtexts, Intertext", *Art History* 17.1 (1994), 1-25.

Lesson 3:

Temple, Synagogue and Church

J. R. Branham, "Vicarious Sacrality: Temple Space in Ancient Synagogues", in *Ancient Synagogues; Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery*, ed. D. Urman and P. V. M. Flesher (Leiden, New York, and Köln: Brill, 1995), 319-345

A. M. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean; Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 14-45.

H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean; The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art*, University Park and London, 1987, 1-15.

Recommended reading:

J. R. Branham, "Mapping Sacrifice on Bodies and Spaces in Late-Antique Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, ed. B. D. Wescoat and R. Ousterhout Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, 201-30.

C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453; Sources and Documents*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1986, 60-72 (Choricus, *Laudatio Marciani I*, 17-72; Choricus, *Laudatio Marciani II*, 28-52).

K. McVey, 'The Domed Church as Microcosm, Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol', *DOP* 37 (1983), 91-121 (&eq; in P. C. Finney [ed.], *Studies in Early Christianity, A Collection of Scholarly Essays*, vol. XVIII [New York and London, 1993], pp. 183-213.

R. Webb, 'The Aesthetics of Sacred Space: Narrative, Metaphor, and Motion in Ekphraseis of Church Buildings', *DOP* 53 (1999), 59-74.

Z. Weiss, *The Sepphoris Synagogue: Deciphering an Ancient Message through Its Archaeological and Socio-Historical Contexts*, Jerusalem, 2005.

Lesson 4: Ways of viewing art in Late Antiquity: continuity and change. The *Imagines* of Philostratus and the *Tabula* of Cebes vis-à-vis the ekphraseis of the School of Gaza in the sixth century.

J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer; The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, Cambridge, 1995, 21-48.

R. Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, Surrey, 2009, 1-11.

The Tabula of Cebes

Several parts of the Imagines of Philostratus

Lesson 5: *Paidea, the Second Sophism (Mosaics at Sepphoris, Antioch and Zeugma)*

R. Talgam and Z. Weiss, *The Mosaics in the House of Dionysos at Sepphoris*, *Qedem* 44, *Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem*, 2004 (125-134).

C. Kondoleon, , "Mosaics of Antioch," in C. Kondoleon (ed.), *Antioch; The Lost City*, Princeton University Press in association with Worcester Art Museum, Worcester MA, 2000, 63-78.

L M. Stirling, *The Learned Collector; Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul*, Ann Arbor, 2005, 138-164, 213-232.

Lesson 6: *Hellenism in Late Antiquity among Jews, Christians and Muslims*

S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, Cambridge, UK, 2004, 1-16, 50-136.

W. Liebeschuetz, "The Use of Pagan Mythology in the Christian Empire with

Particular Reference to the Dionysiaca of Nonnus", in P. Allen and E. M. Jeffreys (eds.), The Sixth Century, End or Beginning?, Byzantina Australiensia 10 (1996), 75-91.

G.W. Bowersock, Hellenism in Late Antiquity, Ann Arbor, 1990, 41-53.

Recommended reading:

A. Kaldellis, Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition, Cambridge 2007, 13-41.

J. Elsner, Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire, AD 100-450 Oxford, 1998, 169-197.

Lesson 7: Non-figurative Attitudes Among Polytheists, Jews, Christians and Muslims

T. N. D. Mettinger, "Israelite Aniconism: Developments and Origins," in The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East, ed. K. van der Toorn, Peeters, Leuven, 1997, 173-204

נ. יובל-חכם, אמנות ללא דמות; מגמות אנטי-פיגורטיביות באמנות היהודית בשלהי התקופה הביזנטית ובראשית התקופה המוסלמית, מאגנס, ירושלים, 2021, 66-19.

Recommended reading:

The Rabbinical laws of idolatry, the attitudes of Christian scholars and the archaeological evidence.

E.E. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the Light of Archaeological and Historical Facts", Israel Exploration Journal 9 (1959), 149-165, 229-245.

Y.Z. Eliav, "Viewing the Sculptural Environment: Shaping the Second Commandment", The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture, vol. 3, ed. By P. Schafer, Tübingen, 2003, 411-33.

S. Stern, "Images in Late Antiquity Palestine: Jewish and Graeco-Roman Views", in: The Image and Its prohibition in Jewish Antiquity, [Journal of Jewish Studies Supplement Series 2], ed. By S. Pearce, Oxford, 2013, 110-129.

Tertullian, (segments from) De idolatria.

Lessons 8 & 9 Mosaic in churches and synagogues: differences and similarities. The focus is on the depiction of biblical images in Jewish and Christian realms.

S. Miller and U. Leibner, "The Synagogue Mosaic," In U. Leibner, *Khirbet Wadi Hamam; A Roman-Period Village and Synagogue in the Lower Galilee*, Qedem Reports 13, 2018, 144-186.

J. Magness, S. Kisilevitz, and Mizzi, D. and others "The Huqoq Excavation Project: 2014-2017 Interim Report" *BASOR* 380, 2018: 61-131.

K. Britt and R. Boustán, "Scenes in Stones: Newly Discovered Mosaics from the North Aisle in the Huqoq Synagogue," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 5.4 (2022), 509-579

Lesson 10: The Bath House

M. Halbertal, "Coexisting with the Enemy: Jews and Pagans in the Mishnah", in G. Stanton & G. G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, Cambridge 1998, 159-172

Y. Tsafrir, "The Classical Heritage in Late Antique Palestine; The Fate of Freestanding Sculpture", *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East; Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, ed. by Y.Z. Eliav, E. A. Friedland and S. Herbert, Leuven, 117-142.

Lesson 11: The defacement of images on the mosaic floors in churches and synagogues

C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness; On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine iconoclasm*, Princeton, 2002, 7-11, 39-59, 83-105, 125-139.

L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Period (ca. 680-850). A History*, Cambridge, 2011, selection of pages.

P. Crone, 'Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980), 59-95.

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K. Britt and R. Boustán, "Scenes in Stones: Newly Discovered Mosaics from the North Aisle in the Huqoq Synagogue," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 5.4 (2022), 509-579

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L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Period (ca. 680-850). A History*, Cambridge, 2011, selection of pages.

P. Crone, 'Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980), 59-95.

Additional Reading Material:

A. Cameron, "The "long" late antiquity: a late twentieth-century model" in: *Classics in progress: Essays on ancient Greece and Rome* ed. by T. P Wiseman, Oxford , 2003, 165-191.

A. Marcone, "A Long Late Antiquity? Considerations on a Controversial Periodization", *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008), 4-19.

O. Irshai, "Confronting a Christian Empire: Jewish Life and Culture in the World of Early Byzantium", *The Jews of Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures*, ed. by R. Bonfil et al., Leiden, 2011, 17-64.

G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar (eds.), *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1999.

G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, Ann Arbor, 1990.

K. Bowes, "Early Christian Archaeology: A State of the Field", *Religion Compass* 2 (2008), pp. 575-619.

P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, London, 1971.

J. Elsner, 'Archaeologies and Agendas: Reflections on Late Ancient Jewish Art and Early Christian Art', *JRS* 93 (2003), 114-28.

J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer; The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, Cambridge, 1995.

J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire, AD 100-450* Oxford, 1998.

J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes; Visuality & Subjectivity in Art & Text*, Princeton, 2007.

S. Fine (ed.), *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, New York, 1996.

S. Fine, *This Holy Place: On the Sanctity of the Synagogue during the Greco-Roman Period*, Notre Dame, 1997.

S. Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World: Toward a New Jewish Archaeology*, Cambridge, Eng. and New York, 2005.

O. Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, New Haven and London, 1973.

R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, Leiden and New York, 1988.

R. Hachlili , *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Diaspora*, Leiden, Boston, and Koln, 1998.

R. Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends: Selected Studies*, Leiden and Boston, 2009.

R. M. Jensen, *Face to Face; Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity*, Minneapolis, 2005.

R. M. Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, London and New York, 2000.

L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, New Haven, 2000.

L.I. Levine, *Visual Judaism in Late Antiquity; Historical Contexts of Jewish Art*, New Haven and London, 2012.

L. I. Levine and Z. Weiss (eds.), *From Dura Europos to Sepphoris: Studies in Jewish Art and Society in Late Antiquity*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement* 40 (Portsmouth, RI, 2000).

S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 1, Berkeley and London, 1981.

H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean; The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art*, University Park and London, 1987.

D. Milson, *Art and Architecture of the Synagogue in Late Antiquity Palestine in the Shadow of the Church*, Boston, 2007.

R. Neis, *The Sense of Sight in Rabbinic Culture: Jewish Ways of Seeing in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, 2003.

S. Pearce (ed.), *The Image and Its prohibition in Jewish Antiquity*, [*Journal of Jewish Studies Supplement Series* 2], Oxford, 2013.

A. Shinan, "Synagogues in the Land of Israel; The Literature of the Ancient Synagogue and Synagogue Archaeology", in: S. Fine (ed.), *Sacred Realm; The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, New York and Oxford, 1996, 130-152.

M. Rosen-Ayalon, *The Early Islamic Monuments of al-Haram al-Sharīf: An Iconographic Study*, Qedem 28, Jerusalem, 1989.

P. Rousseau (ed. with the assistance of J. Raithel), *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 2009.

S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.*, Princeton 2001, 129- 176; 179-292

M. R. Salzman, On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 17, Berkeley, 1990.

L. M. Stirling, The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul, Ann Arbor, 2005.

R. Talgam, Mosaics of Faith; Floors of Pagans, Jews, Samaritans, Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land, Yad Ben-Zvi Press and Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2014.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 80 %
Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 20 %

Additional information: