

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

Art Appreciation ARTH110

Instructor: Joanna Wos

Jewish Religious Traditions and Sacred Texts Module

GOAL:

To explore why one of the most sacred precepts of Judaism is not reflected in the art of the earliest important synagogue found at Dura Europos.

ASSIGNED READINGS:

Exodus: 20.4, 20.5, 20.23

Goodenough, E. R. (1988) *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*. Abridged edition. Bollingen Series. Princeton University Press. Pp. 249-265

Grossman, G.C. (1995). *Jewish Art*. Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc. Pp. 19, 24.

Julius, A. (2000) *Idolizing Pictures: Idolatry, iconoclasm and Jewish art*. Thames & Hudson. pp. 34-42.

Matheson S.B. (1982). *Dura Europos: The ancient city and the Yale collection*. Yale University Art Gallery.

Silver, C. (August 11, 2010). Dura-Europos: Crossroad of cultures. *Archaeology*.

http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/dura_europos/

Young, P. (July 2014). Dura Europos: Findings at a desert site in eastern Syria shed light on pagan, Jewish and early Christian religions. *History Today*. 64(7).

Young, P. (1997.) Return to Dura Europos. *History Today*. 47(11), 31.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What does aniconic mean?
2. What are the written sources that established Judaism as an aniconic religion?
3. What and where is Dura Europos?
4. Why are the images in the synagogue at Dura Europos so significant?
5. Describe, in general terms, the program of images on the western wall of the synagogue.
6. What do scholars think are some of the influences that caused these unexpected images?

ASSIGNMENT:

Write a one page narrative, incorporating the answers to the study questions, discussing the importance of the synagogue at Dura Europos in Jewish art.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES:

Chi, J.Y. and Heath, S. (2011) *Edge of Empires: Pagans, Jews and Christians at Roman Dura-Europos*. Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. New York University.