

Ilia Rodov

Gate to the Lord: Symbolic Language of East-European Synagogue Art

A unique artistic tradition of rich painted and sculpted decoration flourished in east-European synagogues from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century. Ilia Rodov's brief course will focus on the methods of research and interpretation of the images in synagogues. The arts constructed and maintained the mental concepts of the synagogue as a gate of heaven open for pious people and their prayer. The visual allegories propagated religious virtues and implied contemplation on God's providence and human destiny. The images and ornamentation evoked in the congregants a sense of attending the solemn abode of Divine Presence, and envisioning the Holy Land and heavenly Paradise.

Dr. Ilia Rodov is Chair of the Department of Jewish Art at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, principal investigator of research projects in traditional Jewish art in Europe and editor of *Ars Judaica* journal. He is the author of *The Torah Ark in Renaissance Poland: A Jewish Revival of Classical Antiquity* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013) and many other works on European synagogue art, focusing on the history, patronage, and meanings of synagogue paintings, sculptures, architectural decoration, and furniture design.