

**The Jews and Christians of Imperial Asia Minor,
The Literary and Material Evidence**

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To Daddy and Mummy,

For taking us around this country
to discover a new place on each holiday,
So that we might come to appreciate the land we live in,
And for enthusiastically encouraging me to broaden my scope
and step into areas where few feet have troden.

I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Archaeology and History of Art.

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the effect of two religions on Asia Minor during the Roman Imperial period. The Jews existed long before the Christians, and although Judaism and Christianity greatly differed from each other to the Romans they seemed similar, they believed in one God and would not worship any other being, not even the emperor. People of both faiths and identity lived and managed to develop in an environment that was at times hostile. The first part of the thesis focuses on the Jews, when they came, how they developed and what we know of them from literary and material evidence. The second part is on the Christians, how their faith spread to Asia Minor, how they survived the persecutions and the evidence they left behind at a time when their religious practices and faith were considered illegal by the Roman government. The nature of the evidence for both groups are very different, for this reason a comparison is not possible. However it is impossible to study one without the other as they effect each other. Asia Minor proves to be a place where both religions prospered and its cosmopolite nature and topography provided protection for the followers of these religions that were so ‘different’ from the average Roman citizen. This study not only brings together important representatives of the available literary evidence but also most of the material evidence that has so far been discovered. All evidence in its own way reveals a desire to preserve an identity that is attached to their faith, not only to protect but also to proclaim.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Roma İmparatorluk döneminde iki dinin Küçük Asya'ya olan etkisini inceler. Yahudiler, Hristiyanlar ortaya çıkmadan çok önceden buraya yerleşmişlerdi, fakat kendi dinlerinden doğan yeni bir inanç ile yan yana yaşamak farklı bir ikilem yarattı. Yahudi ve Hristiyan inancı kendi aralarında ne kadar farklı olsalar da Roma için onlar birbirlerine çok benziyorlardı. En önemli ortak noktaları tek bir Tanrı'ya tapmaları başka herhangi bir şeye, imparatora bile tapmamaları idi. Her iki inancın bireyleri, zaman zaman düşmanca bir ortamda hem yaşamayı hem de gelişmeyi başardı. Tezin ilk bölümünde Küçük Asya'ya gelişleri, nasıl geliştikleri ile elimizdeki edebi ve arkeolojik buluntulara dayandırılarak Yahudiler incelenmiştir. İkinci bölüm ise Hristiyanları ele alır. İnançlarının Küçük Asya'ya nasıl yayıldığı, zulümlerden sağ çıkışları ve inançlarının Roma devletince yasa dışı olduğu bir dönemde geride bıraktıklarını incelenir. Her iki birey grubu için var olan arkeolojik verinin doğası çok farklıdır ve bu yüzden bir karşılaştırma yapmak mümkün değildir. Ne var ki, diğeri olmadan birini incelemek mümkün değildir, çünkü her ikisinin de var olduğu dönemde birbirlerini etkilemişlerdir. Küçük Asya, her iki dinin geliştiği ve aynı zamanda kozmopolit doğası ile topografisi sayesinde normal Roma vatandaşından 'farklı' olan bu dinlerin takipçilerine koruma sağlayan bir yer olarak kendini kanıtlamıştır. Bu çalışma sadece elde bulunan edebi kaynaklardan önemli örnekler sağlamamakta fakat aynı zamanda bugüne kadar ele geçen arkeolojik verilerin büyük bir çoğunluğunu değerlendirir. Tüm arkeolojik veriler, kendilerine has bir biçimde, hem Yahudi ve Hristiyan inancına sahip kişilerin kimliklerini korumayı hem de aynı zamanda kim olduklarını duyurmayı istediklerini göstermektedir. Aralarında bu çabaya yenik düşüp kopanlar olmuş olsa da büyük bir çoğunluk inançlarına sadık kalıp yeri geldiğinde yaşadıkları ortama zıt, yeri geldiğinde de ortama uyarak var oluşlarını sürdürmüşlerdir.

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Introduction

Studies of ancient religions have revealed that monotheism was a rare phenomenon in antiquity, but the few ethnic groups that lived in a monotheistic fashion became a strong entity within the areas they lived. In early antiquity Judaism was perhaps the most widespread monotheistic religion, to be followed a millennium later by Christianity, which would eventually overtake Judaism in its numbers of believers. How did these communities not only survive but spread in a dominant polytheistic environment?

This study will look at the Jewish communities and Christian communities in general to understand their relationship with Rome, and how it was possible for Judaism to exist and Christianity to spread as it did in such a hostile environment. However, the main aim of the thesis is to comprehend the relationship between ‘Pagans’, Jews and Christians within a specific geographic area for a specific era: Asia Minor in the Hellenistic and Roman Period, until immediately after Christianity became an officially tolerated religion in AD 313.

Often the role that Asia Minor played in the spread of Christianity is underestimated or not even noticed. Geographically, it has posed as a bridge between the Middle East and Europe for centuries. As a result, it was the bridge for the Gospel to spread west. Even more so, what is often not realised is the prominent role the Jewish Diaspora of the Eastern Roman Empire played in bringing this about. Without the Diaspora the Apostles would not have had a starting point for spreading the Word.

First it is necessary to understand the Jewish Diaspora, how it came about and how people responded to it. Our main literary source on early Judaism and the Diaspora is

Josephus, a first century AD Jewish historian of priestly descent.¹ In *Jewish Antiquities* he gives a detailed account of the history of the Jews from Genesis to the period during which he is writing. In the *Jewish War* he writes about the war fought between Rome and the Jews in AD 66-71. It is the first work that gives substantial information about the Diaspora in Asia Minor and while other sources of antiquity such as Philo, Dio and Suetonius also provide us with valuable information, their information concerns specific cases, and at most times it is hard to generalise from this. As with all historical documents, we must be aware that Josephus' account might well be biased, and even inaccurate. Rajak, for example, points out that there are problems with matching up incidents Josephus records with the independently known dates of the government officials he refers to in his texts.² To examine the validity of these works is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, and thus it will be assumed that what they say is correct, unless there is evidence otherwise. After all, the works do reveal much information on the Jews and their ways of life, even if they might well be adopting a biased point of view.

Epigraphic and material evidence from Asia Minor provides an important complement to the literary sources. At times it supports the literary evidence, and at times it reveals local traits of the Jewish communities, otherwise unknown. One of the problems with the epigraphic and material evidence is the chronological and geographical span it covers. There is evidence from the second century BC to the fourth century AD, scattered over a wide area. Examples for certain areas of study are few and belong to different dates. Drawing general conclusions from sparse evidence of this kind can create problems. Due to the specific period studied in this thesis, the evidence of later periods for Judaism in Asia Minor, which forms a high percentage of the existing material evidence, has not been studied in detail and has only been mentioned where deemed necessary.

¹ Hornblower, S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 798.

² Rajak, T., 1992, 111.

In addition, research conducted on Judaism in Asia Minor on this area is still in an initial phase in that the number of studies conducted to date are few and infrequent. Two main modern sources that are important, however, are Trebilco's *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* and Williams' *The Jews Among the Greeks and the Romans, a Diasporan Sourcebook*. Both studies, unique within themselves, have provided the starting point to the thesis.

Ancient literary sources for Early Christianity are many, and the works of Origen, Melito of Sardis, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and others have been studied in great detail. By contrast, while much has been written on the literary evidence for early Christianity in Asia Minor, if anything, studies of the epigraphic and material evidence are even more scarce than that for Judaism. Mitchell's work *Anatolia, Land, Men and Gods* seems to be a pioneering work in collecting all the available information under one heading, but there is the difficulty that Christianity in its early stages was illegal, and so the material evidence in most places seems non-existent. Even so, to date, Asia Minor has proved the place which reveals more material evidence of early Christianity than elsewhere in the Roman World.

In this study, therefore, the focus is on the literary and epigraphic evidence for Jews and Christians in Asia Minor, supported by what physical material does exist. As local factors seem to have had the leading role in what is reported, generalisations from the material evidence have mainly been avoided. That said, because of the overall lack of material evidence for early Christianity in Asia Minor, in some places general comments, which must remain open to discussion, can be made.

The thesis is in two parts. Part I concerns the Jews, and Part II concerns the Christians, and each part is divided into three sections. Part I.1 concerns the arrival of Jews

in Asia Minor, in light of what was going on in contemporary Palestine and the Middle East. Part I.2 discusses The Development of the Jewish Diaspora and Roman Attitudes to it, and the privileges confirmed for the Jews by the Roman government, as well as the problems that arose. As the evidence shows, many of the Jewish communities in Asia Minor were well established and well respected before the region came under Roman control. In Part I.3 the material evidence that supports Part I.1 and Part I.2 is assessed to establish how the Jews functioned in the polytheistic Graeco-Roman Society of Asia Minor.

Part II focuses on the Christians. In Part II.1, the literary evidence for the Emergence and Spread of Christianity in Asia Minor is examined. Eusebius claims that Christianity spread in three stages and this part focuses on the first, which ended with the Apostolic age, the last quarter of the first century AD.³ Part II.2 reviews the Spread of Christianity and Roman, Jewish and individual responses to the religion, and corresponds to Eusebius' second phase which began around 180, towards the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius.⁴ However, in this case the spread is mainly studied alongside the reactions of the Roman Empire, as it is impossible to understand one without the other: the spread was affected by the way the Romans treated the Christians, which in return, was affected by the actions of the Christians. This part concludes with an introduction to Eusebius' third phase, beginning with the Edict of Milan (AD 312),⁵ as chronologically it is not within the time frame of this thesis. The final chapter, Part II.3, discusses the Physical Evidence of Christianity in Asia Minor. As already indicated the material evidence for this is very different than that for the Jews, as it consists solely of funerary monuments. Part II.3 studies these monuments in their geographic setting, from north to south.

³ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.37.

⁴ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 5.5.

The main body of the thesis is supported by Appendix 1, a collection of inscriptions on Jews and Christians that offer information on the whereabouts of Jewish and Christian communities in Asia Minor; the role of individuals and their professions; religious customs; and the interaction of Jews and Christians with the local society of the day. Appendix 2 discusses the evidence for the Jewish community in Antioch. Although not within the geographical scope of the thesis, Antioch is far too important a Diaspora centre to ignore. Appendix 3 concerns Dura Europos, where the synagogue and earliest known house-church excavated have been useful sources for what such structures in Asia Minor may have been like.

⁵ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 10.3.

PART I: The Jews

I.1 The Arrival of the Jews in Asia Minor

The people of Israel, having travelled in the land of Canaan, moved to Egypt and returned from captivity to the Promised Land, finally established an independent kingdom in the mid-eleventh century BC⁶ and they became a powerful entity in the world of the Middle East at the time. They were known as a people who believed in one God and lived by the Law of the Ten Commandments, given to them at Mt. Sinai.⁷

Being a kingdom with shores on the Mediterranean Sea, they were in contact with the sea-faring peoples of their period. Despite the general belief that the Hellenisation of the Jews began with Alexander's campaign, the Jews were in contact with Greeks and their civilisation long before that.⁸ They had even probably established colonies on the eastern Mediterranean and were in contact with the Phoenicians.⁹

As a result of it splitting into two in 933 BC and becoming the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah, the once powerful Jewish Kingdom began to lose ground and power.¹⁰ The northern Kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 715 BC, with its people becoming assimilated within their new boundaries. They had drifted away from the Law, so it is understandable that they did not preserve their identity.¹¹ The Southern Kingdom was taken over by the Babylonians, and king Nebuchadnezzar had the people exiled to Babylonia in 588 BC. When they were finally allowed to go back to their country in 537 BC, some of the Jews that had settled in various parts of Mesopotamia

⁶ Roth, C., 1989, 20.

⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4, Exodus 20:1-17.

⁸ Bartlett, J.R., 1985, 1: For example King David had Cretan mercenaries in his army in the 10th century BC.

⁹ Guignebert, C., 1996, 211.

¹⁰ Roth, C., 1989, 25.

¹¹ Roth, C., 1989, 35.

chose not to return, and others moved to Egypt. These Jews came to be known as the Diaspora. They were still tied to Jerusalem and the Temple, but they established autonomous communities where they lived.¹²

The change in the ancient world that was brought on by Alexander and his conquests also affected the Jews. The spread of Hellenism and the life-style it brought became a challenge to the Jewish communities. The Diaspora was no longer limited to Mesopotamia and Egypt, for Jewish communities were now established in North Africa, Iberia and Asia Minor. These new communities were also tied to Jerusalem, but they began to develop individual traits, so that the Diaspora of each region, including that in Asia Minor, had its own identity.

The earliest evidence of Jewish settlement in Asia Minor relates to Sardis. Although material evidence supports the existence of Jews in Sardis from the third century BC onwards, literary evidence points to an earlier settlement of Jews in the city. The Book of Obadiah refers to Jews that live in Sepharad, having moved here as refugees because their city Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians.¹³ If this is true, then Jews settled in Sardis from c. 587 BC onwards. From bilingual texts in Lydian and Aramaic discovered at Sardis, Sepharad has been confirmed as Sardis.¹⁴ Yet as Trebilco points out, not all scholars have duly accepted the reference in Obadiah, because so far it has not been supported by material evidence of that date.¹⁵

Whatever the truth behind the claim of Obadiah for sixth century BC Jewish settlement in Sepharad/Sardis, the Hellenistic period was certainly one of extensive Jewish

¹² Roth, C., 1989, 45; Guignebert, C., 1996, 211.

¹³ Obadiah 20.

¹⁴ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 38; Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 102.

¹⁵ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 38.

migration to Asia Minor. In 204/5 BC Antiochos III instructed his satrap of Lydia, Zeuxis, to settle 2000 Jewish families in Lydia and Phrygia, the reason being that the areas were subject to revolt and the bringing of this new community was to serve the purpose of providing military security.¹⁶

King Antiochos to Zeuxis, his father, greetings. If you are in good health, it is well. I also am in sound health. Learning that the people in Lydia and Phrygia are revolting, I have come to consider this as requiring very serious attention on my part, and, on taking counsel with my friends as to what should be done, I determined to transport two thousand Jewish families with their effects from Mesopotamia and Babylonia to the fortresses and most important places (of Lydia and Phrygia). For I am convinced that they will be loyal guardians of our interests because of their piety to their God, and I know that they have had the testimony of my forefathers to their good faith and eagerness to do as they are asked. It is my will therefore - though it may be a troublesome matter - that they should be transported and since I have promised it, (let them) use their own laws. And when you have brought them to the places mentioned, you shall give each of them a place to build a house and land to cultivate and plant with vines and shall exempt them from payment of taxes on the produce of the soil for ten years. And also, until they get produce from the soil, let them have grain measured out to them for feeding their servants, and let there be given also to those engaged in public service sufficient for their needs in order that through receiving kind treatment from us they may show themselves the more eager in our cause. And take as much thought for their nation as possible, that it may not be molested by anyone. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XII. 148-53)

Seleucid colonies were established to protect lines of communication, trade routes or frontier zones. These Jews were settled in Lydia and Phrygia for the same reason. The Jews from Mesopotamia and Babylonia were known as good soldiers.¹⁷ As the text above reveals, they were given land for housing and agriculture, exempted from taxes and were

¹⁶ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 5.

¹⁷ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 6.

allowed to abide by their own Laws; in other words they were well provided for for their future allegiance. All this would have helped them to settle comfortably and establish a Diaspora community in Asia Minor. It would not be rash to assume that some of those families were settled in Sardis, which remained an important city of the region, as the headquarters of the Seleucid governor. These families were brought from Mesopotamia and Babylonia, not from Palestine, and were already accustomed to living away from their homeland. Some of them had never even been to Palestine.¹⁸ It is also possible that Jews from Alexandria may have immigrated to the coasts of Asia Minor when part of the area was under Ptolemaic Rule.¹⁹ However, this view requires supporting evidence. Other parts of Asia Minor were probably settled by Jewish communities after this date.

The dynamics of the Jews under Seleucid rule in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor changed with the conquering of Palestine by Antiochus III in 198 BC. The Seleucid State was in no way united ethnically. There were many peoples and many religions that affected the organisation of the structure of the state, and although the king claimed that he was a descendant of Alexander and Apollo, and thus continued the trend of the cult of the king, the Seleucids did permit their people to practise their various religions. Once Jerusalem was also incorporated into their kingdom we see that they made many exceptions for the Jews, related to the taxes they had to pay and the rebuilding of the Temple. By allowing them to live under the “laws of their fathers”²⁰ we see the beginning of a trend that was, in effect, to protect the Jews until Christianity became the official religion of Rome.

However, the Maccabean revolts in Palestine and the establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty, as the new rulers of Palestine, changed the relationship between the

¹⁸ Seager, A.R. & A.T. Kraabel, 1983, 179; Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 38.

¹⁹ Koester, H., 1995b, 213.

gentiles and the Jews.²¹ The revolt began in 168 BC as a reaction to the establishment of a pagan cult in the Temple and a massacre conducted by Antiochus IV.²² Although it was initially started by an old priest called Mattathias, the revolt was led by his five sons, the Maccabee brothers.²³ The gentiles living in the areas around Judaea were especially wary of the Jews, as were the Hellenised Jews who had supported the Seleucid government.²⁴ In 152 BC, Jonathan Maccabeus became the ruler of the State, establishing the Hasmonean dynasty. He was followed in 141 BC by Simon, who was High Priest, prince and head of state, and then John Hyrcanus, who ruled from 133 to 104 BC.²⁵ At this time hostility towards the Jews increased among the neighbouring nations, and the Hasmonean dynasty had to search further away for mercenaries for its army, such as in Asia Minor. The fourth Hasmonean, Janneus (103-76 BC), brought mercenaries from Pisidia and Cilicia.²⁶ It was through this kingdom that Jewish acquaintance with the gentile world increased, through the mercenaries, the converts, the slaves and the seizing of land and property.²⁷

From the first book of Maccabees there is an excerpt from a letter from the Roman Senate giving information on the Diaspora communities around 139-138 BC, and their relationship with the community in Palestine. Most of the places mentioned are on the coast of the Mediterranean, in Asia Minor, indicating possibly that the Jews in Caria, Lycia and Pamphylia (Halikarnassos, Phaselis, Side) were part of colonies established there.

And Noumenios and his fellow-envoys came from Rome, bearing letters for the kings and the countries in which the following were written: Lucius, consul of the Romans to King Ptolemy, greetings. The envoys of the Jews have come to us, since they are our friends and

²⁰ Schafer, P., 1995, 27-29, 32.

²¹ Smith, M., 1999, 194.

²² Hornblower, S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 796.

²³ Roth, C., 1989, 76.

²⁴ Smith, M., 1999, 194.

²⁵ Roth, C., 1989, 80.

²⁶ Smith, M., 1999, 197.

²⁷ Smith, M., 1999, 195.

allies, to renew the original friendship and alliance, having been sent by Simon the High Priest and the Jewish people. They have brought a golden shield valued at 1000 minas. It has pleased us, therefore, to write to the kings and countries so that they do not seek to harm them or make war on them, their cities and their territories, or ally themselves with those warring against them. It has seemed right to us to accept the shield from them. If any wrongdoers have fled from their territory to you, hand them over to Simon the High Priest so that he may proceed against them in accordance with their laws. And he wrote these things to Demetrios the king and Attalos and Arathes and Arsakes (the rulers of Syria, Pergamum, Kapadokia and Parthia) and to all the lands and to Sampsakes (?) and Spartans and to Delos and to Myndos and to Sikyon and to Caria and to Samos and to Pamphylia and Lycia, to Halikarnassos and to Rhodes and to Phaselis and to Kos and to Side and to Arad and Gortyn and Knidos and Cyprus and Cyrene. A copy of these things he wrote to Simon the High Priest. (1 *Maccabees* 15.16-24)²⁸

In 63 BC Pompey entered Jerusalem, the Hasmonean Dynasty was overthrown and Palestine became a client kingdom of Rome. Not for long, however, as Antigonus (40-38 BC), who was placed as ruler of Palestine by Rome, renewed the establishment of the Jewish dynasty. Yet once again an end was put to it by Herod, who now became king in 38 BC.²⁹ During the reign of Herod the Great (38-4 BC), the situation in Palestine changed. Even though the Jews had a king of their own, his allegiance was to Rome. Herod was only ‘half Jewish’, an Idumean,³⁰ with a Nabataean mother. The fact that he had no established orthodox Jewish ancestry added to the dislike the Judaeans had for him. He was called an *Ioudaios*, a term used for military allies, one that was circumcised, but did not follow the Law and was not of Jewish ancestry.³¹ While he did financially provide for the worship of Yahweh, he also contributed to the pagan cults outside his kingdom. It was perhaps for this reason that he had a good relationship with Rome.

²⁸ As quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 2-3, I.3.

²⁹ Koester, H., 1995b, 371-373.

³⁰ Idumeans were a tribe from Galilee that converted to Judaism by being circumcised when the tribe became military allies to Hyrcanus in the second century BC. Smith, M., 1999, 199-200.

Although disliked in Palestine, his half Jewishness drew the support of the Diaspora Jews, because some of them were also *Ioudaioi*.³² He formed a new high priesthood including Diaspora Jews and much of the money used for the rebuilding of the Temple came from the Diaspora.³³

Further literary evidence that gives us an idea of the dispersion of the Jews in the Empire is a letter by Agrippa I, king of Judaea, to Gaius Caligula, dated to AD 40.

As for the Holy City, I must say what it befits me to say. While she, as I have said, is my native city and the mother city of not one country, Judaea, but of most of the others in virtue of the colonies sent out at diverse times to the neighbouring lands Egypt, Phoenicia, the part of Syria called the Hollow and the rest as well and the lands lying far apart, Pamphylia, Cilicia, most of Asia up to Bithynia and the corners of Pontus, similarly into Europe, to Thessaly, Boetia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth and most of the best parts of the Peloponnese. It is not only the continents that are full of Jewish colonies but the most renowned of the islands, Euboea, Cyprus, and Crete. Concerning the lands across the Euphrates, I keep silent. Except for a small part ..., they all have Jewish settlers.
(Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 281-2)

The *Pax Romana* would have enabled people to move freely. The initial establishment of Jewish communities in the Seleucid period would have attracted other Jews to cities where a community had safely developed. As the text above indicates, with the establishment of the Empire the number of places where Jews were settled in Asia Minor had substantially increased. Jews freely moved around within the empire, for trade, for the purpose of marriage, and at other times not so freely, as slaves.³⁴ After AD 70 and 135 many Jews in Palestine were sold as slaves into the Roman Empire, thus increasing the

³¹ Smith, M., 1999, 216, 232.

³² Smith, M., 1999, 232, 234-235.

³³ Smith, M., 1999, 236-237.

³⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 4.

population of the Diaspora.³⁵ It would not be wrong to assume that some of these slaves were brought to Asia Minor.

It is difficult to assess the size of the Jewish population in the Roman Empire at any given period. Literary evidence on this is lacking for Asia Minor, and archaeological evidence also offers little information. However, from the importance the Romans and those who governed before them gave to dealings with the Jews, it is possible to understand that their numbers were high enough to cause serious problems of disruption if not kept in order and there were groups of Jews in most major cities in Asia Minor (Map 1). Feldman offers an estimate of one million in the first few centuries of the Common Era,³⁶ some ten-percent of the whole empire during the reign of Augustus (Map 3).³⁷ Yet, because of the reasons stated above, this can be considered as providing only an order of magnitude not an accurate estimate.

Overall it is clear that as the dynamics in the ancient world began to change with the appearance of Hellenistic kingdoms, the Middle East began to develop into the way it would be for many centuries to come. Palestine would change hands, with the Jews eventually losing any kind of power, but the Jews would spread into regions of the empire, protected and prominent.

³⁵ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 507.

³⁶ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 362.

³⁷ Feldman, L.H., 1990, 205.

I.2 The Development of the Diaspora and Roman Attitude towards

Jews

The establishment of the Roman Empire brought together under one government the Jewish Diaspora communities from Alexandria, Egypt to Spain, with the exception of Babylonia. This was one of the most important developments for the Jewish communities of the world at the time.³⁸ The Romans had great respect for tradition and as they believed that Rome was established in 753 BC and that the Jewish nation had been established long before that, this encouraged their respect. The Romans saw Jews as a *gens*, 'people', that were scattered all over the empire, and were organised according to the local conditions in which they lived.³⁹ The communities were made up of several families, especially in prosperous areas, as Jews attracted Jews, and family ties were close.⁴⁰ By the first century BC Jews were found in almost all the provinces of Rome, especially around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, creating well-populated communities,⁴¹ forming a significant part of Rome's subjects.⁴² According to Josephus, the Roman Empire took care that the Jews could live according to their laws. This toleration and even favour to the Jews was a result of Julius Caesar's confirmation of existing treaties and the fact that he recognised Hyrcanus as High Priest and leader of the Jews of the Empire.⁴³

The Jews did not fully assimilate with the gentiles they lived alongside for their beliefs and traditions prevented them from doing so. Religiously they were thought to be strange, as according to their Law they only believed in one God, and kept their worship to themselves. They offered sacrifices to their God only, at one Temple and that was in

³⁸ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 168.

³⁹ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 330.

⁴⁰ Guignebert, C., 1996, 211-213.

⁴¹ Guignebert, C., 1996, 214; Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 797.

⁴² Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 168.

⁴³ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 330.

Jerusalem, a substantial distance away for some of the Jews. They in no way worshipped idols, and made no images of their God. Their ways were considered rigid, especially because of their observance of the Sabbath and circumcision, and they didn't eat pork, the common food in Italy and many of the European provinces. In more ways than one they were radically different from the norm of the time in all regions.⁴⁴

However, because Jews were recognised as hard-working and industrious, the governments they lived under encouraged them in their work and provided Jewish communities with various privileges. For example they were allowed to send their Temple tax to Jerusalem. The earliest proof of this, under Roman rule, is when this permit was violated by Lucius Valerius Flaccus, governor of the Roman province of Asia in 62 BC. Sometime at the beginning of the first century BC the senate had prohibited the export of silver and gold within the provinces of the Empire. However, an exception was made for the Jews that lived all over the Empire, in that they were still able to send their money to the Temple.⁴⁵ Yet as the text below indicates this ruling was not always followed.

It was the practice every year to send gold to Jerusalem on the Jews' account from Italy and all our provinces, but Flaccus issued an edict forbidding its export from Asia ... At Apamea a little less than a hundred pounds of gold was seized as it was being exported and weighed in the forum at the feet of the praetor by Sextus Caesius, a Roman knight and a most chaste and upright man; at Laodicea a little more than twenty pounds was seized by Lucius Peducaeus... at Adramyttium a hundred pounds by Gnaeus Domitius; at Pergamum not much. The amount of gold is correct; it is in the treasury; there is no evidence of theft, the sole intent is to create unpopularity (of my client). (Cicero, *Pro Flacco* 28.66-9)

The observance of Sabbath meant that the Jews would have to abstain from certain civic duties, and these privileges were granted to them. Under Roman rule, the granting of

⁴⁴ Goodman, M., 1997, 302; Guignebert, C., 1996, 229-230; Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 123-124.

freedom for the observance of the Sabbath also meant that as early as 49 BC Jews were exempted from military service because the Sabbath could not be observed, even though in the Hellenistic period, Jews were much demanded for their military abilities. This privilege was initially granted by Lucius, and as the text below indicates it was confirmed by Dolabella in 43 BC.⁴⁶

In the presidency of Artemon, on the first day of the month of Lenaeon (i.e. 24 January 43 BC), Dolabella, Imperator, to the magistrates, council and people of Ephesus, greeting. Alexander, son of Theodoros, the envoy of Hyrkanos, son of Alexander, High Priest and Ethnarch of the Jews, has explained to me that his co-religionists cannot undertake military service because they may not bear arms or march on the days of the Sabbath; nor can they obtain the native foods to which they are accustomed. I, therefore, like the governors before me, grant them exemption from the military service and permit them to observe their native customs and to come together for sacred and holy rites in accordance with their law and to make offerings for their sacrifices; and it is my wish that you write these instructions to the various cities. These, then, were the favours which Dolabella granted to our people when Hyrcanus sent an envoy to him. And Lucius Lentulus (Crus), the consul (in 49 BC), declared: 'Those Jews who are Roman citizens and observe Jewish rites and practise them in Ephesus, I released from military service on religious grounds before the tribunal on the twelfth day before Kalends of October, in the consulship of Lucius Lentulus and Gaius Marcellus ... (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIV. 225-228)

This freedom for Sabbath observance was extended to Miletus at least, where it was violated at a subsequent date by the gentile Milesians.

Publius Servillius Galba, son of Publius, proconsul, to the magistrates, council and people of Miletus, greetings. Pyrtanis, son of Hermas, a citizen of yours, came before me when I was holding an assize at Tralles and revealed to me that contrary to our expressed wish you

⁴⁵ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 126.

⁴⁶ Koester, H., 1995b, 215.

are attacking the Jews and preventing them from observing the Sabbath and performing their ancestral rites and managing their produce in their customary way...I wish you to know, therefore, that after listening to the arguments on both sides, I have decided that the Jews are not to be prevented from observing their native customs. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIV.244-6)⁴⁷

Elsewhere Josephus gives another example of the tolerance of the empire, again confirming the freedom of observance of the Sabbath, living by the Law and building a place of prayer and general protection of Jewish communities.

Decree of the people of Halikarnassos. 'In the priesthood of Memnon, son of Aristeides (49 BC)...the people passed the following decree on the motion of Markos Alexander. Whereas at all times we have had a deep regard for piety toward the Deity and holiness, and following the example of the people of Rome, who are benefactors of all mankind, and in conformity with what they have written to our city concerning their friendship and alliance with the Jews, to the effect that their sacred services to God and their customary festivals and religious gatherings shall be carried on, we have also decreed that those Jewish men and women who so wish may observe their Sabbaths and perform their sacred rites in accordance with the Jewish Laws, and may build places of prayer near the sea, in accordance with their native custom. And if anyone, whether magistrate or private citizen, prevents them, he shall be liable to the following fine and owe it to the city.' (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIV. 256-8)

Decree of the people of Sardis. On the motion of the magistrates, the council and people have made the following decision. Whereas the Jews dwelling in our city have always received from the people many great privileges, and have now come before the council and people with the request that, as their laws and freedom have been restored by the Senate and the People of Rome, they may, in accordance with their accepted customs, come together and have a communal life and use their own system of justice, and that a place be given them in which they may assemble with their wives and children and offer their

⁴⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 69, III.10.

ancestral prayers and sacrifices to God, it has been decided by the council and the people to allow them to come together on the stated days and perform those acts which are in accordance with their laws, and to have set aside for them by the magistrates for building and inhabitation a place such as they may consider to be suitable for this purpose and that the market-officials of the city (the *agoranomoi*) shall be responsible for the importation of suitable foodstuffs for them. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIV.259-61)

Josephus confirms that these privileges were continued throughout the reign of Augustus, as indicated in an edict of AD 2-3. At this time we see that Jews are not called to council on the Sabbath.⁴⁸

Caesar Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, with tribunician power, decrees as follows: since the Jewish nation has been found well disposed to the Roman people not only at the present time but also in the past, and especially in the time of my father the emperor Caesar, as has their high priest Hyrkanos, it has been decided by me and my council under oath, with the consent of the Roman people, that the Jews are to follow their own customs in accordance with the law of their fathers, just as they followed them in the time of Hyrkanos, High Priest of the Most High God, and that their sacred moneys shall to be inviolable and may be sent to Jerusalem and delivered to the treasurers in Jerusalem, and they need not give bond (to appear in court) on the Sabbath or on the day of preparation for it (Sabbath Eve) after the ninth hour. And if anyone is caught stealing their sacred books or their sacred moneys from a synagogue or an ark (of the Law), he shall be regarded as sacrilegious and his property made over to the public treasury of the Romans. As for the resolution which was offered by them in my honour concerning piety which I show to all men and on behalf of Gaius Marcius Censorinus⁴⁹, and I order that it and the present edict be set up in the most conspicuous (part of the temple) assigned to me by the federation (*koinon*) of Asia at Ancyra. If anyone transgresses any of the above ordinances, he shall suffer severe punishment. This was inscribed on a pillar in the temple of Caesar. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XVI. 162-5)

⁴⁸ Rajak, T., 1992, 17.

As the literary evidence above indicates, the Jews and their customs were officially tolerated and protected by the Roman government.⁵⁰ We cannot talk of a universal Roman charter for the Jews, however, as the cases stated in the texts above are actually incidents of the State backing the Jews on specific cases, in specific cities,⁵¹ Roman practice was not to impose changes on the provinces they governed, except where these were important to ensure peace and stability. Although the province of Asia was created in 133/129 BC, the first reference we have of the Jews within its borders, in a Roman legal context as indicated above, is that of Lucius Valerius Flaccus in 62 BC in response to a specific complaint. Most provincial edicts were not in the line of establishing a new status, but rather confirmation of those privileges that could be kept, and supported by the government, as in the case of Sardis.⁵²

A lot of the time the Jews did not need a special status but rather protection.⁵³ The Jews were often treated with hostility by their neighbours, and the local Greek authorities did not always treat them as well as they might have; thus they were dependent on favourable decrees by the Roman government to confirm their privileges.⁵⁴ Their unavailability on the Sabbath annoyed the local authorities, and their tax collected for the Temple could have otherwise been used for the city. Most of the time we can see from the texts that the complaints are a result of deliberate aggressive behaviour by Greeks towards the Jews, such as taking away the observance of the Sabbath and the money collected for the Temple.⁵⁵ According to the Greeks, if the Jews wanted to be their fellow citizens then they had to worship their gods. They were regarded as only resident aliens. However, citizenship and other rights of the Jews of Asia Minor had been granted by Seleucid kings,

⁴⁹ Gaius Marcius Censorinus was Consul in 8 BC, proconsul of Asia in AD 2-3. Williams, M.H., 1998, 192, note 40.

⁵⁰ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 101.

⁵¹ Rajak, T., 1984, 108; Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 128.

⁵² Rajak, T., 1984, 108-109.

⁵³ Rajak, T., 1984, 107.

and confirmation by the Roman government seems to have elevated their status, which greatly annoyed the Greeks.⁵⁶ And even though they became citizens of the communities they lived in, they never ceased to be a part of the Jewish nation. This, of course, created resentment and developed into anti-Semitism within the societies in which they lived. When the Diaspora communities came under Roman rule this resentment increased with the tolerance shown to the Jews by Rome.⁵⁷

Although the decrees above cannot be generalised for the Jews of the whole empire,⁵⁸ we see that Claudius makes a decision in a general sense when he applies the rights of the Jews, protected by Augustus in certain Greek cities (such as Ephesus) to all Greek cities.⁵⁹

...but also because in my opinion the Jews deserve to obtain their request on account of their loyalty and friendship to the Romans. In particular, I did so because I hold it right that not even Greek cities should be deprived of these privileges seeing that they were in fact guaranteed for them in the time of divine Augustus. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIX. 289)

Sometimes the results of the petitions or complaints depended on the influence a particular person had on the Roman State.⁶⁰ For example, this is the case with the passage quoted above, where Claudius makes this decree saying, because King Agrippa and Herod

⁵⁴ Rajak, T., 1984, 118.

⁵⁵ Rajak, T., 1984, 123.

⁵⁶ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 140.

⁵⁷ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 169.

⁵⁸ Rajak, T., 1984, 114.

⁵⁹ Rajak, T., 1984, 115.

⁶⁰ Rajak, T., 1984, 118.

“are persons very dear to me”.⁶¹ Agrippa had petitioned Claudius to extend the privileges he had granted to the Jews in Alexandria to all the Roman empire.⁶²

Yet whatever city the petition was made from, or however specific the privileges were, the Diaspora Jews had close ties with each other and edicts made for one city were often made known to others. They could then approach the emperor themselves, as we see in Nicolaus’ earlier petition for the Ionians to Tiberius in 15 BC.

...for as they (the Jews) have often obtained your favour, so far as they have even wished to have it, they now only entreat that you, who have been the donors, will take care that those favours you have already granted them may not be taken away from them. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XVI. 32)

A universal public decree had never really been made. Yet anything in favour of the Jews was kept and shared, and knowledge of such texts was used by other communities for their own purposes. In retrospect there is no record of petitions that were not granted.⁶³

These texts confirming Jewish rights were not only kept by the Jews, but copies were in the official archives of the city council and at Ancyra they were on an inscribed pillar (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XVI.165). At Antioch they were inscribed on bronze tablets hung in public view, it is not specified exactly where. The reason the bronze tablets are mentioned is because the people of Antioch ask Titus to destroy the tablets, so that the Jews might lose their status as citizens of the city (Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.100-111). We do not know if this is the case for other cities as unfortunately there is no material evidence to give us further information.⁶⁴ Yet we know from a Greek inscription of Roman law

⁶¹ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIX. 288.

⁶² Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XIX. 286-289.

⁶³ Rajak, T., 1984, 120.

⁶⁴ Rajak, T., 1984, 122.

found at Knidos in 1970 that all decisions made by the Praetor had to be put on public display.⁶⁵ Dated to the end of the second century BC this inscription may indicate that this was common practice through out the Roman Empire.

The Praetor...[is to send] letters to the peoples...a copy of this law to the cities and states...in accordance with this law letters [are to be] engraved on a bronze plaque [or else on a marble slab or] on a whitened board, in order that they may be clearly exposed in the cities [in a temple] or market place, (in a position) in which [anyone who wishes] may stand and read [at eye-level]. He is to write in this way (so the people) may carry out these inscriptions.⁶⁶

Apart from religious and legal privileges the Diaspora Jews were also given social privileges. Another privilege that Josephus talks of is citizenship. Jews who came to Asia Minor under the rule of the Seleucids kept their local citizenship rights, given to them by Seleukos Nicator, well into the Roman period. Josephus says:

They (the Jews) also received honour from the kings of Asia when they served with them in war. For example, Seleukos Nicator (305-281 BC) granted them citizenship in the cities which he founded in Asia, Lower Syria and in his capital, Antioch, itself, and declared them to have equal privileges with the Macedonians and Greeks who were settled in these cities, so that this citizenship of theirs remains to this very day. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XII. 119)

Our Jewish residents in Antioch are called Antiochenes, having been granted rights of citizenship by its founder, Seleukos. Similarly those at Ephesus and throughout the rest of Ion bear the same name as the indigenous citizens, a right which they received from Alexander's successors. (Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.39)

⁶⁵ Hassall, M., M.Crawford & J.Reynolds, 1974, 195, 218.

⁶⁶ Hassall, M., M.Crawford & J.Reynolds, 1974, 208, Col.III, B.1.8.

Trebilco argues that Josephus's claim is questionable, for in the *Jewish War* (7.110) Josephus uses terminology used for specially privileged immigrants for the Jews living in Antioch rather than regular citizens.⁶⁷ He believes that the Jewish communities were internally organised and were autonomous to a certain extent, but this did not mean the Jewish community as a whole had full citizen rights,⁶⁸ although it was possible for residents of Greek cities to partake in public offices without being citizens of the city.⁶⁹ The Romans did not change this.

The Apostle Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. In Acts 9:11 when it talks of "Saul (Paul) of Tarsus" it does not only mean that he came from Tarsus but that he was also a citizen.⁷⁰ Ramsay suggests that in order for a Jewish family to have the citizenship of Tarsus they would have had to be living there for a long time, almost since the city was established. According to him, Paul's ancestors were among the Jews that were settled by the Seleucids, when the city was rebuilt during the reign of Antiochus IV.⁷¹ The Book of Acts states that Paul was born in Tarsus but brought up in Jerusalem. Paul, on the other hand, speaks of himself as being of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee and a persecutor of the church.⁷² He was also a Roman citizen. Keeping in mind the status of Roman citizenship, especially that it was highly guarded in the first century AD, it would not be wrong to assume that he came from a well-to-do, distinguished Jewish family, and thus was placed among the local aristocracy. At the time it is known that the people of the city of Tarsus, including the Jews, were very much in favour of the Empire. Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, does not give us Paul's full Roman name; for this reason it is not

⁶⁷ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 168.

⁶⁸ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 172.

⁶⁹ Koester, H., 1995b, 216.

⁷⁰ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 35.

⁷¹ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 36.

⁷² Phillipians 3:5-6; Galatians 1:14; Davies, W.D., 1999, 681.

known when he received his citizenship but he must have had a *nomen* and *praenomen*; Paulus was evidently his existing *cognomen* of Saul in a Latinised form.⁷³

Receiving Roman citizenship was a privilege bestowed on certain individuals for specific acts in favour of Rome. One such person was Josephus, who was given Roman citizenship by the emperor:

On our arrival in Rome, I met with great consideration from Vespasian. He gave me a lodging in the house which he had occupied before he became Emperor, and he honoured me with the privilege of Roman citizenship and he assigned me a pension. He continued to honour me up to the time of his departure from this life, without any abatement in his kindness towards me. (Josephus, *The Life* 423)

The passage supports Trebilco's idea that it is highly unlikely that the majority of Jews living in Asia Minor had Roman citizenship before the *Constitutio Antoniniana* issued by Caracalla in AD 212. Through this decree almost all the people in the Roman Empire received citizenship.⁷⁴

Another privilege of the Jews was the right to create organisations responsible for administration, trials and financial decisions within their own community. From Hellenistic times, Jews in large cities lived in separate quarters and formed themselves into parishes, all subject to a central *gerousia*.⁷⁵ In Roman Asia Minor a sacred status had been attached to this originally Greek establishment in that it became the assembly of social groups and religious sects.⁷⁶ For the Jews this was a civic council of officials with administrative and judicial authority over its own members, independent of the local Greek

⁷³ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 35.

⁷⁴ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 173.

⁷⁵ Guignebert, C., 1996, 216-217.

⁷⁶ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 635.

municipality. They mainly dealt with the interests of the community. The community fully owned all its communal buildings and cemeteries. It could not inherit other property but it could accept legacies.⁷⁷

The members of the council were called *gerontes* or *presbyteroi* (elders), the leader being the *gerousiarch*. This person was generally an older man. Unfortunately his duties are not exactly known.⁷⁸ Administrative duties were dealt with by a synagoga council, the leader called an *archon*. These people were elected by the community every year. Another office was the *grammateus*, secretary, who served under the synagoga council.⁷⁹

The Jews lived by their Law. Their survival depended on being able to practise it. Therefore they would do anything to keep any privileges given to them. In the early Imperial era, we see that the government continued the rights of the Jews of the Diaspora, and despite tensions that arose with individuals and cities, the Jews of the Diaspora never had to fight the local authorities for their rights.⁸⁰

As Rabello observes, even as late as AD 398 legal cases involving the Jews of the Diaspora and gentiles were judged before local judges according to provincial law. According to Rabello, from the letters Pliny wrote to Trajan, it is clear that in

the provinces, Roman magistrates and local officers did not apply the Roman Law to private individuals; they applied only the local laws (those which existed before the Roman occupation) of the province, with such specific changes as were made for each province by governors or Emperors.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Guignebert, C., 1996, 219.

⁷⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 37-38.

⁷⁹ Guignebert, C., 1996, 217.

⁸⁰ Rajak, T., 1984, 123.

However, since the Jews were still legally part of the Jewish nation (at least until they were expelled from Jerusalem) in matters of their own law they were subject to the central Jewish authority. This was the case especially when religious matters were concerned.⁸² The Diaspora Jews recognised the Sanhedrin as the unifying authority.⁸³ It was only with the publication of the *Codex Theodosianus*, in AD 398 that they had to come before a Roman court or a rabbinical court approved by the Roman Empire.⁸⁴

Despite the many privileges bestowed on the Diasporan Jews, there were times when restrictions were brought upon the Jews, especially after the revolts in Judaea, and also when certain Jewish sects tried to spread their own customs and faith among the gentiles. Generally the authorities were worried by any sort of un-Roman conduct.⁸⁵ The Jews in Rome were expelled from the city from time to time for alleged proselytising. Though undoubtedly there were cases where the efforts of certain individuals to proselytise met with success, the result inevitably was that the community as a whole would be punished.⁸⁶ In Palestine, gentiles who had converted to Judaism were counted as second rank but this was not so in the Diaspora. The translation of the *Torah*, the Jewish Scriptures into Greek, the *Septuagint*, opened a whole new door to the gentile who was curious. We know that proselytes listened to the sermons from the outer courtyards of the synagogues.⁸⁷ As evidence reveals, people of every social level were attracted. Reynolds and Tannenbaum observe, the “Law could be a refuge, but never a burden” to those who were interested.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Rabello, A.M., 2000, 155.

⁸² Guignebert, C., 1996, 216, 220.

⁸³ Guignebert, C., 1996, 221.

⁸⁴ Rabello, A.M., 2000, 155.

⁸⁵ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 798.

⁸⁶ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 47.

⁸⁷ Guignebert, C., 1996, 219, 222, 228.

⁸⁸ Reynolds, J. & R.Tannenbaum, 1987, 86.

The revolt that broke out in Judaea in AD 66 was based on a Messianic movement and was not contained until AD 71. Groups of extremists no longer wished to put up with the pressures of the local governors appointed by Rome.⁸⁹ Not only had the relationship between the Romans and the local rulers fallen apart, but the people had been subject to famine and maltreatment by bandits.⁹⁰ The Jews of the Diaspora mainly stayed out of the troubles and as a result we see that they were not punished for the misdemeanours of the Judaeans. Perhaps the best example of this is the stand Titus took at Antioch on his return from Jerusalem, in spring AD 71, after the conquest of Judaea (Appendix 2). The people of the city asked him to expel the Jews altogether but he denied their request, based on the fact the Jews of the Diaspora had not been involved in the riots at Jerusalem so they should not pay for the sins of Judaea.⁹¹ On the other hand, from the text below it is clear that some Jews outside of Palestine did help, and as Smallwood suggests, there may have been more help than admitted.⁹²

The first battles he (Titus) fought (against the Jews) were indecisive, then, he got the upper hand and proceeded to besiege Jerusalem...The Romans, accordingly, heaped up mounds against the outer walls, brought up their engines, joined the battle with all who sallied forth to fight and repulsed them, and with their slings and arrows kept back all the defenders of the wall.... The Jews were also assisted by many of their countrymen from the region round about and many who professed the same religion, not only from the Roman empire but also from beyond the Euphrates... (Dio, *Roman History* LXV.4.1-4)

After the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in AD 70 the emperor Vespasian diverted the annual tax collected for this from the Jews to the Capitoline, which

⁸⁹ Gabba, E., 1999, 148-150.

⁹⁰ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 796.

⁹¹ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 190.

⁹² Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 356.

had been greatly damaged in AD 69.⁹³ This new tax, called the *fiscus Iudaicus* was applied to all Jews of the empire who had been liable to the tax collection of the Temple.⁹⁴

On all Jews, wherever they lived, he (the emperor Vespasian) imposed a tax. He ordered that every Jew should pay two drachmas every year to the Capitol (i.e. the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol), just as formerly they had paid them to the Temple at Jerusalem. (Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.218)

Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most. From that time forth it was ordered that Jews who continued to observe their ancestral customs should pay an annual tribute of two denarii to Jupiter Capitoline. (Dio, *Roman History* LXV.7.2)

Domitian, Titus' successor, is alleged to have used the tax in order to hunt out the tax evaders, the apostates to Judaism and even those who had secretly taken to Jewish ways.⁹⁵ According to Southern, however, his actions were motivated by financial reasons, not religious issues. Had Domitian wanted to destroy the Jews he could have taken harsher measures.⁹⁶ The apostates and the Roman citizens who had been circumcised and who had no Jewish ancestry were all regarded as *Iudaei*, thus liable to tax. *Delatores* were encouraged to inform on those who secretly kept the Sabbath, abstained from pork and were circumcised. The last requirement obviously necessitated further scrutiny and Domitian had no problem in assigning this crude job of inspection to the people known as *procuratores*. The households of these people faced harassment, blackmail and degrading treatment.⁹⁷

⁹³ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 333.

⁹⁴ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 329.

⁹⁵ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 329.

⁹⁶ Southern, P., 1997, 115.

⁹⁷ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 331, 339; Williams, M.H., 1998, 104.

Domitian's agents collected the tax on the Jews with a peculiar lack of mercy: and took proceedings not only against those who kept their Jewish origins a secret in order to avoid the tax, but against those who lived as Jews without professing Judaism. As a boy, I remember once attending a crowded court where the imperial agents had a ninety year old man inspected to establish whether or not he had been circumcised. (Suetonius, *Domitian* 12.2)

The text above speaks for itself. Although the number of apostates to Judaism was never high, it was probably this period that saw an increase in their number, due to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, with the increased anti-Semitism caused by the revolt and the tax that was initially imposed on Jews only. However, these apostates were now also made to pay the tax. The mark of circumcision was no longer simply viewed as a social disability, but worse.⁹⁸

Especially towards the end of his reign, Domitian sought Roman citizens who had supposedly drifted away from the pagan gods. They were severely punished as the text below indicates.⁹⁹

And the same year (AD 95), Domitian slew, among with many others, Flavius Clemens the consul, although he was a cousin and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was also a relative of the emperor. The charge brought against them both was of atheism, a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned. Some of these were put to death and the rest were at least deprived of their property. Domitilla was merely banished to Pandateria. But Glabrio, who had been Trajan's colleague in the consulship (AD 91), was put to death, having been accused of the same crimes as most of the others, and in particular of fighting as a gladiator with wild beasts. (Dio, *Roman History* LXVII.14.1-3)

⁹⁸ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 338.

⁹⁹ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 329.

The *delator* was more interested in the wealthier supposed tax evaders due to the commission he would receive. Thus it is no surprise that well-to-do Romans were also prosecuted.

The reign of Nerva brought some relief to the Jews in the Roman Empire. Perhaps one of the first and most important factors in this was the action that Nerva took to abolish the *fiscus Iudaicus* for apostates and the public proclamation that an ‘ex-Jew’ was no longer a Jew (*Judaeus*). With the increased anti-Semitism of the past decades it was difficult, if not impossible, to erase the disgust for circumcision, but at least the Jews, apostates from Judaism and proselytes were exempt from degrading treatment from the government.¹⁰⁰ From the *Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*, a collection of papyri from Alexandria written in the second century, we even learn of a Jew from the city on Trajan’s *consilium*.¹⁰¹ The annual tax of two drachma continued on observant Jews, but ‘those that lived secretly according to Jewish customs’ were not sought out.¹⁰² The taxation had been a form of official acknowledgement of Jewish communities.¹⁰³

Rajak believes that the Jews were not specifically persecuted for their beliefs until the reign of Hadrian.¹⁰⁴ The tax levied by Vespasian and Domitian did not prevent the Jews from following their own religious and social practices, they just had to pay to be able to do so. Yet during the reign of Hadrian we see that bans are brought upon them. With Hadrian's decision to re-found Jerusalem as a Roman colony, Colonia Aelia Capitolina, and to build a temple to Capitoline Jupiter on the site of the Temple in Jerusalem (destroyed in AD 70), a revolt broke out in AD 132.¹⁰⁵ Led by a man named

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 342.

¹⁰¹ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 798; Bennett,J., 2001, 105.

¹⁰² Sordi, M., 1986, 58.

¹⁰³ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 798.

¹⁰⁴ Rajak, T., 1984, 107.

¹⁰⁵ Boatwright, M., 2000, 196.

Bar Kochba, the revolt had a religious nature. It spread to the provinces and was only crushed in AD 135 after great losses on both sides. Due to the religious element, where Bar Kochba was seen as a form of the Messiah, Hadrian decided to take measures against the Jewish religion.¹⁰⁶ First, by AD 135 all Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem at all.¹⁰⁷

From that time on, the entire race has been forbidden to set foot anywhere in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, under the terms and ordinances of a law of Hadrian, which ensured that not even from a distance might Jews have a view of their ancestral soil. (Eusebius, *The History of the Church* 4.6.3)

Hadrian also banned circumcision. According to Feldman, it is not known whether this decree was made before the Bar-Kochba revolt, in which case it may have been among the reasons that provoked the revolt, or whether it was made afterwards as a consequence of the revolt.¹⁰⁸ According to *Historia Augusta* the Jews began the war because circumcision was banned.¹⁰⁹ Jewish masters were taught to circumcise their gentile slaves and this was abhorred by the Romans.¹¹⁰ However there is little, if any, evidence of it being imposed on the Jews of the Diaspora.¹¹¹

In addition to the interdiction of circumcission, the observance of the Sabbath, teaching of the *Torah* and celebration of Jewish festivals were forbidden,¹¹² and Jews were banned from Aelia Capitolina. Although the temple to Jupiter was built, it was not on the Temple Mount.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Koester, H., 1995b, 307, 389; Hornblower, S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 797.

¹⁰⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 98-99.

¹⁰⁸ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 100.

¹⁰⁹ *Historia Augusta*, Hadrian, XIV.2-3.

¹¹⁰ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 296.

¹¹¹ Loewe, R., 1999, 255.

¹¹² Koester, H., 1995b, 389.

¹¹³ Boatwright, M., 2000, 197, 199, 201.

Under Antoninus Pius, most of these bans were lifted and the Jews were allowed to worship their God again. However, they were not allowed to proselytise and dislike for circumcision remained among the Romans until the end of the third century, so much so that the penalty could be capital punishment for Jews who circumcised non-Jews.¹¹⁴

Roman citizens who, following Jewish custom (*Judaico ritu*), allow themselves or their slaves to be circumcised, are to be relegated to an island in perpetuity and their property confiscated. The doctors shall suffer capital punishment. If Jews circumcise purchased slaves of another nation, they are either to be banished or suffer capital punishment. (Paulus, *Sententiae* 5.22.3-4)¹¹⁵

After the Jews lost their tie with Jerusalem, any political threat that they had been to the Roman Empire seems to have dissolved, and thus they were not harassed. There seems to be little evidence of interaction of Jews and the Roman government on the same scale as in the early imperial period. We know that Septimus Severus favoured the Jews, as did Elegabalus, who made *Sol Invictus*, the eastern sun god, the chief god of imperial and official worship,¹¹⁶ and also Alexander Severus, for they both found room for Judaism and Christianity in their understanding of religion.¹¹⁷ But petitions of a specific nature decrease as the Diaspora becomes a settled entity that posed no political threat in the Roman Empire. This would not change until Christianity became an accepted religion in the empire, when the Christians began to persecute the Jews, although the government continued to protect the Jews until the fifth century.¹¹⁸

Even though one cannot talk of a Roman charter for Jews, it is clear that they were one of the most privileged minority groups in the Roman Empire. As long as they were

¹¹⁴ Sordi, M., 1986, 82; Williams, M.H., 1998, 56.

¹¹⁵ As quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 56-57, II.120.

¹¹⁶ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 1421.

¹¹⁷ Sordi., M., 1986, 82, 87-88; Birley, A.R., 1988, 135.

not a threat to the government and what the Roman Empire stood for, they would remain as hard working loyal citizens, closely tied to their ways and their faith. And the Roman Empire would tolerate them in line with their respect for tradition and history.

¹¹⁸ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 102.

I.3 Evidence of Jews in Graeco-Roman Society in Asia Minor

I.3.1 Public Life

Citizenship

Citizens of the Roman empire were able to acquire two kinds of citizenship, one of the city they lived in and the other Roman citizenship. Being a citizen of a city was a continuation of a Hellenistic practice. Inscriptions from a number of places reveal that Jews were also able to obtain citizenship of the city they lived in before the Roman period. This is the case in Sardis (App.1 iv), Anemurion (App.1 xl), Korykos (App.1 xli), Tarsus (App.1 xlv) where the people concerned are mentioned as citizens of 'such and such a city'. Roman citizenship, was rarely obtained prior AD 212. The members of one Jewish family, that of Titus Flavius of Akmonia, were given Roman citizenship either during the reign of Titus or Vespasian (App.1 xxiv). These people may have received their citizenship as a personal gift either for their services, by descent, by manumission of a Roman citizen, or through military service.¹¹⁹ The possession of Roman citizenship after AD 212, in Asia Minor is confirmed by some of the inscriptions from Akmonia, Kütahya (App.1 xxv, xxvi).

Public Offices

The possession of important offices indicates that Jews were involved in civic life, and Severus and Caracalla, between AD 198-211, allowed Jews to hold civic offices without imposing on them the pagan rituals integrated into these offices that were

¹¹⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 143.

forbidden by their Law.¹²⁰ How the Jews resolved this problem when they joined into the functions of the city before this date is not known. Various suggestions have been made, but none of them can be supported with evidence.¹²¹ Yet the increase in the number of Jews that held high public offices from the end of the second century onwards indicates that local authorities obeyed the exemption provided by Severus and Caracalla and the relationships between the Jews and the gentiles was harmonious.¹²²

Two inscriptions from Akmonia demonstrate the role of Jews in public life. Dated to the mid-third century, one refers to an Aurelios Phrougianos who held the office of councillor and public offices for maintaining peace, corn supplying, market regulating and *strategos* (App.1 xxiv), the other to a Titus Flavius Alexandros who held offices for market regulating, corn supplying, of police commander and *strategos* (App.1 xxv). These are typical of many and prove that Jews of Akmonia held prominent positions. Their Latin names show that their families had received Roman citizenship.¹²³ Other examples from Ephesus, where a Jew was a city doctor (App.1 ix), Korykos, with a councillor (App.1 xli), and Sardis,¹²⁴ where eight Jews were members of the city council, holding the title *bouletes* (App.1 iv-vi), bear further witness to Jewish involvement in public matters.

Certain public offices were tied to the *gerousia*, the governing body of the Jewish community. From Asia Minor we have examples of Jews as *archons* from Aphrodisias (App.1 xvii), Akmonia (App.1 xxiii) and Tlos (xxxvii). We have evidence of a *grammateus* from Smyrna (App.1 xv) and a *grammateus* and *presbyteros* from Kalchedon

¹²⁰ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 174.

¹²¹ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 181.

¹²² Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 184.

¹²³ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 63-65. Mitchell says that these Roman citizens may have actually been pagans that were attracted to the ways of the Jews and that is why inscribed their funerary monuments like the Jews. Mitchell, S., 1993, 35. Bij de Vaate and van Henten are also sceptical about the position these people held. Bij de Vaate, A.J. & J.W. van Henten, 1996, 21.

¹²⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.91, I.92; Seager, A.R. & A.T. Kraabel, 1983, 185.

(App.1 l), and further a *presbyteros* from Smyrna (App.1 xiv), Korykos (App.1 xliii), Tarsus (App.1 xlv)¹²⁵.

Civic Life

Life within all Jewish communities was very different from life in the world around them. The existing Jewish communities in the eastern provinces, for example, were established according to the laws of the Greek city. In Asia Minor we see them referred to as a *katoikia* (App.1 xxxiii), a military community; *laos* (App.1 xv, xxi, xxxiv), people; or *synagoge* (App.1 li), community.¹²⁶

Jews in some cases occupied a separate quarter of the town allocated to them by the local government.¹²⁷ This was certainly so in Antioch (Appendix 2), Dura Europos (Appendix 3) and Alexandria. In Asia Minor material evidence reveals that this may have been the case at Priene and possibly Akmonia (App. 1 xxvii). For example, later renovation of the synagogue in Priene meant that the outer shape of the building had to be altered entirely. Floor levels were raised, the walls rebuilt and the building of the *Torah* niche would have protruded into the neighbouring house. All this would have attracted public attention, suggesting that the houses next to it and the area around the synagogue may have belonged to the Jews, creating perhaps a small Jewish quarter or a quarter of Jewish sympathisers.¹²⁸ The inscription from Akmonia talks of a Neighbourhood of the First Gate, which may have been a Jewish quarter. Trebilco, on the other hand, suggests that it refers to a burial society, most probably Jewish.¹²⁹ It is difficult to assess where the

¹²⁵ In this particular case, the person mentioned in the inscription was an elder of the Cappadocian community that had settled in Jaffa.

¹²⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 27.

¹²⁷ Guignebert, C., 1996, 216.

¹²⁸ White, L.M., 1990, 67-69.

¹²⁹ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 79-80.

Jewish community in Sardis actually lived. It is clear that the Jewish quarter did not surround the synagogue,¹³⁰ because this was not a residential district.

There is more conclusive evidence of Jewish involvement in civic life, without their holding in public office. An inscription found in Iasos (App.1 xix) refers to a dedication of money to the festival of Dionysus by Niketas, a Jerusalemite. It is dated to the mid-second century BC, making it one of the earliest inscriptions we know of belonging to the Jews of Asia Minor.¹³¹ An inscription found in Smyrna (App.1 xii) is part of a donation list dated to the reign of Hadrian, 117-138 AD, which mentions a donation made by ‘former Jews’. However, what this money was donated for is not known. It is the first information we have of Jews in the city, yet they must have settled there at a much earlier date. According to Smallwood, these ‘former Jews’ may have been slaves brought from Palestine who were manumitted when they rejected their faith.¹³²

I.3.2 Religious Life

There was little unity in the social organisation or theology of the Diaspora community. The destruction of the Temple in AD 70 and the banishment of Jews from Jerusalem in AD 135 created a void in the religious leadership and organisation of Judaism that until this date had depended on the Temple and Jerusalem. Now things were to be shaped by local conditions.¹³³

¹³⁰ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 168.

¹³¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 112.

¹³² Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 507.

¹³³ White, L.M., 1990, 61.

The Synagogue: Definition and Function

The term *synagogue* is the Greek-speaking Diaspora's name for *bet kneset* in Hebrew, meaning an 'assembly'. As a building it first appeared in Palestine and the Diaspora in the early Hellenistic period.¹³⁴ For each Jewish Community it was the central communal institution. Literary and archaeological evidence shows that the synagogue had become the main institution of the Jewish Community and communal life within the Empire by the first century AD. Following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, the number of synagogues in Palestine increased.¹³⁵

The synagogue was used for social, political, educational and religious functions. Fund-raising, judicial matters and communal meals were among the activities that took place in the synagogue and the buildings around it.¹³⁶ Its use in this way was unique to the Jewish Community. The mentality behind it was different than anything pre-existing it, within its own community and in other religions.¹³⁷

Terms used mainly within the Diaspora for synagogue activities were related to the contemporary Greek culture and were not of Jewish origin. Yet later they became so assimilated within the Jewish community that certain words like *archisynagogoi* became related only to the Jews, whereas this was not the case originally. The term meant 'head of assembly', and it was used in cultic associations in contemporary Greek culture, but by the second century AD, gentiles no longer used it for their own offices.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ The main examples being the synagogues at Masada, Herodium, Gamla in Palestine and Delos.

¹³⁵ Levine, L.I., 1998, 139.

¹³⁶ Hachlili, R., 1998, 22.

¹³⁷ Levine, L.I., 1998, 141.

¹³⁸ Williams, M.h., 1998, 44; Levine, L.I., 1998, 139, 141-142.

Although the religious meetings in the Diaspora were conducted mainly in Greek, sermons were often delivered in Hebrew and prayers read in Hebrew and Aramaic.¹³⁹ In Asia Minor Greek was probably used for sermons, however. The *Septuagint* had been translated into Greek in the third century BC, because the Diaspora Jews neither knew Hebrew nor Aramaic, the result of a long period of Hellenisation.¹⁴⁰

The Temple and the Synagogue

Although the Jews of the Diaspora built synagogues, they respected the Temple in Jerusalem and before its destruction visited it on the pilgrimage festivals. As Philo relates,

Countless multitudes from countless cities flock to the Temple at every feast, some by land, some by sea, from east and west and north and south. (Philo, *Special Laws* 1.69)¹⁴¹

The Temple did not become a centre of prayer until a much later period at the end of the first century BC, in the Second Temple period. Initially the Tabernacle and the Temple had been a centre of sacrifice and atonement, not of personal prayer.¹⁴² However, the Temple was very far for some people, and they could only visit it once a year or much less often. Consequently, while initially a communal institution, a sacred status was attached to the synagogue, especially in the Diaspora, as an important element of self-identity and self-image. Originally religious acts were limited to the Sabbath and holidays, but this changed in that they were conducted on a daily basis. Worship in the synagogue consisted of the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the study of what had been read, and then its interpretation. Nowhere else in contemporary society was congregational reading and

¹³⁹ Levine, L.I., 1998, 162.

¹⁴⁰ Green, P., 1993, 317.

¹⁴¹ As quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 67, III.1.

¹⁴² Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 302-304.

the study of the holy text conducted in a regular manner.¹⁴³ The term *synagogai*, meaning ‘assembly’, was used with the term *proseuchai*, meaning ‘prayer-house’.¹⁴⁴ The synagogue was considered a house of prayer. Sacrifices were not carried out in synagogues.¹⁴⁵ This was because Deuteronomical Law forbade Jews to offer sacrifices other than at the Temple.¹⁴⁶ In the synagogue there was no religious person that mediated between God and the people, like the priests of the Temple.

The decoration program of the synagogue was inspired by the Temple. The *menorah*, *shofar*, *lulav* and *ethrog* were things that stood in the Temple.¹⁴⁷ The religious images depicted in the synagogue increased after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, in AD 70,¹⁴⁸ so it might be possible to say that the religious sanctity of the synagogue took on a deeper meaning after the loss of the principal centre of worship. It is after this period that we see the term *Hagios Topos*, literally meaning ‘holy place’ being used for the synagogue.¹⁴⁹ Although it took over some of the functions of the Temple, no synagogue was ever allowed to replace the Temple, even after its destruction.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Levine, L.I., 1998, 141.

¹⁴⁴ Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 305; Williams, M.H., 1998, 33.

¹⁴⁵ Even though Deuteronomic Law only prohibits inhabitants of Israel to build temples for sacrifice, the Diaspora Jews also did not build temples except in two cases, Elephantine and Heliopolis (Leontopolis). That at Elephantine was destroyed in 411 BC. According to Josephus, Vespasian destroyed the temple at Leontopolis after the First Jewish War, to prevent further trouble (Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.420-1 and 433-5) in Williams, M.H., 1998, 99-100. There is little information on either of these Jewish temples, which might be considered proof that they were not widely recognised and supported. Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 301.

¹⁴⁶ This is based on Leviticus 1:3, and was a commandment initially for the Tent of Meeting which later would be replaced by the Temple in Jerusalem. Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 301.

¹⁴⁷ Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 320.

¹⁴⁸ Levine, L.I., 1998, 167; White, L.M., 1990, 64.

¹⁴⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 33.

¹⁵⁰ Cohen, S.J.D., 1999, 322.

Synagogue Officials

The *archisynagogos*,¹⁵¹ was the religious director of the synagogue. He had to make sure the *Torah* was observed and that the tax for the Temple was collected. In some cases a synagogue had more than one *archisynagogos*.¹⁵² *Archisynagogoi* are recorded from Smyrna (App.1 xiii), Nysa (App.1 xxi), Dorylaeum (App.1 xxxii), and Teos (App.1 xvi). There is also record of a lector, teacher of the *Torah* at the synagogue, from Nicomedia (App.1 lii).¹⁵³

Other senior people related to the synagogue included the patrons or benefactors, the *patres et matres synagogae*.¹⁵⁴ When contact with Palestine was infrequent the community depended on these individuals for financial support and gaining respectability in the society they lived in. Epigraphic evidence from Asia Minor has revealed the names of many patrons and benefactors from cities such as Akmonia (App.1 xxiii), Sardis (App.1 iv-vi), Phocaea (App.1 xi), Hyllarima (App.1 xviii), and Tralles (App.1 xxii).

Women and the Synagogue

Among the benefactors were several important women. For example in Phocaea (App.1 xi), a married woman named Tation donated a house, thought to be used a synagogue as she was offered a seat of honour. It is not clear as to whether the building was already standing or whether an edifice was newly built as a synagogue. Also not clear

¹⁵¹ Other Diaspora communities that were under rabbinic influence tended to use the term *rabbi*, meaning teacher, especially after AD 135. However so far we have no evidence of the term being used in Asia Minor. Williams, M.H., 1998, 37; Rajak, T., 1992, 11.

¹⁵² Williams, M.H., 1998, 44.

¹⁵³ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 173.

¹⁵⁴ Guignebert, C., 1996, 117-118.

is whether Tation or her husband were Jewish, but the inscription indicates that she alone made the donation.¹⁵⁵

Perhaps one of the most important pieces of evidence for the status of a Jewish community in a city is an inscription from Akmonia (App.1 xxiii). The inscription refers to the restoration of a synagogue possibly originally donated by Julia Severa, a priestess of the Imperial cult in Akmonia, and *archiereia* three times during the reign of Nero.¹⁵⁶ Apart from her own local status, members of her family were prominent in Roman life: her son was a senator, and a member of the family was a consul. Much debate has focused on whether or not Julia Severa was a Jew, given her position as *archiereia*. Jews were known from time to time to abandon their religion and adopt the pagan cults. Trebilco believes it highly unlikely, however, that an apostatising Jewess, a priestess of the Roman Imperial cult, would donate a synagogue to the Jewish community or that the Jewish community in turn would accept such a donation from an apostate. Thus it seems more likely that Julia Severa was a gentile who sympathised with the Jews. Despite her ties with the pagan cult it is understandable why the Jews would have valued the patronage of such a wealthy and important woman.¹⁵⁷

White, however, believes that there is no indication that the building was initially a synagogue, or that Julia Severa sympathised with the Jews. Since she donated the building it would seem she owned it, but how the Jews came to use it is not known. White notes that a Lucius was among the Jews who renovated the building. Lucius was also the name of Julia's husband, and as freedmen took on the names of their former patrons it may be

¹⁵⁵ White, L.M., 1997, 324-325.

¹⁵⁶ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 58.

¹⁵⁷ Trebilco, P.R., 1991,60.

that Lucius was a Jewish freedman client of Julia's family, possibly explaining how Jews came to use the building.¹⁵⁸

The Synagogue Building

In the Diaspora, synagogues were generally built in the local architectural style.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, it was not possible to distinguish a house or other synagogue from a non-Jewish building by looking at the facade of the structure, nor was there a strict plan for a synagogue.¹⁶⁰ At times they followed the plan of a pagan temple with pronaos; a Hellenistic meeting house; or a Roman basilica in the pre-Christian and the later periods.¹⁶¹ As Levine states, "A politically secure and wealthy Jewish community could afford a more imposing type of building (than a domestic structure in the Jewish quarter) and more elaborate ornamentation executed in a style consistent with its surroundings."¹⁶²

Yet it is possible to say that in the Diaspora, a synagogue generally consisted of a court, enclosed by walls, and a portico that led to a rectangular room, with benches along the sides. At the far end of this room would be a niche or cupboard where the scrolls of Law and the Holy Books were kept. Almost without exception the *Torah* niche in all synagogues in the Diaspora faced the direction of the Holy Land. Generally three walls were lined with benches or columns leaving the fourth wall, which faced the Holy Land for the storage of the *Torah*.¹⁶³ In the centre of the room was the reading desk or pulpit, and the congregation would be seated according to their profession.¹⁶⁴ There is no archaeological or literary evidence that women sat in a separated area within the

¹⁵⁸ White, L.M., 1997, 309-310, footnote 48.

¹⁵⁹ Levine, L.I., 1998, 148.

¹⁶⁰ Based on what we know from Dura (App. 3), Sardis and possibly Priene.

¹⁶¹ Levine, L.I., 1998, 143, 145.

¹⁶² Levine, L.I., 1998, 172.

¹⁶³ Guinebert, C., 1996, 218; Levine, L.I., 1998, 173.

synagogue.¹⁶⁵ Possibly women were not allowed in the synagogue at all,¹⁶⁶ although this seems highly unlikely since almost all evidence from the Diaspora leads one to the conclusion that women had a respectable place within the community.

In Asia Minor we have more epigraphic evidence of synagogues than structural evidence. Inscriptions from Smyrna (App.1 xiv), Teos (App.1 xvi), Hyllarima (App.1 xviii), Philadelphia (App.1 iii), Phocaea (App.1 xi), Akmonia (App.1 xxiii), Nysa (App.1 xxi), Tralles (App.1 xxii), Amastris (App.1 xlix), and Nicomedia (App.1 li) refer to dedications made to the synagogues of these places. The donation of previously built structures to be used as synagogues must have come through wealthy patrons.¹⁶⁷ Other inscriptions mentioning offices of the synagogal community may also indicate the presence of a synagogue.

The synagogues in Asia Minor known from physical evidence all seem to be conversions of existing buildings. For example, House XXIV at Priene, found during the excavations between 1895 and 1898, and at first considered to be a 'house church'.¹⁶⁸ Located in the domestic quarter of the West Gate Street, this began life as a house with a courtyard, built in the late Hellenistic period, and entered through the west wall (Plan 1).¹⁶⁹ The main room was 10 m by 14 m, and was subsequently divided into three by two rows of columns. In its plan the synagogue at Priene resembled that of Dura Europos (Appendix 3), also a converted house.¹⁷⁰ Along the north wall was a bench, and a niche for the *Torah* was cut into the east wall facing Jerusalem. Near the niche was a marble ablution basin, a

¹⁶⁴ Guignebert, C., 1996, 219.

¹⁶⁵ Levine, L.I., 1998, 176; Hachlili, R., 1998, 23-24.

¹⁶⁶ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 170-171.

¹⁶⁷ White, L.M., 1990, 78.

¹⁶⁸ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 55.

¹⁶⁹ Hachlili, R., 1998, 56-57; White, L.M., 1997, 328.

¹⁷⁰ Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 108.

hegev, used for the ritual washing. The smaller rooms around the synagogue were used by the community.

Engravings of *menorahs*, *lulav*, *ethrog* and a *shofar* in the main room (Fig.2), now in Berlin, confirm the use of the building, and a relief of a *menorah* set in the floor of the church in the theatre may have been taken from here.¹⁷¹ Another relief found on the synagogue floor was that of a *menorah* flanked between peacocks, with a *lulav* to the left of the *menorah* and possibly an *ethrog* to the right of it (Fig. 1, Plate 1).¹⁷² Another stele with an incomplete three armed *menorah* engraved on it was also found.

As no further work has been undertaken on the site since its discovery, the question of the date of its conversion still remains uncertain. The original excavators of the site dated this to the fourth or fifth centuries AD, while Kraabel suggests that it might belong to the third century AD. Hachlili believes the architectural conversion from house to synagogue took place in the second century AD,¹⁷³ while White believes the renovation took place in the second or third century AD.¹⁷⁴ The small size of this synagogue and its plain decoration program indicate that the Jewish community in Priene was not prosperous, yet they were faithful to their religion.¹⁷⁵ This is in line with the statement Levine makes about the prosperity of the Jews being reflected in the monuments they built.¹⁷⁶

According to the decree of Lucius Antonius in 49 BC, the Jews in Sardis were provided with a place to conduct their meetings.¹⁷⁷ The visible remains of the synagogue

¹⁷¹ Bloedhorn, H. & G.Huttenmeister, 1999, 288; Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 55.

¹⁷² This *ethrog* was not included in the original sketch of the relief due to the fact that the archaeologist was unable to identify it, possibly because the craftsman had never seen the object he was depicting and thus was not able create a clear representation. Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 108.

¹⁷³ Hachlili, R., 1998, 58.

¹⁷⁴ White, L.M., 1997, 328.

¹⁷⁵ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 55-56; Bloedhorn, H. & G.Huttenmeister 1999, 288.

¹⁷⁶ Levine, L.I., 1998, 148, 172.

¹⁷⁷ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIV. 259-261.

in Sardis today date to the third century AD, and prior to this date the standing building was certainly not used as a synagogue. It may be that this original meeting place was part of another building, especially set aside for this, or there was an earlier synagogue that has not yet been discovered. Perhaps it was not even a building but rather an area that was set aside for the Jews to discuss their issues.¹⁷⁸

After the earthquake in AD 17 much of Sardis had to be rebuilt, as was the case for many cities in Asia Minor. This work involved the construction of a large bath-gymnasium complex on the site of a Hellenistic cemetery.¹⁷⁹ The larger complex of the bath and gymnasium sections were completed, and not subsequently altered, but the wings to the north and south of the palaestra were remodelled more than once. The south wing was initially divided into three rooms and used for civic purposes.¹⁸⁰ Along the exterior of the south wall was a series of shops, some owned by Jews and Christians.¹⁸¹ This has been attested by the graffiti of *menoroth*, a possible *lulav* and the name Jacob.¹⁸²

In about AD 166, the excavators' Phase 2 (Plan 2), the southern wing of the gymnasium complex was sealed off from the general complex and turned into a basilica with two rows of columns.¹⁸³ About AD 270 (Phase 3) the building became one big hall, with piers replacing columns, and seats in the apse. Then in 320-340 (Phase 4), the building took its final form, by which time it was certainly used as a synagogue (Plan 3, Fig. 3).¹⁸⁴ The building had an atrium and main hall. The length of the atrium was 20 m and that of the main hall was 60 m.¹⁸⁵ There was a roof over the four sides of the atrium but the centre was uncovered (Plate II). From the atrium to the main hall the synagogue

¹⁷⁸ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 179.

¹⁷⁹ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 171.

¹⁸⁰ Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 102.

¹⁸¹ Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 102-103; Hachlili, R., 1998, 58.

¹⁸² Hachlili, R., 1998, 63.

¹⁸³ Seager, A.R., 1972, 428-429.

had a triple door entrance, a common feature in Palestinian synagogues.¹⁸⁶ There was also an entrance to the atrium from the south, between two shops. The main hall could accommodate at least 1000 people.¹⁸⁷ The main hall was split into three aisles by two rows of six piers.¹⁸⁸ In the west end of the building was an apse lined with seats. Important members of the synagogue and community leaders probably sat on these benches.¹⁸⁹ Up to seventy people could be seated there. In front of the apse was the 'Eagle Table' (Plate IIIa). This structure resembles an altar and consists of three different parts, all reused. The supports of the slab are decorated with Roman eagles clutching thunderbolts. The table is also flanked by stone lions, which are re-used sixth-fifth century BC Lydian carvings. The floor of the structure was paved with mosaics of geometric and floral design, each with an inscription of a donor.¹⁹⁰ No evidence of the necessary cooking facility or communal kitchen was found, so either it must have been somewhere else or the Jews of Sardis did not have one. Considering the status of the community and also the city's situation on the main West-East trade and pilgrim route, however, it is highly likely that they did have a communal kitchen and hostel for the travellers.¹⁹¹

One of the complications of using a previously built structure was that it did not automatically fit into the religious requirements. For example, the apse at Sardis did not face east, thus the *Torah* scrolls could not be kept there. To solve this problem of the storage of the *Torah*, two small rooms were built along the east wall of the main hall. This meant that they had to be carried back and forth between the altar table and the room, a

¹⁸⁴ Seager A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 173.

¹⁸⁵ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 41.

¹⁸⁶ However this may have been a feature of the original civic basilica, in which case the resemblance to Palestine might just be a coincidence.

¹⁸⁷ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Levine, L.I., 1998, 148; Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 103.

¹⁸⁹ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 190.

¹⁹⁰ Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 105.

¹⁹¹ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 169,182.

somewhat unusual procedure.¹⁹² In earlier synagogues the *Torah* scrolls were often placed in portable chests that were brought out during the services. It was at a later period that permanent niches were built for the scrolls. A marble plaque with a *menorah*, *lulav*, *shofar* and *Torah* scrolls was placed in the wall below the southern shrine (Plate IIIb). It was at the foot of this shrine that the few Hebrew inscriptions of the synagogue were found (Plate VI-a). Most of them are fragmentary; one of them reads *shalom*, ‘peace’.¹⁹³

Although Diasporan synagogues vary architecturally according to the local traditions, as mentioned, most of them have common features.¹⁹⁴ The synagogue in Sardis, however, does not have benches lining the side of the walls and there is no evidence for a gallery or balcony set aside for the women. At Sardis, people either worshipped standing or sitting on the floor. In twelve of the over eighty dedicatory inscriptions at Sardis, husband and wife are co-donators.¹⁹⁵ The synagogue is also unique in that it is the only one, so far known, to have benches in the apse, two *Torah* niches and marble-inlay wall decorations. Local circumstances both in culture and the Jewish community is what determined the appearance of the synagogue.¹⁹⁶

Building work in 1976 for a new museum in Aphrodisias revealed a building which may have been a synagogue related to the Jewish community, as a stele found there carried two inscriptions of Jews and Godfearers (Plate VIIIa-c).¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately this was built upon immediately, without any excavation, and nothing is known of its nature.

¹⁹² Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 105.

¹⁹³ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 170-171.

¹⁹⁴ Mentioned on page 43.

¹⁹⁵ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 41, footnote 15.

¹⁹⁶ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 177.

¹⁹⁷ Bloedhorn, H. & G.Huttenmeister, 1999, 287.

Architectural blocks with images of *menoroth* carved as decoration and graffiti surviving near the site strengthen the interpretation of this structure as a synagogue. (Plate IV-a)¹⁹⁸

The earliest possible date of the inscription recording Julia Severa's synagogue at Akmonia (App.1 xxiii) is the early second century AD, because of the use of the name "Publius" the *archon* mentioned in the inscription. This is the earliest date for such a building in Asia Minor and two marble capitals found in Akmonia, decorated with a *menorah* and a *Torah* scroll (Plate IV-b), are thought to have belonged to it.¹⁹⁹

At the beginning of the twentieth century a small building in Miletus was identified as a synagogue by excavator von Gerkan, not because of any Jewish artifactual evidence, but rather because the plan resembled that of synagogues in Palestine and what we know from the work of Josephus.²⁰⁰ However, Trebilco notes that the Jews of the Diaspora did not generally build their synagogues in the Palestinian style, while the synagogues of Priene and Sardis were conversions of existing structures. In addition to this, a statue of Poseidon was found there, leading the excavators to believe that the building may have served another purpose. As there is no satisfactory evidence of the role of this building, Kraabel excludes it from the list of Diaspora synagogues.²⁰¹ The question of where the Jews of Miletus worshipped their God still remains until further evidence is found.²⁰²

A fragment of a pediment (?), perhaps belonging to a *Torah* shrine of a synagogue is the only architectural evidence we have of Jews in Pergamum. A *menorah*, *lulav* and *ethrog* are carved on it, also possibly a small amphora above the *menorah*. (Fig. 6)²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Reynolds, J. & R.Tannenbaum, 1987, 133.

¹⁹⁹ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 60.

²⁰⁰ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XIV.244-6.

²⁰¹ Kraabel, A.T., 1998, 107.

²⁰² Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 56.

²⁰³ Hachlili, R., 1998, 87.

Influence of Palestine

Based on the donation inscription found in Aphrodisias, where Jews and Godfearers are listed as donators of a soup kitchen, Reynolds and Tannenbaum come to the conclusion that there was more contact between the Diaspora of Asia Minor and Palestine than previously believed, especially from the early third century onwards. For example, the Aphrodisian Jews follow the requirements of the Law in the same way as in Palestine. Sometimes there are difficulties in the interpretation of terms on this inscription because the terms of the Hebrew Talmud don't always exactly match up with those of the Greek version. However, educational and institutional terms are the same.²⁰⁴ At times we see that terms were literally translated. The people in general did not speak much Hebrew; in fact even the teachers at the synagogues would have had a hard time comparing the *Septuagint* with the original Hebrew. At this period in Palestine only rabbis spoke Mishnaic Hebrew. The Mishnaic requirement of the Talmud is that each Jewish community must have a soup kitchen and this law was obeyed by the people of Aphrodisias.²⁰⁵

From the inscription from Aphrodisias (App.1 xvii) it is understood that this soup kitchen was being built for the first time. Keeping this in mind and the fact that it was given its literal Latin translation *patella* of the Mishnaic name *tamhui*, Reynolds and Tannenbaum came to the conclusion that the Jewish community in Aphrodisias had been visited by a travelling rabbi from Palestine who had admonished the community for not following the Talmudic laws completely.²⁰⁶

From several sources it is clear that the imperial government did recognise native religious legal authorities. Consequently rabbis were able to exercise their authority over a

²⁰⁴ Reynolds, J & R. Tannenbaum, 1987, 78.

²⁰⁵ Reynolds, J & R. Tannenbaum, 1987, 79.

large area. One person, Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi (AD c.170-250), is thought to have increased his area of authority into the Diaspora, by sending out emissaries to the Diaspora communities. Such a large proportion of the Diaspora Jews spoke and worshipped in Greek only that it was necessary that they be checked on by a central authority. Not until a much later period did rabbinical centres develop outside Palestine. It would have taken a long time for the rabbinic institutions to train enough rabbis for all the Jewish communities in the Roman Empire, and a widespread use and knowledge of the Talmud and Mishnah did not develop until the late fourth and early fifth century. One of these emissaries was Rabbi Me'ir, who is said to have died in Asia.²⁰⁷ His job was to inspect the communities in each activity, checking that those leading the community were doing their job well and making sure all activities were conducted according to the Law, from synagogue services to slaughtering.

Reynolds and Tannenbaum conclude that Me'ir may have visited Aphrodisias,²⁰⁸ but White disagrees with their interpretation that the inscription reveals such direct influence of the Holy Land and the Mishnah. Instead this inscription should be considered in the light of local traditions, as other than Jewish names mentioned on it, in style and manner of its composition does not differ from that of other gentile inscriptions recording public gifts to the community.²⁰⁹

Margaret Williams likewise disagrees with Reynolds and Tannenbaum's interpretation of rabbinic influence. She suggests that there is nothing unusual about the inscription, in that it is like any other donation inscription written in Greek and in the style of the era, except for the Hebrew names. She argues that it is unlikely to indicate

²⁰⁶ Reynolds, J. & R. Tannenbaum, 1987, 27, 80.

²⁰⁷ Reynolds, J. & R. Tannenbaum, 1987, 80-84.

²⁰⁸ Reynolds, J. & R. Tannenbaum, 1987, 80-84.

²⁰⁹ White, L.M., 1997, 304, footnotes 41-42.

rabbinical influence because of the difference in style between certain rabbinical texts and this traditional Greek text. In Hebrew texts charitable deeds are not publicly praised, and if anything this practice is detested. Apart from this, she notes the important role taken on by a donor, Jael, listed on the inscription. Reynolds and Tannenbaum interpret the name Jael as male, but Williams makes a valuable point that in the Old Testament the name Jael is referred to twice, in Ezra 10 and Judges 4-5. In Ezra it is the name of an unimportant man who disgraces himself by marrying a foreign woman. In Judges, however, Jael is the name of the heroine who kills the enemy by nailing a tent peg through his head. Williams suggests that it is more likely that parents would have named their child after a biblical hero(ine) rather than an ignominious figure. In this case, Jael would be the only woman's name in the list, and she was clearly a patroness of the community, which was common practice in the Hellenistic world and was adopted by Jews. Also, when the professions of some of the donors are studied, it is possible to see that many of them had professions that would have been looked down upon by the orthodox Jew, such as the image-maker and the pork sausage maker, while the Godfearer city councillors recorded on the inscription would have had to take part in the pagan rituals associated with their office as they were not fully Jews.

According to Williams the only thing that might possibly support Reynolds and Tannenbaum's interpretation of this inscription as rabbinically inspired, is the use of the word *patella*, referring to a soup kitchen. Yet even that seems doubtful to her because generally if Diaspora Jews needed a new word for an institution, they either used the nearest Greek equivalent or they transliterated the word into Greek, so that it sounded very much like the Hebrew. At times they even invented words, but direct translation into Latin was certainly not common.²¹⁰ Williams goes on to interpret the use of the word *patella* as

²¹⁰ Williams, M.H., 1992, 299-302, 306.

referring to a synagogal *triclinium*, a dinning hall used for communal festivities on the Sabbath and so forth.²¹¹ Temple *triclina* were a common element of the Greek culture, thus it would not have seemed strange that the Jews of Aphrodisias also built such a structure.²¹²

Having concluded that the text does not indicate rabbinic influence, Williams suggests that it belongs to a community memorial structure built to ‘allay public grief’. The word *dekania* she translates as ‘burial society’ rather than ‘soceity of law-lovers’ and suggests that the word *panteulogounton* is the name given to the members of this society, the eulogists that would compose laments for the deceased.²¹³ Thus the first sentence translates not as:

Those listed below from the Society of the Law-Lovers, also known as Those who Continuously Offer Praise, in order to alleviate suffering (?), have built (this) memorial for the community (*plethos*) out of their own resources.²¹⁴

But as:

Those listed below from the Burial Society of the Law-Lovers, also known as Those who Continuously Offer Benedictions or Eulogies, have erected for the alleviation of public grief (this) memorial.²¹⁵

In light of this interpretation Williams believes that Jael was a woman appointed as patroness of civic and religious organisations. She most probably was not the president of the burial society but she may have easily been a patroness.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Which was known even to Julius Caius, consul of Rome knew about and mentions in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 14.214.

²¹² Williams, M.H., 1992, 308.

²¹³ Williams, M.H., 1992, 304-306.

²¹⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 165, VII.11.

Apostasy

Although Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.141, *Jewish War* 7.47) and Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium* 26. 166-70) refer to individual cases of Jews apostatising and rejecting their Jewish heritage, apostasy does not seem to have been that common a practice.²¹⁷ The only case we know of from Asia Minor are two Jewish officials, one of them a high priest in a local cult named on two coins found in Sale.²¹⁸

I.3.3 Social and Economic Life

How did the Jews manage to exist in a society that clashed with many of the strict rules they had to live by? Considering the prominent place of the worship of gods in daily life and in so many professions, one would expect the Jews to separate themselves entirely from the ‘pagans’. However, as the evidence indicates, this does not seem to have been the case at all. In fact, as seen the Jews of the Diaspora often did interact with the local society and occasionally take part in the activities of Roman life as we have already seen that they took on public services.

One of the most distinctive practices of later Hellenism was the worship of rulers as gods. This practice was then adopted by the Romans in the form of the Imperial Cult. All people within the Roman Empire, whether citizens or not, were expected to pay homage to the living emperor and pray for the welfare of the emperor and empire. However, the Jews were exempted from this as long as they took oaths by his name, in accordance to their

²¹⁵ Williams, M.H., 1992, 307.

²¹⁶ Williams, M.H., 1992, 306.

²¹⁷ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 83.

²¹⁸ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 74. The geographically closest example of apostasy is the case of Antiochus in Antioch mentioned in Appendix 2.

faith, celebrated his birthday and accession, and joined in celebrations of victories or of public mourning in their own ways. Guignebert claims they did this willingly and accordingly the state was “satisfied”.²¹⁹

Education

Education was as an important part of Jewish life, as it was of Graeco-Roman society. It was not limited only to the teachings of the *Torah* on the Sabbath but the synagogue was used at other times for the education of the boys and the younger men of the community. Some Jews, however, also sent their boys to the gymnasium. A Jewish inscription from Hypaepa (App.1 ii) for example, contains the word *neotoroi*, which was used for ephebes at a gymnasium, indicating that Jews of that city attended a gymnasium.²²⁰ An inscription from Iasos (App.1 xx), dated to the early Imperial period, is an ephebic list that contains three Jewish names.²²¹

Part of the education in the Hellenistic and even later Roman gymnasium consisted of offering sacrifices to the pagan gods, such as Hercules and Apollo. The Jews most probably had to partake in this, as this was the custom. Athletics and the games also involved associations with the pagan gods and a Jew who would not take part in this might be looked down on by the Greeks, while a Jew who did participate might be shunned by his community according to the Law, which forbade them to worship any other god other than the one true God.²²² How the Jews who were somewhat more Hellenised were received by the rest of the Jewish community, we do not know. Feldman raises the question that they might have had to reject their Judaism. Yet he also makes the comment that from the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo, it is clear that he had a gymnasium

²¹⁹ Guignebert, C., 1996, 220.

²²⁰ Feldman, L.H., 1998, 58.

²²¹ Williams, M., 1998, 114.

education. Philo praised the education of the gymnasium and still kept to the orthodox ways of his faith. He also possessed great knowledge of the games and the festivals.²²³

Entertainment

Attending the theatre caused similar problems. In the second century, Jews were told by Rabbi Me'ir that they were not allowed to go to the theatre because the plays and all entertainment were performed to honour the gods.²²⁴ However, material evidence from Miletus (2nd-3rd century AD, Plate V)²²⁵ and Aphrodisias (5th-6th century)²²⁶ prove that certain seats in the theatre were reserved for the Jews. Of course this does not indicate how often they participated in public entertainment, but it is clear that it must have been often enough for seats to have been allocated. Unless, that is, the theatres were also used as an *ekklesiasterion*, as with the theatre of Dionysus in Athens, used for this purpose.²²⁷ In which case the inscriptions record the places reserved for Jews and Godfearers were used at the meetings of the *ekklesia*.

The Milesian and Aphrodisian theatre inscriptions apart, if indeed they do refer to Jews taking part in public entertainment, there is very little evidence of Jews partaking in the religious and cultural life of the Roman Empire.²²⁸ However, the economic crisis that struck the Roman Empire in the mid-third century forced many people into selling themselves into gladiator games because of the high pay they received. As social or even legal status did not matter, all types of people including Jews, even rabbis, signed up.²²⁹

²²² Exodus 20:3.

²²³ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 58-60.

²²⁴ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 61.

²²⁵ "Place of the Jews and of the Godfearers." (*CIJ* II no. 748), Williams, M.H., 1998, 115, V.26.

²²⁶ "Place of Blues, of the elder Jews." (*SEG* 37 (1987) no. 846), Williams, M.H., 1998, 116, V.30.

²²⁷ Hornblower S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 514.

²²⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 148.

²²⁹ Sperber, D., 1998, 91; Loewe, R., 1999, 254.

Trade and Trade Guilds

Although the Jews participated in trade and held various important positions in local government offices, as we know for example from the grave stele from Akmonia, there were complications and restrictions on this due to the requirements to observe the Talmud. In communities that strictly followed the Talmud, Jews could only participate in markets on Mondays and Thursdays, the days allocated to community interaction, when reading of the *Torah* and so forth would take place. Also, Jews were not allowed to participate in fairs or festivals because of their pagan associations. These festivals included those related to the Graeco-Roman pantheon and also to the Imperial Cult.²³⁰ In Palestine, if a market day fell on the same day as a festival then the Rabbi of the community had to be consulted; in some cases commerce could only be carried out with those who did not partake in the idolatrous activities. In cases where Jews were not allowed to participate in the markets, because of the pagan involvement, they conducted their transactions outside the city wall, where they would not have to pay taxes that would be used for the pagan festivals.²³¹ This also may have been the case in the Diaspora.

From the various inscriptions in Hierapolis we understand that many of the citizens of the city, including Jews were members of trade guilds. This reveals that they had no problem in working side by side with gentiles in daily life. Among these guilds were the Association of Purple-dyers and the Association of Tapestry-makers (App.1 xxxv).²³²

²³⁰ Loewe, R., 1999, 253.

²³¹ Sperber, D., 1998, 27-28.

²³² Hierapolis 1987, 16-17; Seager, A.R. & A.T. Kraabel, 1983, 181.

Professions

Epigraphic evidence has revealed a variety of professions throughout Asia Minor. Most are late, such as those from Akmonia and Aphrodisias, but indicate how well Jews integrated into the community. There are over eighty inscriptions from the synagogue in Sardis,²³³ the majority in Greek and dated to the third and fourth centuries.²³⁴ Among them are goldsmiths (App.1 iv-v), merchants selling glass, dyes and paints, and a sculptor.²³⁵ There is also possible evidence of a blacksmith from Akmonia (App.1 xxix), a priest in Ephesus (App.1 x), a goldsmith, shepherd, greengrocer, bronze-smith and confectioner from the long dedicatory inscription from Aphrodisias (App.1 xvii), a perfumer from Korykos (App.1 xliii) and a linen merchant from Tarsus (App.1 xlv).²³⁶

Unfortunately material evidence for these professions is scarce. Sardis, Ephesus and Miletus have revealed artefacts of Jewish identity, either produced by or for Jews. Among the important finds of the synagogue in Sardis are the *menoroth*. In total fragments of eighteen *menoroth* were found, the most important one being the large, marble “Socrates” *menorah*, possibly made by a Jewish sculptor. It was found in the main hall and is unique. Unfortunately it was greatly damaged by fire, but the inscription is partly legible and Rachel Hachlili has made a good reconstruction which gives one a rough idea as to what it may have looked like (Fig. 5a-b). It probably had a height of 56 cm and a width of 1m. However, because of the rarity of free-standing *menorahs* in the Diaspora it is extremely difficult to date. Another *menorah* is depicted on a marble slab, and was found close to the southern *Torah* shrine. Other examples are of metal and or are simple

²³³ I will not be looking into most of these in detail because they are almost all dated from the mid-fourth century onwards.

²³⁴ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 171.

²³⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.91, I.92; Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 185.

²³⁶ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 173

graffiti (Plate VIb).²³⁷ Although of slightly later date, circular lamps with *menorah* decorations have been found at Ephesus, dated to the 4th century (Plate VIc),²³⁸ while from Miletus is a lamp with a depiction of an aedicula, a niche where the *Torah* ark was kept (Fig. 7).²³⁹

Elsewhere in Asia Minor, the people of Phrygia and Galatia earned their living by farming. This was probably also the case for the Jews. Also there is graffiti evidence of Jews working at marble quarries in Docimaeium and Amorium.²⁴⁰

Bathing

Based on Talmudic evidence, Sperber notes that the Jews conducted the bathing procedure in the bath house as any other ordinary Roman citizen, in that they paid the keeper, anointed themselves with oil, washed, were scraped with a strigil and given a massage as long as they kept within the rules of the Sabbath.²⁴¹ It is also interesting that within the Talmud certain prayers were written to pray for the protection from certain dangers that might arise in a bath-house.²⁴² If going to baths was thought of as normal in Palestine, where Talmudic Law was strictly followed, it would not be wrong to assume that bathing in Asia Minor was of the same nature. No references are made to Jewish women using the bathhouses at any time.

²³⁷ Hachlili, R., 1998, 320.

²³⁸ Hachlili, R., 1998, 376.

²³⁹ Hachlili, R., 1998, 376.

²⁴⁰ Mitchell, S., 1993, 35

²⁴¹ Sperber, D., 1998, 61-63.

²⁴² Sperber, D., 1998, 65-66. For example the prayer made when one entered the bath-house not to be burned and to be protected from the possible collapse.

Intermarriage

Despite all the local interaction between Jews and Greeks, intermarriage seems infrequent. One case we know of is Timothy's parents mentioned in Acts 16:1; his mother was a Jewess but his father was Greek. However, as Feldman points out, the fact that Jews were highly concentrated in the areas where they lived it would have made it unnecessary to look elsewhere for matches.²⁴³ Marriage between two Jewish communities seems to have been a common practice. An inscription from Apollonia is evidence for this (App.1 i). Here, Debbora from Pisidian Antioch is given as a bride to a man from Sillyon, Phrygia.

Social Structure within the Jewish Community

Both material and literary evidence reveal considerable social inequality within the Jewish communities. There were those that were very rich, and those that were so poor that they surrounded the synagogues as beggars. Yet one question raised is why, when the people needed to stick together so much, they allowed such great differences among them. One suggestion is that the beggars at the city gates and around the synagogue were actually people who had been banished from the synagogue and the community²⁴⁴ but we also know from many examples in the New Testament²⁴⁵ that the crippled, blind and other sick people were outcasts. One other element that affected the social structure of the community was the associations within the community, especially for people that conducted trade. People sat in the synagogue according to their trades and travellers from outside were put under the charge of these associations according to their profession.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 79.

²⁴⁴ Guignebert, C., 1996, 221.

²⁴⁵ Matthew 20:30-31; Mark 1:40, 10:46, 12: 42; Luke 2:6, 13:10-11.

²⁴⁶ Guignebert, C., 1996, 221.

Yet despite the rigid social structure there is evidence of wealthy Jews taking care of their slaves. An inscription from Smyrna not only tells of a woman *archisynagogos*, but also that she built a tomb for her freedmen and slaves (App.1 xiii). This inscription, and two from Hierapolis (App.1 xxxiii, xxxiv), also inform us that women were able to possess land.

Interaction with Local Traditions

Local traditions play a larger role in certain areas. This is especially the case in Phrygia. According to Mitchell, some of the largest Jewish communities lived in Phrygia in the mid-first century BC (Map 2).²⁴⁷ The most interesting evidence is from Apamea. Coins minted by the city in the first half of the third century show Noah and the Ark (Fig. 4a-b). What is fascinating about the coins is that the region of Apamea had many local flood stories so the depiction on the coins reveals a coming together of the native legends with the biblical story, a collaboration of the native and the Jew.²⁴⁸

The honouring of benefactors was also conducted in the local manner. For example in Akmonia (App.1 xxiii) the repairs mentioned were undertaken by two *archisynagogoi* and an *archon*.²⁴⁹ The benefactors were both recognised in the inscription and awarded a gilded shield by the Jewish community, for their generosity. This was a tradition of Greek cities.²⁵⁰ A similar case is seen in Phocaea (App.1 xi) where Tation, the benefactress is honoured with a gold crown and a seat of honour in the synagogue.

²⁴⁷ Mitchell, S., 1993, 33.

²⁴⁸ Seager, A.R. & A.T. Kraabel, 1983, 181.

²⁴⁹ Levine, L.I., 1999, 1008.

²⁵⁰ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 60.

Funerary Customs

Most of the information we gain about the Jews of Asia Minor comes from funerary inscriptions. It is possible to say that Roman cultural elements left a mark on Jewish society, especially among Diasporan communities. Jews in Palestine never listed their community offices on their tombstones, whereas those from the Diaspora almost always did.²⁵¹ They have yielded much information on their professions, their status, their guilds, customs and much more.

The Jews gave much importance to the protection of their graves and the remembrance of their dead on special days. Generally families bought plots for graves for family members, as in Akmonia (App.1 xxvii). In one case in Asia Minor this family tomb is called a *heroon* (Tlos, App.1 xxxvii). Sometimes the graves were on land they already possessed outside the city necropolis. Families took care of these plots. Another type of burial was when halls or plots set aside as cemeteries were purchased. These were taken care of by burial organisations.²⁵² In Hierapolis we see that guilds, such as the Association of Purple-dyers and the Association of Tapestry-makers, were responsible for conducting memorial services for deceased Jews on feast days (App.1 xxxv).²⁵³ The practice of decorating tombs with flowers and wreaths was a Greek custom adopted by the Jews, and example of this practice is found at Akmonia, where the grave of the deceased is decorated with roses (App.1 xxvii).²⁵⁴

In most cases, however, Jews were buried alongside non-Jews, their tombs identified by inscriptions or depictions of Jewish symbols. For example, in Hierapolis the

²⁵¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 148-149.

²⁵² Hachlili, R., 1998, 308.

²⁵³ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 181.

²⁵⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 128

necropolis does not reveal a separate cemetery for the Jews outside the city wall but rather a concentrated area within the necropolis itself. Many of the tombs are only identified with the graffiti of a *menorah* (Plate VII).²⁵⁵ The tombs resemble those of the non-Jews in style. The epitaphs are written in the local manner.²⁵⁶ No personal objects were placed with the deceased. Elsewhere in the Diaspora objects such as glass bowls and lamps have been found; however, in Asia Minor no such objects have been found *in situ*.²⁵⁷

South west Central Anatolia seems to have been a densely Jewish populated area (Map 2). Gravestones belonging to Jews from Akmonia indicate that the size of the community was one of the larger ones in Asia Minor.²⁵⁸ It also reveals another side of the Jewish community and that is the importance they gave to the Scriptures. On gravestones belonging to Jews of different status are inscribed the curses of Deuteronomy, inflicting them on anyone who may tamper with the burials.²⁵⁹ Among them is the only inscription found in Hebrew in Asia Minor, apart from those found at Sardis. It is a blessing, repeated in Greek. Considering how little Hebrew seems to have been used in the Diasporan communities of Asia Minor it is assumed that only a few traditional blessings were known in Hebrew, and as in everyday life Greek was generally used in funerary inscriptions.²⁶⁰

The epitaphs written on the tomb stones also reflect Greek influence in the listing of the attributes of the person and curses protecting the grave. Yet we see that the Jews adapted these curses according to their own faith, and the Greeks in return used these new forms of curses. One problem that arises in the identification of these graves is that

²⁵⁵ Hierapolis, 1987, 116-117.

²⁵⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 125.

²⁵⁷ Hachlili, R., 1998, 309-310.

²⁵⁸ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 181.

²⁵⁹ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 61.

²⁶⁰ Seager, A.R. & A.T.Kraabel, 1983, 181.

Christians also used the same curses.²⁶¹ Bij de Vaate and van Henten review Trebilco's conclusions that all these tombs belong to Jews. According to them, the fact that so many gravestones have Deuteronomic curses on them does not mean they belong to Jews. Such curses were used by pagans and Christians, and when inscriptions are all that remain, they believe one should be careful of making clear statements of who the tomb belongs to.²⁶²

The tomb inscriptions from Apamea (App.1 xxx-xxxii), Korykos (App.1 xlii) and Nicomedia (liii) present typical examples of the threats and penalties inscribed on the tombs for protection. The financial penalties for burying someone not of the family in the tomb were high and at times it was to be paid to the treasury of the city and at other times to the Jewish community. For example, the tombs from Ephesus (App.1 ix, x), Smyrna (App.1 xiii), Hierapolis (App.1 xxxiii-xxxiv) and Nicomedia (App.1 li) were in the care of the Jews. In places like Smyrna and Hierapolis copies of these penalties were kept in the record office (App.1 xiii, xxxiii, xxxiv).

Tombstones from the Holy Land have revealed that people from Asia Minor were buried there. An inscription from Beth She'arim records people who had emigrated to Palestine from Pamphylia (App.1 xxviii) and then died there. Beth She'arim was where the Patriarchs' cemetery was and it became the chosen place for important people of the Diaspora to be buried. This inscription probably dates to the third-fourth centuries AD.²⁶³ There are similar cases from Jaffa, where a Cappadocian (App.1 xxxix) and a Tarsian (App.1 xlv) had emigrated. However there is also evidence of deceased people being taken there for burial. Generally these were people of wealthy families or prominent people within the community. For example, an *archisynagogos* from Dorylaeum was buried in

²⁶¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 129.

²⁶² Bij de Vaate, A.J. & J.W. van Henten, 1996, 16-28.

²⁶³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 75.

Jerusalem (App.1 xxxii).²⁶⁴ This also may have been the case for a Jew from Tarsus (App.1 xliv). The main reason for this was that the first people the Messiah would raise from the dead were those that were buried in the Holy Land.²⁶⁵

Godfearers

The definition of the term of *theosebeis* is one of great debate. From literary evidence it is clear that it is used in the meaning of 'pious,' yet at times the word is used for gentiles adopting Jewish customs, but who had not converted to Judaism, in which case it is interpreted as 'Gentile God-worshippers'.²⁶⁶

Evidence from many different places in Asia Minor indicate that people everywhere were attracted to Judaism. Although proselytes are mentioned in Acts, all the epigraphic evidence for Godfearers is dated to the third century. At Philadelphia, a Godfearer dedicates an ablution basin to the synagogue (App.1 iii). At Sardis another Godfearer makes a unspecified donation to the synagogue (App.1 vii-viii). An inscription from Tralles (App.1 xxii) refers to Capitolina, the Godfearer, who donated the *Torah* platform and who must have interacted with the synagogue or the Jewish community.²⁶⁷ A dedicatory inscription from Phocaea (App.1 xi), could also possibly belong to a Godfearer.

The nine foot high marble block from Aphrodisias (App.1 xvii, Plate VIIIa-c), dated to the third century AD, reveals the most information about Godfearers. It contains the names of Jews, proselytes and gentile Godfearers who had contributed to a memorial thought to be a soup kitchen for the community. Over half of the 130 names listed are

²⁶⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 76-77.

²⁶⁵ Hachlili, R., 1998, 307.

²⁶⁶ Trabilco, P.R., 1991, 147-148.

²⁶⁷ Williams, M., 1998, 168.

people described as *theosebeis* – Godfearers.²⁶⁸ From this is it clear that a wide range of people of every social level were drawn to the ways of the Jews in Aphrodisias. Among the professions of the Godfearers are fullers, artists, craftsmen, smiths, tradesmen and household slaves.

²⁶⁸ Levine, L.I., 1999, 1009; Williams, M.H., 1992, 297.

PART II. The Christians

II.1 The Emergence and Spread of Christianity in Asia Minor

The new Jewish sect that developed in Galilee under the teachings of Jesus Christ took on a different direction after his death c. AD 30. The church in Jerusalem continued to grow, despite the persecution by the Jews, who disliked the followers of Christ for two reasons. Firstly, the man called Jesus claimed that he was the Messiah, and the message he preached was blasphemous according to the Law. Secondly, this man who worked miracles and who was a good teacher attracted large crowds around him, arousing the attention of the Romans. The Jews were worried that the followers of this person would endanger their own position in Palestine.

When the Jewish authorities began to persecute the followers of Christ, they turned their proselytising efforts elsewhere. The day of Pentecost, the year Christ was crucified was perhaps the first time the Jews of the Diaspora encountered his followers. Jews from Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia had come to Jerusalem,²⁶⁹ and with the pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples, they heard them speak in their own tongues. According to Acts 2:41, three thousand people converted to the new faith. Although there is no concrete evidence to support the theory, among them must have been some of those Jews from Asia Minor, and these Jews presumably would have been the first to take the Gospel back to their provinces.²⁷⁰

The Scriptures, however, would seem to imply that the spread of Christianity in Asia Minor depended solely on the work of the Apostles. The earliest literary evidence for information on the development of Christianity in Asia Minor are the New Testament

²⁶⁹ Acts 2:9-10.

books, Galatians and Acts, dated to the mid-first century AD.²⁷¹ The prime mover behind the spread of the religion in this region was Saul.²⁷² Originally, Saul was a Pharisee, and among the Jews that were against the proto-Christians. When he initially appears in the texts of the Book of Acts, we see him consenting with Jews from Cilicia and Asia to the killing of the disciple Stephen (Acts 6:9, 8:1). Stoning was permitted by Jewish law but not approved by Roman law and thus the stoning of Stephen was a provocative act for a Roman citizen to engage in, but one that Saul did not mind undertaking. Yet although Roman law may have overlooked a few individual incidents of this kind, it did not allow persecution at a greater level and so Saul had to leave Jerusalem and find another area where he could follow his extremism with less likelihood of Roman interference.²⁷³

He turned his attention to Damascus, which paid allegiance to Rome as part of the Decapolis, but was not under the direct rule of Rome until after AD 106.²⁷⁴ That the Christians in Damascus lived in peace with the Jews at the time did not prevent him from going there to pursue his purpose.²⁷⁵ On his way to Damascus, however, Saul was converted through a vision in which he saw Christ; Mark Wilson suggests that this conversion took place before September AD 31.²⁷⁶ He remained in Damascus and then went to Arabia, only going to Jerusalem to meet the Apostles three years later.²⁷⁷ Soon after, his fervent preaching caused such problems among the Jews there that he was sent to proselytise elsewhere, to Tarsus specifically according to the Book of Acts, and to the provinces of Cilicia and Syria in general according to the Epistle to the Galatians.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁰ Wilson, M., 1999, 3.

²⁷¹ Mitchell, S., 1993, 3.

²⁷² Unless specifically needed so for consistency sake his more common name Paul will be used for after the period of his conversion.

²⁷³ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 42.

²⁷⁴ Millar, F., 1993, 408-409.

²⁷⁵ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 42-43.

²⁷⁶ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 48.

²⁷⁷ Galatians 1:17-18.

The martyrdom of Stephen had caused the church in Jerusalem to scatter. Some of the people travelled to Phoenecia and Cyprus, and then on to Antioch, where they preached to the Jews and the Gentiles.²⁷⁹ According to the Book of Acts, ten years later, Saul was called to Antioch by Barnabas, ready to partake in the great commission of the spread of the Gospel.²⁸⁰ However, (P)aul, writing to the Galatians, says he returned to Jerusalem 14 years later with Barnabas and Titus, before going to Antioch. Here he was recognised by James, Peter and John as an apostle to the Gentiles, just as Peter was an apostle to the Jews.²⁸¹ This clear separation in the mission of the spread of the Gospel also meant that (P)aul did not work under the jurisdiction of the church in Jerusalem.²⁸²

In AD 47, Paul set out from Seleucia Pieria with Barnabas and John on his first missionary journey (Map 4). During their time in Cyprus, a Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, converted to Christianity. It is believed that it is after his conversion that Saul latinised his *cognomen* as Paulus,²⁸³ as from this point on, we see him referred to only as Paul in New Testament literature. From Cyprus they sailed to Asia Minor, arriving at the port of Perge, where John left them and Paul and Barnabas travelled to Pisidian Antioch, the starting point of the mission in Asia Minor, where they arrived in AD 48.²⁸⁴

Why did Paul start with Pisidian Antioch? Mehmet Taşlıalan suggests that Sergius Paulus, converted by Paul in Cyprus, was from Pisidian Antioch, and he knew many Jews in the city that might also be interested in Christianity.²⁸⁵ From inscriptions at Rome it is understood that the family of the Sergii Pauli was prominent in senatorial society, and its members had held many important senatorial offices. In 25 BC Augustus had created the

²⁷⁸ Acts 9:30; Galatians 1:21.

²⁷⁹ Acts, 11:19-20.

²⁸⁰ Ramsay, W.M., 2001, 48; Acts 11:25-26.

²⁸¹ Galatians 2:7-9.

²⁸² Grant, R.M., 1990, 57.

²⁸³ Mitchell, S., 1993, 6.

colony *Colonia Caesarea Antiochia* in Pisidian Antioch, by bringing in veteran soldiers from two legions, along with their families,²⁸⁶ among them the family of the Sergii Pauli. Quite probably Sergius Paulus suggested Paul go to Pisidian Antioch, where there was a suitable body of potential converts, and gave him letters of introduction to help him.²⁸⁷

Mitchell suggests that Paul may have wanted to preach to the elite of Pisidian Antioch. The success of the new religion did not only depend on the number of converts but on the converts being of a prominent status.²⁸⁸ We know that the Jews of the Diaspora were protected in many ways and allowed to carry out their traditions. It may have been the protection that came through this freedom that attracted Paul. By the time Paul reached Pisidian Antioch, it had become the most significant Roman colony in Asia Minor.²⁸⁹ Latin gradually lost its importance and Greek was adopted as the usual epigraphic language by the end of the first century AD,²⁹⁰ and Greek was Paul's mother tongue.²⁹¹ Mitchell also comments that Paul may have been suffering from malaria and therefore had to move from the damp lowlands of Pamphylia to the airy highlands.²⁹² Yet while Paul could have chosen any number of cities in the highlands, he chose Pisidian Antioch, so this suggestion does not by itself clarify the matter.

According to Acts 13:16, Paul addressed the Jews of Pisidian Antioch, but he also hailed the Gentiles who worship God. These proselytes or Godfearers were not allowed into the synagogue and listened outside.²⁹³ However, on the following Sabbath when Paul

²⁸⁴ Acts 13:4-14.

²⁸⁵ Taşlıalan 1991, 52.

²⁸⁶ Mitchell & Waelkens 1998, 8; Wallace & Williams 1998, 190.

²⁸⁷ Mitchell, S., 1993, 6-7.

²⁸⁸ Mitchell, S., 1993, 7.

²⁸⁹ Wallace & Williams 1998, 190.

²⁹⁰ Levick 1967, 131.

²⁹¹ Hengel 1992, 38.

²⁹² Mitchell, S., 1993, 6.

²⁹³ Guignebert 1996, 219.

preached, “the whole city gathered.” – presumably in the theatre.²⁹⁴ Paul’s preaching worried the Jewish leaders who did not like the enthusiasm the gentiles of the city showed for Paul and Barnabas, and as a result he and Barnabas were expelled from the city.²⁹⁵

According to Goodman, the reason Paul and the disciples faced opposition at Pisidian Antioch and elsewhere in Asia Minor was the enthusiasm the Godfearers, associated with the synagogues, showed for the Christians, and that the Jews feared losing their proselytes. He also goes on to suggest that it may have been these Godfearers that later opened the door for the gentiles to embrace the new religion.²⁹⁶ In the Book of Acts they are a significant part of the congregation of the synagogues that Paul preaches to, as in Pisidian Antioch. Certainly, Godfearers were widespread in Asia Minor, as we learn from the inscriptions from Aphrodisias, Sardis, Tralles, Philadelphia and Phocaia. These inscriptions talk of them as *theosebeis*; in the book of Acts, Luke talks of them as *sebomenoi*, those who revered God, meaning essentially the same thing. These Godfearers, among whom were people of prominent status - including women - had not taken the full step of becoming Jews. Proselytes surrounded the synagogues in the Diaspora, much more so than in Palestine, and their knowledge of the *Septuagint* also prepared the way for understanding the Gospel, and the message preached by the Apostles.²⁹⁷

From Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium,²⁹⁸ where again they preached at the synagogue and aroused both curiosity and animosity. According to the Book of Acts, both Jews and Gentiles converted in this city. But eventually Paul and Barnabas’ bold preaching again caused problems, so much so that they had to flee the city

²⁹⁴ Acts 13:44.

²⁹⁵ Acts 13:50.

²⁹⁶ Goodman, M., 1997, 320; Feldman, L.H., 2001, 369.

²⁹⁷ Guignebert, C., 1996, 219, 222, 259-260; Mitchell, S., 1993, 31-32.

for their lives, and went to the cities of Lystra and Derbe to continue to preach.²⁹⁹ Following a miracle, in which a man who had been lame from birth was healed, the people of Lystra wanted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. As they in return tried to convince the people that they were only human, Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived and turned the crowd against Paul and Barnabas, to the point of stoning Paul and leaving him for dead.³⁰⁰

Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps after preaching in Derbe, having won a large number of disciples. They went back to Lystra and Iconium and Pisidian Antioch to encourage the new believers. Then on their way back to the coast they travelled through Pamphylia where, at Perge, they also preached the gospel. Finally they sailed from Attaleia back to Syrian Antioch, completing their first missionary journey.³⁰¹

A year or so later, in AD 50, Paul went back to southern Galatia, this time with Silas (Map 4). At Lystra he met Timothy, a young convert who had a Jewish mother and a Greek father. Taking him along with them they travelled through Galatia and Phrygia, and on to Troas, from where they sailed to Macedonia.³⁰² In spring AD 52 Paul travelled from Corinth to Ephesus. With him were Priscilla and Aquila, Jews that Paul had met in Corinth. Aquila was originally from Pontus, but had moved to Rome. When Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 49, he and Priscilla had moved to Corinth, where they converted to Christianity.³⁰³ Following Paul, they then moved to Ephesus. Paul left them in Ephesus and travelled to Syrian Antioch, which he used as a starting point for his third

²⁹⁸ Acts 13:51.

²⁹⁹ Acts 14:1-6.

³⁰⁰ Acts 14:8-20.

³⁰¹ Acts 14:21-26.

³⁰² Acts 16:1-8.

³⁰³ Acts 18:1-2.

journey into Galatia (Map 5).³⁰⁴ The Book of Acts does not offer any further information on the state of the churches in Galatia. From Galatia, Paul then went back to Ephesus, where he probably stayed from AD 53 to spring 55. Initially he was invited to speak at the synagogue, which he did for three months according to Acts 19:8. When he met with opposition, he moved to the hall of Tyrannus, where he preached for two years.³⁰⁵

It was during his time at Ephesus that Paul wrote many of his letters, such as the Epistles of 1st-2nd Corinthians, Philippians, Galatians and Philemon.³⁰⁶ However, it is through Romans chapter 16 that we gain the most information about the church at Ephesus and its followers.³⁰⁷ For example, in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, there was a house church. The first convert mentioned is a man named Epaenetus.³⁰⁸ Junia and Andronikos are mentioned as fellow prisoners of Paul, probably when he suffered imprisonment in Ephesus, during the winter of AD54/55.³⁰⁹ Altogether, Romans 16 gives us 26 names of Christians at Ephesus at this date. One is Semitic (Maria), nineteen are Greek, and six are Latin. Three of the Latin names belong to people of known Jewish origin, Priscilla, Aquila and Junia. Two of the Greek names are also of known Jews (Andronikos and Herodion). In addition, many women are among the people mentioned - Tryphaina, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, Maria, Priscilla and Junia. The fact that only five - possibly six if Maria is included - Jews are listed among the church of Ephesus indicates that the converts were mainly gentiles and Godfearers.³¹⁰

³⁰⁴ Acts 18:22-23.

³⁰⁵ Acts 19:8-10.

³⁰⁶ Koester, H., 1995a, 121-122.

³⁰⁷ This is Koester's interpretation due to the difference in style of Romans chapter 16 from the rest of the epistle. The mention of Aquila and Priscilla suggested that the letter may have been written to the Ephesians, Koester, H., 1995a, 122-123.

³⁰⁸ Romans 16:5. He was supposedly the first convert in the province of Asia..

³⁰⁹ Koester, H., 1995a, 122; 2. Corinthians 1:8.

³¹⁰ Koester, H., 1995a, 123. However Jews often did use Greek names, thus identification is difficult unless indicated otherwise.

Ephesus was probably the city where the first Christians faced the most opposition.³¹¹ Although many had initially received the teaching, not only did the Jews turn against them and report Paul and his companions to Jerusalem, which eventually led his trial in Rome,³¹² but also the gentile silversmiths rioted against them, gathering in the theatre to shout ‘Great is the Diana of the Ephesians!’ for two hours.³¹³ Initially the Jews had felt responsible for the Early Christians.³¹⁴ When travelling Apostles visited their communities they invited them to speak at their synagogues. In Asia Minor, this was the case at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Ephesus. However, each time the Jews became uncomfortable with their preaching and they got rid of the Apostles.³¹⁵ This was either because they found the teaching blasphemous, or because of the Apostles’ Jewish origin, for when active Christian proselytising took place among the gentile citizens, Rome blamed the Jewish community as a whole for any resulting trouble, which the orthodox Jews resented.³¹⁶

After travelling on to Macedonia, Paul returned to Jerusalem in order to arrive for the Passover. On the way back he sailed via Troas and Assos, and from there to Miletus, where he summoned the leaders of the church of Ephesus. This is the last time he saw them. Leaving Miletus, he sailed to Patara and then on to Phoenicia, before finally arriving in Jerusalem. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and after being tried by the Sanhedrin and charged for causing disruption and riots among the Jews, he was brought before Felix and Agrippa, who sent him to Rome to face trial before the emperor (AD 59). This journey

³¹¹ Acts 19:23-40.

³¹² Acts 21:27-29.

³¹³ Acts 19:23-29.

³¹⁴ Ferguson, E., 1988, 712-713.

³¹⁵ Acts 13:50, 14:2, 19:8.

³¹⁶ Mitchell, S., 1993, 9.

from Jerusalem to Rome was the last time recorded in the New Testament that he set foot in Asia Minor, at Myra on the coast of Lycia.³¹⁷

While at Rome, from AD 59 to the mid-60s Paul continued his relationships with the churches in Asia Minor via correspondence. The Epistles of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon were written around AD 61-62 to the churches of Ephesus and Colossae. The last letters he writes, 1st and 2nd Timothy, are to Timothy, who had become one of the church leaders at Ephesus. It is thought that Paul was executed under Nero in Rome, between AD 64-66.³¹⁸

While the best-known, Paul was not the only Apostle who directly communicated with the churches in Asia Minor. Other Apostles travelled to and contacted different communities. Sometimes they addressed the same issues of the faith, at other times they dealt with local situations. Peter, writing at the same time Paul was writing to Timothy, wrote two letters to the Christians in Asia Minor, 1st and 2nd Peter.³¹⁹ In 1st Peter 1:1 he addresses the Jews of Pontus, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Whether he actually visited these places is not known and it seems more likely that a messenger carried the epistles between these places. Outside of Asia the Anatolian provinces had few important cities, so it is possible to guess some of the ones this messenger visited. They probably included Sinope and Amisus in Pontus, and Caesarea Mazaca in Cappadocia. Then, depending on the route taken, he would pass through Tavium, Ancyra and Pessinus to Dorylaeum then on to Aezani before visiting the coastal cities of Asia; or via Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, then through the Maeander valley, arriving at the coast. From here he would then go north

³¹⁷ Acts 27:2, 5.

³¹⁸ Wilson, M., 1999, 7.

³¹⁹ For two main reasons there is an ongoing debate as to whether the two epistles were written by the same Peter. The first being that they are different in style and language, the second epistle written in simpler Greek. The second reason is that the First epistle is quoted by the Apostolic Fathers as Peters Epistle, where as the Second epistle is hardly ever mentioned. Tenney, M.C., 1987, 366-367.

to Nicea, Nicomedia and Chalcedon in Bithynia. The number of provinces addressed in the Epistles indicates that the Gospel was spreading fast in the 60's.³²⁰

Another disciple that wrote to the Christians in Asia Minor is John who wrote the Epistles 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, all written to Christians in Asia Minor, the latter epistle being especially addressed to Gaius at Ephesus.³²¹ These are thought to have been written in the 80s. It is uncertain if the same John wrote the last book of the New Testament, Revelation, addressed to the Seven Churches in Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea), as its language and theology is quite different from the epistles. This is thought to be written from Patmos, where John was in exile. Its date is still debated. There are internal indications of an earlier date of c.69, which if accepted would explain why the language is simpler and more laboured compared to the Epistles, because John was still mastering his Greek.³²² But generally a later date of the mid-90's is accepted.³²³ And for this reason the difference in style and language between the Epistles and Revelation remain as a source for debate.

One of the important aspects of Paul's ministry was his interaction with people of higher ranks in the society; we learn of the presence of independent women, owners of trade enterprises and patronesses,³²⁴ Asiarchs at Ephesus,³²⁵ the governor of Cyprus,³²⁶ and 'first' men at Athens.³²⁷ If one accepts that Paul went to Pisidian Antioch, his first stop in Asia Minor, (probably) on the advice of Sergius Paulus, it is easier to understand the importance of these people in the spread of the Gospel, especially among the gentiles.³²⁸

³²⁰ Wilson, M., 1999, 8.

³²¹ Koester, H., 1995a, 132.

³²² Tenney, M.C., 1987, 383.

³²³ Wilson, M., 1999, 8; Koester, H., 1995a, 132.

³²⁴ At Philippi, Lydia from Thyateira and Phoebe from Corinth, Acts 16:14, Romans 16:1.

³²⁵ Acts 19:31.

³²⁶ Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7.

³²⁷ Areopagus, 'first-man of Malta' Acts 17:34.

³²⁸ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 293-294.

The Apostles in Asia Minor, evidently worked diligently among these groups. If they were not able to travel they wrote letters. They raised disciples where they started churches, so that these people could take over when they left. With this in mind, we might look a little less sceptically at Paul's words: '...so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.'³²⁹

Asia Minor, which may have seemed just like another area within the empire was to become a key place in the spread of the Gospel. The diversity of the cities, the peoples, all under the protection of Rome, would prove to be fruitful ground for a message that preached 'Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth...Blessed are the pure in the heart, for they will see God...Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'.³³⁰ And as will be seen, not only did the people of Asia Minor receive the preaching of the Apostles, but they also took their part in the Great Commandment and 'went and made disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded to them.'³³¹

³²⁹ Acts 19:10.

³³⁰ Matthew 5:3-10.

II.2 The Spread of Christianity and Roman, Jewish and Individual

Responses

Unlike the other ‘mystery religions’, such as Mithraism, that were also a personal religious choice to fill the spiritual vacuum of the second and third century Roman Empire, there was no social advantage to be gained or confirmed in Roman society by becoming a Christian.³³² Yet it attracted and even reached out to the poorest, uneducated people.³³³ Christianity offered equality in a social structure of inequality and it was based exclusively on the foundation of love, to people of every status, of every shortcoming.³³⁴ The pagan gods did not offer anything of this nature. In this way, Christianity brought a whole new dynamic of its own, not one that was adapted to the pagan rituals, or rigidly followed the Old Testament, but something new. “And they will know we are Christians by our love” was their motto. The early Christians brought ideals that were to become the foundation of religious security for many centuries.³³⁵

Just as in Judaism, the church (as a people) also had a strong component of women of important status. In Asia Minor we have evidence of Thecla, who followed Paul on some of his travels, having heard him preach in Iconium. According to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, she never married, was adopted by a rich widow named Trifina³³⁶ and was subjected to much persecution for her beliefs which she was miraculously rescued from each time.³³⁷ There were also many widows among the early Christians, for two reasons. Firstly, women who married below their rank lost their legal privileges and status, and there were few men of high status among the Christians, so Christian women preferred to

³³¹ Rephrased from Matthew 28:19-20.

³³² Hornblower, S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 1017.

³³³ MacMullen, R., 1984, 36-37.

³³⁴ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 335.

³³⁵ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 22.

³³⁶ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 8.2

remain unmarried rather than marrying a non-Christian. Secondly, widowhood was not publicly acceptable, and often young women were encouraged if not forced by the law to remarry, but in the church these women found respect and honour, and according to the teachings of the New Testament were well taken care of.³³⁸ Likewise, women of a lower class suddenly had something they could be a part of and learn from. These women presumably passed on what they learned to their children and husbands, and to their households.³³⁹

Several studies have revealed that practising Christians tended to be dispersed rather than being concentrated in an area.³⁴⁰ Christianity was established in many a city with different backgrounds and traditions. The evidence from Asia Minor is proof of this diversity, with Christianity existing alongside the glorious temples of cities like Ephesus and Pergamum, and also in rural Phrygia, where superstitious beliefs in gods were dominant.³⁴¹

According to Eusebius, Christianity spread in three stages, the first beginning at the time of the Apostles; the second around 180, towards the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and the last after the Edict of Milan.³⁴² There were various factors that affected the spread of Christianity and all of them were related to how Rome treated the Christians. This part will also look at the spread of Christianity and interaction with the Roman government in these stages, specifically looking at the first and second, and concluding with the beginning of the third stage.

³³⁷ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, 5.15, 9.13, 11.17.

³³⁸ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 308-309.

³³⁹ MacMullen, R., 1984, 39.

³⁴⁰ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 272.

³⁴¹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 276.

³⁴² Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.37, 5.5, 10.3.

The New Testament is the earliest literary source to record the lives of the proto-Christians and the first stage of its spread.³⁴³ From it we get an indication of how Christians were treated by the Roman government. However it is difficult to paint a coherent picture. Most of the time, during the establishment of the religion, they were somewhat protected by the empire. Unlike the Zealots of Judaea who fervently opposed Roman rule, this Judaic sect inspired through Christ's preaching and the preaching of his followers did not pose an obvious political threat, and thus the empire was not concerned.³⁴⁴

Contact with Jews obviously was a significant vehicle of the spread of Christianity during this time. Feldman suggests that Christianity, initially, spread well among Jews in Asia Minor because they had so little contact with Palestine and were somewhat Hellenised.³⁴⁵ That divergences in observance and practice were arising between Jewish and Christian communities was recognised by Christians in the AD 50s. Problems that had arisen in Antioch between the Jewish Christians and the gentile Christians led to the meeting in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15, where the Jerusalem Decree was formulated in an attempt to clarify core issues within Christianity. According to the creed, Christians were to abstain from meat offered to idols, from blood, from meat not drained (in keeping with Jewish customs) and from fornication.³⁴⁶ Yet, although this decree clarified certain issues where Judaism and Christianity overlapped in the eyes of the Christians, it would not have made an impression on the Diaspora Jews and the Roman Empire until a later date.

³⁴³ As the emergence of Christianity in Asia Minor was studied in the previous chapter, interaction with Jews and the Roman government will be looked at in this part.

³⁴⁴ Sordi, M., 1986, 23.

³⁴⁵ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 72-73.

³⁴⁶ Grant, R.M. 1990, 58; Acts 15.

By AD 64, however, proto-Christians may have become distinct enough from Judaism to provide a scapegoat for other issues. In Tacitus' *Annals*,³⁴⁷ there is mention of Nero blaming the great fire in Rome in AD 64 on the Christians. The Christians that were arrested were either killed by dogs or they were crucified or burnt on stakes as torches to light up the night. Mattingly argues that Tacitus is almost always correct but as Tacitus really disliked Nero he therefore would have written about him in a biased manner.³⁴⁸ According to Suetonius, however, Nero did not accuse the Christians of the fire, but inflicted punishment on them for the capital offence of not paying homage to the pagan gods, mentioning that they were 'a sect with mysterious belief'.³⁴⁹ Be that as it may, there is little proof from either source that Nero initiated an official pogrom against the Christians.

Imperial tolerance of Christianity was evidently a personal matter. Louth makes the point that the 'persecutions' of both Nero and Domitian were limited to Rome itself.³⁵⁰ As we have seen, during the reign of Domitian, for example, a tax was imposed on those who were circumcised, including those who were not 'Jewish' but were still circumcised. Among these people were probably Jews who were now Christians and/or gentiles that had converted to Christianity as a Judaic sect. Any person who abstained from pork and was against idolatry – whether Jew or Christian - would have been considered as one living according to the 'Jewish ways,' and thereby subject to this tax.³⁵¹ According to Sordi, this is when Christianity officially became an 'illegal religion', as it did not claim to be Judaic but also did not conform to the ways of the Roman polytheism.³⁵² However, we only have evidence of individual cases from Rome, such as the banishment of Domitilla, whom some

³⁴⁷ Tacitus, *Annals* XV. 44.

³⁴⁸ Mattingly, H., 1990, 211-213.

³⁴⁹ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars, VI Nero*, 16.

³⁵⁰ Louth, A., 1989, xxvii.

³⁵¹ Thompson, L.A., 1982, 340.

³⁵² Sordi, M., 1986, 53.

scholars believe must have been a Christian, as she was accused of ‘atheism.’³⁵³ Others think she may have been a ‘Godfearer.’³⁵⁴ But as indicated above and as Southern points out, Judaism and Christianity were scarcely distinguishable to the Romans.³⁵⁵

According to MacMullen, after Paul’s missionary work, the church did not proselytise in an organised way.³⁵⁶ By the end of the first century the Church (*ekklesia*) had developed its own identity with a bishop leading the community.³⁵⁷ The spread was now taking root among the gentiles, through travellers, trade, Roman troops and Godfearers (Map 6, 7).³⁵⁸ Many scholars believe that the spread of Christianity to the countryside took place between AD 250 – 310.³⁵⁹ Funerary monuments from inland Phrygia, which will be discussed, provide us with material evidence of Christianity as an essentially rural phenomenon at this period. Yet literary evidence reveals that this took place at an earlier date. It would seem that although Christians did not openly proselytise during the period after the Apostles, there were individuals, teachers and bishops who travelled through Asia Minor, who were an important element in the spread of Christianity. Some moved from city to city, others ventured out into the countryside. Another factor that may have affected the spread of Christianity in the rural parts of Asia Minor was that the communities perhaps heard sermons in their own dialects. If we are able to take as fact what the Book of Acts reports about all people speaking in different languages on the day of Pentecost, we might gain a better understanding of the diversity of the Roman empire, and the number of languages spoken within its borders. Latin was the official language of Rome, although Greek was predominant in the eastern provinces. In Asia Minor, many of the regions had their own indigenous languages, such as ‘Phrygian’, ‘Cappadocian’, ‘Galatian’ and

³⁵³ Bennett, J., 2001, 105; Sordi, M., 1986, 44; Southern, P., 1997, 115.

³⁵⁴ Ferguson, E., 1988, 273.

³⁵⁵ Southern, P., 1997, 115.

³⁵⁶ MacMullen, R., 1984, 34.

³⁵⁷ Goodman, M., 1997, 322.

³⁵⁸ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 280.

‘Isaurian’.³⁶⁰ The ‘Lyconian’ language is referred to in Acts 14:11. While we do not have any evidence for the Scriptures being translated into the local languages,³⁶¹ Christianity spread into the inner parts of these regions. From the letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who wrote in the early second century from Rome, we learn of churches in Pisidian Antioch, Hierapolis, Colossae, Tralles and Magnesia ad Maeandrum, as he had visited them on his way from Syrian Antioch to Rome, where he would face trial and was probably executed between AD 107-110.³⁶²

One of the problems the Christians caused in Asia Minor was with the imperial religious economy. Both Pliny,³⁶³ who was sent by Trajan to inspect the finances of Asia Minor, and later Granianus, proconsul of Asia during the reign of Hadrian, complain that the taxes paid to the temples of the imperial cult were decreasing due to the spread of Christianity.³⁶⁴ Governors often consulted the emperor on how to deal with certain situations in the provinces they controlled. It seems logical however, that the emperor would not be able to reply to all these petitions, yet in the case of Pliny’s questions, Trajan saw fit to do so,³⁶⁵ indicating that the case must have been significant.

The number of Christians of every rank, age and both sexes, from towns, villages and countryside worried Pliny enough to take firm action against them.³⁶⁶ Pliny had been executing those that persisted in being Christians even though he had never been present at such a trial. The problem was that although these Christians led a blameless life, they did not worship the emperor. Interpreting the verse ‘God’s kingdom among us’ (Luke 17:21) Christians believed they were citizens of a better kingdom. This and not worshipping the

³⁵⁹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 287

³⁶⁰ Mitchell, S., 1993, 172.

³⁶¹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 283.

³⁶² Ignatius, *Epistles*, Harvey, S.A., 2000, 40.

³⁶³ Pliny, *Epistles* X.96.9.

³⁶⁴ Bickerman, E., 1986, 157.

emperor gave the government enough ground to accuse the Christians of civil disobedience.³⁶⁷ On the other hand, Christians were taught to respect the authorities, ‘to give Caesar his due and God his due’ (Mark 12:17) They prayed for the emperor, and honoured him. They just placed him under God. So essentially Christians tried to be good citizens.³⁶⁸ In the case of Bithynian Christians, Roman citizens charged with membership of the religion were sent to either Amisus or Amastris by Pliny, to face further trial. Those that denied their faith, swore by the gods and honoured the emperor were discharged.³⁶⁹ In his reply, Trajan approves Pliny’s actions but specifies that Christians are not to be sought out and that those anonymously accused of being Christians should not be persecuted although they were to be punished when proven guilty.³⁷⁰

There is no copy of the letter of petition sent by Granianus to Hadrian c. AD 124/125, although Hadrian’s reply indicates that the *Koine* of Asia had requested him to do something about the Christians. Hadrian’s reply to Fundanus, the governor who succeeded Granianus, addresses the concerns of the Commonality, and refuses the persecution of Christians by the people of Asia.³⁷¹ Imperial administration and peace came first, and violence was to be avoided at all costs.³⁷² Despite petitions made by political bodies, the crimes of the accused Christians had to be proved before a court, and sentences carried out accordingly - otherwise claims were invalid.³⁷³

It is unclear what Hadrian’s own views on Christianity were. According to the *Historiae Augusta*

³⁶⁵ Bickerman, E., 1986, 171.

³⁶⁶ Pliny, *Epistles* X.96.9.

³⁶⁷ Ferguson, E., 1999, 80.

³⁶⁸ Ferguson, E., 1999, 80.

³⁶⁹ Pliny, *Epistles* X.96.3-5.

³⁷⁰ Pliny, *Epistles* X.97.2.

³⁷¹ According to Bickerman, Eusebius and Justin, our original sources each made slight changes to them to show that the emperors were in the favour of the Christians. Bickerman, E., 1986, 154.

³⁷² Bickerman, E., 1986, 158-162; Ferguson, E., 1988, 714.

...Hadrian ordered a temple without an image to be built in every city, and because these temples, built by him for this intention (as a temple for Christ), so they say, are dedicated to no particular deity, they are called today merely Hadrian's temples. (*Historiae Augusta, Severus Alexander*, 43.6)

It is also thought that he was planning to legalise Christianity by bringing Christ into the Roman Pantheon. The fact that they had kept out of the Bar Kochba revolt was to their advantage.³⁷⁴

After the period of the first apostles, we see a greater gap developing between the Christians and the Jews. With the destruction of the Temple and then banishment from Jerusalem the spread of Christianity took on a new direction, almost entirely separated from the synagogue, the crux of Jewish life.³⁷⁵ Yet it would seem that an undercurrent of mutual dislike remained, to such an extent that when the Romans began to persecute the Christians it suited the Jews to go along with it.³⁷⁶ As the number of Christian converts among gentiles increased, and the span of time grew from the crucifixion of Christ, the Christians began to lose interest in the Jews and thus the gap between the two communities increased even more.³⁷⁷ According to Goodman, as this separation became distinct in the second century, the Jews no longer persecuted the Christians as much as the Pagans did. The martyrdom of Polycarp, bishop of the church at Smyrna for over half a century in c. AD 150, however, reveals otherwise.³⁷⁸

When this had been said by the herald, (that Polycarp had confessed that he was a Christian), the multitude of heathen and Jews living in Smyrna cried out with uncontrollable wrath and a loud shout, 'This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the

³⁷³ Bickerman, E., 1986, 168, 171.

³⁷⁴ Sordi, M., 1986, 67.

³⁷⁵ White, L.M., 1990, 85.

³⁷⁶ Goodman, M., 1997, 325.

³⁷⁷ Goodman, M., 1997, 326.

Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teaches many neither to offer sacrifice nor to worship (to the gods).’ And when they said this, they cried and asked Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion on Polycarp. But he said, he could not legally do this, since he had closed the Sports (the days of the animal games). Then they found it good to cry out with one mind that he should burn Polycarp alive...These things then happened with so great speed, quicker than it takes to tell, and the crowd came together immediately, and prepared wood and faggots from the work-shops and baths and the Jews were extremely zealous, as is their custom, in assisting at this. (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* XII.1-XIII.1)³⁷⁹

One of the most important rulings towards the Christians in the Antonine period was that they were not to be sought out. From Eusebius and other authors we know that the public or even local government did not pay heed to this, as the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* reveals.³⁸⁰ As a result, according to Eusebius, Antoninus Pius issued an edict of inflicting punishment on those who did search out the Christians.³⁸¹

At the same time he issued an edict that gave back the Jews their privileges. This and the increase in public hostility, controlled with difficulty by the government, caused Christians to become attracted to Judaism. At this time this was one of the main obstacles in the spread of Christianity. According to Lane-Fox, in the second half of the second century the Romans distinguished Christians from Jews and allowed the Christians to be persecuted, while the Jews remained under any protection that they had already attained. The banishment from Jerusalem and the failure of the Jewish Wars had pushed Christianity even further away from Judaism, as it no longer had ties with the well formed society there.³⁸² The wars had also changed Judaism’s status, in that it no longer was a political threat to Rome. The fact that Jews were not persecuted and were an established entity

³⁷⁸ Goodman, M., 1997, 328; Mitchell, S., 1993, 37.

³⁷⁹ *The Apostolic Fathers II*.

³⁸⁰ Polycarp was actively sought out in the countryside around Smyrna, where he was in hiding, and then burnt at the stake when caught and having confessed he was a Christian. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

³⁸¹ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 4.13.

within the empire attracted Christians, whereas very few Jews were attracted to Christianity.³⁸³ In Asia Minor especially the reason behind this was the fact that the Jews had many more privileges than the Christians until AD 313, and in line with evidence given earlier, the Jews had prominent places in the city councils and government offices and the synagogue could protect them from persecution.³⁸⁴ However, it would seem that this attraction posed a problem at a much earlier date. In Revelation, John talks of the Jews in Smyrna and Pergamum and warns the churches.³⁸⁵ Later, the Apostolic fathers, such as Ignatius, warned the Christians in Magnesia and Philadelphia against the Jews.³⁸⁶ It would seem that the problem persisted.

Another factor that affected the spread of Christianity was that the increase of martyrdoms in theatres and arenas. This increased the level of public advertisement for the faith.³⁸⁷ Christians believed that the death of one would lead to the conversion of many. And it supposedly did. This was the ‘practical side’ to martyrdom referred to by Ferguson.³⁸⁸ Thus, martyrdom was considered by many a joy and a privilege.³⁸⁹ Yet while martyrdoms occurred, they were far apart and quickly over, and we might question how real the effect was.³⁹⁰

MacMullen reviews how Christianity managed to spread when there was obviously a high number of impostors carrying out miracles. He concludes that non-Christians were unable to read Christian writings and assess the truth of the word preached as there was no

³⁸² Cary, M. & H.H. Scullard, 1994, 484.

³⁸³ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 319.

³⁸⁴ Feldman, L.H., 2001, 371.

³⁸⁵ Revelation 2:9, 14-15.

³⁸⁶ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians* VIII.1, *Epistle to the Philadelphians* VI.1.

³⁸⁷ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 315.

³⁸⁸ Ferguson, E., 1999, 270.

³⁸⁹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 316.

³⁹⁰ MacMullen, R., 1984, 33.

canonical New Testament at the time.³⁹¹ He also concludes that to avoid unwelcome attention, the Christians did not openly proselytise between AD 100 and 312 in synagogues, but preferred individual interaction.³⁹² Thus they spread the gospel by interacting with individual gentiles around them at all times - in the forum, baths, inns, shops, trade, farming, army and even local councils.³⁹³ Through such individual contact with their neighbours and co-workers, the religion spread the way it did, into households of all ranks, from teacher to student, from parent to child.³⁹⁴ Even so, quite how this individual interaction occurred is uncertain as MacMullen believes that Christians did not marry non-Christians, and were wary of their relationships with their neighbours, who might label them as traitors (based on what we know from Pliny). In addition, they did not join in many public celebrations, as some sort of ritual sacrifice would be a part of the event,³⁹⁵ further reducing the chances of individual contact with gentiles.

Because of the lack of a canonical scripture, and its isolated and individualised development, early Christianity witnessed the birth of several sub-sects. Perhaps the most significant for Asia Minor was Montanism. Formed by Montanus in c. AD 177, this sect differed from the mainstream Christians in that they believed that the Holy Spirit actively spoke to them, guiding individuals with their lives, and that martyrdom was better than paying any sort of allegiance to Rome. Women had a prominent role in the development of the sect. It spread among many, especially rich peasants that worked for imperial or private land. Many of the inscriptions in Phrygia from the mid-second century onwards belong to the Montanists.³⁹⁶ Although it perhaps originated as a local assimilation of

³⁹¹ MacMullen, R., 1984, 25.

³⁹² MacMullen, R., 1984, 34-35.

³⁹³ MacMullen, R., 1984, 40.

³⁹⁴ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 311-312.

³⁹⁵ MacMullen, R., 1984, 35.

³⁹⁶ Mitchell, S., 1993, 39-40.

Christianity and Phrygian cults, it was not limited to the borders of Phrygia, but spread as far as North Africa.³⁹⁷

During the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180), localised intolerance towards Christians seems to have increased. The persistence of the Montanists in refusing military office added to the dislike because the empire was in great need of recruits.³⁹⁸ Criminals were sold cheap for gladiator games, and among them were Christians whom were arrested and blamed for ‘disasters’. Christians in Philadelphia, for example, were sought out and taken to Smyrna to be martyred.³⁹⁹ It is during the reign of Marcus Aurelius that the first anti-Christian works appear by Lucian, writing around 165, and Celsus around 178. However, only excerpts of these works have survived, in the writings of Origen. Lucian was a travelling cynic philosopher who wrote about all he saw, including Christians.⁴⁰⁰ Yet it is Celsus’s ‘The True Word’ that indicates a low opinion of Jews or Christians, whom he calls small minded, mainly because they were not patriotic to Rome. He attacks Christianity as being a secretive community, joined together by oaths, thus making it illegal. In keeping with this was the fact that Christians would not join the community celebrations or assume any civic responsibility. Finally he claims that there was no difference whatsoever between Judaism and Christianity, Christians were apostate Jews, who just interpreted the Old Testament in a different way.⁴⁰¹

Yet this intolerance was not adopted as a State doctrine. Towards the end of Marcus Aurelius’s reign Christians were encouraged to take part in civic life. During the reign of his successor Commodus we see that Christians begin to take up offices and,

³⁹⁷ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 405-406.

³⁹⁸ Sordi, M., 1986, 72.

³⁹⁹ Ferguson, E., 1988, 714.

⁴⁰⁰ Cary, M. & H.H. Scullard, 1994, 480.

⁴⁰¹ Frend, W.H., 1988a, 54.

according to Sordi, the church becomes a recognised ecclesiastical establishment.⁴⁰² This change in the attitude of Rome and the Christians would seem to coincide with Eusebius' second stage in the growth of Christianity.

Even so it would appear that localised resistance towards the new religion grew despite the level of official tolerance. Septimus Severus, for example, is said to have banned Christian proselytising, and according to Eusebius the church faced persecution during his reign.⁴⁰³ Yet Sordi believes that this was not a systematic or widespread ban, for both Jews and Christians were favoured by Septimus, to the extent that no edicts were issued against either community.⁴⁰⁴

From 202/203 onwards the number of Christians working in public offices greatly increased. They had realised that by not taking part in public life they were jeopardising their faith.⁴⁰⁵ Christians were also among the people to receive citizenship with Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* of AD 212. According to Frend, the aim of this was not only to give almost everyone Roman citizenship, making them liable to taxation, but to bring everyone under the Roman pantheon. Eventually, this was to cause serious problems for Christians, for now the question of loyalty, which was based on citizenship as well as paying homage to the emperor, was to become even more of an issue.⁴⁰⁶

That said, Elegabalus, who introduced the concept of *Sol Invictus*, the eastern sun god to Rome,⁴⁰⁷ also made room for the God of the Jews and the Christians. His successor

⁴⁰² Sordi, M., 1986, 74-75.

⁴⁰³ Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 6.1.

⁴⁰⁴ Sordi, M., 1986, 79-80, 84.

⁴⁰⁵ Sordi, M., 1986, 85.

⁴⁰⁶ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 108.

⁴⁰⁷ Hornblower, S. & A.Spawforth, 1996, 1421.

Alexander Severus, was even more pro-Jewish and pro-Christian, applying Christian phrases to the Roman Empire. It is said that

He also wished to build a temple to Christ and give him a place among the gods-
...Alexander, however, was prevented from carrying out his purpose, because those who examined the sacred victims ascertained that if he did, all men would become Christians and the other temples would of necessity be abandoned. (*Historiae Augusta, Severus Alexander*, 43.6-7)

By AD 230, therefore, Christianity was being openly practised, for the aim of the later Severan emperors was to bring all the gods together. Inscriptions from Asia Minor of this period are evidence to this openness.⁴⁰⁸ Other evidence is the activity of men such as Gregory the Wonderworker (AD c.210-270). From Pontus, he was trained in Roman law. His studies led him to Beirut where he met Origen and became his pupil for eight years, but unlike him did not interact with the Jews. On his return to Neocaesarea, he was made a community leader and bishop. He had a great reputation for miraculous powers, not only in his own city but also in the neighbouring district. Apart from this he wrote on what he learnt from Origen, the most important of his work being the letters he wrote to Origen. Although there are many works attested to Gregory the Wonderworker, most of the works' authorship has not been proved. His ideas on the 'pollution and purity' of society were to become the foundations for the understanding of what was pure and holy and what was not for the Eastern Church. Some of his writings are in line with Origen's, however others seem to be his own interpretations and misunderstandings of Scripture. One important factor of Gregory's writings is his commentaries on the Old Testament.⁴⁰⁹ There were

⁴⁰⁸ Sordi, M., 1986, 87-89.

⁴⁰⁹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 519,-522, 543; Mitchell, S., 1993, 53-54.

probably many like him who worked such miracles, and word of this must have spread around, thus attracting more converts.⁴¹⁰

The growth of early Christianity reached an apogee in AD 244, with the first openly Christian Emperor, Philip the Arab. By this time Christians had become greatly involved in public offices, but now conservative pagans began to take action against them with popular support. The policies of the empire were based on its official pantheon, and many Romans did not want their state to become Christian.⁴¹¹ As soon as the pagan, Decius came to power, therefore, concerted action against Christians began.⁴¹² His short reign (AD 249-251) was a period of extreme crisis, with natural disasters, civil war, plagues and barbarian raids.⁴¹³ In particular the Aegean region had been struck by an earthquake, and Decius came to the conclusion that the gods were angry with Rome, and especially with those who had not been practising the imperial cult, notably the Christians.⁴¹⁴ However it is not entirely clear whether Decius wanted to re-activate the worship of the gods or whether this act was directly aimed at destroying the Christians. Edicts were issued for Christians to be pursued and it became impossible for them to remain hidden.⁴¹⁵ Initially, the leaders of the Church were tried for disloyalty, and many martyred.⁴¹⁶ Among these was Pionius, bishop of Smyrna, who was martyred in AD 250, like Polycarp with an audience of Greeks, Jews and women.⁴¹⁷

As they came (Pionius and his fellow-Christians) into the agora (of Smyrna), by the eastern stoa and the double gate, the whole agora and the upper storeys of the porches were packed

⁴¹⁰ MacMullen, R., 1984, 34

⁴¹¹ Sordi, M., 1986, 109.

⁴¹² Sordi, M., 1986, 96,99.

⁴¹³ Feldman, L.H., 1993, 363.

⁴¹⁴ Ferguson, E., 1988, 108.

⁴¹⁵ Sordi, M., 1986, 104.

⁴¹⁶ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 109.

⁴¹⁷ Mitchell, S., 1993, 36.

full with Greek and Jews and women. For they were on holiday because it was a Great Sabbath ... (*Martyrdom of Pionius*, 3.6)⁴¹⁸

Then, in the summer of 250, everyone was ordered to offer sacrifices to the gods under the direct inspection of state officials. Those who refused had their property taken away, and were either imprisoned, tortured or killed. This shook the church greatly. It lost many members, who chose apostasy rather than be martyrdom.⁴¹⁹ The persecution was extremely organised and extensive, yet in the event, only the leading Christians were actively pursued, mainly because the prisons could not cater for the large number of those to be imprisoned indefinitely.⁴²⁰

The persecution stopped between 253-257, perhaps because of the invading Goths, Franks and Alemanni in the west and the Persians in the east, and the need for military manpower to resist these. However, once Valerian pushed these invaders back, the persecution resumed, more severely than before.⁴²¹ First, all Christians were forbidden to conduct services or go to their cemeteries.⁴²² Then, in 258, Valerian decreed that any senators, Roman knights, and respectable women who persisted in their Christian faith, were to be punished with the confiscation of their property.⁴²³ Also, bishops, presbyters and deacons were to be punished with execution. The aim was to leave the church without its leaders and support of the upper class and, according to Christian sources, those involved with the job made sure no one was overlooked.⁴²⁴ Apostasy was not sufficient to

⁴¹⁸ Quoted from Williams, M.H., 1998, 63, II.139, who quotes from Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, no. 10.

⁴¹⁹ Ferguson, E., 1988, 211, 259; Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 110.

⁴²⁰ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 111.

⁴²¹ Ferguson, E., 1988, 715; Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 115.

⁴²² Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 116.

⁴²³ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 302; Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 117.

⁴²⁴ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 117.

protect oneself from penalty. The edict was important because its specific nature indicated that the Romans now saw Christianity as a specific faith separate from Judaism.⁴²⁵

During the reign of Gallienus (AD 260-268), comparative peace returned to the Roman Empire. He realised that Christianity was strong in the eastern provinces, and that the Roman Empire was not going to gain the support of the Christians against the Persians and barbarians through persecution. The size of the Christian community in the empire could no longer be ignored. The church was given back its property,⁴²⁶ and Christians were allowed to use their cemeteries again, having been banned from them by Valerian.⁴²⁷ This was Christianity's first victory, with regard to official tolerance, if not formal approval.

The church now redefined itself and became stronger. As many believers had succumbed to apostasy, the proportion of those in the church who were nominal Christians, who shunned martyrdom and preferred wealth and position, had substantially decreased, meaning that those who were left were the ones who were strongly loyal to the faith.⁴²⁸ Refusal to partake in public sacrifice was still punished according to Roman and provincial law, but Frend observes that 'the Church had now established itself as a political and religious force to be reckoned with.'⁴²⁹ During this period the number of Christians who held government office again increased. By the reign of Diocletian there were Christians in the army, and in important positions in the government. Most managed to avoid the ritual of sacrifices, but some were martyred when they refused to carry out this act.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁵ Sordi, M., 1986, 111, 115.

⁴²⁶ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 117; Ferguson, E., 1988, 716.

⁴²⁷ Gibson, E., 1978, 139.

⁴²⁸ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 107.

⁴²⁹ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 119.

⁴³⁰ Ferguson, E., 1999, 82.

Churches also became conspicuous in the urban fabric, if not necessarily entirely replacing the house-churches of proto-Christians.⁴³¹

The first nineteen years of the reign of Diocletian were occupied with protecting the empire from outside invaders. During this period the church became stronger and stronger. At a time when people had been sending recruits to the army for decades and were subject to heavy taxes and there was a growing sense of social justice, the church became a centre of refuge and comfort, something the pagan religions had not been able to offer. Christianity spread to the rural areas at a greater rate.⁴³² Indeed, the church began to fill in the social gaps between the State and the imperial cult. Churches were by now founded all around the Mediterranean region (Map 8). Leadership within the Church was well established. However, disagreements on doctrine were increasing more and more, as official tolerance brought different problems along with it.⁴³³

Given an evidently high level of tolerance in the early years of Diocletian's reign the Great Persecution that began in on 23 February AD 303 at Nicomedia, came as a total shock to the church. Diocletian was determined to restore the strength of the Roman Empire, and restoring traditional values and unity was part of this policy.⁴³⁴ Disloyalty and atheism would not be tolerated, and we learn that a few incidents in the army resulted in the banishment of Christians from the army.⁴³⁵ Nicomedia was the home of the imperial court and as the new capital of the empire in the East had undergone major building and remodelling.⁴³⁶ According to Eusebius, Diocletian and his heir, Galerius, had become infuriated at the number of Christians there. Galerius had a strong hatred for the Christians

⁴³¹ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 119.

⁴³² Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 119-121.

⁴³³ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 123, 126.

⁴³⁴ Treadgold, W., 1997, 25.

⁴³⁵ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 128.

⁴³⁶ Foss, C., 1996, 2.

and when a sacrifice was annulled because a court official crossed himself during the offering, he decided to take action against them.⁴³⁷ The result was a series of edicts. According to the first, all copies of Scripture were to be burnt, structural churches destroyed, and Christian meetings forbidden. The honorary titles and positions of Christians were taken away, exposing them to torture. In a second edict, which may have been a result of the palace in Nicomedia burning, which the Christians were accused of,⁴³⁸ all bishops and clergymen were to be arrested, but this became problematic, as just as with the persecution under Decius, the prisons could not hold so many long-term prisoners. In order to solve this problem, a third edict was issued, allowing clergy who apostatised to be freed, and slowly the prisons began to empty. During this persecution, the general mass of Christians, especially in the West, were not greatly affected, until 304 when Diocletian and Galerius ordered a day of general sacrifice in the whole empire, except for the Jews. Now, no one was able to escape the persecution.⁴³⁹

In 311, however, after continuing and supporting the persecution, Galerius, now emperor in the East, issued an edict that brought an end to the Great Persecution. Allegedly he had fallen ill, and decided that Christians could follow their faith as they had not been guilty of worshipping their God but had conformed to the edicts issued by Diocletian.⁴⁴⁰ He also felt that if they prayed to their God for his health he might get better.⁴⁴¹ The Christians were allowed to rebuild their churches.⁴⁴² Although persecution briefly resumed under the reign of Maximinius between 312-313, it seems to have been localised.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁷ Cornell, T. & J. Matthews, 1982, 178.

⁴³⁸ Treadgold, W., 1997, 25.

⁴³⁹ Ferguson, E., 1988, 263; Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 129-130; Treadgold, W., 1997, 25.

⁴⁴⁰ Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 134.

⁴⁴¹ Cornell, T. & J. Matthews, 1982, 179.

⁴⁴² Ferguson, E., 1988, 359.

It may be that the Great Persecution greatly spread knowledge about Christianity. In the previous century only its heroic martyrs were heard of, but as a result of the persecution, Romans came to understand more about the ethics and non-political stand of Christianity.⁴⁴⁴ The increase in written material by Christians during the Great Persecution caused Neo-Platonist authors, such as Philostratus and Porphyry, to question the necessity of blood sacrifices.⁴⁴⁵ Christianity's high moral and ethical standards began to attract the educated provincial, and soon Christianity was understood in a different light, and accepted by those who wanted an alternative to imperial customs. There was also an undeniable strength of unity in the church, now spread from Britain to Armenia, to a far greater extent than the Jewish Diaspora. The Roman Empire would rather have that strength on their side than against them. Finally, the 'Edict of Milan' in 313, granting the freedom of religious choice to everyone, including Christians, brought the Christians the legal acceptance that had been long awaited.⁴⁴⁶

After three hundred years of existence, then, Christianity managed to gain official recognition and acceptance in a positive sense. It would seem that successive Roman emperors were not always quite sure what to do with this new 'sect' of Judaism. Semi toleration, turning a blind eye, or even the most gruesome persecution did not seem to make it fade away and disappear. If anything the Christians became stronger, and as the empire began to struggle with its growing internal and external problems, it must have made sense to have the Christians on the side of the empire rather than against it.

⁴⁴³ Foss, C., 1996, 3-4.

⁴⁴⁴ Frend, W.H., 1998b, 8.

⁴⁴⁵ Quoted in Frend, W.H., 1998b, 16-17.

⁴⁴⁶ Frend, W.H., 1998b, 17-18; Frend, W.H.C., 1965, 137-138; Grant, R.M., 1990, 236.

II.3 The Physical Evidence for Christianity in Asia Minor

The first serious research on Early Christianity in Asia Minor was by W.M. Ramsay and W.M. Calder at the end of the 19th century and up to the mid-20th century. Their studies revealed that unlike the material evidence for Jews in Asia Minor, the material evidence for Christianity in the area consists solely of funerary epitaphs. Today this is still the case. The evidence is extremely scattered and at that not equally so, and it gives us more an idea of a Christian presence, rather than any specific information on numbers or of Christian impact on society.

From Ramsay and Calder, and from later studies, we learn that, apart from a few exceptions discussed below, almost all the pre-Constantinian evidence for Christianity in Asia Minor dates to the mid-third century through to the early fourth century. Mitchell observes that disbursement of the evidence and variety in character leads one to understand that each community and each church developed according to its local situation, and the contact it had with other churches.⁴⁴⁷ On one hand, it can be said that the geographical spread of material evidence would seem to indicate that the Christians in Phrygia thrived in a much more prosperous way than those in the western parts of Asia Minor. Mitchell attributes this to the local culture of Phrygia, and to the fact that the people were more open in general to religious change, just as they had been in earlier times with the Jews.⁴⁴⁸ However, on the other hand we also need to consider the toponymical changes that have taken place over the past two thousand years. The western coast of Asia Minor has been much more urbanised than the central parts of Anatolia. There, constant growth and development has made archaeological research extremely difficult, so that studying artefacts in their context is hard. So the fact that few, if any, Christian inscriptions have

⁴⁴⁷ Mitchell, S., 1993, 41.

been found in the west and the south of Asia Minor may be because they have not been recovered and reported, not because they never existed.

There are a few Christian inscriptions from Pontus and Bithynia dated to the late third century.⁴⁴⁹ There are also individual inscriptions from Claudiopolis, Amisos, Cappadocia and Galatia, affirming what we know from literary evidence,⁴⁵⁰ that Christians were present in those places.⁴⁵¹ An inscription from Ancyra, Galatia has been identified as Christian because it includes the names Theotimus and Paulus (Timothy and Paul).⁴⁵² The use of both together would seem to indicate Christian context. On the other hand, despite the letters of Revelation and the evidence of Ignatius, there is little epigraphic evidence from Lydia. There are only four inscriptions, from Sardis, Thyatira and Philadelphia, while the communities further west and south, from Ionia to Pamphylia, remain known only from literary evidence.⁴⁵³ pre-Constantine churches have in addition been attested near Lystra⁴⁵⁴ and at Philomelium, which received the letter telling of the martyrdom of Polycarp.⁴⁵⁵ We also know of the church in Nicomedia that was built on top of the hill that faced the palace and thus was the first church to be destroyed in the Great Persecution.⁴⁵⁶

Of the regions of Asia Minor, Phrygia has provided us with the largest number of pre-Constantinian inscriptions from the Roman world. According to Ramsay, quoted in Anderson, the Christian influence spread through Phrygia from three directions, from

⁴⁴⁸ Mitchell, S., 1993, 41.

⁴⁴⁹ Mitchell, S., 1993, 37.

⁴⁵⁰ Pliny and Gregory the Wonderworker, mentioned in Part II.2.

⁴⁵¹ Mitchell, S., 1993, 38. From what we know of travelling bishops, in Pontus especially, such as Gregory the Wonderworker, it seems strange that so little material evidence has been found, only proving that lack of material evidence does not mean lack of Christianity. Jews settled in Amisos from the first century AD onwards. However, we have little information about them as only one tombstone remains as material evidence (Atasoy, S., 1997, 79, 83). There were also Jews in Claudiopolis; however, the only evidence we have from there is a column, with a Greek inscription and *menorah* flanked by a *shofar*, *lulav* and *ethrog* (Fig. 8) (Hachlili, R., 1998, 86).

⁴⁵² Bosch, E., 1967, 30, no.325.

⁴⁵³ From the Epistles in the New Testament and the epistles of Ignatius. Mitchell, S., 1993, 38.

⁴⁵⁴ *MAMA VIII*, no. 43. This inscription is the only early Christian evidence we have from Lystra, it talks of a couple who may have been leaders in the local church.

⁴⁵⁵ Mitchell, S., 1993, 41.

Ephesus up the Maeander valley; from the churches established by Paul in south east Phrygia, and lastly from Bithynia.⁴⁵⁷

The Christian identity of the inscriptions is indicated in four ways. The Eumenian formula 'If anyone shall intrude with another (corpse) he shall have to reckon with God,'⁴⁵⁸ depiction of fish(es); a bishop's epitaph; and the use of the word 'Christian.'⁴⁵⁹ A debatable point of identification is the use of + instead of the letter X in some inscriptions. The letter chi (X) indicated a relationship with Christianity, and the use of the cross instead of the letter may have been a cryptic way of expressing their faith. But this has still not been proved entirely as others think it may be just a local way of writing the letter 'X'.⁴⁶⁰ Calder believes that this way of writing the letter chi is not necessarily an indication in itself for identifying a tomb as Christian, as it might be a Phrygian epigraphic tradition.⁴⁶¹

For a later period two groups mainly stand out among the Christian inscriptions from Phrygia, those from the northwest and those from the southwest, with individual examples in the district between (Map 2). For this reason they will be studied in their geographical order from north to south. Those from the rural district in the north seem to be more open in expression of identity in comparison with the group further south, which are from urban centres and their Christian identity is somewhat concealed under the Eumenian formula.⁴⁶² At the time Anderson conducted his study, no inscriptions had been found in the cities in the northwest, around the Tembris valley.⁴⁶³ The people in the region farmed the fertile soil of the Tembris plain, and evidence would seem to indicate that the

⁴⁵⁶ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 8.1.

⁴⁵⁷ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 196.

⁴⁵⁸ Calder, W.M., 1955, 26.

⁴⁵⁹ Gibson, E., 1978, 139.

⁴⁶⁰ Gibson, E., 1978, 39.

⁴⁶¹ Calder, W.M., 1955, 35-36.

⁴⁶² Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 197.

⁴⁶³ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 199.

plain never really had an urban centre, which might explain the openness in the inscriptions.⁴⁶⁴

The group of tombstones from northwest Phrygia carry the inscription or formula of 'Christians for Christians.' Gibson has made a detailed study of 45 inscriptions from northwest Phrygia. Seventeen of the inscriptions had not been previously published, eight of these having been discovered by Gibson herself. She has especially examined the use of the formula - which indicates that the tombstones were made for Christians by Christians - and the workshops these epitaphs were prepared in. Almost all the stelai from Tembris which include this formula have semicircular pediments⁴⁶⁵ and the inscriptions are in an aedicula with a cross inscribed on it (Plates IX-XII). Each epitaph has a long dedicatory inscription, including the names of extended family members⁴⁶⁶ (App.1 liv, lv, lvi, lvii, lviii). The inscriptions reveal very little about the social status of the owners. Only in one case is anything bequeathed to anyone (App.1 lix). Some of the inscriptions are exactly dated, the earliest to AD 242/243 (App.1 lx), and 248/249 (App.1 lix).

Although the Christians may have seemed intensive and aggressive in their rejection of imperial orthodoxy, they seem to have been in harmony with the people around them in their social context: their tombstones share the same language and the same culture.⁴⁶⁷ Female and male tombs with Christian formulae are in the same manner and style as those belonging to pagans. Those belonging to women are decorated with birds and baskets, and those of men with oxen and a sickle.⁴⁶⁸ These depictions vary so little within themselves, that it is only the inscription that identifies the person(s) buried as

⁴⁶⁴ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 186.

⁴⁶⁵ Anderson, J.G.C., 1897, 194.

⁴⁶⁶ Gibson, E., 1978, 12.

⁴⁶⁷ Gibson, E., 1978, 139.

⁴⁶⁸ Gibson, E., 1978, 25.

Christian, not the depictions.⁴⁶⁹ Even so, it is of interest that over half of these Christian inscriptions are assigned to the same workshop and the workshop may have belonged to a Christian.⁴⁷⁰

Further southwest, in the upper Hermus valley, is the earliest Christian tombstone, dated to AD 179/80, from its inscription. The deceased is Eutyches, whose parents have made the epitaph, and the deceased is shown in an aedicula (Plate XIIIa). The tomb is identified as Christian both from the inscription which uses the term *adelphoi*, meaning brethren, which was used for Christians, and because of the various objects carved on it, such as the boss with a superimposed cross that the deceased carries in his right hand. Behind his left hand is a bunch of grapes, also commonly seen in Christian tombs, which hang in the form of a 'T' shaped bar, representing a *tau* cross, one of the earliest forms of a cross. Calder states that although the boss, the cross and grapes were all common in pagan art, it seems unlikely that they would all appear together as a group on a pagan tomb.⁴⁷¹ The use and development of such symbols is a late second century AD development, allowing the identification of Christian graves.⁴⁷² The use of fish and the *tau* cross has also helped in the identification of four stelai from Amorium as Christian.⁴⁷³

Many tombstones found at Akmonia have a Deuteronomic curse. Originally, because of these curses, these tombstones were attributed to Jews,⁴⁷⁴ but Bij de Vaate and van Henten suggest that some of them actually belonged to Christians, as verses from the

⁴⁶⁹ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 194.

⁴⁷⁰ Gibson, E., 1978, 144.

⁴⁷¹ Calder, W.M., 1955, 33-34.

⁴⁷² Mitchell, S., 1993, 38.

⁴⁷³ *MAMA* VII, 277, 279, 297, 298.

⁴⁷⁴ This was discussed in Part I.3.

Septuagint version of the Old Testament are known to have been used by the early Christians.⁴⁷⁵

One of the earliest certainly Christian inscriptions is from Hieropolis in central Phrygia.⁴⁷⁶ A large epitaph belonging to bishop Avercius Marcellus is dated to c. 216. The inscription records his travels, and it gives us an idea of the extent of Christian presence at the time, as he seems to have met Christians everywhere.⁴⁷⁷ The language used is cryptic in that it is not from the words but context that his profession is understood.⁴⁷⁸ The epitaph ends in the usual Asia Minor tradition with the warning of a fine to be paid to the Roman treasury and city treasury by anyone who violates the tomb.

A few decades later, in the upper Meander basin, this warning takes on a different form, as the ‘Eumenian Formula,’ in which the violators are warned of the wrath of God for such violations (App. 1 lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxiv).⁴⁷⁹ The ‘Eumenian Formula’ is so-called because of its frequent use at Eumonia, in southwest Phrygia. The tombstones from this city make up the second main group of Christian tombs from Phrygia. Only from one do we find out that the deceased was a lawyer (App.1 lxiv). From the texts that remain, it is thought that the number of Christians at Eumonia exceeded those of the pagans by AD 300. They were on good terms with the Jewish community of the city, whose existence we know of from funerary inscriptions, which like those at Akmonia generally have the Deuteronomic curse on them. Although the Eumenian Formula was used on pagan inscriptions at the beginning of the third century, dated inscriptions suggest it was not used between AD 249-273, most probably due to the persecution under Decius. According to

⁴⁷⁵ Bij de Vaate, A.J. & J.W. van Henten, 1996, 119.

⁴⁷⁶ Not to be confused with Hierapolis ad Lycum, on the border of Caria.

⁴⁷⁷ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 276; Calder, W.M., 1955, 25.

⁴⁷⁸ Calder, W.M., 1955, 25.

⁴⁷⁹ Calder, W.M., 1955, 26.

Calder, it was imitated by Jews,⁴⁸⁰ and he believes that the reason the Christians monopolised this formula was because they were affected by the bolder Montanists in the south.⁴⁸¹ On the other hand Sheppard disagrees with this, believing that rather than influence from the Montanists, the Christians were imitating the Jews in Akmonia, who used Deuteronomic curses to protect their graves, and especially the Eumenian formula. Considering that there were Jews among the first converts, this seems probable.⁴⁸²

The inscriptions in the whole of Phrygia reveal very little about those who they commemorate, except that they were or probably were Christians. Were they *coloni* associated with the imperial estates that we know existed in the area?⁴⁸³ This may be doubted because the imperial institution would have had pagan associations. They could very well have been local peasants that worked for the estates. Yet these people were also affected by the Montanist movement, and in no way could have escaped the Great Persecution under Diocletian, if they held to their beliefs.⁴⁸⁴ Calder believes all the inscriptions in the area belonged to Phrygian Montanists who boldly declared their faith and openly rejected the pagan gods.⁴⁸⁵ Sheppard does not agree with him, for he notes that neither the ‘Christians for Christians’ nor the Eumenian formula are seen in Africa, where Montanism was also powerful.⁴⁸⁶ According to Anderson, they could not have been erected during the Decian persecution, but rather in the interval between that and the persecution of Diocletian,⁴⁸⁷ Since families were not allowed to bury their martyrs during the persecution under Diocletian, these people are likely to have been martyrs under Decius.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁰ Calder, W.M., 1955, 26.

⁴⁸¹ Calder, W.M., 1955, 29-30.

⁴⁸² Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 171-172.

⁴⁸³ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 188-190.

⁴⁸⁴ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 200-201.

⁴⁸⁵ Calder, W.M., 1955, 27.

⁴⁸⁶ Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 171.

⁴⁸⁷ Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 198.

⁴⁸⁸ Ramsay, W.M., 1897, 732, no.658.

After the legalisation of Christianity in 311, there is a rapid decline in the number of these epitaphs and they eventually cease to exist altogether.⁴⁸⁹

East of Eumenia, seven pre-Constantinian Christian epitaphs were discovered and studied by Ramsay. They are somewhat similar to the Eumenian inscriptions in containing violation curses but in addition to this they contain phrases such as ‘the brethren,’ or the ‘peace of all the brothers.’⁴⁹⁰ They are dated to the late third century, except one that is an epitaph for five martyrs who were buried by a family, and which is dated to the Decius persecution.

Elsewhere in Phrygia, William Ramsay discusses a different type of pre-Constantinian Christian tombstone formula. Due to the terminology used, such as the term *adelphoi*, two inscriptions dated to the late second century, from Hierapolis ad Lycum, are possibly defined as Christian. The terms are incorporated with the mention of feasts permitted to Jews, often referred to on Jewish tombstones, giving them a cryptic nature. The forbidden religion was hidden.⁴⁹¹

Another area whose inscriptions suggest a strong Christian presence was Isauria/Lycaonia (Map 9).⁴⁹² Research carried out by the Ramsays demonstrated that not only were there Christians in the area who expressed their faith on their tombs, but also that they set a trend in the funerary art of the area.⁴⁹³ These funerary inscriptions are on massive rectangular blocks, generally with a background depiction of a triple aedicula with four columns. A.M. Ramsay believes that pre-Constantinian Christian inscriptions can be identified by carvings of fish, vines, doves (Fig. 10), and small inconspicuous crosses, all

⁴⁸⁹ Calder, W.M., 1955, 30; Gibson, E., 1978, 144.

⁴⁹⁰ Ramsay, W.M., 1897, 715, no.654.

⁴⁹¹ Ramsay, W.M., 1897, 500-501, no. 411-412.

⁴⁹² Mitchell, S., 1993, 58.

symbolic to Christianity.⁴⁹⁴ Some are identified also by six-leafed rosettes, thought to be an early decorative form of I(esous) and X(ristos) (Fig. 9,11, Plate XIIIb), in other words a cryptic chi-rho.⁴⁹⁵ A tomb with the Jewish-Christian name Elias is thought to be Christian because of such a rosette (Fig. 11). Others also have a *tau* cross on them (Fig. 9, Plate XIIIb).⁴⁹⁶

A.M. Ramsay believed that the earlier tombs revealed Christian belief by combining Christian elements with pagan motifs. She suggests that one tombstone, from the Konya Museum is of an early date, due to the combination of a banquet scene, a common pagan theme, and two fish (Plate XIVa, Fig. 13).⁴⁹⁷ Another grave looks entirely pagan, as it shows the Isaurian mother goddess, yet there is a small cross inscribed on it (Fig. 12). It is stylistically dated to the second half of the third century.⁴⁹⁸ Of the inscriptions studied by the Ramsays, a village called Dorla in Nova Isauria (Map 9) produced the majority. One belonged to ‘blessed Papas’, a bishop, and is decorated with fish and vine branches (Plate XIVb, Fig. 14). W.M. Ramsay interprets the writing tablets in the central aedicula as a ‘covenant between man and God’,⁴⁹⁹ but we need not accept such a view in the light of its common use on tombstones. A tombstone belonging to a martyr (*marturos*) was found at Derbe, produced by the workshop in Dorla.⁵⁰⁰ None of the inscriptions have ‘Christian’ written on them, and so far no connection with northern Phrygia, where the presence of Christianity is clear from tombstones, has been proved.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹³ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 92.

⁴⁹⁴ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 33.

⁴⁹⁵ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 27, 41.

⁴⁹⁶ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 76.

⁴⁹⁷ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 7.

⁴⁹⁸ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 82-84.

⁴⁹⁹ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 27.

⁵⁰⁰ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 60-61.

⁵⁰¹ Ramsay, A.M., 1906, 91.

Despite the confusion caused by the use of the Eumenian Formula by Christians, Jews and even pagans at times, there seems to be various ways Christians expressed their identity on their tombstones. The use of the cross, fishes, doves and other symbols along with terms such as *adelphoi* or obvious inscriptions of ‘Christian for Christians’ reveal a variety of ways to identify the tombs.

From this review of material evidence for early Christianity in Asia Minor it seems that there was a certain boldness in rural Phrygia. Perhaps the pressures of urban life caused any Christian to be less openly expressive than the rural Christians, who were presumably not faced with determined ‘atheism’, rejection of polytheism. Perhaps in the rural districts there was a greater acceptance of divergence in personal religious beliefs.⁵⁰² This goes against what we generally think of as ‘conservative’ rural values, suggesting that – perhaps, and for whatever reason – Christianity was widely accepted.

⁵⁰² Anderson, J.G.C., 1906, 199.

Conclusion

From the evidence presented above, we can see that Judaism and Christianity, the two main monotheistic religions of antiquity, were challenged by two aspects of Roman life. The first was the worship of the emperor, the second the pagan rituals and sacrifices that were integrated into daily life.⁵⁰³ The line between state and religion was very thin in the Roman Empire. Sacrifices offered to the gods or the image of the emperor in some way involved the welfare of the empire or the emperor, forming the basis of the problem; the clash was between the belief of the Jews and the Christians, that only one God was to be worshipped, and the state, which demanded polytheism and idolatry.⁵⁰⁴ To many, Jews and Christians deserved the death penalty as they did not honour the gods. Moreover, the secrecy in which the Christians practised their religion caused suspicions that they were perhaps part of a subversive association that was against the imperial cult. Loyalty to Rome was expressed through loyalty to the emperor and the gods. If you were not loyal to Rome, you were breaking the law.⁵⁰⁵

Nevertheless, despite their monotheism and disdain for idolatry, as Part I of the thesis shows, the Jews found a place in Graeco-Roman Asia Minor, thanks to those who ruled before Rome. Rome prided herself in a policy of not changing the way local governments ruled in places she conquered, as long as they paid homage to Rome, and thus did not change the privileges earlier given to the Jews of Asia Minor. Indeed, as seen, Rome provided protection for the Jews in cases when it was necessary. Such tolerance led to the extension of government offices and citizenship towards Jews by the end of the second and beginning of the third century AD.

⁵⁰³ Mitchell, S., 1993, 10; Hornblower, S. & A. Spawforth, 1996, 325, 327.

⁵⁰⁴ Ferguson, E., 1999, 79.

⁵⁰⁵ Frend, W.H., 1998b, 7.

True, firm information on how Rome and the Jewish communities in Asia Minor responded to each other is scarce – especially when compared to Egypt and the Middle East. It might be a result of limited archaeological activity devoted towards identifying such evidence. Yet what exists is of great variety and, while scattered, it does offer valuable information about many aspects of Jewish life within the contemporary Graeco-Roman society. Even so, as the debate on the Aphrodisias inscription reveals, it is too soon to come to any definite conclusions on this relationship. We can only report the evidence, rather than draw firm conclusions.

That said, we might note that the limited evidence for synagogues in Asia Minor is significant compared to that available for the other Diaspora communities. The synagogue of Sardis, for example, is by far the largest Diaspora synagogue to have been discovered. The assumed synagogue at Aphrodisias reveals an inscription which combines a long list of Jews and Godfearers as joint donors of a soup kitchen. The synagogue at Priene is a prime example of a house converted into a synagogue, the only surface example we have in Asia Minor today. The dedication inscription for the synagogue at Akmonia is the only one we have that records the involvement of a pagan priestess with a Jewish community, as well as being our earliest material evidence of a synagogue in Asia Minor.⁵⁰⁶ In general, it is clear that the cities of Sardis, Aphrodisias, Priene and Akmonia allowed the Jewish communities of their cities to have a synagogue, and possibly in the case of the synagogue at Akmonia, a prominent non-Jew even donated such a building. This does not indicate that other cities in Asia Minor were always so accommodating: we cannot generalise just from four cases. Much probably depended on local conditions and customs.

⁵⁰⁶ The synagogue found on the island of Delos, dated to before 88 BC is the earliest Diasporan synagogue so far. Hachlili, R., 1998, 17.

The literary and material evidence also proves that, although the Jews practised their own religion and customs, some, if not all, were part of the general hustle and bustle of the city, apart from worshipping the emperor and pagan gods. They were active in trade, philosophical discussions, industry, public offices and even at times the education and entertainment of their city.⁵⁰⁷ Yet, again we cannot generalise. The material evidence covers a time span of several hundred years, and much of it comes from single sources.

Drawing any other conclusions from this varied evidence is a challenging task. Yet, as noted, one conclusion that may be drawn is that the Diasporan Jews would seem to be one of the most privileged and tolerated minority groups within the empire. Once their unique ways were understood, even if not fully comprehended, they were left to their own devices, as long as they did not constitute a political threat. Despite major problems and revolts in Palestine, and in Alexandria between Jews and gentiles, the Diaspora in Asia Minor seems to have been peaceful and maintained good relationships with local authorities. While this conclusion can only be supported with limited evidence, it does seem valid.

While the Jews in Asia Minor were long-established immigrant ethnic communities, Christianity was a religion of converts. Christianity spread at a rate that perhaps no other religion had before, and while the numbers of individuals involved were not great, the wide areas they covered reveal the enthusiasm and diligence of the Apostles. At first, the Romans had a hard time distinguishing between Jews and Christians, and Christians were administratively treated as Jews whether their background was Jewish or gentile.⁵⁰⁸ Eventually, however, they realised that they had something different on their hands. In this case, as this was a new sect, with no history or established tradition, once

⁵⁰⁷ Rajak, T., 1992, 107.

⁵⁰⁸ Loewe, R., 1999, 256; Southern, P., 1997, 115.

Rome recognised its independence from Judaism, she felt no requirement to extend to Christians the privileges long extended to the Jews.

When we correlate the material and literary evidence, it is possible to see that this recognition of the ‘difference’ between Jews and Christians came in stages. An initial phase began with Paul being sent to Rome on trial⁵⁰⁹ at the time of Nero, who was to blame the Christians for the burning of Rome. Trajan tells Pliny that Christians were not to be sought out, although some early Christians were considered to be trouble makers, while rarely creating an uprising themselves, they caused discomfort among the local population, and did not obey the emperor; thus they deserved to be punished. Yet by the mid third century AD the strength and the extent of the Christian religion was pronounced, resulting in the first persecution under Decius. As much as some Graeco-Romans may have rejoiced in the number of martyrs and apostates, they were probably also shocked at the number of people who in some way were in favour of this ‘new’ religion.

It is clear that by the mid-third century Christianity was present in cities of various sizes and importance. The Gospel was preached in the main literary languages, and possibly in the local dialects. The presence of Christianity in the countryside is known, and while in some parts of the Roman world it was still in its early stages⁵¹⁰ the material evidence suggests this was not the case for central Asia Minor. This may be because the smaller rural settlements there were not under the heavy scrutiny of the local administration or the governor, providing a haven to the earliest Christians. From the evidence, there was certainly a strong Christian presence in the unurbanised parts of Asia Minor, by the beginning of the fourth century.⁵¹¹ This does not mean that Christians were

⁵⁰⁹ Sordi, M., 1986, 26.

⁵¹⁰ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 293.

⁵¹¹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 288.

not present in urban centres as literary evidence indicates the presence of Christians in cities.⁵¹²

Persecutions raised the profile of Christianity, and Christians were aware of the fact that they were suspect - hence the need for discretion.⁵¹³ But what level of discretion was required and why? Was it fear of local persecution, or fear of the state? Evidence from Asia Minor has proved evidence for both. Bishop Avercius' epitaph, from Hieropolis, for example, shows how he still believed in the protection of the state, and the use of the Eumenian formula identifying Christians as Christian, without using the word 'Christian', shows some defiance of pagan authorities.⁵¹⁴ Funerary epitaphs from the Upper Tembris valley boldly express their owners as Christians. While it would seem likely that the local officials here realised that this funerary formula was somewhat different from the local traditions, it does not seem to have caused a problem. It would also seem clear that in some communities Jews and Christians were able to live side by side, as at Akmonia, Eumenia and Sardis.

Unfortunately, as this review has revealed, a lot of the evidence is too specific to generalise from for Asia Minor, never mind the whole Roman Empire. Moreover, much of it is based on hypothesis and deduction. As Ramsay observes "Jews can rarely be traced in the epigraph of such cities, because the men usually adopted Greek or Roman names, and thus become indistinguishable,"⁵¹⁵ and this was probably the case for Christians too. However, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that there was a strong Christian presence in some parts of Asia Minor, especially in the rural areas. In order to

⁵¹² Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 280, 288.

⁵¹³ Calder, W.M., 1955, 28.

⁵¹⁴ Calder, W.M., 1955, 29.

⁵¹⁵ Ramsay 1907, 255.

understand how exactly Christianity developed in Asia Minor and why, a study of a different nature needs to be conducted, including a search for new evidence.

Both Judaism and Christianity left a significant mark on the culture of Asia Minor. It would seem that many of the works conducted to date have only scratched the surface of this mark and there is more to be discovered. Their ways were both intriguing and repulsive to those around them, and it seems that it was the combination of these two responses that helped them survive in a polytheistic environment.

Appendix 1

The Epigraphical Evidence

Jewish

(Lydia) Apollonia

- i. An Antiochene from the land of [Caria?], from ancestors who won many (civic) honours, by name Debbora, I was given to Pamphylos of Sillyon, a famous man and lover of children, and to fleecy Phrygia. I have received (this tomb) as a mark of gratitude from him for my virgin marriage. (*CIJ* no. 772 = *MAMA* IV no. 202, 2nd-3rd century AD)⁵¹⁶

(Lydia) Hypaepa

- ii. Of the younger Jews. (*CIJ* II no. 755)⁵¹⁷

(Lydia) Philadelphia

- iii. To the most holy community/synagogue (*synagoge*) of the Hebrews in memory of my brother Hermophilos, I, Eustathios, a God-fearer, along with my bride Athanasia, have dedicated the ablution-basin (*maskaules* = Heb. *maskel*). (*CIJ* II no.754 = *DF* no.28, 3rd century AD)⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 10, I.27.

⁵¹⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 114, V.24.

⁵¹⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 84, III.81.

(Lydia) Sardis

- iv. I, Aurelios Hermogenes, citizen of Sardis, councillor, goldsmith, have fulfilled my vow. (DF no. 23)⁵¹⁹
- v. I, [name lost], councillor, goldsmith, together with my wife Eu[...], have given (this). (DF no. 22)⁵²⁰
- vi. Aur(elios) Basileides – former procurator. (Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 3rd-4th century)⁵²¹
- vii. I, Aur(elios) Eulogia, a Godfearer, have fulfilled my vow. (DF no. 17, 3rd-4th century)⁵²²
- viii. I, Aur(elios) Polyippos, a Godfearer, have made a vow and fulfilled it. (DF no. 18, 3rd-4th century)⁵²³

(Ionia) Ephesus

- ix. [This is the tomb] of Io[ulios?] (rest of name lost), chief doctor (*archiatros*) [and] his wife Ioulia [...e] and their children. [It was erected] during their lifetime. This tomb is in the care of the Jews at Ephesus. (*CIJ* II no. 745=*IK* Ephesus V no. 1677)⁵²⁴
- x. The tomb belongs to Mar(kos) Moussios, priest. (He erected it) during his lifetime. The Jews (of Ephesus) are responsible for it. (*CIJ* II no. 746, now *IK* Ephesus V no. 1676)⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.91.

⁵²⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.92.

⁵²¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 97, IV.40.

⁵²² Williams, M.H., 1998, 168, VII.14.

⁵²³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 168, VII.15.

⁵²⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.90.

⁵²⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 52, II.95.

(Ionia) Phocaea

- xi. Tation, wife of Straton the son of Empedon, made a gift to the Jews of the house and the walls of the (peristyle) court which she had built from her own resources. The congregation of the Jews has honoured Tation, wife of Straton the son of Empedon, with a gold crown and a seat of honour. (*CIJ* II no. 738 = *DF* no. 13)⁵²⁶

(Ionia) Smyrna

- xii. The former Jews – ten thousand drachmas. (*CIJ* II no.742)⁵²⁷
- xiii. Rufina, Jewess (and) *archisynagogos*, has built the tomb for her freedmen and house-born slaves. No one else has the right to bury anyone else (in it). If anyone dares to do so, he shall give to the most holy treasury 1,500 denarii and 1,000 to the *ethnos* of the Jews. A copy of this inscription has been deposited in the record office. (*CIJ* II. No.741 = *IK* Smyrna no.295, no earlier than the 3rd century AD)⁵²⁸
- xiv. I, Irenopios, *presbyteros* (Elder) and *pater tou stemmatos* (father of the community), son of Eiakob, a *presbyteros* (Elder) too, in fulfilment of a vow made by (my)self and my wife and my lawfully begotten son, have made, and beautifully too, the mosaic of the interior (of the synagogue) and the balustrade. (Cost)-7 (gold) coins. (*CIJ* II no. 739 = *DF* no.14, 4th century)⁵²⁹
- xv. Loukios Lollios Iousstos (*sic*), *grammateus* of the *laos* at Smyrna, has set up this tomb for himself and his own family. (*IK* Smyrna no. 296 = *Hellenica* 11-12 (1960) 260, not dated)⁵³⁰

⁵²⁶ White, L.M., 1997, 324-325.

⁵²⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 112, V.19

⁵²⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 151, VI.37.

⁵²⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 48, II.75.

⁵³⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 30, I.109.

(Ionia) Teos

- xvi. The most illustrious P(o)lius Rout(lios) Ioses, the *archisynagogos* for life, along with his wife, Bisinnia Demo, (has built the synagogue) from the foundations up, out of his own resources. (*CIJ* II no. 744=*DF* no. 16, 3rd century)⁵³¹

(Caria) Aphrodisias

- xvii. (a) God the Helper, who puts [food] on our plate.

Those listed below from the Society of the Law-Lovers, also known as Those who Continuously Offer Praise, in order to alleviate suffering (?), have built (this) memorial for the community (*plethos*) out of their own resources.

Iael, *prostates*, with her/his son Iosoua, *archon*

Theodos, *palatinos*, with his son Hilarianos

Samuel, *archi(dekanos?)*, proselyte

Ioses, son of Iesse

Beniamin, psalm-singer

Ioudas, the contented one

Ioses, proselyte

Sabbatios, son of Amachios

Emmonios, Godfearer (*theosebēs*)

Antoninos, Godfearer (*theosebēs*)

Samouel, son of Politanios

Eioseph, son of Eusebios, proselyte

And Eioudas, son of Theodoros

And Antipeos, son of Hermes

And Sabathios, the sweet one(?)

[And?] Samouel, envoy priest

- (b) [Iose]ph, son of Zenon

[Ze]non, son of Iakob; Manases, son of Ioph (Job?)

Ioudas, son of Eusebios
 Heortasios, son of Kallikarpos
 Biotikos; Ioudas, son of Amphianos
 Eugenios, goldsmith
 Praoilios; Ioudas, son of Praoilios
 Roupas, Oxyholios, old man (the elder?)
 Amantios, son of Charinos; Myrtilos
 Iako, shepherd, Seberos
 Euodos; Iason, son of Euodos
 Eusabbathios, greengrocer; Anysios
 Eusabbathios, foreigner; Milon
 Oxyholios, the younger
 Diogenes; eusabbathios, son of Diogenes
 Ioudas, son of Paulos; Theophilos
 [I]a[k]ob, also called Apellion; Zacharias, retailer(?)
 [L]eontios, son of Leontios; Gemellos
 [I]oudas, son of Acholios; Damonikos
 Eutarkios, son of Ioudas; Ioseph son of Philer(iphos?)
 Eusabbathios, son of Eugenios
 Kyrillos; Eutykhios, bronze-(smith?)
 Ioseph, confectioner; Rouben, confectioner
 Ioudas, also called Zosi(mos?); Zenon, rag-dealer
 Ammianos, also called Samouel; Philanthos
 Gorgonios, son of Oxyholios, Paregorios
 Heortasios, son of Zotikos; Symeon, son of Zen[on]
 And such as are *thesebeis* (Godfearers). Zenon city councillor
 Tertullos, city councillor; Diogenes, city councillor
 Onesimos, city councillor; Zenon son of Longi(nos?), city councillor
 Antipeos, city councillor; Aponerios, city councillor
 Eupithios, purple merchant; Strategios
 Xanthos; Xanthos, son of Xanthos

⁵³¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 45, II.61.

Aponerios, son of Aponerios; Hypsikles, son of Mel(iton?)
 Polychronios, son (?) of Bel(?); Chrysippos
 Gorgonios, coppersmith (?); Tatianos, Oxy(cholios?)
 Apellas, son of Hege(mon?); Balerianos, maker of wooden tablets?
 Eusabbathios, son of Hed(ychroos?); Ma(rkos) Anikios (?), son of Attalos
 Hortasios, stone-carver; Brabeus
 Klaudianos, son of Kal(limorphos?); Alexandros son of (?)
 Appianos, son of (?); Adolios, mincemeat-maker
 Zotikos, armlet-maker (?); Zotikos, Egyptian-dance performer (?)
 Eupitios, son Eupithios; Patrikios, coppersmith
 Elpidianos, athlete (?); Hedychrous
 Eutropios, son of Hedychrous; Kallinikos
 Balerianos, treasurer (?); Heuretos, son of Athenag(oras)
 Paramonos, maker of images (?)
 Eutychianos, fuller; Protokopios, money changer (?)
 Prounikios, fuller; Stratonikos, fuller
 Athenagoras, carpenter
 Meliton, son of Amazoios
 (SEG 36 (1986) no. 970)⁵³²

(Caria) Hyllarima

- xviii. Aur(elios) Eusanbatiōs, Elder (*presbyteros*), and Aur(elia) Epitynch(an)ousa for their own safety and that of their children and ... (have dedicated) to the most holy synagogue/community (*synogoge*)... out of their own resources. (*DF* no. 32, no earlier than the 3rd century AD)⁵³³

(Caria) Iasos

⁵³² Williams, M.H., 1998, 165-168, VII.11-12.

⁵³³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 84, III.82.

- xix. Niketas, son of Iason, a Jerusalemite – 100 denarii. (*CIJ* II no. 749, mid-2nd century BC)⁵³⁴
- xx. Dionysios, son of Dionysios
 Hieronymos, son of Eirenaios
Dosas, son of Dosas
Ioudas, son of Eudos
 Tryphon, son of Tryphon
 Dionysios, son of Dionysios
 Theophilos, son of Theophilos
Artemisios, son of Theudas . (*REJ* 101 (1937), 85-6)⁵³⁵

(Caria) Nysa

- xxi. Menander, son of Apollonides has made (this). He has constructed the place (i.e. the synagogue) from the east-facing inscription for the community (*laos*) and the cultic association (*synodos*) of which Dositheos, son of Theogenes, is head. (*DF* no.31, 3rd-4th century AD)⁵³⁶

(Caria) Tralles

- xxii. I, Capetolina, a most illustrious woman and a Godfearer, have made the whole platform (for the *Torah*) and paved the steps with mosaics in fulfilment of a vow for herself (*sic*) [and?] my children and my grandchildren. Blessing! (*DF* no. 30)⁵³⁷

⁵³⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 112, V.18.

⁵³⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 114, V.22. However Feldman labels the third Jew as Theophilos, Feldman, L.H., 1993, 58.

⁵³⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 30-31, I.111.

⁵³⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 168, VII.13.

(Phrygia) Akmonia

xxiii. This building was erected by Julia Severa; P(ublius) Tyrronios Klados, the head for life of the synagogue, and Lucius, son of Lucius, head of the synagogue, and Publius Zotikos, archon, restored it with their own funds and with money which had been deposited, and they donated the (painted) murals for the walls and the ceiling, and they reinforced the windows and made the rest of the ornamentation, and the synagogue honoured them with a gilded shield on account of their virtuous disposition, goodwill and zeal for the synagogue. (*MAMA* 6.264, *CIJ* II no.766)⁵³⁸

xxiv. (a) Made in the year 328 (= AD 243-4)

T(itos) Fl(abios) Alexander has built the tomb during his lifetime for himself and his wife Gaiana, as a memorial, having been councillor, held public office, lived an honourable life (and) harmed no one. After the interment of me, Alexander, and my wife Gaiana, should anyone open the tomb, there will fall upon him the curses that have been written against his sight and the whole of his body and his children and his life. If anyone tries to open (this tomb), he shall pay to the treasury a fine of 500 denarii.

(b) Office of maintaining peace (*eirenarchia*). Office of the corn supply (*seitionia*).

(c) Presidency of the council (*boularchia*). Office of market-regulator (*agoronomia*)

(d) Office of strategos (*strategia*). Office of corn supply (*seitionia*). (*CIJ* II no.770)⁵³⁹

xxv. (a) Year 333 (= AD 248-9) Aur(elios) Phrougianos, son of Menokritos, and Aur(elia) Iouliane, his wife, have constructed (this tomb), during their lifetime, for MaCaria his (or her) mother and Alexandria, their sweet daughter, as a memorial. If anyone after their deposition places another corpse in it or transgresses by purchasing it, there shall be upon them the curses written in Deuteronomy.

(b) Office of market-regulator (*agoronomia*). Office of corn supply (*seitoneia*). Office of police commander (*paraphylakeia*). Having undertaken all offices and liturgies and been *strategos*. (*CIJ* II no. 760)⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 58-59.

⁵³⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 110, V.14.

⁵⁴⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 110, V.15.

- xxvi. Year 342. Aure(elios) Alexander, a Jew, has built this tomb during his lifetime. (*CIJ* II no. 764)⁵⁴¹
- xxvii. (a) [Aur(elios) A]risteas, son of [Apol]lonios, has brought from Markos Math(I)os and empty plot measuring 10 by 10 cubits, in the year [300 or 380].
- (b) Alexander and Kallistratos his children have built (this tomb) for their father and mother in remembrance.
- (c) He (i.e. Aurelios Aristeas) has undertaken (to provide) the Neighbourhood of the First Gate with two two-pronged implements, hired by the month, and a (noun lost) for digging. He has given (them the plot) on the condition that they decorate each year with roses (the grave of) my wife Aurelia. [If they are not willing] to decorate (it) each year with roses, they will have to reckon with the justice of God.⁵⁴²
- xxviii. Epiktetos has fulfilled his vow to God, the Most High. (*New Docs.* I no. 5(i))⁵⁴³
- xxix. With good fortune. Aur(elia) Tatis, wife of Onesimos, blacksmith, together with her husband Onesimos, set up (this monument) from their own resources to the Most High God. (*New Docs.* I no. 5(ii))⁵⁴⁴

(Phrygia) Apamea

- xxx. I, Aur(elios) Roupfos, son of Ioulianos, the son of Ioulianos, have built the tomb for myself and my wife Aur(elia) Tatiane. No one else is to be placed in it. If anyone does inter (another body), he knows the Law of the Jews. (*CIJ* II. 774)⁵⁴⁵
- xxxi. Year 338 (= AD 253-4) Aelios Pancharios, also called Zotikos, has built the tomb during his lifetime for himself and his wife, Aelia Atalanta and their children. If anyone places

⁵⁴¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 145, VI.11.

⁵⁴² Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 78, 3.6.1.

⁵⁴³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 174, VII.45.

⁵⁴⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 174, VII.46. Trebilco does not believe that this inscription belongs to Jews but rather to God-fearers, Trebilco, P.R., 1991, 138.

⁵⁴⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 130, V.71.

another body in it, he shall have to reckon with God and he shall give to the treasury five hundred denarii. (*CIJ* II no. 773)⁵⁴⁶

(Phrygia) Dorylaeum

xxxii. Rabbi Samou(el), *archisynagogos*, a Phrygian from Do[rylaeum?]. The world (?) will glorify him. [Peace on] his resting place (in Hebrew). (*CIJ* II no. 1414, undated)⁵⁴⁷

(Phrygia) Hierapolis

xxxiii. This sarcophagus and the area around it (belong to) Aurelia Augusta, daughter of Zotikos. In it she will be buried and her husband Glykonianos, also called Aproos, and their children. If anyone else buries (another in it), he shall pay to the community (*katoikia*) of the Jews dwelling at Hierapolis a fine of (amount lost) denarii and two thousand denarii to the one who has sought recompense. A copy has been placed in the record-office of the Jews. (*CIJ* II no. 775)⁵⁴⁸

xxxiv. This tomb and the base on which it rests [and] the site (belong to) Aurelia Glykones, daughter of Ammianos, and her husband, M(arkos) Aur(elios) Alexander, son of Theophilos, also called [..]aph[.]os, Jews. It is for their burial. No one else shall be allowed to bury anyone else in it. Otherwise he shall pay the *laos* of the Jews by the way of a fine one thousand denarii. A faithful copy of this inscription has been deposited in the record office. (*CIJ* II no.776)⁵⁴⁹

xxxv. (This tomb and the land around it are the property of) Poplius Ailios Glykon, (son of?) Damianos, son of . In it he himself, his wife (name lost) and their children will be buried. No one else is allowed to be buried in it. He has assigned to the most venerable presidency of the Purple-Dyers two hundred denarii for crowning (his tomb), from the interest on

⁵⁴⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 175, VII.48.

⁵⁴⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 76-77, III.45.

⁵⁴⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 28, I.101.

which X (amount lost) is to be given to each (gap in text) on the feast of Unleavened Bread. Likewise he has left to the Guild of Carpet-Weavers for crowning his tomb one hundred and fifty denarii from (the interest on which there is to be given)...on the Feast of Pentecost (rest of text missing). (*CIJ* II. 777)⁵⁵⁰

(Phrygia) Laodicea

xxxvi. Here lies Ammias, a Jewess from Laodicea, who lived 85 years. Peace (*Shalom*)! (*CIJ* I no. 296 = Noy II no.183)⁵⁵¹

(Lycia) Tlos

xxxvii. Ptolemy, son of Leukios, citizen of Tlos, has built the tomb (*heroon*) from its foundations out of his own resources (for) himself and on behalf of his son Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy, son of Leukios, on account of the archonship which he has held amongst us Jews. It is to be the property of all the Jews and no one else is to bury anyone else in it. If anyone is discovered burying someone else (in it), he shall pay to the people of Tlos (amount lost) drachmas (rest missing). (*CIJ* no. 757 = *TAM* II.2, no. 612, perhaps late 1st cent AD)⁵⁵²

Pamphylia

xxxviii. Iakos of Caesarea, *archisynagogos*; (originally) from Pamphylia. Peace (*Shalom*)! (*BS* II no.203).⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 30, I.110.

⁵⁵⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 62, II.137.

⁵⁵¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 13, I.45.

⁵⁵² Williams, M.H., 1998, 119, V.39.

⁵⁵³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 78, III.58.

Cappadocia

- xxxix. (Burial) place of Eiako, (the) Cappadocian and Acholi, his wife and Asterios. (*CIJ* II no. 910)⁵⁵⁴

(Cilicia) Anemurium

- xl. Here lies Alexander, citizen of Anemurium, a Jew, together with his wife. If anyone disturbs us, he shall pay to the most sacred treasury 2,500 denarii. (*CIJ* II no. 786 = *MAMA* III 222)⁵⁵⁵

(Cilicia) Korykos

Dated to the third century.

- xli. Sarcophagus of Aur(elios) Eusanbatiōs, son of Menander, citizen of Korykos, councillor, and of his wife, the peerless and unforgettable Matrōna, also called Photion. Here she lies and Photion, (the) grandson of Matrōna and (Photi?)os, *doukenarios* from Seleukeia and their sweetest children. If anyone else wishes to place (another body) here, he shall pay to the heirs of the same Eusanbatiōs ... ounces (?) of gold. Do not lose heart, for no one is immortal, save the One who has ordered this (i.e. the punishment for disturbing the grave) to take place, (He) who has transposed us to the sphere of the stars. (*CIJ* II no. 788 = *MAMA* III no. 262)⁵⁵⁶

Early Imperial

- xlii. Here lies Ioudas and Alexas, the sons of Nisaios, Jews. If anyone disturbs us, he shall pay to the most sacred treasury 2,500 denarii. (*CIJ* II no. 791 = *MAMA* III. No. 440)⁵⁵⁷

4th-5th century

⁵⁵⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 77, III.47.

⁵⁵⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 108, V.5.

⁵⁵⁶ Williams, M.H., 1998, 109-110, V.10.

⁵⁵⁷ Williams, M.H., 1998, 129, V.69.

- xliii. Tomb of Eusambatios, a Jew, and Elder (*presbyteros*) (and) a perfumer. (*CIJ* II no. 790 = *MAMA* III no. 344)⁵⁵⁸

(Cilicia) Tarsus

- xliv. Here lies Ioudas, son of Ioses, of Tarsus. (*CIJ* II no. 925)⁵⁵⁹
- xlv. Here lies Isakis, Elder of the (Community) of the Cappadocians (at Jaffa), a Tarsian (and) a linen merchant. (*CIJ* II no. 931)⁵⁶⁰

(Paphlagonia) Amastris

- xlix. To God, the invincible, and to the sovereign synagogue, I, Aurelios Protoktetos, having prayed and seen my prayer answered, have dedicated (this) as a thank-offering. (*DF* no. 35, 3rd century AD)⁵⁶¹

(Bithynia) Kalchedon

- l. Here lies Sanbati(o)s, son of Gerontios, *presbyteros* (Elder), *grammateus* (secretary) and *epistates ton palaiton* (one who stands over the ancient ones). Peace. (*CIJ* no. 800=*IK* Kalchedon no. 75)⁵⁶²

(Bithynia) Nicomedia

- li. I have set up the tomb and altar for my sweetest mother, Oulpia Kapitylla, and I want no one else to disturb it. Otherwise he will have to face the judgement (of God) and pay to the

⁵⁵⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 25, I.89.

⁵⁵⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 77, III.48.

⁵⁶⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 73, III.24.

⁵⁶¹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 122, V.45.

⁵⁶² Williams, M.H., 1998, 38-39, II.25.

(Jewish) community (*synagoge*) 1,000 denarii and to the treasury 500. Farewell. (*TAM* IV.1, no. 376, 3rd century AD?)⁵⁶³

- lii. Aur(elios) Ethe(l)asios, son of Makedonios the Lector, and Aur(elia) Thamar have put this sarcophagus in place during their lifetime. Blessing upon all. (*CIJ* II no. 798=*TAM* IV.1, no. 374, 3rd century AD?)⁵⁶⁴
- liii. I, Aur(elios) Kyrion, during my lifetime, have built this tomb for myself and my wife Aur(elia) Ioulias. It is my wish that after my deposition no one else, except my child, is placed in it. If anyone acts in contravention of this, he will undergo judgement before God. Blessing upon all. (*Hellenica* 11-12 (1960), 392-4, 3rd century AD)⁵⁶⁵

Christian

(Phrygia) Upper Tembris Valley

- liv. Aurelios Eutychos son of Menandros and Prokla for their child Kyrillos, his wife, Domna, and their son Kyriakos, who leave orphaned their children Alexandros and Prokla. And Aurelios Eutychos for his brother Kyrillos and his sister-in-law Domna; and Eutychianes for her brother-in-law Kyrillos and her sister-in-law Domna, Christians for Christians.⁵⁶⁶
- lv. Aurelia Domna for her husband, Meles, and for herself (while still) alive; their children Kyrillos and Alexandros and Istratonikes and Eutychianes and Tatianos and Alexandria and Auxano(n) and Kyriakes and Eusebis and Domnos for their father and mother, who is still alive. Christians for Christians.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ Williams, M.H., 1998, 30, I.108.

⁵⁶⁴ Williams, M.H., 1998, 34, II.4.

⁵⁶⁵ Williams, M.H., 1998, 130, V.73.

⁵⁶⁶ Gibson, E., 1978, 12, no.3.

⁵⁶⁷ Gibson, E., 1978, 20, no.8.

- lvi. Aurelios Eistratonikos for his child Erpidephoros; and Dionysus for her husband; and their children Eistratonikos and Kyrilos and Patrikis and Philetos for their father. Christians for Christians.⁵⁶⁸
- lvii. Aurelios Theodoros and Patrikis and Prokla and Euktemon, Christians, for Aurelia Domna, their mother-in-law, a Christian. Aurelios Euktemon and Ammias for their child Onesime, a Christian.⁵⁶⁹
- lviii. Aurelios Onesimos and Stratonikos and Tropimas took possession of the portions (of land) which were bequeathed to them; and let no one ever make any claim, either himself or through another. Aurelios Papylos, son of Onesimos, and Appes, for their children Eugenios and Amias; and for their grandchild Epiktetos and Eugenia; and for themselves (while still) alive; and their children Papylos and Amianos for their father and mother, and Arde(mas) and Amias Trophymos for their sweetest parent-in-law and their sweetest brother-in-law, in memory. I, Aurelios Papylos, leave my (tool) chest and tools and the portions (of land) which were bequeathed to me, to Papylos and Amianos. Then I leave to Eutychiane and Appe 30 measures of barley mixed with wheat and to my wife I leave 30 measures and a sheep.⁵⁷⁰
- lix. 333=AD 248-249 Christians for Christians. Aurelia Ammelia with their son-in-law Zotikos and with their grandchildren Alexandria and Telesphoros (and), her husband made (this tomb).⁵⁷¹
- lx. In the year AD 242/243 the fourth day in the last part of the tenth month, Aurelios Satorneinos son of Satorneinos, a Christian, lies here, having built for himself this eternal resting place while still alive, with the stipulation that no one else shall be permitted to bury anyone else (in here...except my) wife, Apphiane...(If anyone tries to violate this provision) he will pay to the treasury 502 denarii.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁸ Gibson, E., 1978, 22, no.9.

⁵⁶⁹ Gibson, E., 1978, 25, no.10.

⁵⁷⁰ Gibson, E., 1978, 34, no.15.

⁵⁷¹ Gibson, E., 1978, 56-57, no.22.

(Phrygia) Eumenia

- lxi. Aurelius Zotikos II, son of Papias, citizen of Eumenia, built the *heroon* and the altar upon it for himself and his wife Aurelia Apphion and his brother Ammianus and anyone else he himself makes an agreement with in his own lifetime. No one else will be permitted to inter anyone. If anyone makes the attempt, he will pay a fine of 1500 denarii to the Council of Eumenia and he will have to reckon with the great name of God.⁵⁷³
- lxii. Aurelius Gaius, son of Apellas, built the memorial for himself and his wife and his most worthy friend Onesimus and his wife. If anyone tries to dig up the site, let there be a curse on him and the man who collaborates with him unto their children's children. Such is life.⁵⁷⁴
- lxiii. (Property) of one who still lives. I, Lycidas, cite God as my witness, that I built the *heroon* by my own labours, as my brother Amianus was reluctant, and I authorise only my sisters Phronime and Maxima to be placed (in it). If anyone inter another, he will have to reckon with God and the Angel of Roubes.⁵⁷⁵
- lxiv. I, Gaius, who am equal in numerical value to two words of awe, make this declaration as a holy and good man: A man - Gaius the lawyer, trained in the arts - built this tomb while he was alive for himself and his dear wife Tatia and their lamented children, that they might have this eternal home together with Roubes, servant of the great God. I did not have much wealth or much property for my livelihood, but I worked hard and gained a modicum of learning. This enabled me to assist my friends, as far as I was able, freely putting the ability I had at the disposal of all. Helping anyone who was in need was a joy to me, as, in the case of other people, prosperity brings joy to heart. Let no one deluded in his wealth harbour proud thoughts, for there is one Hades and an equal end for all. Is someone great in possessions? He receives no more, (but) the same measure of earth for a tomb. Hasten, mortals, gladden your souls at all times as (allegedly) a pleasant way of

⁵⁷² Gibson, E., 1978, 118, no.42.

⁵⁷³ Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 173, no.1= Ramsay, 1897 *CBP* 525, no.369.

⁵⁷⁴ Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 175, no.4.

life is also the measure of existence. So, friends. After this, no more of this - for what more is there? A monument of stone speaks this, not I . Here are the Doors and the road to Hades, but the path has no way out to the light. Indeed the righteous at all times point the way to the resurrection. This is the God of Hosts...⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁵ Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 176, no.6.

⁵⁷⁶ Sheppard, A.R.R., 1979, 178, no.7=Ramsay, W.M., 1897, 386, no.232.

Appendix 2

Antioch

Although Antioch is not geographically situated in the area covered in this thesis, after Alexandria, Egypt it is the most important Diaspora centre and the closest to Asia Minor, and for this reason a brief overview is necessary.

Ancient Antioch was situated on the eastern bank of the Orontes River, thus called Antioch-on-the-Orontes to differentiate it from the other Antiochs. The city was protected by a ridge of hills that lay behind it. Although the river was navigable, the city had a port town on the Mediterranean at Seleucia Pieria. Its ideal topographic and geographic conditions, led Antioch to becoming one of the greatest cities of antiquity.⁵⁷⁷

Antioch was built by I, and according to Josephus, Seleukos granted the same rights to the Jews there.⁵⁷⁸

They (the Jews) also received honour from the kings of Asia when they served with them in war. For example, Seleukos Nicator (305-281 BC) granted them citizenship in the cities which he founded in Asia, Lower Syria and in his capital, Antioch, itself, and declared them to have equal privileges with the Macedonians and Greeks who were settled in these cities, so that this citizenship of theirs remains to this very day. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XII. 119)

It is possible that individual immigrant Jews gained Greek citizenship, but we cannot say that the non-military Jewish community as a whole was granted citizenship, as

⁵⁷⁷ Kondoleon, C., 2000, 3-4.

⁵⁷⁸ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 30.

might be interpreted from the text above.⁵⁷⁹ Under Seleucid rule, a *politeuma*, a civic corporation with autonomous administrative and judicial authority was formed for the Jews, as those who wanted to continue to follow the Law could not accept Greek citizenship. By giving them this political organisation, the Jews had been granted equal status as the Greeks.⁵⁸⁰ Seleukos also made sure the community in general was provided for. A privilege that has not been recorded for any other city, but Josephus mentions for Antioch⁵⁸¹ is the provision of olive oil, in accordance to their faith, by the city.⁵⁸²

The Jews in Antioch were always in contact with other Jews, and this being a centre where groups of Jews speaking different languages lived together, increased the number of their contacts. Aramaic-speaking Jews were in contact with Babylonia, Galilee and Judaea. Greek-speaking Jews were in contact with Jerusalem, Sardis, Rome and Alexandria. They were also in continual contact with the Judaeans. After the Maccabean revolt the successors of Antiochos IV Epiphanes restored the Antiochene Jews the treasury from the Temple, made of brass, which they had sent as a gift, so they might place them in their synagogue.⁵⁸³

In the first century BC five hundred Jews from Babylon moved to Antioch of their own accord.⁵⁸⁴ They settled in Ulath,⁵⁸⁵ an area just outside Antioch where the Jewish farmers grew rice. These Jews from Babylonia were not necessarily poorer than the Jews in the city who worked with silver, gold, leather and textiles, whose wealthy families lived

⁵⁷⁹ This was discussed in detail in Part I.II, page

⁵⁸⁰ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 359.

⁵⁸¹ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* XII. 120.

⁵⁸² Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 360.

⁵⁸³ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 31.

⁵⁸⁴ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 187.

⁵⁸⁵ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.23-26.

in Daphne. The artisans were generally bilingual in Aramaic and Greek, the elite Jews spoke Greek and most of the time they were neither rejected nor entirely assimilated.⁵⁸⁶

When Syria became a province of the Roman Empire in 63 BC the Jews of Antioch came under the protection of the Romans, and were able to continue to exercise their religion. In other words, they were unaffected by the annexation. By the first century AD Antioch had one of the largest Diaspora communities.⁵⁸⁷ Romanization occurred through military and civilian administration, and also by heavy urbanisation and the award of Roman citizenship.⁵⁸⁸

As the prosperity of the Jews of Antioch increased, racial tensions developed. These turned into riots.⁵⁸⁹ The Roman governor had to maintain order, especially when street fighting between the Jews and the Greeks were frequent, and at certain times he had to intervene in local government.⁵⁹⁰ The riot noted below, for example was caused by the different circus factions.

From the first year of Gaius Caesar (AD 37) and for the three years until the end of his reign, the Green faction ruled the roost both at Rome and the cities generally...In the third year of his reign in Antioch in Syria, the members of the Blue faction of that city chanted in the theatre against the local Greens, 'Time raises up and Time casts down. The Greens are lechers.'... A great public riot broke out and disaster befell the city, for the Greeks of Antioch, doing battle with the Jews of the city, killed many of them and burned down their synagogues. (John Malalas, *Chronographia* 244)⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 30, 34-35.

⁵⁸⁷ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 358, 360.

⁵⁸⁸ Maas, M., 2000, 15.

⁵⁸⁹ Smallwood, E.M., 1976, 360.

⁵⁹⁰ Maas, M., 2000, 15.

⁵⁹¹ Quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 115, V.28.

Antioch itself was greatly affected when AD 67 when Antiochus, a Jew who had acquired Greek citizenship, turned against his father and his people, which resulted in a general attack on the whole Jewish community in the city. Perhaps this was a result of what Josephus says about the Greeks in the city being attracted to the worship of the Jews in the late AD 60's.⁵⁹²

Because the later (Seleucid) kings continued to treat the Jews of the Antioch in the same (i.e. favourable) manner, they grew in number and adorned their sanctuary with elaborate and costly offerings. All the time they were attracting to their rituals a large number of Greeks, whom they had, to a certain extent, incorporated in their own community. (Josephus, *Jewish War* 7.45)

As a result of the riot certain rights were taken away from the Antiochene Jews, such as the observance of the Sabbath, and were not restored to them until a few years later. It is thought that this attack was actually against Christianity that had been developing over the past twenty years in the city, for this was of Jewish descent and character.⁵⁹³

When Titus visited Antioch in spring AD 71, after the conquest of Judaea, the people of the city asked him to expel the Jews altogether but he denied their request, based on the fact the Jews of the Diaspora had not been involved in any way in the riots at Jerusalem so they would not pay for the sins of Judaea.⁵⁹⁴ However, from the writings of John Malalas we do know that he took some moves to show the Jews who was in power.

Titus founded the theatre of Daphne and inscribed on it: 'From the spoils of Judaea.'

The site of the same theatre was formerly a synagogue of the Jews. Out of contempt

⁵⁹² Williams, M.H., 1998, 200, footnote 18.

⁵⁹³ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 189.

⁵⁹⁴ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 190.

for them he pulled down their synagogue and built a theatre, placing there a marble statue of himself, which stands to the present day. (John Malalas, *Chronographia* 261)⁵⁹⁵

After the revolts in Palestine, only Jews whose loyalty had been proven were granted citizenship, and given local office. Even though men from Antioch were being sent to Rome to join the Senate at the end of the first century, senior offices were rarely given to Jews because their loyalty was questioned.⁵⁹⁶

Unlike the Jewish communities in Asia Minor, and even in Rome and Alexandria, Antioch was rabbinically influenced. The centres further way from the Holy Lands had become independent of rabbinic authority. The reason of this influence may have been its relation with the Aramaic-speaking Babylonian Jews. It was among them, the first Diaspora Jews, that the rabbinic teachings and regulations developed. Although Antioch was in contact with rabbis it never became a rabbinic centre like Galilee did.⁵⁹⁷

The Jews maintained Jewish traditions with in the city life. Inscriptions found in the Holy Land indicate that Jews of important status from Antioch were sometimes buried there.

Tomb of Aidesios, gerousiarch, from Antioch. (*BS* II no. 141, 3rd century AD)⁵⁹⁸

According to Williams the city had two Jewish quarters. One within the city walls, in an area south of the city called the Kerateion, between the Cherubim gate and the western slopes of Mt. Silpios and one outside, in the suburb of Daphne (Map 10).⁵⁹⁹ Yet

⁵⁹⁵ Quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 19, I.65.

⁵⁹⁶ Maas, M., 2000, 17.

⁵⁹⁷ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 29, 36.

⁵⁹⁸ Williams, M.H., 1998, 49, II.79.

⁵⁹⁹ Williams, M.H., 1998, 18.

evidence has shown that Jews lived in other parts of the city that were not connected to these quarters.⁶⁰⁰ Perhaps this is why Smallwood says there were three main areas that Jews lived in, the main one being at Daphne.⁶⁰¹

From at least two literary texts we know of synagogues in Antioch.⁶⁰²

After him, Demetrianos (I Soter), son of Seleukos, reigned for eight years (162-150 BC). There came to Antioch the Great a certain man, Judas by name, a Jew by race, who begged and entreated Demetrianos the king. He made over to him the Temple and the remains of the Maccabees. They buried them in Antioch the Great in the district known as the Kerateion, for there was a Jewish synagogue there. (John Malalas, *Chronographia* 206)⁶⁰³

The main synagogue was the Matriona Synagogue, which was in Daphne, the wealthier part of town. It is thought that this synagogue probably resembled that of Dura Europos in decoration. Another synagogue known from literary evidence is the Ashmunit Synagogue in the southeast part of Antioch. According the medieval writer Ibn Shahin it was the first synagogue to be built after AD 70 (not necessarily meaning that there were no earlier synagogues). It later became a church.⁶⁰⁴

Jewish quarters were set up in a Hellenistic city for various reasons, but generally the reason being that they felt the need to stay together. Initially, however, the Jews in Antioch chose to live outside the walls, but during the reign of Tiberius new walls were built, with the Jewish quarter now within the city (Map). The Aramaic-speaking Jews

⁶⁰⁰ Williams, M.H., 1998, 15.

⁶⁰¹ Smallwood, E.M., 1999, 187.

⁶⁰² Williams, M.H., 1998, 19.

⁶⁰³ Quoted in Williams, M.H., 1998, 18-19, I.64.

⁶⁰⁴ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 33.

generally continued to live outside Antioch whereas the Greek-speaking Jews lived within the walls of the city.⁶⁰⁵

Archaeological evidence of the Jews in Antioch is somewhat scarce. Only the relief of a *menorah* has been found, questionably associated with a synagogue.⁶⁰⁶ This engraving has four Greek letters inscribed below the *menorah*. Due to the damaged condition of the fragment, no successful interpretation has been made from these letters. This relief was a surface find, thus it is not known what it belonged to and unfortunately today it is lost (Plate).⁶⁰⁷

Until the fourth century, when under the reign of Constantine the Jews were given a diminished status in society, the Jews of Antioch were highly respected and protected by the Roman law.⁶⁰⁸ Evidence of Christian activity within Antioch dates much earlier than the conversion of the Empire. When spreading the Gospel became difficult in Judaea, after the death of Jesus, his disciples decided to go elsewhere to spread the good news. Antioch was one of the first cities where such missionary work was carried out. It is thought that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Antioch. The Apostles Paul and Peter made many a trip to Antioch and it was here that the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26).⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁵ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 30-31.

⁶⁰⁶ Bloedhorn, H. & Huttenmeister, G., 1999, 287.

⁶⁰⁷ Brooten, B.J., 2000, 29, 35.

⁶⁰⁸ Maas, M., 2000, 19.

⁶⁰⁹ Harvey, S.A., 2000, 39.

Appendix 3

Dura Europos

Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates river near the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire (Map 7), likewise not situated within the geographical borders covered in this thesis, is too important a site to ignore entirely, as the synagogue and house-church found there present significant information on both Jewish and early Christian religious life, that might illuminate this in Asia Minor.

The synagogue was not a free-standing building but rather a reconstructed house in a residential area of block L7. Even after the purpose of the building changed, from the outside it still looked like a house, and blended in with the structures around it; in other words it was inconspicuous, built in the local traditions. The houses around the synagogue also belonged to Jews.⁶¹⁰ It had two building phases (Plan 4). In the initial phase the interior of the house was changed to accommodate a Jewish communal institution with a sanctuary, courtyard, and rooms around a peristyle courtyard, probably used by the synagogue officials, with the main hall only being able to seat 60 people. It had benches along the three sides and the walls were covered with plaster with paintings on them. In the second phase the synagogue was extended to incorporate the adjoining house H and the entrance to the building was now from the east rather than the west. The old building now only consisted of the main hall and forecourt and the community rooms were in the newer section. The *Torah* niche in the west wall remained where it was and the forecourt was probably used for discussions.⁶¹¹

⁶¹⁰ Hachlili, R., 1998, 39.

⁶¹¹ Hachlili, R., 1998, 42-44; Levine, L.I., 1999, 1016-1017.

The early synagogue is probably dated to AD 165-200, the later to AD 244/5. A few years later biblical scenes were painted on the walls of the main hall. The need for enlargement must have been because of growth within the community; however, the synagogue was still not a large one and thus perhaps the community was not very large either.⁶¹² On the other hand the second phase of the synagogue was twice the size of the house church at Dura and more impressive a structure.⁶¹³

Inscriptions from the synagogue are in Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew. Most of them are explanatory names belonging to the narrative biblical scenes. A few of them are building inscriptions, giving us information on the leaders and their positions in the community.⁶¹⁴ There are also Iranian inscriptions, somewhat unusual and enigmatic in that they seem to belong to local officials that inspected and approved the paintings. However their exact purpose still remains a mystery.⁶¹⁵

The most striking element of the synagogue, are the figural paintings on the walls of scenes from the Old Testament. These belong to the second phase, and are painted over the pre-existing paintings, so that the outlines of the first phase ones can still be made out. Because of the Law, Jews generally refrained from depicting figures, especially humans. However at Dura we have a unique case. The figures are in Iranian dress, which may have just been a reflection of the local culture. Yet scholars believe that it is because of this that the eyes of some of the figures have been gouged out and some of them marred. It is thought that Roman soldiers, during the Sassanian siege at Dura in AD 256/7, thought the Jews to be Sassanian sympathisers because of the clothing of the figures and thus damaged

⁶¹² Hachlili, R., 1998, 45.

⁶¹³ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 277.

⁶¹⁴ Hachlili, R., 1998, 403-407.

⁶¹⁵ Levine, L.I., 1999, 1018.

the paintings. Yet, as not all the figures were damaged, the act seems to have been conducted randomly, and this explanation is not conclusive.⁶¹⁶

The house church at Dura is dated to AD 232. Initially they used a new private house, with rooms around a courtyard, as it was, the largest room holding about 30 people. In the early 240's, due to the increase in number of Christians at Dura, they built a larger meeting room on the west side of the house, by making two rooms into one. This room was decorated with paintings. The building was identified as a 'house church' for the community by a red cross marked on the street entrance.⁶¹⁷

In style it is extremely different from the synagogue, except for the decoration of the niche which is identical to the *Torah* niche in the synagogue, which had remained unaltered in both periods, so most probably the Christians had seen it before the conversion of the house into a house-church. Among the narrative stories painted in the baptistery are stories of the New Testament. The paintings in general are somewhat more simplified.⁶¹⁸ However, this may have been the contact of two minority groups rather than contact through the conversion of Jews to Christianity. Names found in inscriptions from the house-church are Greek and Latin, not the native names of Dura, and the fragments of Scripture on the wall paintings were in Greek, not Syriac the local language. These Christians were probably Roman troops stationed at Dura, without a strong Jewish heritage.⁶¹⁹

Both the synagogue and the house-church flourished during the reign of Alexander Severus, the pro-Jewish and pro-Christian emperor, and then Philip the Arab, the first

⁶¹⁶ Hachlili, R., 1998, 422-423.

⁶¹⁷ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 269-270.

⁶¹⁸ Hachlili, R., 1998, 427-428.

⁶¹⁹ Lane-Fox, R., 1986, 277.

Christian emperor. In this way Dura Europos has provided valuable material evidence as proof for a period where the open practice of Christianity is suggested by literary evidence.

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PLATES, FIGURES and MAPS

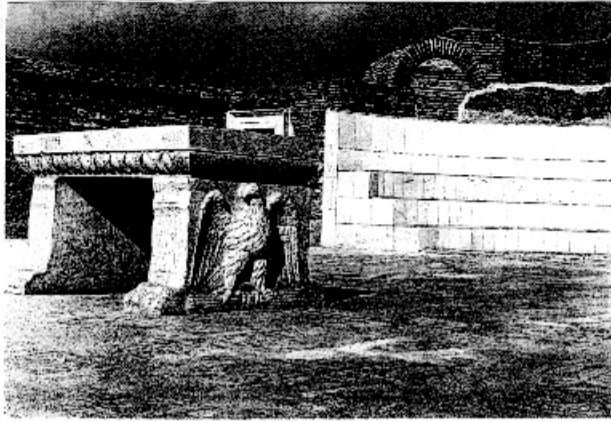


Ashlar chancel screen (2) from Priene, with menorah flanked by two peacocks.



Sardis, looking into the Main Hall of the synagogue from the atrium.

PLATE III

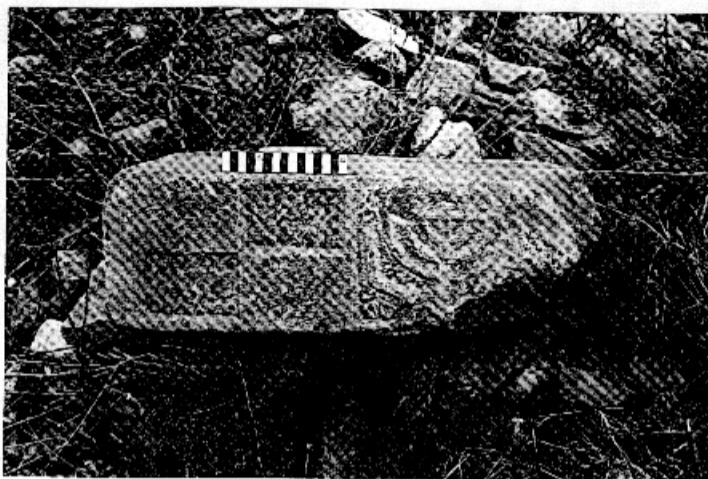


a - Sardis, Eagle altar table.



b - Sardis, limestone screen with menorah, lulav, Torah scrolls and ethrog.

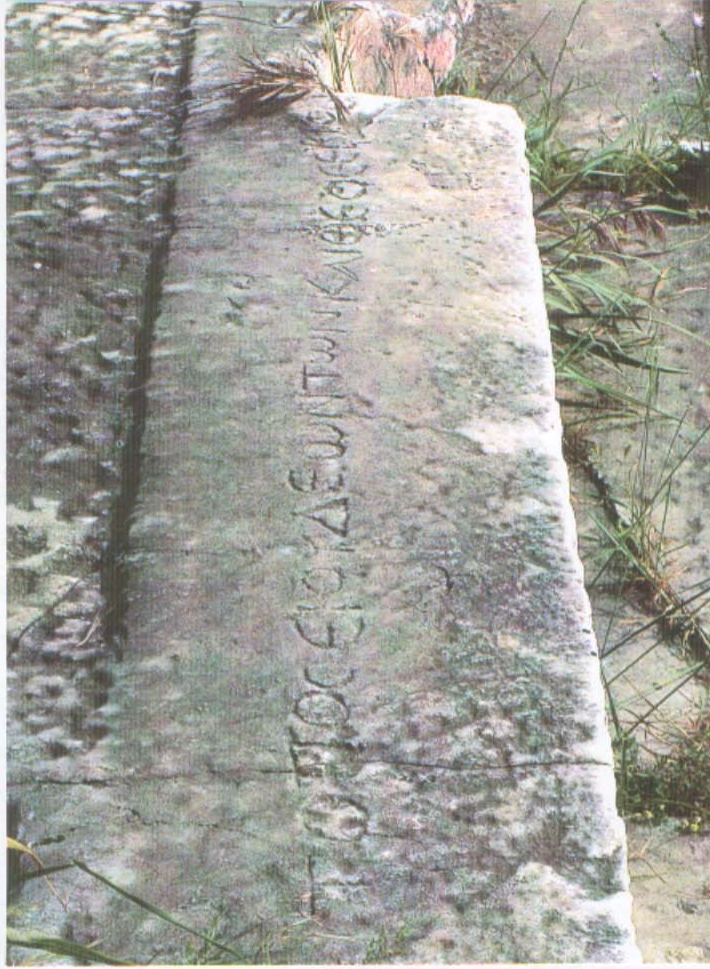
PLATE IV



a – Aphrodisias, architectural fragment with carved menorah,
possibly from the synagogue.



b – Akmonia, column capital with menorah and Torah scrolls,
possibly from the synagogue.



Miletus, row of seats with the inscription 'Place of the Jews and Godfearers' from the theatre.

PLATE VI



a – Sardis, Hebrew inscription with the word 'Hebrew'.



b – Sardis, incised menorah on brick.



c – Ephesus, oil lamp with depiction of menorah.

Hierapolis, tomb identified as Jewish by incised menorah.



PLATE VII



a - Aphrodisias, dedicatory inscription, face b.



b - Aphrodisias, face b, upper list.



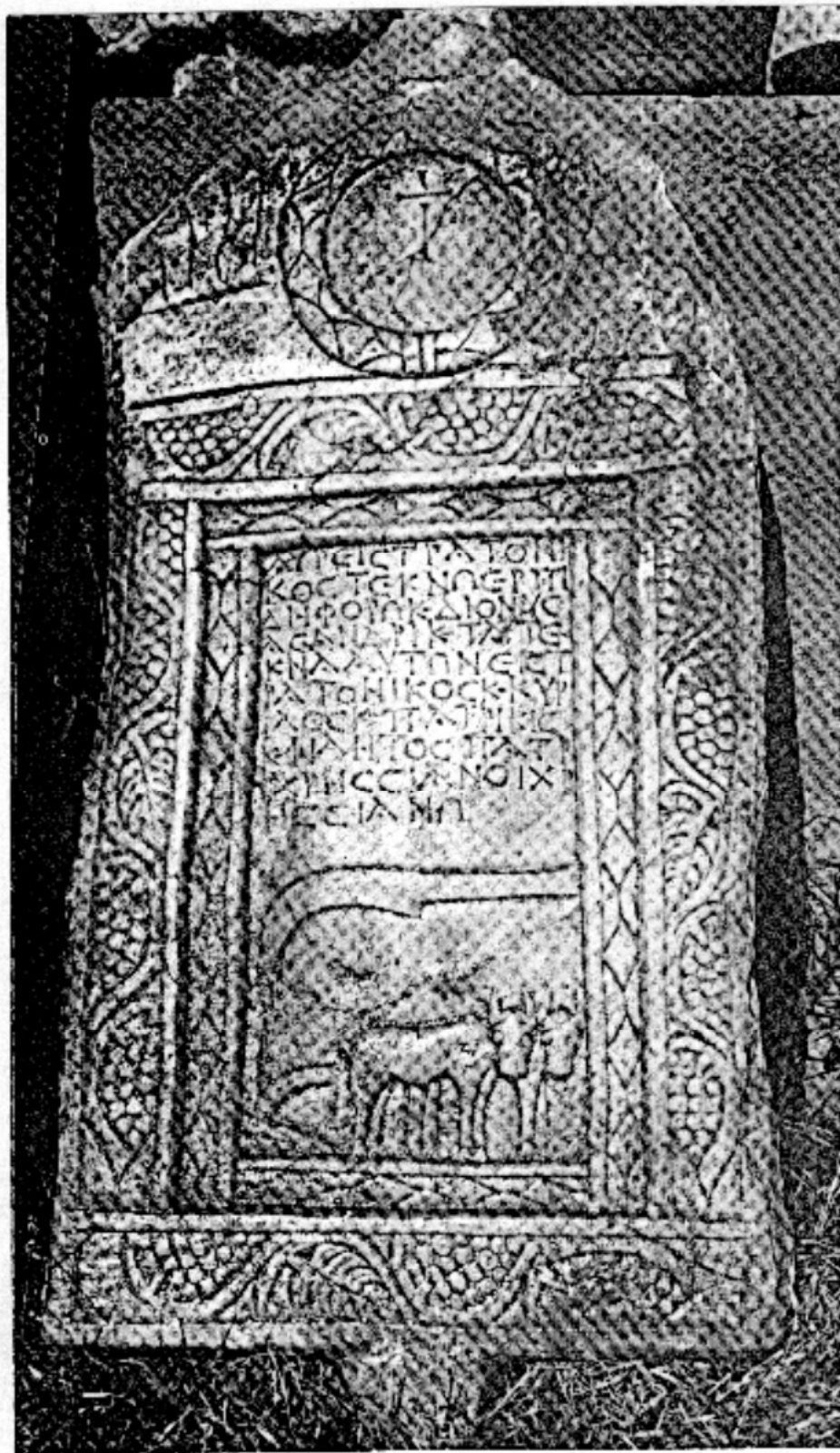
c - Aphrodisias, face b, lower list.



Tembris Valley, tomb number 3 = App.1 liv.



Tembris Valley, tomb number 8 = App.1 lv.



Tembris Valley, tomb number 9 = App. I lvi.



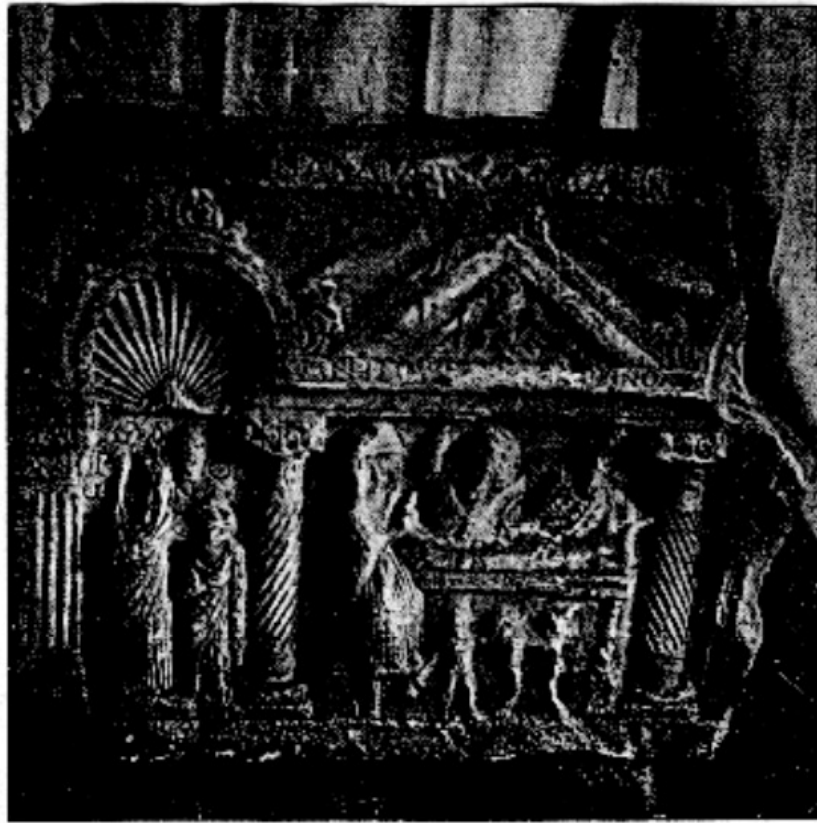
Tembris Valley, tomb number 10= App.1 lvii.



a - Hermus Valley, Christian tomb.



b - Lyconia, Tau cross tomb.



a – Konya, tomb with banquet scene and fish.



b – Dorla, Nova Isauria, tomb of 'blessed Papas'.

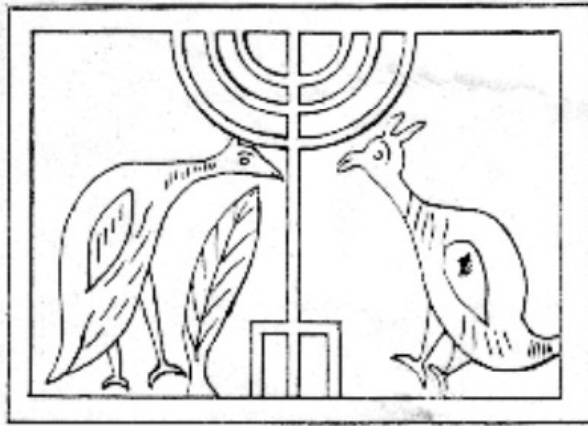
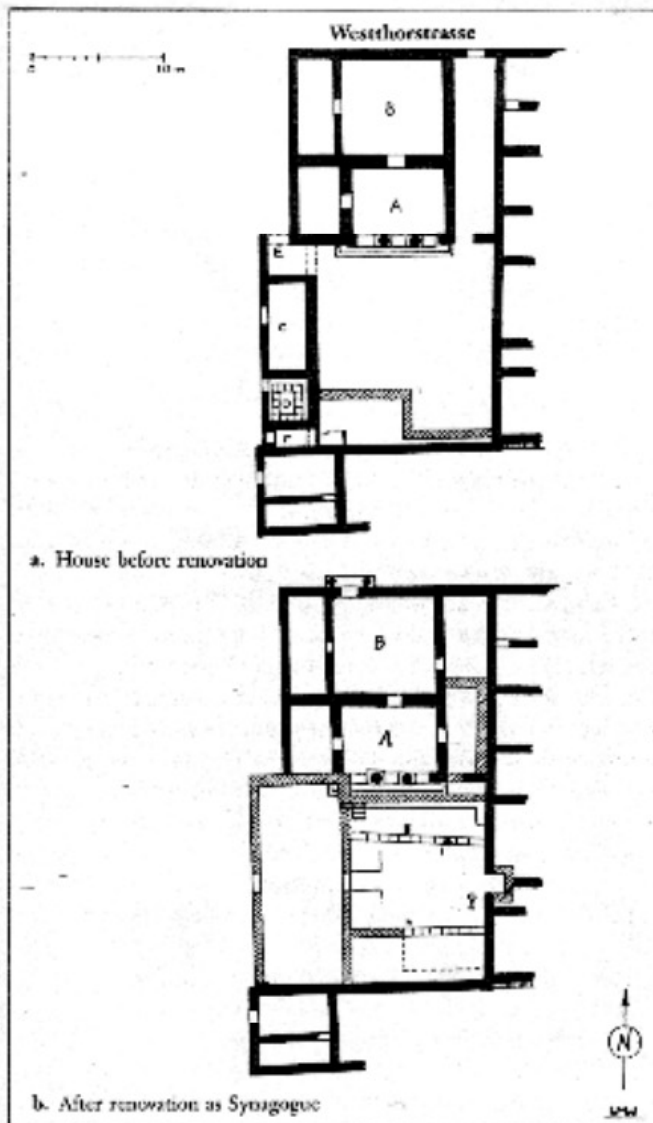


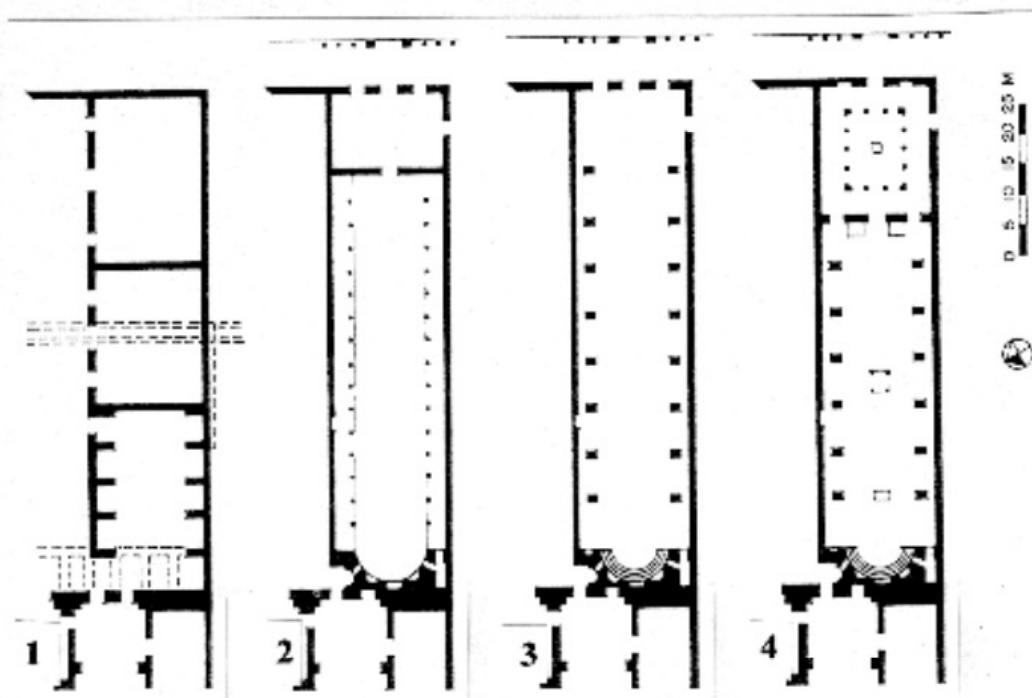
Figure 1 – Priene, drawing of chancel screen 2.



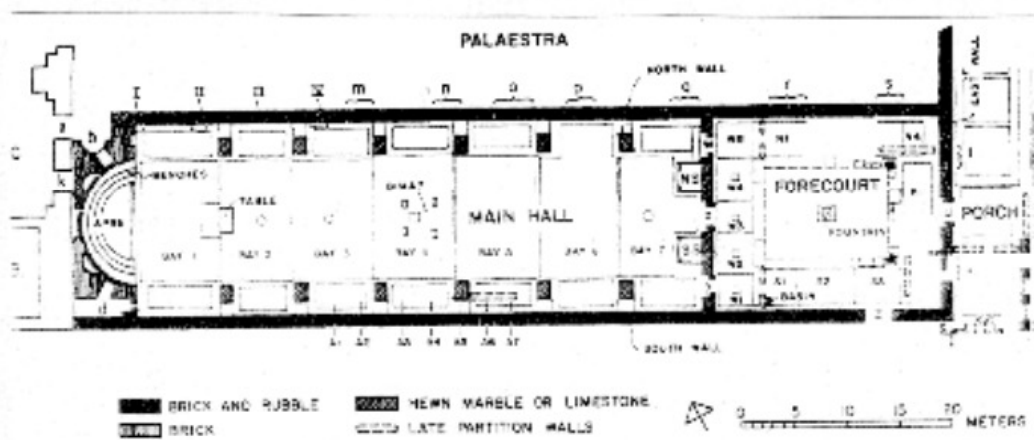
Figure 2 – Priene, drawing of chancel screen 1.



Plan 1 – Priene, both phases of the synagogue.



Plan 2 – Sardis, four phases of synagogue.



Plan 3 – Sardis, detailed plan of synagogue in Phase 4.

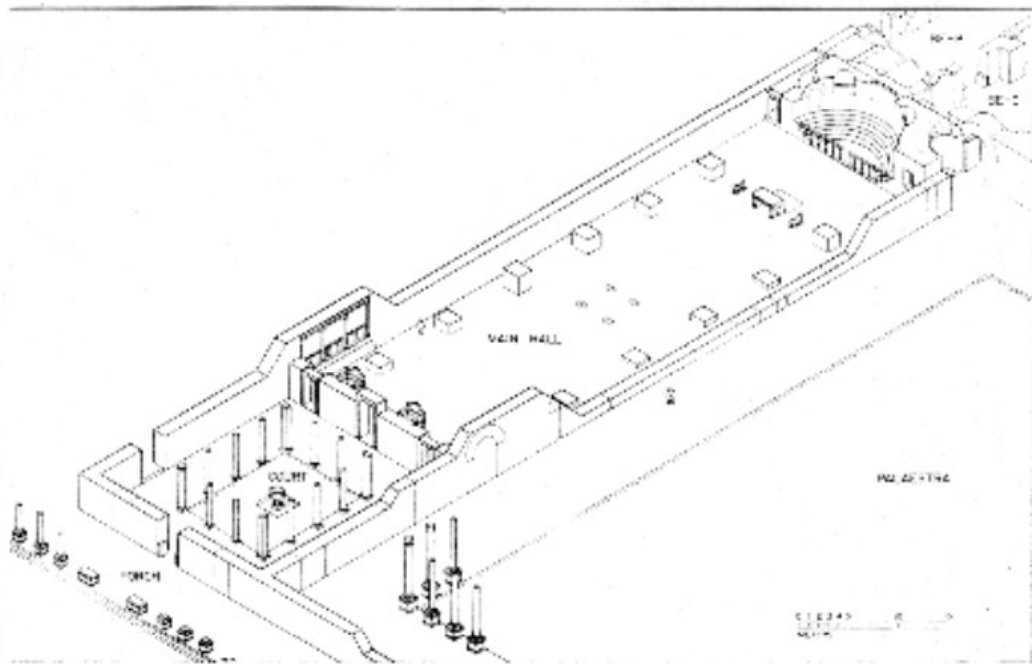


Figure 3 – Reconstruction of the synagogue of Sardis in final phase.



Figure 4 a – b – Apameia, coins with the depiction of Noah and the ark.

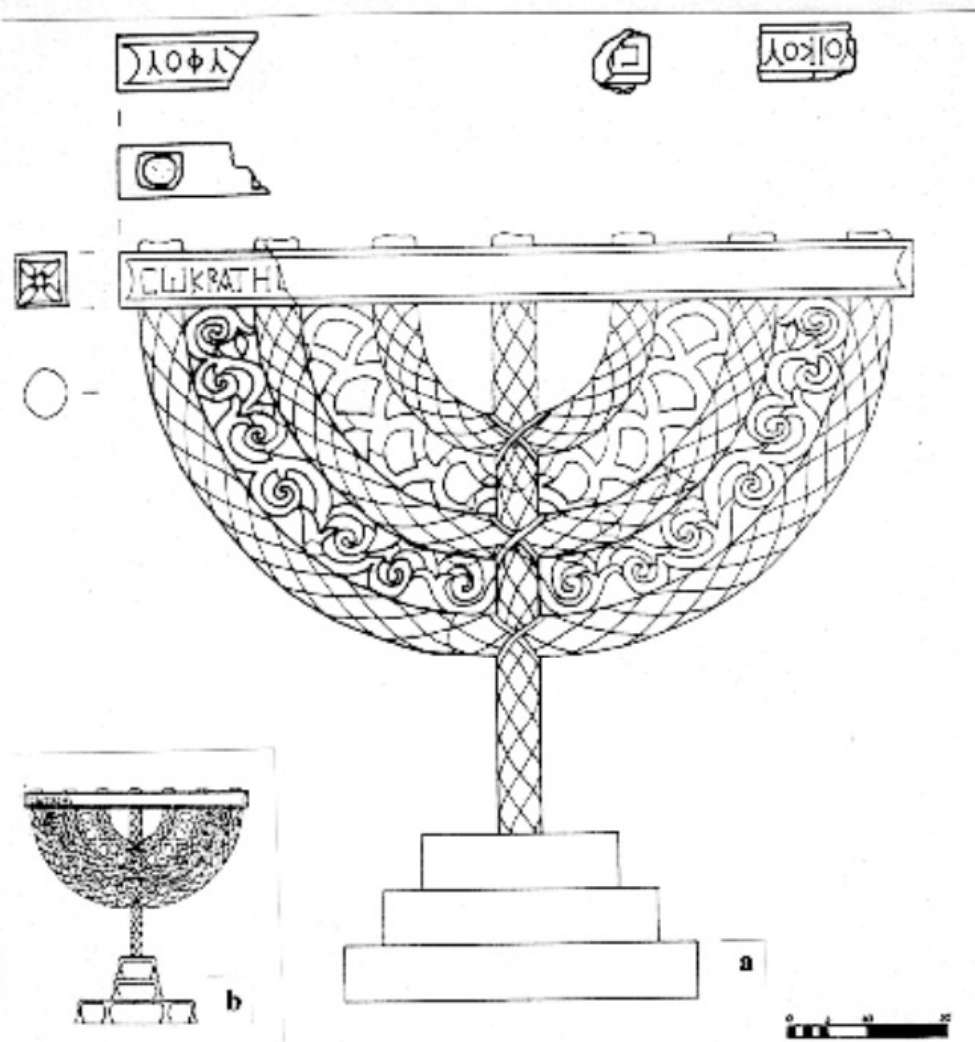


Figure 5 a - b - Sardis, Socrates Menorah, partial reconstruction and complete reconstruction.



Figure 6 – Pergamum, pediment fragment with menorah, lulav, ethrog.



Figure 7 – Miletus, oil lamps with depiction of Torah shrine



Figure 8 – Claudopolis, depiction of menorah, lulav, ethrog, shofar.

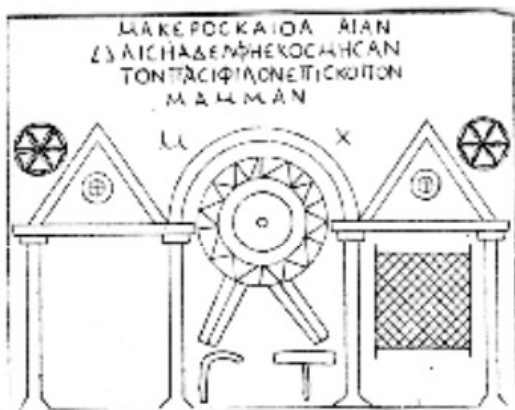


Figure 9 – Lyconia, Tau cross tomb.



Figure 10 – Lyconia, tomb with doves



Figure 11 – Lyconia, Jewish-Christian tomb of Elias.

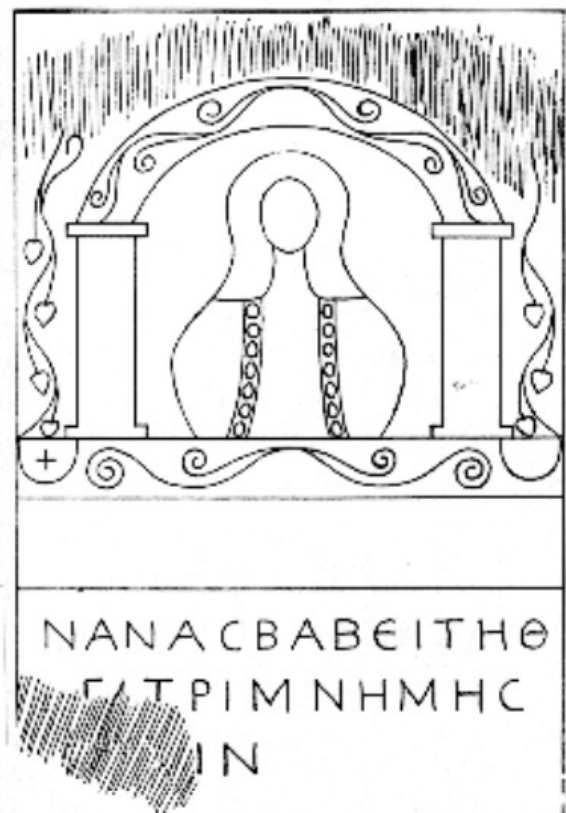


Figure 12 – Lyconia, Early Christian tomb with Isaurian mother goddess and small cross.

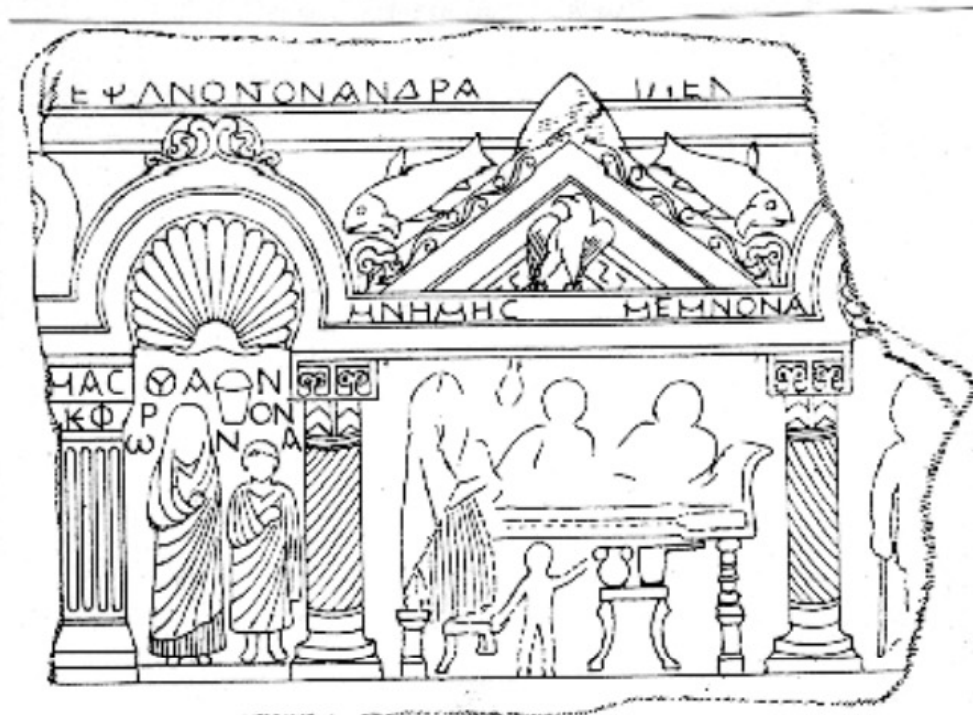


Figure 13 – Konya, tomb with banquet scene and fish.

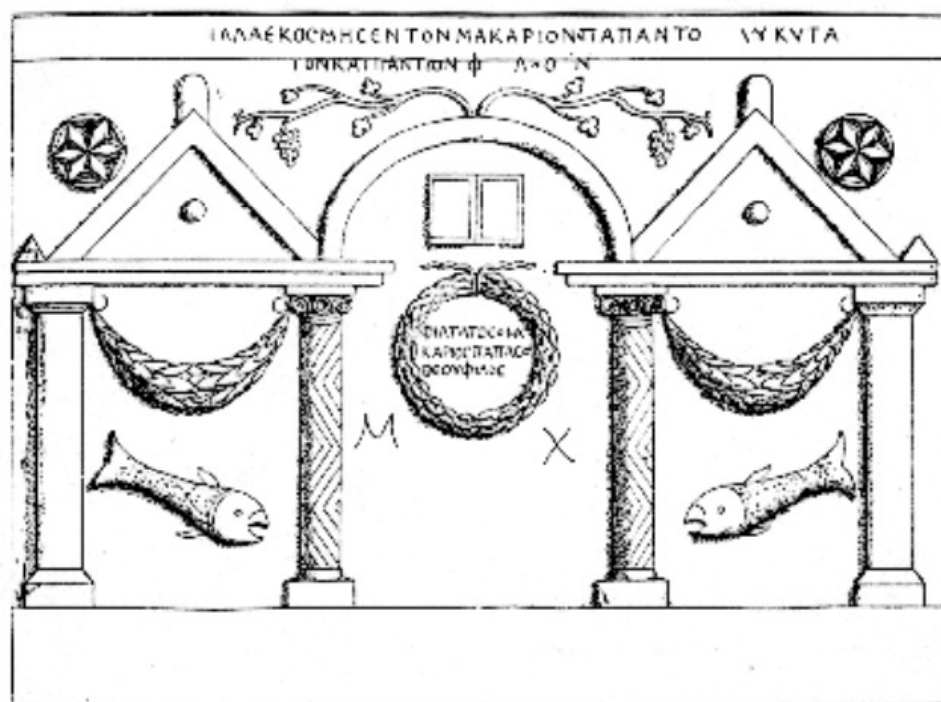
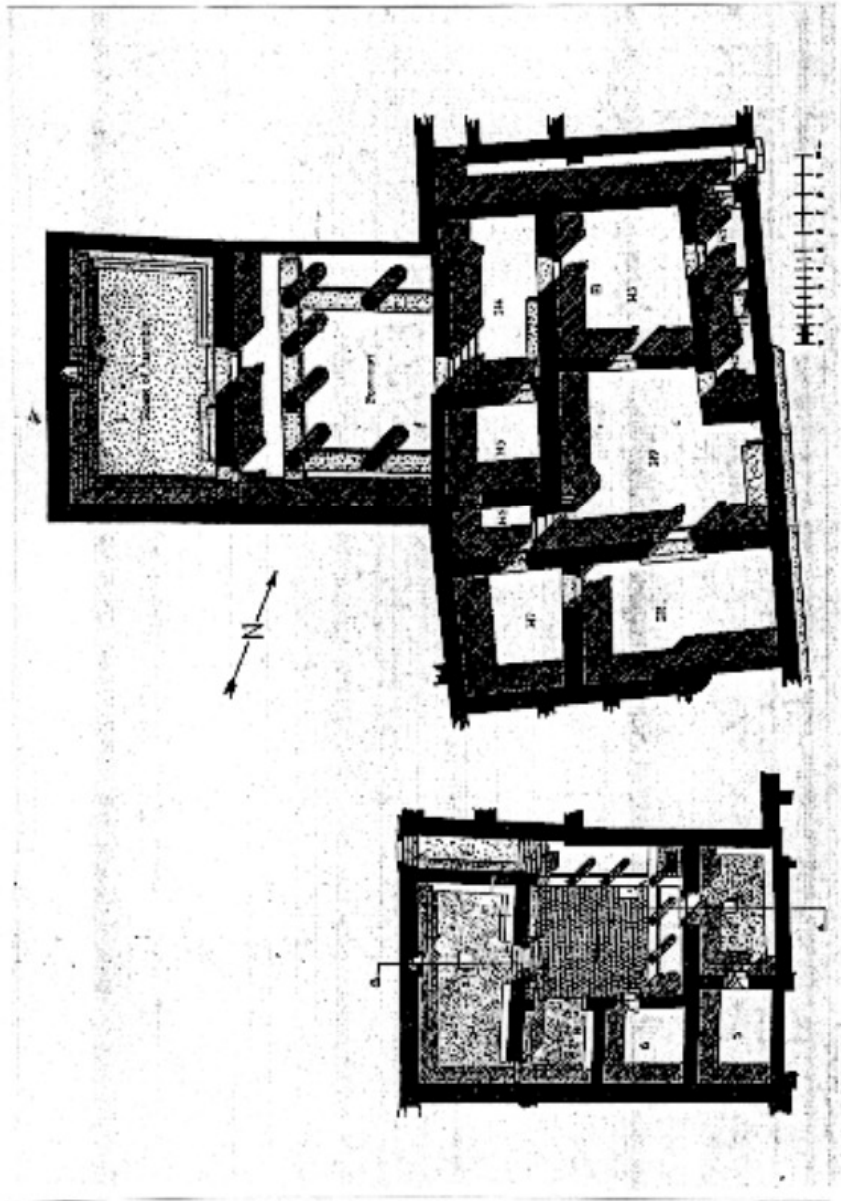
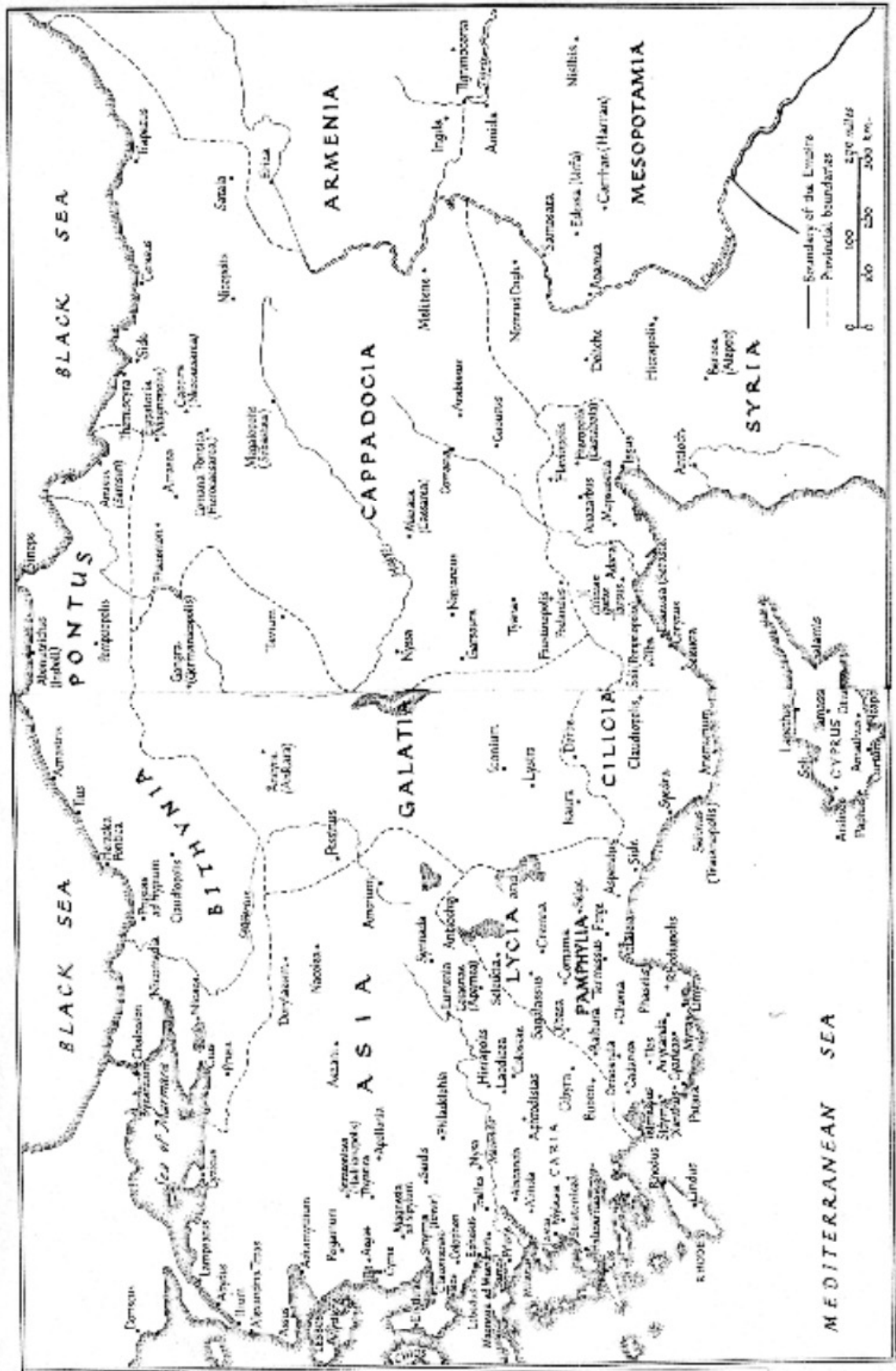


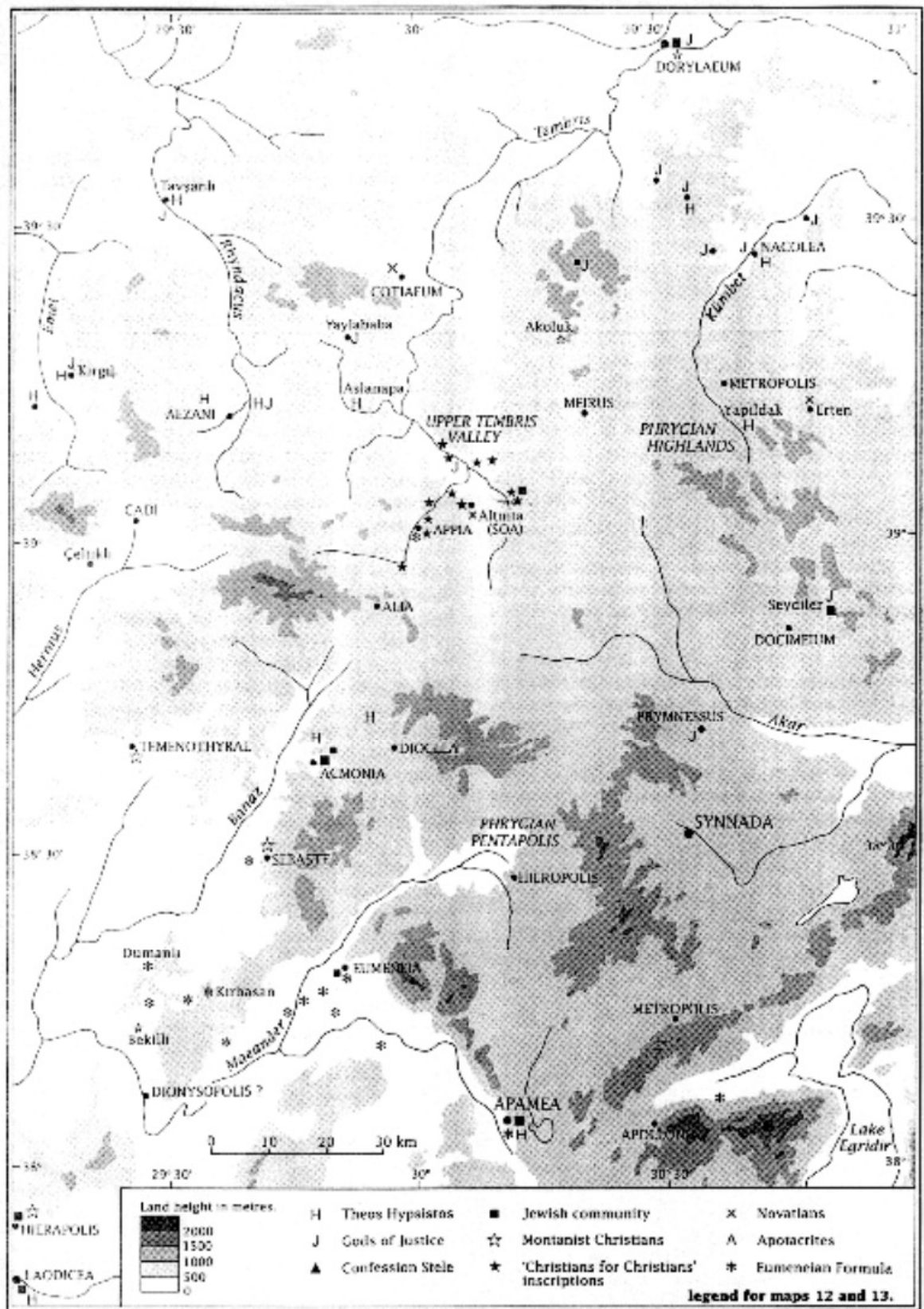
Figure 14 – Dorla, Nova Isauria, tomb of 'blessed Papas'.



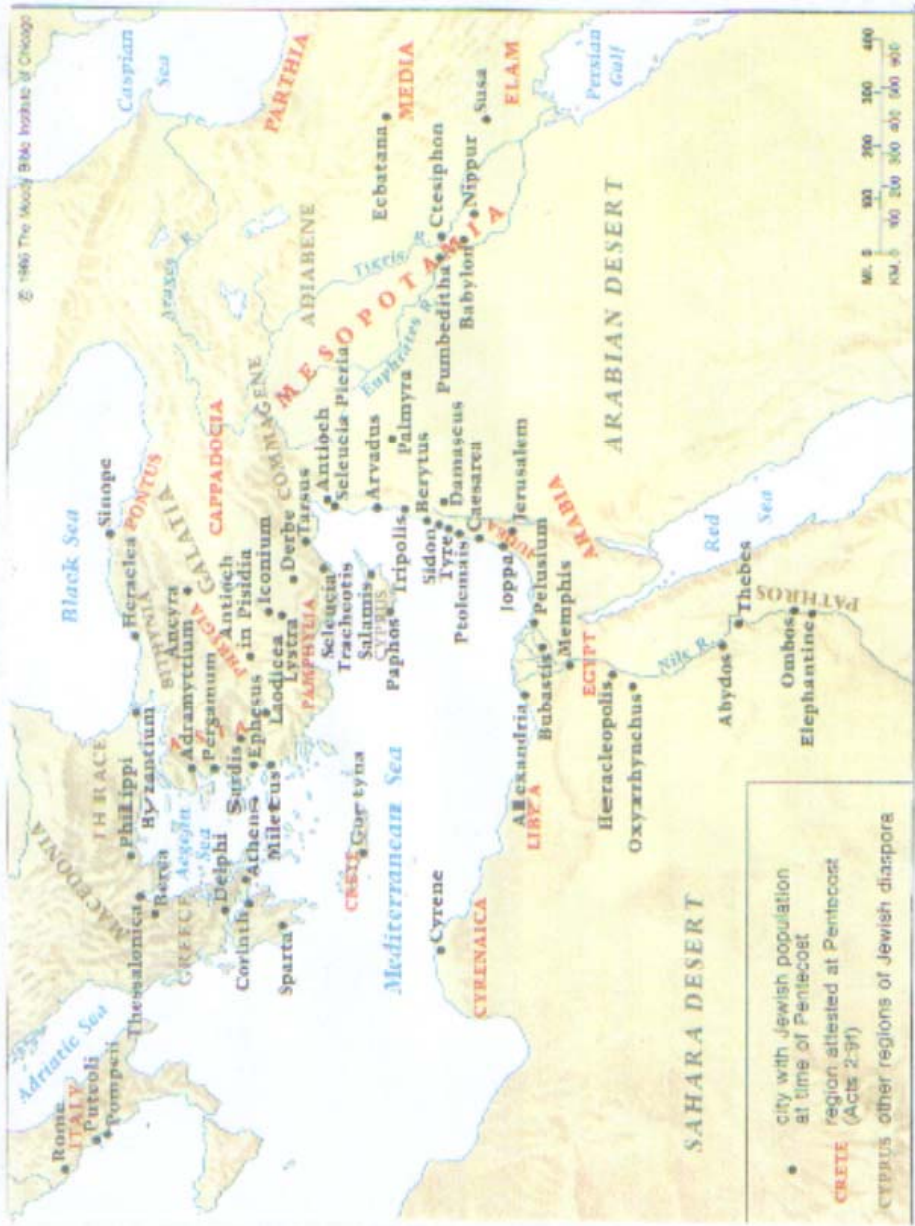
Plan 4 – The two stages of the synagogue at Dura Europos.



Map 1 - Major cities in Asia Minor from the Roman Imperial period.



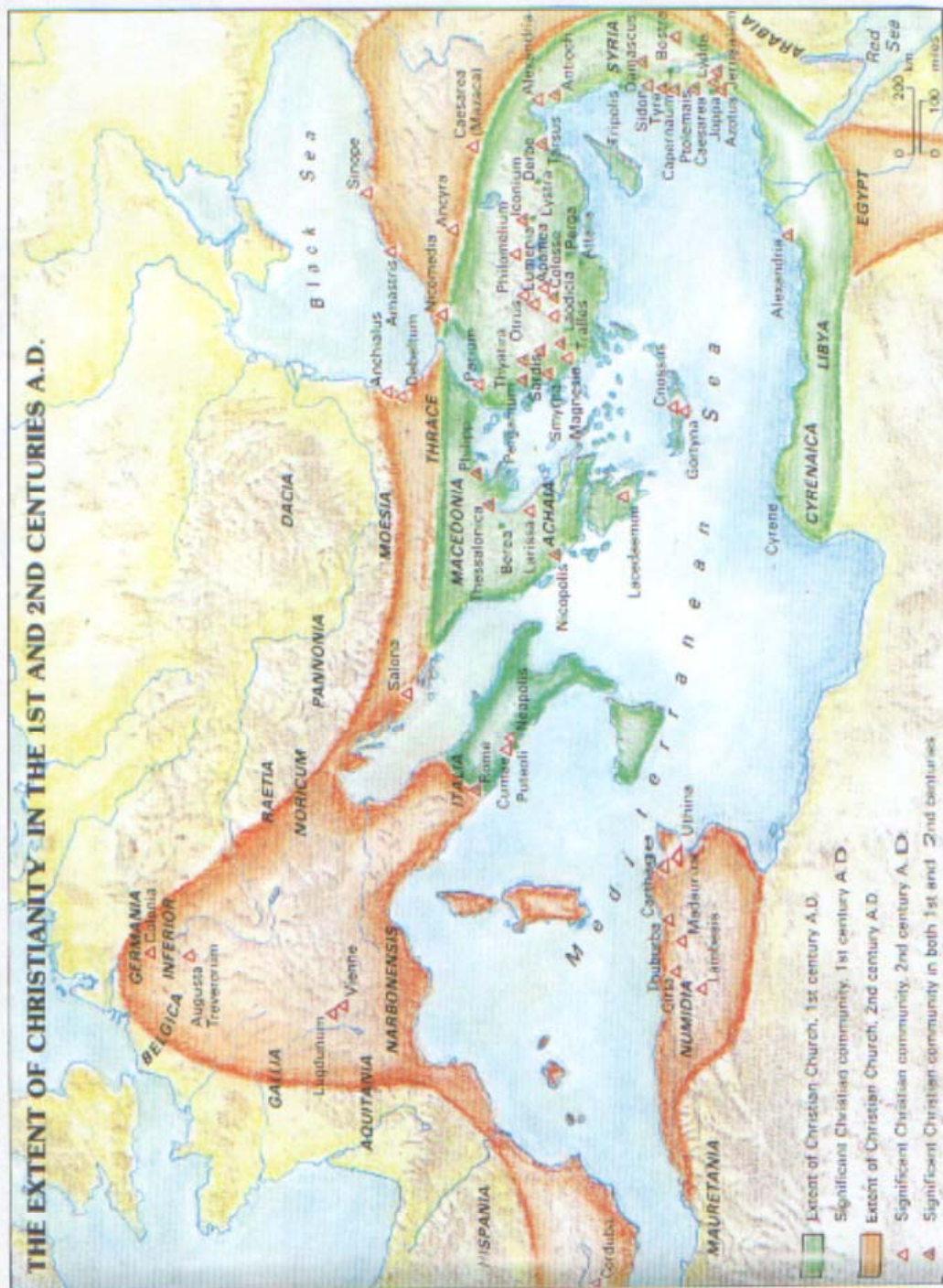
Map 2 – West and central Phrygia, indicating Jewish and Christian sites.



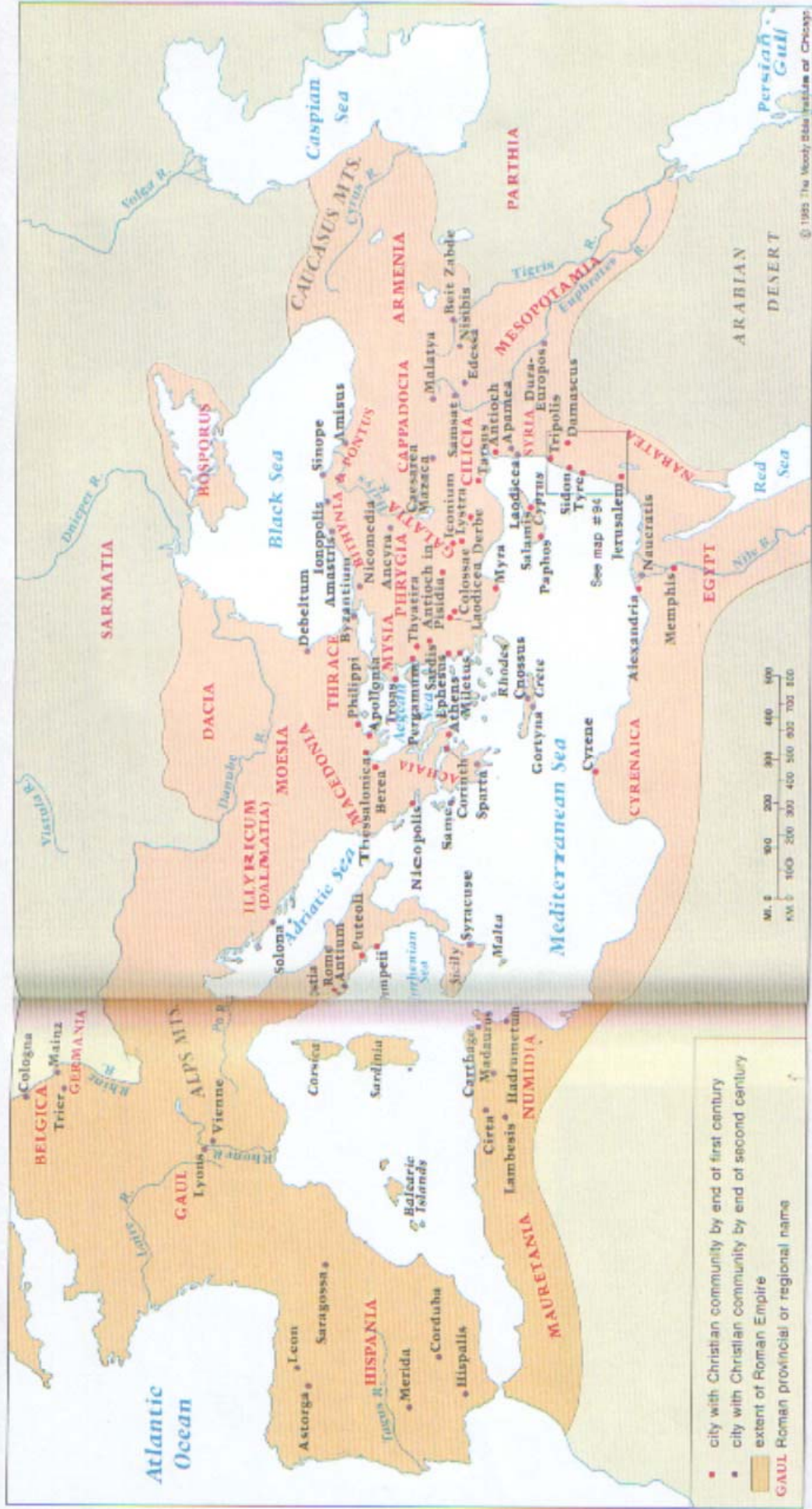
Map 3 – The Jewish Diaspora in the mid-first century AD.



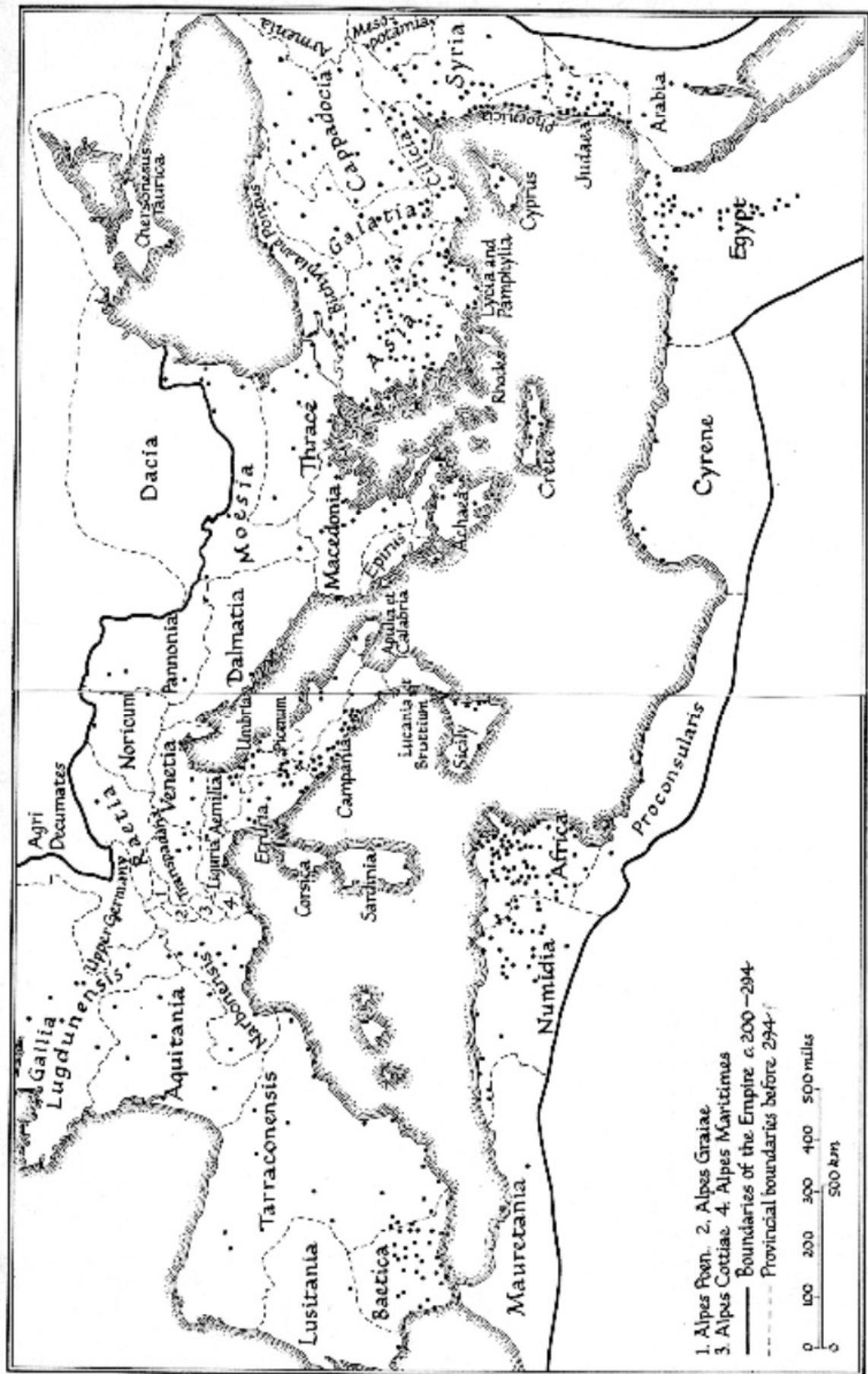
Map 4 - Paul's 1st and 2nd journeys.



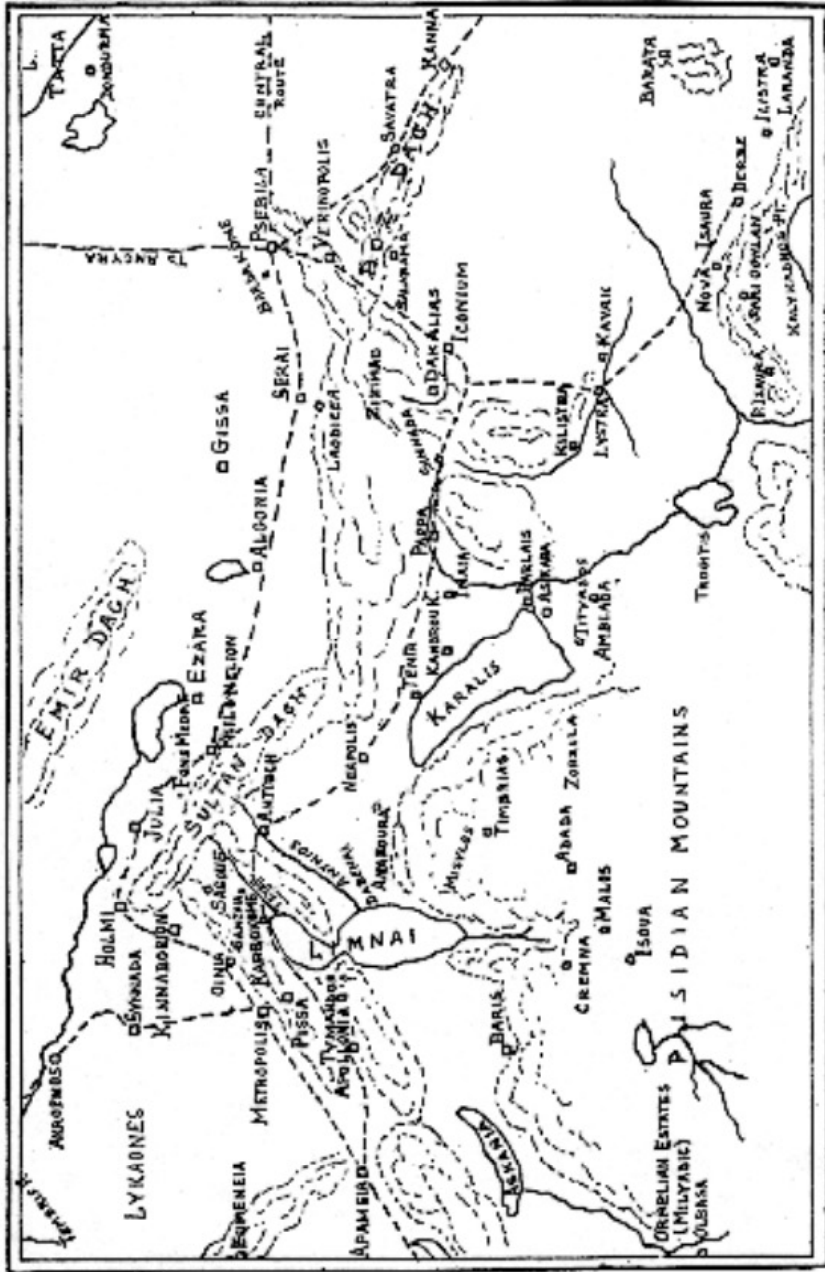
Map 6 – Christian communities in the 1st and 2nd centuries.



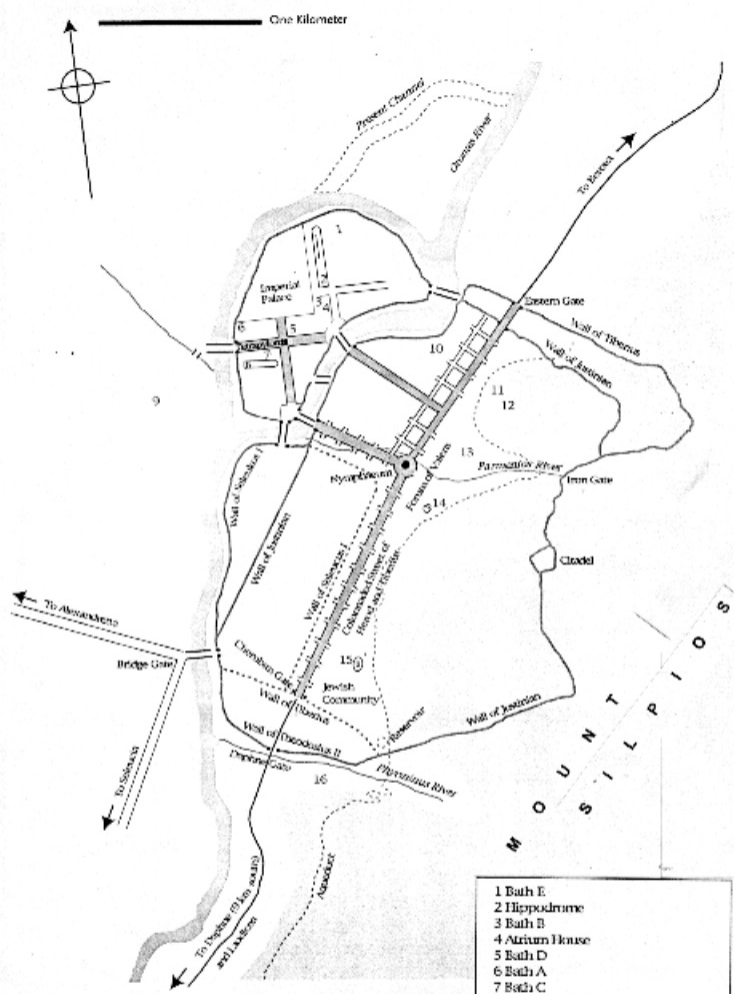
Map 7 - Christian communities in the 1st and 2nd centuries.



Map 8 – Christian communities in the Mediterranean before AD 304.



Map 9 - Pisidia, Lyconia and southern Phrygia.



Map 10 - Plan of the city of Antioch in Roman Period.

- 1 Bath E
 - 2 Hippodrome
 - 3 Bath B
 - 4 Atium House
 - 5 Bath D
 - 6 Bath A
 - 7 Bath C
 - 8 Byzantine Stadium
 - 9 Mysterion of St. Babylas (Kausie)
 - 10 Bath F
 - 11 House of the Calendar
 - 12 House of the Drunken Diceyos
 - 13 Charitonos (rock-cut relief)
 - 14 Theater
 - 15 Amphitheater
 - 16 Necropolis of Menesryne
- (Locations are approximate, based on Lind 1947, pt. 1, G. Poczard, MEFRA 106, p. 1072)

Map courtesy of the author