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The Discovery of a Menorah in Attalia (Kaleiçi, Antalya) and its Significance for Jewish Communities in Pamphylia

MARK WILSON*

Abstract

The presence of Jews in the region of Pamphylia in Asia Minor is documented in ancient literary and epigraphical texts. However, little archaeological realia have been found documenting their existence. Therefore, the discovery of a marble colonette fragment with a menorah during a rescue excavation in ancient Attalia, the old city Kaleiçi of Antalya, is significant. This article first discusses the textual and epigraphical evidence for Jews in Pamphylia. It next recounts how the Attalia menorah was discovered, then discusses details of the colonette and its menorah. A review of menorah comparanda follows with suggested interpretations for the function of the colonette and its menorah. The article concludes by setting the menorah and its discovery in the larger historical narrative of Jews in southern Asia Minor.

Keywords: Attalia, Pamphylia, Menorah, Jewish community

Öz

Küçük Asya'da Pamphylia bölgesindeki Yahudilerin varlığı, antik edebi ve epigrafik metinlerde tespit edilebilmektedir. Buna karşın, bu varlığı belgeleyecek arkeolojik kanıtlar sayıca azdır. Bu nedenle, Antalya'nın (antik Attaleia) eski yerleşimi olan Kaleiçi semtindeki bir kurtarma kazısı sırasında üzerinde bir menora tasvirinin yer aldığı küçük bir mermer sütun parçasının bulunması önemlidir. Bu makalede, önce, Pamphylia'daki Yahudilerin varlığına ilişkin edebi ve epigrafik kanıtlardan bahsedilmektedir. Daha sonra, Attaleia menorası'nın keşfi ve ardından da menora tasvirli mermer bloğun kendisi ele alınmaktadır. Menoraların bilinen başka örneklerle karşılaştırılmasıyla, burada ele alınan mermer blok ve üzerindeki menoranın işlevine ilişkin yorum ve önerilerde bulunmaktadır. Makale, menora ve keşfinin, Küçük Asya'nın güneyindeki Yahudilerin geniş bir tarihsel öyküsü kapsamında değerlendirilmesiyle sona ermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Attaleia, Pamphylia, Menora, Yahudiler

Introduction

The presence of Jews in Asia Minor during the Roman and Late Antique periods is known from ancient literary texts.¹ The material culture of these communities is evidenced in the long-known of synagogues at Sardis and Priene as well as the recently discovered synagogue in Lycia at Andriake, the port of Myra.² The identification of these structures was secured by the

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¹ For a comprehensive bibliography see Trebilco 1991, 264-300, and more recently Van der Horst 2015 in his chapters, "The Jews of Ancient Phrygia" and "Judaism in Asia Minor," 134-60.

² These synagogues are well documented: for Sardis see Seager and Kraabel 1983; for Priene see Burkhardt and Wilson 2013; for Andriake see Çevik et al. 2010. For an updated overview see Wilson 2019b, 122-31.

menoroth –the seven-armed candlestick– found at all three synagogues. Individual menorahs have also been discovered in numerous other ancient sites in Turkey in various contexts, such as at Sebastopolis and the necropolis at Hierapolis.³ However, in Mediterranean Turkey, Çevik has observed that “there is a paucity of information regarding the Jews in the Roman province of Lycia and Pamphylia.”⁴ Pamphylia is the coastal plain situated below the Taurus Mountains with Pisidia bordering to the north, Lycia to the west,⁵ and Rough Cilicia to the east. Of its main cities Attalia and Side were situated on the coast, while Perge, Sillyon, and Aspendos were located inland along a road that connected all the cities.⁶ Pisidia is directly linked to the cities of Pamphylia by roads and tracks, most notably the Via Sebaste built by Augustus in 6 BC.⁷

Applebaum suggests that in Pamphylia “a considerable part of the Jewish population in the region was rural, and unattached to city communities.”⁸ If Applebaum’s point is to highlight the non-urban situation of Jews in the region, the claim is unrealistic. A look at Grainger’s suggested boundaries for the *chorai* of the cities of Pamphylia shows that only a short distance separated them.⁹ The longest distance is between Aspendos and Side –approximately 30 kilometers. Thus any “rural” Jew living in Pamphylia would be within a few hour’s walk of a major Pamphylian city. And given the relationship of Hellenistic cities to the *chorai*, it is inconceivable that these areas around the cities would be “unattached to city communities.” Thus Applebaum’s point is lost amidst Pamphylia’s geographical realities.

Jews in Pamphylia and Southern Pisidia

Textual Evidence

Much textual evidence exists to document the presence of Jews in southern Asia Minor. Pamphylia and Side are among the places mentioned by the Roman consul Lucius in 139 BC. In his circular letter written at the behest of the Roman Senate, he admonished rulers, countries, and cities to be friendly to the Jews.¹⁰ Herod I, in his letter to Gaius Caligula, mentioned Pamphylia among the places in Asia Minor where a Jewish community existed.¹¹ Jews from Pamphylia were among the Diaspora communities gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost described by Luke in Acts 2:10.

Paul and Barnabas arrived in and departed from Pamphylia on their first journey dated around AD 46–48. Paul’s *modus operandi* was first to visit the local synagogue, if one existed. On the first journey he spoke in synagogues at Salamis (Acts 13:5), Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14–15, 32), and Iconium (Acts 14:1). On their return Paul preached at Perga, although where

³ For Sebastopolis see Le Guen-Pollet and Rémy 1991; for Hierapolis see Miranda 1999.

⁴ Çevik et al. 2010, 345.

⁵ For a review of Jewish communities in Lycia, see Wilson 2019a, 11–17.

⁶ Phaselis and Korakesion are sometimes reckoned as Pamphylian cities; however, here they are regarded in Lycia and Rough Cilicia respectively; see Grainger 2009, xi–xiii and passim.

⁷ These routes to the interior are discussed in Wilson 2009, 472–83.

⁸ Applebaum 1974, 486.

⁹ Grainger 2009, 35, map 2.

¹⁰ 1 Maccabees 15:23. Williams 1998, 2, notes that the date and authenticity of this letter are disputed. Nevertheless, “the picture that it gives of the Diaspora in the first decades of the 1st century BC, the period when 1 Maccabees is thought to have been written, is entirely consistent with other evidence for the extent of the Diaspora at that time.”

¹¹ Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 36. Williams 1998, 3, again notes that, while the speech is largely or wholly an invention of Philo, “the situation it describes is entirely plausible....” She points to Acts 2:5–11 as supporting Philo’s description.

this took place is unmentioned (Acts 14:24-25). Carroll writes that “it is likely that there were Jews in the city of Perga during Paul’s missionary activities there,”¹² with Gasque positing there was “presumably a synagogue.”¹³ Nevertheless, no archaeological evidence for such a structure in Perga has yet been discovered. The Western text of Acts 14:25 states that Paul also preached in Attalia. As Metzger states, this reading suggests “that the apostles conducted a preaching mission there before sailing for Antioch.”¹⁴ If synagogues did exist in first-century Perga and Attalia, Paul’s *modus operandi* of ministry suggests he would have preached in them.¹⁵

A remarkable martyrdom account, coming from Magydus the port of Perga, dates around AD 250 during the persecution under Decius.¹⁶ A gardener (*bortulanus*) named Conon was working on an imperial estate there and questioned in court about his background.¹⁷ He replied, “I am of the city of Nazareth in Galilee, I am of the family (συγγένεια) of Jesus, whose worship I have inherited from my ancestors, and whom I recognize as God over all things.”¹⁸ Conon was therefore among those relatives of Jesus whom Julius Africanus called δεσπότες, meaning “those who belong to the Master or Sovereign (δεσπότης).”¹⁹ To inform the governor of Pamphylia about Conon’s background, the local Jewish community is said to have produced “records” telling about Jesus, his family, his works in Judea, and his violent death as a criminal.²⁰ At the time Nazareth was a Jewish city. Although much of the account dates to a later period and may be fictional, Bauckham nevertheless argues that “the sheer unexpectedness of a record of a member of the family of Jesus in Pamphylia at a time when, to judge by extant Christian literature of the period, the church at large had lost all interest in the living members of that family, argues for the authenticity of at least this part of the account.”²¹ Conon’s martyrdom was commemorated on 5 March in the pre-Byzantine Palestinian liturgical calendar and in the 4th-century Catholic Church. The account does point to the presence of a Jewish community near Attalia in the Late Imperial period.

Inscriptional Evidence

Inscriptional evidence exists from the Late Antique period as well. From the necropolis at Beth She’arim in Israel comes a funerary stele dating to the 3rd to 4th century AD that mentions an *archibisnagogos* named Iakos of Caesarea who was originally from Pamphylia.²² Early evidence of Jews in Perga is a dedicatory inscription at Aphrodisias on Face II (Reynolds call this Face a) that mentions Samuel, an elder from Perga (Σαμουηλ πρεσβύτερος Πέργεος). Reynolds and Tannenbaum write that “the only explanation we can suggest is that this is a form of the ethnic

¹² Carroll 1992, 138.

¹³ Gasque 1992.

¹⁴ Metzger 1975, 425.

¹⁵ Wilson 2018, 355.

¹⁶ See Bauckham 2004, 121-25.

¹⁷ A marble block now in the Side Museum portrays a standing, robed figure with outstretched arms. The name KONON is inscribed above it. Whether this figure is connected with the Conon of Magydus is still debated; see Elam 2011, 438, 447, fig. 21 for a photo of the figure and inscription.

¹⁸ *Martyrdom of Conon* 4.2

¹⁹ Eusebius *Church History* 1.7.14.

²⁰ Fox 1986, 483.

²¹ Bauckham 2004, 122.

²² Ameling 2004, no. 217.

for the city of Perge in Pamphylia, for which the attested form is Πέργαῖος.²³ They prefer to interpret Samuel's appellation as indicating he is the "older" one to distinguish him among others in the community, since Samuel is a common name. Fairchild interprets this as a designation for an officeholder in the synagogue and that Samuel was most likely serving as an envoy from Perge to Aphrodisias.²⁴ Reynolds and Tannenbaum regard such a suggestion as "highly speculative."²⁵ Chaniotis has convincingly argued for a date for this inscription after AD 350 and probably in the early 5th century.²⁶

Two Jewish inscriptions have been found at Side. One,²⁷ likely dating to the 4th century, mentions a "first synagogue" (πρώτης συναγωγῆς) whose administrator was a man named Isaac. He completed some projects for the building including the cleaning of two seven-armed lampstands (*heptamyxion*). A second inscription,²⁸ dated variously from the 4th to 6th century, mentions a presbyter and weight-checker named Leontios, son a weight-checker named Jacob. Leontios supervised the installation of a fountain (κρήνη) in the inner court probably of a synagogue. An incomplete title for Jacob - ἄρχ - has been variously interpreted as *archidiakonos*, *archipresbyteros*, *archontos*, or *archisynagogos*.²⁹ The inscriptions point to the presence of a synagogue in Side during the Late Antique period.

An inscription from Choma (Sarılar), published by Bean and Harrison,³⁰ is thought to suggest a Jewish community in Perge. Fairchild believes that it "indicates a Jewish presence among Perge's artisan community."³¹ The dedicator, Osses son of Osabimis, sponsored the carving of emblems of war - a shield, spear, sword, and helmet - on the tomb of his grandfather Osses and his great-grandfather Manossas. He hired a stone artisan from Perge named Paion, son of Mousaios, to carve these emblems.³² Fairchild claims that Mousaios and Manossas are Hellenized Jewish names for Moses and Manasseh, and that Paeon's family came from Perge; his involvement with sculpture "may indicate that some Jewish artisans migrated the short distance from Perge to Choma."³³ This deduction is unlikely for several reasons. First, this inscription is an example of a verse epitaph for Hellenistic soldiers, according to Barbantani, who dates the inscription to the 4th-3rd century BC.³⁴ Second, Manossas and Mousaios are not of the same family but relatives of the dedicator and the artisan. Regarding these names, Bean and Harrison note that Osses and Manossas are Lycian names while "Paion of Perge has

²³ Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987, 42.

²⁴ Fairchild 2013, 55, 57.

²⁵ Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987, 42.

²⁶ Chaniotis 2010, 39, 77 n. 4; 2002, 218.

²⁷ Nollé 2001, 191.

²⁸ Nollé 2001, 190.

²⁹ See Ameling 2004, 462-69, nos. 219-20, for a discussion and bibliography of these inscriptions.

³⁰ Bean and Harrison 1967, 43-44; 40, pl. V.1-2. The inscription can also be viewed on the Packard Humanities Epigraphy website (<https://epigraphy.packhum.org/regions/1367>) under ΠΑΙΩΝ in Pamphylia.

³¹ Fairchild 2013, 58.

³² The words ΠΑΙΩΝ ΜΟΥΣΑΙΟΥ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΥ are visible on the left side of the inscription on the third line from the bottom. A photograph and squeeze of the inscription can be found in Bean and Harrison 1967, 40, pl. V.1-2. A photograph of its lower left lines can be seen at "Sarılar, Turkey," *Bryn Mawr Collections*, (<http://brynmawrcollections.org/home/items/show/9091>).

³³ Fairchild 2013, 58.

³⁴ Barbantani 2014, 319. This is much earlier than Fairchild who follows Bean and Harrison for a late Hellenistic/early Roman date.

a good Pamphylian name, occurring several times at Side.”³⁵ In his index of Jewish personal names in Asia Minor, Ameling does not list anyone named Manossas.³⁶ However, he does give one example of a Moses - a priest from Ephesus named Marcus Moussios.³⁷ An inscription found in Sebastopolis (Sulusaray) names a Mouses (Μουσης) as *archisynagogos*. With its depiction of a menorah, it incontrovertibly links the name to a Jewish context there.³⁸ Ilan notes that a “Moses” was possibly at Termessos but admits that, since most of the name is missing, the “editor suggested this reading.”³⁹ She notes further that “many times scholars identified similar looking names as Moses and then as Jews, but this is a circular argument.”⁴⁰ This appears to be the case with Fairchild’s identification, so it is tenuous to argue for a Jewish presence in Perge based on this inscription from Choma.

Pednelissos was located just north of Sillyon in the foothills of the Taurus Mountains. Fairchild discusses an inscription found there from the Trajanic period whose dedicatee was Salmon. He concludes that since Salmon (Solomon) is a Jewish name, the inscription “may suggest a Jewish presence at Pednelissos in this early period.”⁴¹ However, Salmon is not among Ameling’s list of Jewish personal names found in Asia Minor.⁴² Importantly, Salmon is also not listed by Ilan as a Jewish name found in the western Diaspora.⁴³ Among Pisidian cities with known Jewish inscriptions only Sidibunda and Termessos are listed in Ameling’s corpus. An appeal to this inscription for a Jewish community in Pednelissos is thus problematic.

At Termessos, just northwest of Attalia, a funerary inscription for Aurelia Artemis was found in the necropolis.⁴⁴ In the epitaph, dated to the 3rd century AD, she is identified as an Ἰουδαία. Ilan notes that such isolated use of the term *Ioudaios* in this context “was a way of marking a Jewish tomb within a non-Jewish cemetery.”⁴⁵ Since the epitaph of her uncle, Markos Aurelius Moles, makes a customary reference to Zeus Solymeis,⁴⁶ Aurelia’s family was undoubtedly pagan. Her father Markos Aurelius Hermaios had either married a Jewish woman or, as Williams suggests, “both the separateness of her burial, as well as the omission from her epitaph of the customary reference to Zeus Solymeis, points more strongly towards her having been a proselyte.”⁴⁷ Whichever interpretation is adopted, there must have been a Jewish community nearby, either in Attalia or Perge, where Aurelia might worship in a synagogue or be instructed in Judaism.

³⁵ Bean and Harrison 1967, 43.

³⁶ Ameling 2004, 591, 592. Ilan 2008, 136, does not cite this as a form of Manaseh either.

³⁷ Ameling 2004, 157-58, no. 33. Williams 2002 does not cite this inscription among the six examples of Jewish usage of Moses as a personal name. This expands her 1997b article on the Jewish use of Moses as a personal name. She is countering Derda 1997, 1999, who contends that only Christians used the name of Moses until the 9th century AD. Williams 2013, 337 concludes that Jews “did on occasion use Moses as a personal name.”

³⁸ Ful and Sorensen 2014.

³⁹ Ilan 2008, 137 no. 13; 138 no. 40. Ameling 2004, 455 n. 27 is referenced as her source.

⁴⁰ Ilan 2008, 137 n. 1. The immediate context is the articles by Williams 1997a, 1997b and Derda 1997, 1999.

⁴¹ Fairchild 2013, 58.

⁴² Ameling 2004, 594.

⁴³ Ilan 2008.

⁴⁴ Ameling 2004, 453-55, no. 216.

⁴⁵ Ilan 2006, 73.

⁴⁶ TAM III 1, 612.

⁴⁷ Williams 1997a, 262; see also Ameling 2004, 453-55, no. 216.

At Pisidian Melli (Milyas) a house with a west-facing apsed sanctuary has been identified which, according to Mitchell, “recalls the position of early Christian churches or the smaller synagogues of the Jewish diaspora, which were integrated into the housing area of communities.”⁴⁸ He concludes that this sanctuary was probably designed for monotheistic worship of *theos hypsistos* in a form of “soft monotheism.”⁴⁹ Citing Mitchell, Fairchild suggests that this apsed chapel “may have been a synagogue or a church”⁵⁰ and that “the presence of this cult seems to testify to the existence of Jewish or Christian congregations in the area.”⁵¹ However, Mitchell makes no such inference other than to observe that the sanctuary’s location “recalls” that of smaller Diaspora synagogues. This structure in Melli is not a Jewish synagogue nor does it provide any evidence for a Jewish community in the area.

In conclusion, the textual and inscriptional evidence clearly indicates that Jews lived in and around Pamphylia during the Roman and Late Antique periods. Yet as late as 2009 Türkoğlu could observe that “it is worth noting that the recent salvage excavations at Kaleiçi and especially at the necropolis at Halk Pazarı and Doğu Garajı, have unfortunately not shed light onto the origins of the Jewish presence in the city of Antalya.”⁵²

The Discovery of the Colonnade Fragment in Antalya

That situation changed in 2013 during another rescue excavation carried out under the auspices of the Antalya Museum and its archaeologists F. Büyükyörük, Ç. Ulutaş, M. Değer, and museum assistant/researcher Ö. Şen. The discovery occurred in Kaleiçi, an urban and third-degree archaeological site in Antalya. This historic walled “Old City” is situated over the remains of Greco-Roman Attalia founded around 167 CE by Attalus II.⁵³ This excavation at Insula 124, Lot 13 on a private lot at Müze Sokak, no. 14, was prompted by a new construction project beginning there. After the demolition of an illegal building in the lot measuring 125 m², four sondages were dug. Based on the remains found in them, Sondages 2, 3, and 4 were joined into a single trench (fig. 1).⁵⁴

Sondage 1 was evaluated separately. In this sondage, bedrock was reached at 2.80 m, and no architectural remains, apart from three featureless blocks or small finds such as the usual glazed and unglazed potsherds, were found. In the combined Sondages 2-4, a doorway atop two large blocks, one with a round locking hole, was found. Connected to its west side was a stone-paved room measuring 5.20 x 4.70 m. Installed beneath the doorway and floor were terracotta pipes 20 cm in diameter, one of which ran into a round terracotta basin about

⁴⁸ Mitchell 2003, 154.

⁴⁹ The structure in Melli also contained an inscription related to the Clarian Apollo, of which nine copies of the Latin version have been published. Mitchell 2003, 155, suggests that the placement of the oracle in the sanctuary “provided reassurance that this brand of monotheism...did not in this instance entail complete denial of the traditional deities.”

⁵⁰ Fairchild 2013, 59.

⁵¹ Fairchild 2013, 59; 84 n. 6.

⁵² Türkoğlu 2012, 489.

⁵³ For more on the history of Attalia, see Wilson 2020a, 71-73.

⁵⁴ Two excavation reports, both entitled “Rapor Müze Müdürlüğü’ne Antalya,” were submitted on 23 December 2013 and 17 January 2014 respectively. The first report of eighteen pages included a plan and fifty-five photographs. Among the finds were: “mermer 1 adet menorah tasvirli sütunçe parçası (Foto. 50)” (“1 marble colonnette piece with a menorah depicted”). The second report, eight pages long, also contained a plan plus twenty photographs. However, the colonnette fragment is not mentioned in this second report. I wish to thank museum archaeologist Ferhan Büyükyörük for sharing these reports with me.

1 m in diameter. A second water system was found above that dates to the 4th-5th century. Comprised of five terracotta pipes 24 cm in diameter, it reached the stone-paved room via an amphora that was refunctioned to distribute water. Stone plugs were used to close off the holes in the pipes.

The rubble deposit removed from the eastern corner of the lot contained a fragment of a Byzantine ambo with double columns and a fragment of a tomb stele depicting two dressed women of the Roman period. Both fragments are marble but poorly preserved. Beneath the rubble were walls built of finely-dressed stones, perhaps belonging to another building. Four phases were identified: 1) a stone-paved room and doorway built on a mortar bed on bedrock with the 20 cm pipes beneath; 2) a round basin identified as a hearth because of burnt traces inside; 3) the 24 cm pipes uncovered above the hearth remains with rainwater drainage channels by the doorway and basins; and 4) a channel with two late Ottoman coins and connecting basin uncovered 1 m below the surface. As Büyükyörük states about the earlier phases, “These remains constitute an important example of Late Roman-Byzantine construction that reflects the urban development.”⁵⁵ Among the small finds were Roman pottery and glass fragments as well as various roof tiles and flooring pieces. A final small find was a marble colonette fragment inscribed with a partial menorah. It was discovered above the stone-paved room in fill material dated to the 4th-5th century (fig. 2).⁵⁶

The Colonette Fragment with a Menorah⁵⁷

The colonette fragment (fig. 3) has a height of 11.5 cm and a diameter of 9.3 cm. In its bottom is a hole 1.3 cm in diameter and 3.8 cm deep (fig. 4). This suggests that the menorah was held upright by a shaft inserted into its center. On the cylinder to the right rear of the menorah is a single hole about 6.5 cm from its top (fig. 5a). On the cylinder to the left rear of the menorah are two holes 5.5 cm from the top, therefore situated 1 cm higher than the single hole (fig. 5b). The diameter and depth of all the holes are approximately 1 cm. These side holes were apparently sockets for some type of rods used to stabilize the colonette. However, why one side should require two holes is unknown.

The bottom of the single hole is at the level of the top of the arms of the menorah. The menorah is typical with seven arms;⁵⁸ however, its bottom half is broken. Where arms 1, 2, and 7 merge with the central stem is not visible; only the connection with arms 3, 5, and 6 can be seen. The remainder of the central stem no. 4 is 4 cm high.⁵⁹ The distance along the curved arms, partial and complete, from the central stem to their tip is as follows: 1) 3 cm, 2) 3.5 cm,

⁵⁵ This summary is based on the published report by Büyükyörük 2014; quotation at 271. A plan of the excavation is included in the report as well as six photographs including the menorah (p. 271, fig. 7). The description of the menorah find in Turkish is: “menorah tasvirli mermer küçük sütun parçası kayda değer bir diğer buluntudur.”

⁵⁶ F. Büyükyörük writes: “Taş döşemeli mekanın üzerindeki dolgunun içinde bulunmuştu” (personal correspondence 30 April 2020).

⁵⁷ With the permission of the Turkish Museum of Culture and Tourism granted under number 64298988-155.02-E.233959, the colonette fragment with menorah was measured on 26 December 2017 at the Antalya Archaeology Museum. I wish to thank museum director, Mustafa Demirel, and his staff for their helpfulness in examining the fragment now stored in its depot. I also want to thank F. Büyükyörük for discussing this find from the rescue excavation, and for Emel Yilgör for her assistance in translating documents and conversations.

⁵⁸ Hachlilil 2018, 2, prefers to use “arm” instead of “branch,” but because of common usage uses the terms interchangeably. In this article the term “arm” is used exclusively.

⁵⁹ Hachlilil was informed of the discovery of the Attalia menorah, which she included in her 2018 corpus. It is no. D5.24 on p. 217.

3) 3 cm, 5) 3 cm, 6) 4.9 cm, and 7) 4.6 cm. From the tip of the central stem to arm 1 is 3.8 cm; from the central stem's tip to arm 7 is 3.6 cm. Above each arm there is a flame shaped like an L slanted to the left. The base of each is .08 cm; however, the vertical part varies in length: 1) 1.0 cm, 2) 1.0 cm, 3) 1.2 cm, 4) 1.8 cm, 5) 1.6 cm, 6) 1.5 cm, 7) 1.5 cm.

The menorah was one of the ritual pieces of furniture that formerly stood in the temple in Jerusalem.⁶⁰ During the Second Temple period the menorah was depicted on coins, graffiti, and stone reliefs.⁶¹ The temple menorah was brought as booty to Rome after the temple's destruction in AD 70 and is famously represented on the southern frieze inside the Arch of Titus at the eastern end of the Roman Forum.⁶² In the Roman and Late Antique periods the menorah became the predominant symbol of Judaism, created as a national symbol "which satisfied the Jews' need for self-identity while living among Christians and pagans."⁶³ In Asia Minor the menorah has likewise been found on tombs and lamps as well as inscribed as graffiti on steps. Decoration on chancel screens and wall plaques is seen at the synagogues in Sardis, Priene, and Andriake.⁶⁴

Regarding the form of menoroth, Hachlili has identified three main components: 1) the base, 2) the arms in many varieties, and 3) the light fittings atop the arms.⁶⁵ The Attalia menorah is broken where the second arm joins the stem, so the form of the base is lost. It was undoubtedly a simple tripod similar to those depicted in Hachlili's charts of menorah base forms from the Diaspora.⁶⁶ The arms conform to the most common style, which is round and upward curving. They are simple and unornamented. Regarding the light fittings, there is no solid crossbar on top of the arms. Beneath each of the seven left-leaning flames⁶⁷ is a rough incision that seems to represent a light fitting. However, these notches do not rest atop each arm but are above a space that is suggestive of a horizontal crossbar. The style of the flames most closely resembles those on the Laodicea column menorah and on an unprovenanced plaque from Asia Minor.⁶⁸ Because of its fragmentary nature, it is difficult to place the Attalia menorah in one of Hachlili's types. Nevertheless, it seems to conform most closely to her Type II. She dates this type to the 3rd-4th century, conceding: "Some simple menoroth from Diaspora synagogues at Apamea, Sardis, and Stobi...are also of this type although they might date to a later period."⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Wilson 2020b.

⁶¹ Hachlili 2001, 22-25.

⁶² Fine et al. 2017.

⁶³ Hachlili 2018, 20.

⁶⁴ For Sardis see Seager and Kraabel 1983, 171, figs. 249-50, 268, 277; for Priene see Burkhardt and Wilson 2013, 169, 177-78, figs. 18a-b, 19; for Andriake see Çevik et al. 2010, 341, figs. 27-29. The chancel screens found in secondary use at Limyra suggest the presence of a synagogue nearby; see Seyer 2014, 145, figs. 1-2, pls. 6.1-2, 7.1-2.

⁶⁵ Hachlili 2018, 80.C

⁶⁶ Hachlili 2001, 136-37, figs. III-11, III-12.

⁶⁷ Fine 2015a, 39-40, notes regarding the flames that their orientation toward the central flame was "a detail noted by Palestinian rabbis who claimed to have seen this configuration on the menorah in Rome and on menorah images from Palestine to Asia Minor to Rome." However, there are a number of examples of menoroth, including the Attalia menorah, where the flames are not oriented toward the central flame. The flames on three plaques from Asia Minor instead depict flames that are upright and not slanted; for these see Fine 1996, 44, fig. 2.19.a-c.

⁶⁸ Hachlili 2018, 94, fig. 3.24.b-c.

⁶⁹ Hachlili 2001, 164.

Menorah Comparanda in Southern Asia Minor

This review of menorah comparanda must be geographically limited given the extensive corpus found in Asia Minor.⁷⁰ The only other example of a menorah known in Pamphylia comes from Side. This small menorah is carved into an ashlar block and now situated upside down in secondary usage high in a city wall south of the archaeology museum. Because of its location, it is not possible to measure. This nicely inscribed menorah has a crossbar but no flames or base (fig. 6).

At the Pisidian city of Sia just north of Attalia, Fairchild describes a relief (fig. 7) carved on a doorpost there as a “box (perhaps representing a building) containing an individual carrying a staff. Above the relief is another object that is weatherbeaten and indistinct. A close look at it, however, indicates it is a menorah.”⁷¹ He further suggests the relief may represent someone in a synagogue and concludes that this relief is evidence of a Jewish presence in the city. In their discussion of Sia, Horsley and Mitchell depict this same carved stone. Although Fairchild does not identify its findspot, Horsley and Mitchell do: it is from an agora with three temples facing a structure shaped like a Sebasteion. Low podia surrounding the temple supported stone benches. These benches supported altar-shaped statue bases as well as the relief, which they call a column. Horsley and Mitchell do not see a menorah, but state it “is decorated with a relief of a male figure and a tree (Apollo and Daphne?).”⁷² Talloen briefly mentions the relief in his discussion of cults in Pisidia: “Based on the iconography of the Apollo (Sideton) relief at Pednelissos Mitchell and Horsley suggested Apollo holding a laurel tree (daphne). Although the two reliefs are obviously not identical they may have a point, especially when you consider that the deity was also present at nearby Melli and thus seems to have been a popular figure in the southern part of Pisidia.”⁷³ Işın, discussing the Apollo sanctuaries of southern Pisidia, describes the Apollo figure at Pednelissos as wearing “a short thin chiton and a thick chlamys, holds a *patera* in his right hand and grasps a laurel branch in his left hand.”⁷⁴ The bundle above the Melli relief appears to resemble the leaf cluster that is clearly seen atop the laurel branch in the Pednelissos relief. Given its findspot in Melli’s agora and the frequency of Apollo reliefs in southern Pisidia, this relief should not be identified as Jewish and displaying a menorah, as Fairchild has done.

An oil lamp with a menorah was found during excavations in 2002 at the Pisidian city of Sagalassos.⁷⁵ However, the excavators do not think this is a Jewish object but a Christian one because of the cross-like symbol on the base. Van der Horst though believes that this Christian identification “is in fact quite uncertain.”⁷⁶ Oil lamps with a menorah are common, and their

⁷⁰ For a list of menorah finds in ten other cities in Asia Minor, see Collar 2013, 190.

⁷¹ Fairchild 2013, 59.

⁷² Horsley and Mitchell 2000, 144; 145, fig. 54 for a drawing of the Roman agora. Their photograph of the figure and tree (pl. 87) is much clearer than can be taken today (fig. 6). Nevertheless, the object above the box does not resemble any known menorah.

⁷³ P. Talloen (personal communication 29 June 2017. L. Vandeput, director of the BIAA and who for many years has surveyed urban and rural sites in Pisidia, similarly commented: “As for the identification of the relief, I would rather go with the interpretation of Horsley and Mitchell. I have not seen other examples like this one, but - as you know - there are quite a number of rural reliefs around” (personal communication 29 June 2015).

⁷⁴ Işın 2014, 89. On page 90 she discusses the relief of Apollo at Melli to which she attributes stylistic features similar to the one in Pednelissos.

⁷⁵ For the lamp’s publication see Talloen 2003, no. 192; Waelkens and Poblome 2011, 18.

⁷⁶ Van der Horst 2015, 12 n. 50.

Jewishness seems certain.⁷⁷ In her corpus of menoroth found on oil lamps in the Diaspora, Hachlili includes only one from Asia Minor - a discus lamp from Sardis.⁷⁸ However, another lamp with menorah, this one with an Ephesian provenance, is displayed in the Ephesos Museum of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.⁷⁹

The synagogue discovery at Andriake, the port of Myra in Lycia, yielded three whole or partial chancel screens with menoroth. Since these more formalistic menorah depictions on such screens are not the type of comparanda being examined, our interest is in the small menorah depicted in the upper left corner of the complete screen (fig. 8). Why a second, simpler menorah was placed to the left of the inscription is unknown. This diminutive menorah stands on a typical tripod base with a crossbar atop its arms. There are bowls or flames atop its arms. A lulav with connected ethrog is found at its left; a shofar rests midway to its right.⁸⁰ The excavators date the synagogue to the 5th century AD.

A broken column with a menorah was discovered in Phrygian Laodicea (fig. 9). Discovered as fill in the nymphaeum along the Syrian Street, its original context has been lost. The column has been reerected in Laodicea's north agora. To the left of the menorah is a lulav, to the right a shofar. Double flames emanate from bowls resting on the crossbar. A lower column fragment, now been joined to the upper one, shows a tripod base and to its left is the lower half of an ethrog. A unique feature was that a Byzantine cross was later inscribed atop the upper part of the menorah.⁸¹ The depth and type of incision shows clearly that the two iconic symbols date from different periods. Although Fairchild claims that the cross does not damage the menorah, its globus has destroyed the menorah's central stem. His interpretation that the melding of these symbols shows the religious tolerance of the Late Antique period appears incongruent with the evidence.⁸² Fine, on the other hand, views the superimposition of the cross over the menorah as evidence of the ever-increasing intolerance of theological supercessionism, perhaps growing out of the Council of Laodicea (ca. AD 364) and that began to characterize Byzantine Christianity.⁸³ In this author's view, the cross above the menorah appears more hostile than irenic, obliterating rather than completing the Jewish symbol.

The Interpretation of the Attalia Menorah

The nonformalistic style of Attalia's inscribed menorah places it in the category of similarly etched menoroth such as found in Laodicea and Priene. Both of these are likewise found on columns, albeit much larger. In the Priene synagogue a menorah with ethrog was chiseled on the western pillar (fig. 10). Its tripod stand can be seen on the lower broken fragment.

⁷⁷ For a similar lamp with menorah, unprovenanced but suggested as Asia Minor, see Bussi re and Wohl 2017, 384-85, no. 525. This is tentatively dated to the 3rd-4th century A.D. However, the menorah faces the handle not the spout, as on the Sagalassos example.

⁷⁸ Hachlili 2018, 239, 260-61, L4.18. For an illustration of the lamp with accompanying lulav, shofar, and ethrog, see Greenewalt et al. 1988, 62, fig. 7.

⁷⁹ The museum's caption for this lamp from Ephesus (Inv.-Nr. V 2523) dates it to the 4th century AD.

⁸⁰  evik et al. 2010, 341-42, figs. 24, 27. On p. 344 they wrote that "no archaeological evidence regarding Jewish presence has been uncovered at Limyra in the course of excavations for over 40 years." Only four years later such evidence was discovered in Limyra; see Seyer 2014. Hopefully this is a harbinger that more Jewish realia will emerge in future excavations in Antalya and other sites in Mediterranean Turkey.

⁸¹  im ek 2006.

⁸² Fairchild 2017, 36.

⁸³ Fine 2012, 34, 50.

The menorah's location at eye level ensured it was seen by those entering the synagogue.⁸⁴ Because the Attalia colonette is broken, it is not known whether a lulav, shofar, or ethrog appeared below the menorah, although the appearance of one or more is likely. Although the menorah found on the Priene and Laodicea columns are commonly classified as graffiti, their size, placement, and purpose is very different from menorah graffiti found on columns at Aphrodisias.⁸⁵ Differing from White's assessment that the Priene menorah is a "rough graffito," Burkhardt and Wilson observe that "its placement on the pillar at the entrance suggests that the menorah was an intentional piece of decoration."⁸⁶ At Priene the menorah was a clear indicator to attendees that they were entering the sacred space of a synagogue. The column with menorah found at Laodicea presumably functioned similarly, although that synagogue is yet to be found. Likewise, the colonette with menorah found in Attalia probably marked the sacred space of a synagogue.

The first building phase of the synagogue at Priene dates to the late 4th century, and the menorah at its entrance is dated to that phase.⁸⁷ The menorah at the entrance should be dated contemporaneously. From its form, the Laodicea menorah could be dated within a similar time frame. Dating for the Attalia menorah is estimated to be in the Byzantine period. Since it was discovered among fill material dating to the 4th-5th century, this date is a reasonable estimate.⁸⁸

There are several possible interpretations of this colonette fragment. Its size would fit a table leg or support for some other type of furnishing. Menorahs are found on the square legs of the funerary table of Hesychios and Judas from Lydian Philadelphia.⁸⁹ Could it be part of a post for a baldachin? Its diameter is smaller than the columns for the aediculae in Sardis, yet the Attalia fragment has dowel holes like one of Sardis' shrine columns that helped to support a veil or curtain to hide the scroll in the Holy of Holies.⁹⁰ An unprovenanced plaque from Asia Minor depicts a menorah within an aedicula supported by columns on each side.⁹¹ However, the scale of the columns is impossible to determine. Ness describes a synagogue in Aleppo, later turned into al-Hayyat Mosque, that had eleven colonettes to support a bema from which scripture and/or sermons were read.⁹² The previously mentioned inscription from Side stated that Isaac, besides cleaning two lampstands, also cleaned the two chief pillars (*kionocephala*) in the synagogue. Such pillars would not be for architectural support (too small and why clean supporting pillars?), but most probably flanked the aedicula in the synagogue. Ameling disputes the suggestion by Chaviara that these columns bore the menorah but does note: "Säulen flankierten häufig den Torah-Schrein."⁹³ In light of this, could the colonette fragment also be one of the chief pillars for the Attalia synagogue? Barag reports on an unprovenanced colonette found in Israel with similar dimensions: ca. 12.5 cm in diameter, 8.5 cm high, and

⁸⁴ Burkhardt and Wilson 2013, 169. A drawing of the restored pillar with menorah is found on p. 193, fig. 7.

⁸⁵ Chaniotis 2010, 34, 36.

⁸⁶ Burkhardt and Wilson 2013, 169 n. 10.

⁸⁷ Burkhardt and Wilson 2013, 169, 174.

⁸⁸ For some reason the English translation failed to provide this suggested dating, which in the Turkish version reads: "Bizans Dönemi'ne ait"; see Büyükyörük 2014, 271.

⁸⁹ Ameling 2004, 207, no. 50; 569, figs. 11-12. For an excellent illustration of one of the legs, see Cimok 2010, 37.

⁹⁰ Hachlili 1998, 70.

⁹¹ Fine 1996, 44, fig. 2.19.c, 162, no. 26; cf. Hachlili 2018, 219 D6.46, 288 CFIG. 11.

⁹² Ness 2016, 84. On p. 223, fig. 4.18 is a drawing of the bema with colonettes; an old photograph of the object is found on p. 224, fig. 4.19. The dimensions of the colonettes are not given unfortunately.

⁹³ Ameling 2004, 465-66.

6.8 cm thick. It was inscribed with a four-line donor inscription in Aramaic. About its function he writes, “It comes, undoubtedly, from a synagogue. The small diameter of the colonette probably precluded its use as a structural part of the building. One may assume therefore that it formed part of the Ark of the Law.”⁹⁴ Finally, a small colonette fragment seemingly with a rod projecting from its center was also found in the Andriake synagogue.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, its dimensions are not known. Because of the fragmentary nature of the Attalia menorah, it is difficult to choose which interpretation best fits its function. However, it was clearly one of the ritual appurtenances of Jewish worship in Attalia.

Conclusion

The discovery of the menorah in Attalia is significant for our understanding of ancient Judaism in Pamphylia. As Fine observes, the menorah was “the most successful and widespread Jewish branding icon in the ancient world.”⁹⁶ From the fourth century AD onward, according to Fine, the menorah “became ubiquitous in Jewish visual culture as a cipher for Judaism and Jewish culture”; such menorahs “were placed there as markers of Jewish identity.”⁹⁷ Brilliant likewise calls the menorah and its related markers “symbols of identity, symbols of connection, repositories of faith and hope.”⁹⁸ By inscribing a menorah on a marble colonette in this Mediterranean city over 1500 years ago, one member of Attalia’s Jewish community indeed left a visual marker of his faith. For this individual the menorah would symbolize light for illumination, provide a recognizable iconic shape, motivate sacred ritual functions in the synagogue, and invite memory of the golden lampstand that once stood in the Jerusalem temple.⁹⁹ The serendipitous discovery of this colonette during a rescue excavation has opened a fresh window into that community and provided us with further insight into Pamphylia’s Jewish history.

⁹⁴ Barag 1981, 835. In n. 6 he refers to a fragmentary colonette. Barag concludes that if the colonette did form part of the Ark of the Law, it could not be dated before the 4th century AD. This dating is based on the fact that the Ark, which became a common structural element during the Byzantine period, does not appear in synagogues in Palestine before this time.

⁹⁵ Çevik et al. 2010, 364, fig. 32 where it is grouped with chancel screen elements. A menorah next to an inscription stating “the altar” (*to thusiastērion*) was also found on a chancel screen element in Ephesus; see Ameling 2004, 153, no. 31.

⁹⁶ Fine 2015b, 132. The significance of the menorah is seen in the exhibition recently organized by the Vatican Museum and the Jewish Museum of Rome entitled “The Menorah: Cult, History and Myth.” A 375-page catalog presents essays and illustrations related to the exhibition; see Leone 2017.

⁹⁷ Fine 2015a, 39.

⁹⁸ Brilliant 1989, 73.

⁹⁹ Hachlili 2018, 19, identifies these four symbolic aspects of the menorah’s significance for Jewish communities.

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FIG. 1 Kaleiçi rescue excavation (Author's photo).



FIG. 2 Excavation plan with findspot in red (Courtesy Ferhan Büyükyörük).



FIG. 3
Attalia Menorah
(Author's photo).



FIG. 4
Colonette base
hole (Author's
photo).



FIG. 5a
Colonette side
hole (Author's
photo).



FIG. 5b
Colonette sides
hole (Author's
photo).



FIG. 6
Side Menorah
(Author's photo).



FIG. 8
Andriake Menorah (Author's photo).

FIG. 7
Sia relief (Author's photo).



FIG. 10
Priene Column with Menorah
(Author's photo).

FIG. 9
Laodicea Column with
Menorah (Author's photo).