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## The Late Antique Synagogue in Priene: Its History, Architecture, and Context

*Abstract:* This article discusses the history of the Late Antique synagogue at Priene, illuminated by its excavation in 2009–2011. First identified as a synagogue in the early twentieth century, the structure was never fully excavated. The two building phases related to its development as a synagogue are discussed first. The chronology and some finds from the synagogue are then presented. The synagogue is then placed within its historical context as a prostas house in the city's western residential district. Finally, the Priene synagogue is discussed in relationship to other synagogues found in Asia Minor.

*Keywords:* Priene; Synagogue; Prostras; Menorah; Late Antiquity; Jewish Architecture.

The synagogue of Priene was first excavated at the end of the nineteenth century in the west quarter of the ancient city (Fig. 1). Initially it was regarded as a house church (Wiegand – Schrader, *Priene* 480–481 fig. 585; cf. Kraabel 1995, 107).<sup>1</sup> Sukenik (*Ancient Synagogues* 42–43, esp. fig. 12) was the first archaeologist to identify it as a synagogue.<sup>2</sup> Since the brief nineteenth-century excavation and the publication of its short report, no detailed investigations of the building have taken place, so any information on the synagogue remains incomplete and derivative. In 2009 a new study of the synagogue began that lasted three campaigns. Its objectives were to investigate the details of the structure, especially its different building phases, to obtain new information about the dating of these phases by making several sondages (Fig. 4) and to create a new site plan (Fig. 20). Wiegand and Schrader excavated the whole building. In parts such as the western rooms of the oikos and the southern end of the western rooms they dug deeply under the Late Antique floor level, down to the floor of the Hellenistic and early Roman phases of the house. Above the street along the western side of the house they constructed a railway for the removal of the excavation's waste. This railway embankment destroyed parts of the southwestern area of the building. Wiegand and Schrader failed to note that different building phases of the synagogue existed. They also did not differentiate the various floor

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<sup>1</sup> The recent volume published by the Foundation of the Hellenic World and the Center for Hellenic Studies continues to call the building a church erroneously (Ferla, *Priene* 196–197).

<sup>2</sup> See also Rumscheid – Koenigs, *Priene* 92; Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* 135–136, esp. fig. 45; Goodenough, *Jews Symbols* 2.77 and 82; 3 fig. 879; Ovadiah 1978, 859–860 no. 4 pl. 273 figs. 2–4; Kraabel 1982, 227–236.

levels and wall courses in the southern part of the building. Our first two campaigns in the synagogue sought to delineate these different building periods. The entire area was cleared, and several sondages were made at selected points to obtain further information about technical construction details and the sequence of walls as well as to find hopefully some dateable material. The two campaigns were concentrated on the Late Antique level; we did not research the early building phase of the Hellenistic house. This article does not present a detailed excavation report regarding every sondage and artifact that was discovered. Instead only some of the dateable finds such as glass, lamps and coins which are important for the chronology are cited. All sondages were drawn and calibrated (leveling), and a team of architects under the leadership of Dr. Martino La Torre prepared a stone map. Furthermore, we used the method of the direct leveling and set several benchmarks to determine the building's position on the map of Priene.

## I. Description and development of the construction of the synagogue

Since at least two building phases can be distinguished for the synagogue,<sup>3</sup> the following description is divided according to these two phases (Figs. 3b-c, 20). The first phase reveals a large basilica, arranged in an east-west direction, probably without a narthex, while the second is a somewhat smaller and later building with a narthex. In the western part of the southern aisle, there are some hints of alteration or stone robbery following the building's use as a synagogue.

### 1. The first building phase

For the synagogue's construction, one of the biggest *prostas* houses of Priene was used.<sup>4</sup> The building was integrated into the southern courtyard of Hellenistic *prostas* House No. 24 (Figs. 3a, 20).<sup>5</sup> At the time of the renovation the house had a large northern *oikos* and a Doric *prostas* in front of it, which opened to a southern courtyard.<sup>6</sup> Its area did not comprise the normal east-west width of an *insula* because the house and Street No. 14 in the eastern neighborhood took more room. But the lost space was recaptured in its southern part because the house extended over the normal north-south width of an *insula*. On both sides of the *oikos* were two long, rectangular rooms. The eastern ones had been set in the former entrance from the West Gate Street during a rebuilding phase of the house, probably together with the installation of the *prostas*. Now the entrance from the small Street No. 14 in the west to the yard was the main entrance. West and south of the southern yard were other small annex rooms. Under House No. 24 and below the synagogue were excavated older water channels (Fig. 4: Sondages 3, 11, 25) and walls in various places (Sondages 3, 9, 13, 16-17, 19; 2/3; *Oikos*), which prove several reconstructions also in Hellenistic times. A new entrance was created for the synagogue in House No. 24 at the West Gate Street by opening partly the northern wall of the *oikos* (Figs. 3b, 5). The monolithic block of the new threshold is still on site (1.09 x 0.72 x 0.09 m), but has slipped off the foundation in the wall. Three high steps connect the street with the house level in the north. These steps reached 2.11 m into the West Gate Street and formed an obvious eyecatcher for those approaching

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<sup>3</sup> Thus the observation of White (Christian Architecture 2.328) that the synagogue was "constructed in one stage through renovation of the courtyard of an existing private house" must be revised.

<sup>4</sup> Compare House No. 33 (phase 2) in the Theater Street with the same size of the *prostas* and the somewhat larger house on the terrace with the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods.

<sup>5</sup> Already Goodenough (Jews Symbols 2.77-79) assumed a unity of House No. 24 and the synagogue.

<sup>6</sup> The *prostas* consists of two columns *in antis* in Doric order with the frieze with metopes and triglyphs. A majority of the building material remains in the area: parts of the frieze, lower and upper shaft of unfluted columns, half of a fitting Doric capital with three annuli and the beginning of flutes, the eastern lower and upper part of the pillar, and the western high pillar broken in two parts. The building elements were measured and drawn under the direction of Arnd Hennemeyer; see Koenigs et al. 1996, 78.

from either direction (Fig. 2).<sup>7</sup> There was probably a second smaller entrance in the north-south street No. 14 near the corner of the West Gate Street.<sup>8</sup> Two wall stones are positioned like a door frame, and in front of them is a flat, stone base used for a wooden stairway (Sondage 2/2).

The inside of the house was transformed into an open courtyard. In the northern part on just two points there remain parts of the pebble floor with mortar from the Late Antique level. The L-shaped walls in the oikos, lying open today, were not visible at the time of the synagogue because they were below this floor level. In the south, in the former area of the prostas, the new paving of the yard is preserved (64.953 top edge). Several large plates formed a preserved surface approximately 7.00 x 7.00 m that covered the former east wall of the southwestern annex room and the former wall between the oikos and prostas. According to the high level of the two thresholds and the bottom of the two eastern annex rooms, these rooms were still accessible from the new yard after the rebuilding. We do not know if the western annex rooms still existed or if their eastern walls flanked the passage and the yard to the synagogue. Because the paving of the new yard lies over the wall of the southwestern oikos and because the graffito of the menorah on the corner pillar (*ante*) of the prostas (see below) indicates that the cornerstones (*Antenanschlußsteine*) of this wall cannot have been there any longer, this room would also have been part of the yard. The Doric columns and pillars of the prostas were standing still upright and were integrated into the entrance of the synagogue (Fig. 3b).<sup>9</sup>

The stylobate of the prostas (64,986 top edge) is preserved at almost its entire length including the foundation. Only at the southern end is a stone of the stylobate missing, while the last block was pushed eastwards, probably during the old excavation. Since we know the situation of the joints of the door (see below), it is possible to recover their original position. They would not have turned the entablature because of the weight, so the triglyphs were not attached in the direction of the new yard of House No. 24 but rather toward the interior of the synagogue. The height of the columns, according to the calculations of the components by Arnd Hennemeyer, was at least 4.70 m with a range to 6.10 m, and the top edge of the triglyph was at least 5.70 m high. Therefore the interior of the synagogue's first phase must have been at least 5.70 m in height. There are no traces at the column and pillars for a lower connection of the eaves of the roof. In the case of a gabled roof with an open roof truss, this would have produced a surprisingly spacious and high interior in the nave measuring 14.40 x 13.00 m (187.20 m<sup>2</sup>) and approximately 7.50 m in height.

The above-mentioned door was built on an axis with the entrance by the West Gate Street between the western pillar of the prostas and the western column. The holes of the lintel and the joints are preserved in the blocks of the stylobate on both sides. The western and eastern connecting walls of the prostas are preserved only below the stylobate in the Hellenistic masonry. On these Hellenistic walls a new, narrower wall was placed on both sides, in which Hellenistic ashlar with bosses were integrated on the north side (Fig. 12). Perhaps in the new yard the impression was created to look on the outside

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<sup>7</sup> Because Trebilco (Jewish Communities 55) thought the entrance was not from the West Gate Street, it resulted in an erroneous conjecture that the synagogue “was on a side street and was not easily identified as a synagogue.” This has suggested to later interpreters that the Jews of Priene were trying to conceal their synagogue by hiding it away from public view.

<sup>8</sup> Supposing that this side entrance was the main one, Murray (2005, 205) suggests a romanticised perspective on this architectural feature: “West Gate Street, as the main thoroughfare of the city, (was) probably full of activity and noise. Entering the synagogue from a side alley would enable worshippers to remove themselves from the clamour of the main road and would provide a quieter, reverential atmosphere more suitable to entering a religious building. The private nature of the synagogue structure is consistent with the architectural practice of other religious sanctuaries in the city.”

<sup>9</sup> Nearly all building elements of the prostas (columns, capitals, triglyph, pillar) were found locally. Because they were not reused in House No. 24 or the synagogue and did not show any traces of change except for the door area (see below), we suggest that the prostas stood completely upright and collapsed only after the synagogue fell into disuse.

surface of a wall, provided that these had been visible. The eastern wall, however, was not visible at least while the southeastern annex room was in use.

The entrance to the synagogue from House No. 24 was marked visually. On the north side of the western pillar of the *prostas*, a menorah 65.50 cm tall and a citron (*ethrog*) 16 cm (Dm) were chiseled at eye level. From a distance these would catch the eye of a visitor who was crossing the new yard (Figs. 6a-b, 7).<sup>10</sup> The tripod stand of the menorah is visible in the lower section of the broken block. A second small menorah (ca. 7 cm high) appears to be scratched in the middle of an outer, bossed ashlar stone at the West Gate Street near the entrance. And on the new threshold of the neighboring eastern house opening to the West Gate Street is another graffito with a menorah (10.0 cm H) flanked by a small *shofar* or *lulav* and oriented to the entry room.

Underneath the menorah in the western pillar is a niche (Fig. 7); in the opposite column a second but smaller niche.<sup>11</sup> Both are covered by the door, whose position is determined by the holes of the lintel and the joints of the door. The door and niches therefore must belong to different phases. It is possible to enter the interior of the synagogue through the door in the *prostas*. The direct connection is lost because of the deep, older excavations (Sondages 3, 24). But lying nearby in a row opposite the door are three parallel ashlar stones. Two have served as stairway steps and one as a support of a stairway step, in order to bridge the level between the stylobate of the *prostas* and the ground level of the synagogue.

The main building of the synagogue was situated in the yard of House No. 24. The surface of the natural rock lies directly under the plastered floor in the northeastern corner of the synagogue and slopes to the southwest, so that high terracing was necessary (Sondages 10, 12, 14). A level area had been created here by fill dirt already in Hellenistic times. During the period of the synagogue the ground level had been marginally increased.<sup>12</sup> The east-west oriented interior of the synagogue is divided into the nave flanked by two aisles (Fig. 3b). The northern aisle with a width of 4.09 m is a bit wider than the 3.40 m wide southern aisle. The two lines of the stylobate separating the nave are not parallel: the western end of the northern stylobate ends approximately 0.80 m farther north than its eastern end.<sup>13</sup> Also, the line of the long eastern wall does not run exactly north to south like the Hellenistic *insula* system. It is a new eastern wall with a line running north-northeast to south-southwest (Figs. 3b, 20). These irregularities could be intentional to obtain a greater orientation toward the southeast to Jerusalem than was possible in the Hellenistic *insula* system. The stone slabs of the stylobate are made of local grey marble (Cramer, *Herkunftanalyse* 145–147) like the building elements of the *prostas* of House No. 24 and the ashlars of the wall (Fig. 8). The surfaces of the stones of the stylobate were polished; in the corners of the narrow side are two holes for clamps. The measures, the clamp holes and the smooth surface suggest the possibility that these are the former orthostats of the *prostas* walls. This provides evidence of the rebuilding of the annex walls of the *prostas*: the synagogue

<sup>10</sup> White (*Christian Architecture* 2.332) calls this menorah a “rough graffito...seemingly unfinished.” However, its placement on the pillar at the entrance suggests that the menorah was an intentional piece of decoration.

<sup>11</sup> The half-vaulted niche underneath the menorah on the pillar is at a height of 1.10 m; it measures 0.43 m high, 0.42–0.44 m wide and 0.19 m deep. Opposite at nearly the same height is a roughly rectangular hole in the column; it measures 0.195 x 0.205 x 0.04 m.

<sup>12</sup> There was observed above the rock in the northeast (Sondage 10) only a 3 cm thick earth layer between the floor slab and rocky ground, which was nearly absent of finds. In the southwest (Sondage 14) the layer between the floor slab and the Hellenistic leveling-out fill was 23.10 cm; under the floor slab a foundation of 8–10 cm had been created with small stones and broken brick.

<sup>13</sup> A similar diagonal line shows the stylobate of the line of columns between the southern aisle and the main nave of the synagogue in Thracian Philippopolis (Plovdiv); the main nave is, however, regularly rectangular (Noy et al., *Inscriptiones Judaicae* 39 fig). This synagogue was established in the first half of the third century A.D. and rebuilt in the early fourth and fifth century A.D. Sometime in the sixth century A.D. it was destroyed.

builder removed the orthostats of the Hellenistic walls for the stylobate and erected new walls using very rough masonry. No supports are preserved on the surface of the stylobate, and also the singular shaft of a column mentioned by the Wiegand excavation team was not found again.<sup>14</sup> Impressions of such supports did not appear. The shafts of columns in the periphery belong to the prostas of House No. 24; other columns or supports do not exist. Perhaps supports of timber were used.

How the western end of the building appeared is unclear due to later changes as well as the deep, former excavations that left a railway embankment in the narrow Street No. 14 used to clear their debris. The old excavation team dug down to the Hellenistic and early Roman floor level, so the Late Antique level is missing, and the railway embankment rebuilt and overbuilt the west walls of the western rooms. The three rooms visible today in the synagogue's southwestern area – water discharge, latrine and a room of unknown use – were filled by the first excavators. Their ground level is 2.24-2.32 m (62,081-62,161) lower than that in the nave of the synagogue (Fig. 3a-b). The structures in the latrine, the tiles and the ceramics from the loamy ground indicate that these three rooms were used only until early Imperial times (Sondages 22, 26). The water basin and the water outlet beside the latrine were filled with tiles, mortar, stones and earth (Sondages 19, 20, 21). The fill of the water basin (PR 10 SYN 1, 20, 1-2) east of the water outlet contains ceramics from the Hellenistic to the early Imperial time. If a main entrance in the nave's central axis had existed as in the second building phase, the difference between the ground level and the road level would have been evened out. It remains unclear if the narrow street had been raised similarly to the south, or if narrow stairs led down to the street. In any case, Street No. 14 had been narrowed to approximately 2.00 m.

In the synagogue's southern aisle no traces of a floor covering were found. The bottom of the small stones located in the eastern and western portion of an older wall (Sondage 13) is on a significantly lower level than the ground level of the main nave and below the upper edge of the foundation of the southern row of the stylobate. At the side of the foundation (Sondage 9) there is preserved an edge of mortar with a sharp bend to the bottom, so that the original ground level of the southern aisle can be reconstructed on 63.741 m.

Centrally located in the east wall of the synagogue's nave is a rectangular niche measuring 1.30 x 1.40 m that extends into the insula adjoining to the east (Figs. 3b-c, 9). The width of the niche's outer walls is 0.55 m in the north, 0.70 m in the east and 0.63 m in the south (Sondages 5, 18, 23). The niche shows two joints at its contact point with the southern wall, which results from the connection to the Hellenistic house wall which turns here to the east. While the walls in the niche's interior are preserved to a height of approximately 0.60 m, the outer shell of the eastern double wall reaches down only three or four courses. The ground of the insula east of the synagogue was at a higher level when the niche was built, which is not an uncommon feature of neighboring insulae.<sup>15</sup> Behind the niche and back of the eastern wall, an older Hellenistic wall running from east to west was interrupted to erect the niche here. The level of the bottom of the niche is several centimeters higher than the floor level of the main nave of the synagogue. The bottom of the niche consists of natural rock, upon whose surface is clustered smaller pebbles and a large stone (64,561 at the bottom). Possibly this irregular ground had been covered with sand or wood; however, no traces remain. Also, traces of a wooden floor construction or

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<sup>14</sup> The stones from the stylobate are very small and uniform at 0.62 m. The reused ashlar had a uniform width, but their lengths were different. They were posted on a wide and thick foundation made from rubblestone, brick fragments and a lot of mortar, which was brought to light by stone robbery in the south (Sondages 8, 13). Those stones, approximately 0.16 m thick, sit on a strong foundation of 0.24 m (Sondage 13). The gaps between the orthostats are closed partly with mortar, partly with loose earth.

<sup>15</sup> White (Christian Architecture 2.331) perceptively notes that because the niche was outside the original bounds of the house, it gives "even greater weight to the idea that the Jewish community had come into possession of all or most of the houses and buildings in the block." The discovery of a menorah graffito on the threshold of this insula supports the thesis that the buildings surrounding the synagogue belonged to members of the Jewish community.

something else are missing. Still adhering to all three inner walls are significant remains of plaster, which exhibit clear traces of wall painting (Fig. 9). Without cleaning the wall, red circles of different sizes were also observed clearly on all three sides attached to one another on a yellow background, which possibly represent marble imitation. The center of the eastern wall displays a bluish-green broad framework. The lower end of the northern and southern walls consisted apparently of broad red strips. The other plastered walls of the synagogue do not show traces of color. Particularly at the foot of the eastern inner wall, north and south of the northern spolia wall and at the bench and at the wall of the southern aisle were found many pieces of plaster partly adhering, partly fallen down. This plaster is at the surface smoother and whiter. Only in the niche is the plaster painted. Close to the niche there was a larger fragment of plaster (0.20 x 0.14 x 0.09 m) with red painting in sketchy brush lines. One of the edges is curved and has a clear break of approximately 65° and the painting goes across the edge. It could be a fragment of a vaulted niche (*Kalotte*). Other references about the upper end of the niche are not preserved.

In front of the niche the first excavators found a long, reused marble stele with a totally worn away and unreadable inscription of numerous lines on the surface (Figs. 9, 11).<sup>16</sup> The side with the inscription lay upward; there was nothing on the rear side. In front of the niche no other slabs of pavement were visible. The ground was made dense by a solid layer of small, white pebbles. During our excavation the stele was set back to its original position. On the surface of the stele there are two or three letters and the rounded foot of a menorah 0.19 m high and 0.21 m wide scratched below the older inscription.<sup>17</sup> Possibly the stele held another position in the surroundings of the synagogue before being placed in front of the niche, in which the engraved design was better visible.

The main building of the synagogue comprised 187.20 m<sup>2</sup>, and with the new yard (the former *prostas* house), its two annex rooms and also some of the rooms of the eastern neighboring house<sup>18</sup> formed together the synagogue building complex. So today we know that the whole complex measuring 450–510 m<sup>2</sup> was bigger than the first excavators thought.

## 2. The second building phase

There are some clear finds and traces of a second phase of the synagogue – new north and south walls for the aisles, a new narthex in the west, a new water basin near the northern entrance and a new paved floor in the main nave and in the northern aisle. In the second building phase the interior of the synagogue was reduced in size by constructing new walls in front of the existing walls of the aisles (Figs. 3c, 20). The northern one consists of numerous spolia (rusticated ashlar, a part of a fountain, a part of a cornice and others), and the large gaps between the spolia were filled with rubblestones, brick fragments and a lot of mortar (Fig. 12). It is preserved to a length of 8.50 m, which is interrupted in the west, and has a width of 0.65 m and plastered on both sides. Likewise, in the southern aisle a new wall was set closely in front of the older outside wall. The plaster of the eastern and southern inner walls reaches further behind the connection point of the two walls (Sondage 6). The older southern wall

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<sup>16</sup> The measurements are: 2.31 m high, 0.69 m wide at the top, 0.74 m wide at the foot, 0.18–0.22 m thick. Its top has an ornamental profile, the foot with a tenon and two *bosse* at the side (*Hebebosse*).

<sup>17</sup> Ovadia (1978, 859) identifies this as a “crude menorah on a column.”

<sup>18</sup> The rooms along the eastern wall of the synagogue show some later changes: new thresholds, added walls, installation of smaller room units, and the new second entrance from the West Gate Street with menorah graffiti. Under the paved yard runs a water channel in the direction of the water basin of the synagogue (second phase). And the niche of the main nave of the synagogue extends into the terrace of this neighboring building. The southern two-room units seem to be separated from the rest of this house. But the northern and main parts measuring 400 m<sup>2</sup> were used contemporaneously and are structurally connected with the synagogue. The cleaning and excavation of this area remains to be done. Maybe there was a Jewish quarter around the synagogue, and the synagogue was built into one of its houses.

stood, at least in the plinth, upright even after the establishment of the new wall. Both southern walls, old and new, are 0.70 m wide; the base of the older one is on a previous wall, while the newer one possesses a foundation of small stones. Between both walls is a gap of approximately 0.30 m, in which many rubblestones, bricks and fragments of plaster were found. The new southern wall is interrupted shortly before the wall of partition of the aisle. The part continuing to the south is more strongly disturbed also in other areas: the walls are cleared to a deeper level, the ashlar of the stylobate is robbed out and the ground level is obviously deeper. Perhaps here is either a final phase (a separation; a stone-robbing) or a stronger destruction by the old excavation team, because of the directly adjacent slope and the railway embankment (Fig. 13). There are three older small walls in the southern aisle (Sondages 9, 13, 17). They are preserved only to a low height and lie under the top edge of the foundation of the southern outside wall of the second phase. They were covered in the time of the synagogue and no longer visible. They could well have been the walls of annex rooms in the yard of House No. 24 in pre-synagogue times.

The northern aisle and the main nave have a new pavement. This pavement is part of the second building phase because it fills the space between the new northern wall and the northern and southern stylobate and between the new threshold from the main entrance from the new narthex and the eastern wall. There were no traces of a pavement in the narthex or in the southern aisle, but the rectangular stone layer beside the eastern wall of the narthex could be a foundation for a special floor cover.

The pavement was made from spolia: there are architectural blocks and stones with inscriptions. Construction units with architectural ornamentation had been turned facedown with the decoration covered or partly reduced. If the inscriptions were readable, the blocks were placed upside down in the pavement; if no longer readable (with a low-contrast, weathered surface), the blocks were put with the inscribed side to the top. So an altar of Athena Polias was cut down the middle, and both halves with the inscription upside down were laid side by side into the floor of the northern aisle (Sondage 10). The stones of the pavement reached partly under the bench on the northern wall and partly in front of it. The bench was set directly at the plastered inner wall. This would be a technical feature and did not mean a third building phase. The front of the bench is bricked up and plastered; the upper layer is gone.<sup>19</sup> The inside is solidified by small stones and bricks. An ashlar with engraved small letters from the main nave, broken into two parts, could have been the covering of the bench. The graffiti (single incoherent letters) might have been engraved while persons sat on the bench. The block was put down temporarily on the surface of the bench. The slabs of the pavement are set on a thin layer of small, white pieces of mortar. Possibly there had been applied yet another mortar layer on the few centimeters of a strong filling layer at the Hellenistic level (Sondages 12, 14). An older paved floor was not found, but it is possible that they reused the stones and spolia from a former paved floor during the rebuilding of the synagogue.

The installation of the door in the former *prostas* of House No. 24 suggests a filling between the columns and the pillars, but no traces of this remain. Since a lot of mortar was used in the first phase, the lack of mortar in the area of the stylobate could point to a late closing. That the *prostas* was closed at the latest in the second phase is deducible, on the one hand, from the wall of spolia, which was pulled up directly in front of the *prostas*. It stops at the height of the door passage in the *prostas* (Sondages 3, 24). On the other hand a water basin or a reservoir was inserted between the old and new northern outside wall of the synagogue (Fig. 14; Sondage 7). There is a supply in the northeastern corner at ground level; however, clay pipes were not found. Above the basin there is a late supply channel (Sondage 4) that leads toward the eastern wall of the synagogue and ends in front of it. A

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<sup>19</sup> This bench is not illustrated in Richardson, *Building Jewish*, pl. 31. The caption is mislabeled; the so-called “benches” are the right stylobate. The Torah niche is also not out of the picture on the right, but in the left background of the picture behind the stele lying in front of it.

downspout was not found. Possibly the basin served to handle the accumulation of ground water coming from the northeast to the terraces (no waste water). The southern end of the basin is not preserved; the thick ridges of mortar and the gap in the ground level between the foundation of the stylobate and the basin suggest a small wall or a closing stone. The water was obviously channeled in a southerly direction into a gutter between the foundation of the stylobate and the foot of the north side of the northern wall (of spolia) of the second building phase. Whether the basin is connected with the smaller marble basin (0.95 m diameter) found in the synagogue in front of the niche is uncertain.

In the second building phase a narthex was placed into the interior in the west, spanning the whole width. For this narthex the main nave was shortened, and the western ends of the stylobate became parts of the side panels of the narthex (Fig. 3c). These visible, earlier parts of two longer stylobate lines indicate clearly a former first building phase of a larger synagogue. Traces of brickwork on top of the former ashlar of the stylobate were not found. The area south to the narthex today is on a deeper level and probably was excavated down to the level of the rooms to the northwest. The situation north of the narthex within the area of the former entrance to the courtyard of House No. 24 could not be clarified satisfactorily as mentioned above. The direction of a rusticated ashlar in the wall to the west of the prosta had been turned from east-west to north-south and lines up with the western wall of the narthex. This heavy, large stone block must have been set intentionally in this position so it was part of an external wall of the first building phase (without a narthex). It should belong to the western wall of the synagogue and indicates the deep cleaning by the old excavation team. The narthex opens with only one central entrance with a large threshold (64,312 top edge) to the main nave.

In the second phase of the synagogue the main building was reduced by 54 m<sup>2</sup> from 187.20 m<sup>2</sup> to 120 m<sup>2</sup> with a narthex of 13.20 m<sup>2</sup>, but the northern yard and rooms remained without reduction.

## II. The chronology and some finds from the synagogue

On the surface and in several of the sondages ceramics, lamps, coins, glass and some small metal objects like iron nails and strips of lead were found. The ceramics dated from the Hellenistic and early Roman periods while the lamps, glass and coins were from the Late Antique period. Beneath the late Roman ceramics only a few items with dateable characteristics were found. Because the synagogue was built in a Hellenistic house, much Hellenistic material was among the finds. The house was erected at the time of the foundation of the city. We do not know when the house was changed into a prosta house, but the other large prosta houses in Priene like House No. 33 were erected in the third quarter of the second century B.C. But in the sondages in the southeastern annex rooms (Sondage 2/3) two floor levels could be discerned. The material under the first and between the first and second plaster floor of this annex room is Hellenistic without later objects. Therefore the closing of the entrance from the West Gate Street originated from the installation of the prosta house. The annex rooms were also used in late Roman times, not only because of the Late Antique level of the thresholds, but also because the ceramics, glass and a coin of Theodosius I (A.D. 379–95) were found between the second floor and the layer of the debris of the decline (PR10 SYN-2, 3, 2 N 35).

Already the former southern yard of the Hellenistic house shows a fill layer for the equalization of the floor. The ceramics revealed that the water channel running from northeast to southwest (Sondages 11, 25) was also part of the Hellenistic house. In the early Roman period three rooms were added in the southwest: a water outlet, a latrine and a paved room (shop?).<sup>20</sup> These were filled in before the fourth century A.D. Altogether we found just a few sherds from this period: two while cleaning the surface and one in a sondage in the nave's southern side.

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<sup>20</sup> The correlation to the prosta house remains open. The rooms were accessible from the street, so maybe it was not utilized in combination with the house. But also in relation to Priene's other big prosta houses like House No. 33 a public function had already been entertained. Such a function occurs with a latrine.



Under the stones and spolia of the pavement of the main nave were found some ceramics of the late Roman period: African Red Slip ware (PR 10 SYN-1, 10, 2; SYN-1, 14) and Eastern Sigillata A and B ware (PR 10 SYN-1, 14). A fragment of Phoccean LRC ware or ARS ware was found under the floor level of the second north wall (PR 10 SYN-1, 24, 2). Another fragment of LRC ware comes from the sondage in the area of a possible side entrance from Street No. 14 near the northwest corner (PR 10 SYN-2, 3, 1).<sup>21</sup>

More exact data for the Late Antique period could be obtained only from the coins and glass vessels (see below). During the cleaning in the gaps of the pavement and on the bench, coins of the late fourth century to the middle of the sixth century A.D. were found. Also found was glassware, which occurs in this form from the fourth century to the sixth/early seventh century A.D. In the threshold area of the entrance from the West Gate Street into House No. 24 a small clay lamp from the first half of the fifth century A.D. was found during surface cleaning. Another lamp dating to the second half of the fifth century A.D. was found in the joints of the pavement in the nave. These few finds imply a use of the synagogue from the late fourth to the sixth/early seventh century A.D.

One of the glass vessels in the pavement (Sondage 12 PR 09 SYN-1, 12, 1 G 33) corresponds to a form that appears in the second half of the fifth century A.D. In the same place (Sondage 12) but a little deeper under the pavement, two coins minted under Arcadius (A.D. 395–408) or Honorius (A.D. 393–423) were found. Therefore the pavement was probably laid in the latter half of the fifth century A.D. This dating then serves as the *terminus post quem* for the pavement and thereby for the rebuilding (building phase 2). However, the *terminus ad quem* cannot be determined from the finds even now. From the style of the architecture it is likely that the construction of the synagogue is from the Late Antique period. The glass and coins under the floor pavement of the synagogue's second phase start in the late fourth century A.D., so it is certain that the synagogue was in use in the fourth century A.D. Nevertheless, the dating of the building's first use as a synagogue must remain open, because it is possible that the former house was used initially as a place of prayer or assembly by the Jewish community before the construction of a synagogue.<sup>22</sup> The coins, glass and lamps attest a utilization of the synagogue between the late fourth and the six/early seventh centuries A.D. However, we did not find the typical Byzantine finds like the glass bracelet or the glazed ceramic that emerged in excavations at the castle's chapel of Priene or at the Teloneia.

## 1. Glass

In the joints of the synagogue's pavement as well as southeast of the front of the niche and southwest of the threshold of the main entrance, several colorless and colored sherds of glass vessels were found.<sup>23</sup> These include thin-walled glass vessels with a spreading rim, a cylindrical cup, a goblet and a foot of a goblet, broken sharply-bent handles and rims of cups and bowls. Also several fragments of glass came to light in the sondages. The goblets, whose feet were manufactured from a glass bubble, developed in the fourth century A.D. and particularly spread out in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. toward Asia Minor and Syria. After Stern and Czurda-Ruth, the glass goblets, like the lamps in the form of goblets without a foot, are a *leitform* of Byzantine glass vessels (Stern 1984, 138; von Saldern, Glass 45–52 il.

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the exceptional situation of the sigillata tablewares in western Asia Minor including Priene in the early Roman imperial period, see Poblome and Zelle (2002).

<sup>22</sup> Suggested dating of the synagogue by other scholars before our excavation is: Magness (2005, 443): "fourth or fifth century C.E.?"; Richardson (Building Jewish 138): "probably second century C.E."; Hachlili (Jewish Art 58): "probably...to the second century"; White citing Kraabel (Christian Architecture 330): "probably in the second-third centuries CE."

<sup>23</sup> For the cleaning and the restoration of the glass pieces we thank Isabell Gennacarro (Frankfurt a. M.), Kathi Posekany (Vienna), Nadine Heller (Berlin) and Alexander Gatzsche (Berlin); for the drawing Markus Brücke (Cologne).

23 and 32; Czurda-Ruth, Gläser 151, 174, 181; cf. Isings, Roman Glass 130–131, 140). Also the goblets were obviously used as lamps and found in houses, shops, churches and synagogues. Such lamps with a hollow-pending handle and used in polycandela have often been found in Ephesos and Sardis and were used both by Jews and Christians (Neuburg, Antikes Glas 58–59).<sup>24</sup> In addition to their practical uses for illumination, such decorated interior lamps could be associated with a semiotic function related to the symbolism of light.<sup>25</sup>

No. 1 (Fig. 15): a glass fragment PR 09 SYN-1, 12,1 G 33 from Sondage 12, southwest of the threshold of the main entrance into the main nave, directly below the ground level of the pavement; description: a funnel-shaped, separate manufactured vessel foot with strengthened neck and knob in torsion, with tubular, hollow foot ring, foot is pinched out from the side, foot and handle from a glass bubble, a thin and double-walled glass with little bubbles, free-blown, worked with a tool, corroded iridescent surface; color: greenish; measures: 2.6 cm high, foot diameter outside 4.5 cm, wall strength (cup) 0.08 cm, (foot) 0.2 cm, dating: second half of fifth to the early seventh century A.D.; compare: Priene, chapel and Episcopal residence<sup>26</sup>; Ephesos, so-called *Hanghaus* 1 (Czurda-Ruth, Gläser 151, 160–72, 303 pl. 19 nos. 686–701; 316–17 pls. 32–33; complex 18–21 (ca. fourth–seventh century A.D. green glass)<sup>27</sup> and Tetragonos Agora (Czurda-Ruth 2005: 158–161); Sardis, shops<sup>28</sup>; Didyma, Temenos of the altar (Tuchelt – Wintermeyer 1980, 141 pl. 68 no. 123); Myndos<sup>29</sup>; Athenian Agora (Alexander 1973: 32 pl. 24a; Weinberg – Stern, Vessel Glass, cat. no. 346–351, pl. 20.31)<sup>30</sup>; Nea Anchialos (Isings, Roman Glass 139–140)<sup>31</sup>; Thasos (Abadie-Reynal – Sodini, Thasos 92 nos. V7–V8 fig. 38 pls. 14 c-d, 15 a-b); Samos<sup>32</sup>; Dura-Europos<sup>33</sup>; and Kartli, Georgia (Ugreldize, Производства 27 no. III fig. 3). This is the only glass fragment discovered in a closed context.

No. 2 (Fig. 16): glass fragment PR 09 SYN 1.1 G27 from the joints in the pavement directly in front of the niche; description: a narrow glass goblet spread to the rim, foot and rim are lost, separately manufactured foot, glass with little bubbles and smears, free-blown, worked with a tool, corroded iridescent surface; color: blue-greenish, measures: 7.0 cm high, foot diameter 1.8 cm, wall strength 0.2 cm (foot), 0.08 cm (upper part). Several similar pieces with conical lower part, partly with a knob in

<sup>24</sup> For the example of a fifth-sixth century polycandelon with two menorahs found in the Galilean village of Kefa Hananyah, see Fine 1996, 38–39 and 167; for a recent survey of the various types of Byzantine glass lamps, see Olcay 2001, 77–87.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the ritual function of lights in the synagogue, see Levine, Ancient Synagogue 356–357.

<sup>26</sup> In the chapel in the eastern part of the Agora were found two such goblet feet (PR09 AK 6.2; 6.3) and an additional one without a knob at the foot of the Episcopal residence (PR 09 Bischofspalast G 20). Jesko Fildhuth leads the excavations and investigations in both buildings; see note 51. Other pieces of these characteristic glass feet were found in the area of the Agora (PR 07 G7 AG 41/2; 41/8)

<sup>27</sup> Compare goblets of fourth-seventh century A.D. from the cellar of the Vadius-Gymnasion in Ephesos; see Steskal 2008, 199 nos. 126–134.

<sup>28</sup> Crawford, Byzantine Shops 46 E 1 Univ. 67 (green); cf. goblets on a high foot; 80 E 12–13 Univ. 64 and W 13 fig. 44; Claußen, Synagoge 58 type 2 late sixth-early seventh century A.D. like on pl. 24 no. 351 G 59.57:2001.

<sup>29</sup> Hakan Mert of Uludağ University, Bursa, has kindly provided information on this and the next glass fragment from finds in the area of the church and the graves on the promontory at the harbor of Myndos.

<sup>30</sup> For a comparative piece in Gortyn, Crete, see Sternini 1997 nn. 126–128, pl. 51 nn. 33–35; for Samos in the sixth century A.D. see Isler 1969, 228 figs. 59, 60.

<sup>31</sup> See Weinberg 1962, 133 pl. 28 fig. 16 for glass of greenish, bluish, yellowish and brownish color arising from the fourth century A.D.

<sup>32</sup> For the early sixth-century A.D. church in the Heraion and the glass finds, see Isler 1969, 228 figs. 59, 60, 98; pls. 8, 10.

<sup>33</sup> See Perkins, Glass 101 nos. 460–466 pl.11 nos. 460, 463, 466 for vessels of greenish and blue glass with a knob in the cup foot. Since Dura-Europos was abandoned and destroyed at the beginning of the second half of the third century A.D., the local finds are from the first half of the third century A.D.; cf. Hopkins, Dura Europos 262–265.

the top of the foot and spread to the rim originate from Sardis (Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* 46 fig. 172 E 1 Univ.67 [pale green]; Claußen, *Synagoge* 49–50, type 3 pl. 32 nos. 274–86; type 4 no. 289). They range from the fourth to the early seventh century A.D. with an acme in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The form belongs to the conical glass lamps, usually smoked, which appears both in funnel-shaped form and in the form of those from Priene and Sardis. Compare Ephesos (Czurda-Ruth, *Gläser* 174, 181–82, 305 pl. 21 nos. 811, 819, 820, 823; second half of the sixth century A.D. [greenish]); Myndos and Thasos (Abadie-Reynal – Sodini, *Thasos*, V4 fig. 38 conserved as a lamp?); Samos (Isler 1969, 227 fig. 57 pl. 98,7 from the Heraion, sixth century A.D. greenish, smoked inside); Karanis (Harden, *Karanis*, pl. 5 nos. 464, 465); and Dura-Europos (Perkins, *Glass* 142 pl. 16 no. 755).

## 2. Coins

Twelve bronze coins were found,<sup>34</sup> half of which during the surface cleaning of the synagogue in the first two campaigns. However, six bronze coins were discovered in closed contexts. The two identifiable bronze coins from the surface cleaning are PR09 SYN-1 N 23 minted in Nikomedia under Justinian (A.D. 527–65), a decanummium with the portrait of Justinian on the obverse and a Greek iota on the reverse, the legend is ANNO and NIK (Fig. 17a) but the date is missing; and PR09 SYN-1 N 17, most probably minted under Theodosius I (A.D. 379–95) (Fig. 17b).<sup>35</sup> So we have coins from the late fourth and sixth century A.D. in the area of the synagogue. Two coins from a closed context were found below the pavement level (Sondage 12): PR09 SYN-1 N 27 dates to Arcadius (A.D. 395–408)<sup>36</sup> (Sear, *Byzantine Coins*, no. 205) while PR09 SYN-1 N 28 was minted in Constantinople, probably under Arcadius or Honorius (A.D. 393–423).<sup>37</sup> The Late Antique coins found in the synagogue correspond to other contemporaneous coins from Priene. They are fewer than in the preceding centuries and mostly of Valerianus, Gallienus, Claudius Gothicus, Marcianus, Leo and others (Regling, *Münzen von Priene* 14–15, 184–185 and 191). Among them is a hoard without context containing coins minted under Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius from the mints of Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Heracleia, Antioch, Constantinople and Alexandria (Regling, *Münzen von Priene* 177–200).<sup>38</sup>

## 3. Lamps

Between the slabs of the paved floor southeast of the niche's front were found several small clay lamps with decorated mirror. An additional one was found in the interior of House No. 24 at the West Gate Street beside the threshold. This last small lamp (PR 09 SYN-1 L1) shows three of the original five little holes arranged on the mirror, which are separated by a cross-shaped pair of ribs.<sup>39</sup> It belongs to the first half of the fifth century A.D. Another from the second half of the fifth century A.D. has small embossed points close to the spout beside an attached clay cord.<sup>40</sup> A fragment of a lamp spout shows a

<sup>34</sup> For the coin restoration and coin photography we thank Anna Weinberger (Vienna), Nadine Heller (Berlin) and Birgitta Schödel (Frankfurt am Main); for the provisional dating Frank Daubner (Stuttgart). For any informations or pictures to the coins please contact the authors.

<sup>35</sup> This coin type was minted under Theodosius in Antioch, Constantinople, Arles and Alexandria. Obverse: portrait of the emperor; reverse: enthroned Constantinopolis with a spear in her right and a globe in her left hand.

<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately the date is not readable. The obverse shows a portrait of Justinian; the reverse perhaps shows a phoenix on the top of a mountain with the legend FEL TEMP REPARATIO.

<sup>37</sup> Obverse: portrait of the emperor; reverse: possibly a victoria crowning the emperor; legend: perhaps VIRTUS EXERCITI, in the section: CONS (D?).

<sup>38</sup> A detailed chart summarizing the coin finds of the Priene synagogue is available from the authors.

<sup>39</sup> A small clay lamp from the Late Antique Byzantine shops next to the Sardis synagogue shows five small holes arranged in the mirror (Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* 101 E 19 fig. 590–591 L63.59:5813 [Asia Minor type]); two other such lamps are from Miletos (Menzel, *Antike Lampen* 98 nos. 632–633 fig. 80, 9. 10).

<sup>40</sup> Decorated lamps like those with point or grape ornament and attached clay cords were found also in Sardis (Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* 30 W 9-8 L 59.4:1246 fig. 93; E 19 fig. 590–591 L63.59:5813), Didyma (Tuchelt –

diagonal pair of grooves on the lower side of the spout base on both sides,<sup>41</sup> as they appear in Asia Minor around the middle of the fifth century A.D. Similar small lamps of the same period were found in the excavations in the north hall of the Agora (cf. Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 479). Their handles are flat, added knobs, and the preserved simple spouts show traces of smoke. The lamp body is circular or nearly oval, while the spout is attached close to the mirror and the lamp shoulder is narrow and partly pending.

#### 4. Menorah Plaque

One of the most important finds of the 2009 campaign was the rediscovery of a menorah plaque, which was broken into three pieces and had a small piece of the lower left corner missing.<sup>42</sup> Wiegand and Schrader (Priene 481, fig. 586) were the first to publish sketches of this plaque, which they found near the niche of the main nave. According to Kraabel (1995, 108 no. 41), he recovered the two pieces [at that time] and photographed them during a visit to the synagogue on 10 August 1966. He writes: “One fragment had remained in the main room of the synagogue, the other was found in the room just to the right (south) of the Torah niche.”<sup>43</sup>

The plaque measures 0.77 x 0.61 x 0.09 m with two peacocks on either side of a menorah with tripod foot (Figs. 18 a, b). Between the peacocks and the candelabrum are a palm leaf (*lulav*)<sup>44</sup> and a sprig with leaves and fruit (*ethrog*<sup>45</sup> or bundle of Sukkoth?).<sup>46</sup> The flat relief carving is only 4 cm thick. On the narrow lower and upper side there is a dowel hole for clasping the exterior edges; the back side is roughly worked. Significantly, the sketches of Wiegand and Schrader and those patterned after them show several discrepancies: the palm leaf is too large and stands at the bottom, the crown of the left bird is missing, the shape of the bird’s wing was changed, the tripod foot is closed, the tenon added and the object between the right bird and the menorah is missing (cf. Ovadia 1978 pl. 273 fig. 4; Rumscheid – Koenigs, Priene 93 fig. 73). Hachlili (Jewish Art 319 fig. VII-7d) shows the sketch once according to Wiegand and once with the addition of the sprig with leaves (1998: 78 fig. II-33; 2001: 76, fig. II-22d). Wiegand and Schrader (Priene 481) regarded it as an ornament of the Torah niche because it was found close to the niche.<sup>47</sup> They found a similar relief reused in the floor pavement of

Wintermeyer 1980, 141 pl. 67 no. 119) sixth/seventh century A.D.; Miletos (Menzel, Antike Lampen 99 nos. 637 and 638 fig. 80,8. 13) fifth century A.D.; Smyrna (Brants, Terra-Cotta Lampen 63 pl.8 nos. 1120, 1131); Ephesos (Ladstätter 2008, 116–118 fig. 23).

<sup>41</sup> From the Byzantine shops next to the Sardis synagogue we know of several small lamps with such ornamented spouts (Crawford, Byzantine Shops 49 E 2 L68.2:7603 [Asia Minor type] fig. 185; 101 E 19 figs. 590, 91 L63.59:5813 [Asia Minor type]). Several Late Antique small clay lamps, which were found on Thasos and are assigned to the area of Asia Minor and the Black Sea, show at the top side a decoration of small embossed points, while at the lower side are two pairs of grooves proceeding to the handle and to the spout (Abadie-Reynal – Sodini, Thasos 68–69 L30, L32, L34, L35, L36 figs. 28–30). Lamps of this type also known from Ephesos, Assos, Miletos (Menzel, Antike Lampen 97 no. 621 fig. 72.2 and no. 635 fig. 80.6; Miltner, Coemeterium, nos. 1264–1266 pl. 7 and Smyrna: Brants, Terra-Cotta Lampen 63–64 pl. 8 nos. 1119 and 1120).

<sup>42</sup> For the cleaning and gluing of the three parts we thank Gerrit Höfig (Halle); the design was made by Nadin Burkhardt (Frankfurt a. M.). The relief was transferred to the museum depot of Miletos.

<sup>43</sup> A photograph of the relief in two pieces taken by Andrew Seager in 1966 (personal communication 26 July 2012) illustrates an article on diaspora synagogues by Rutgers (1996, 72 fig. 12).

<sup>44</sup> Ovadia (1978, 859) suggested that the object was not a *lulav* but rather a tree, perhaps a cypress.

<sup>45</sup> Goodenough (1953: 2.77) first identified it as a circumcision knife instead of an *ethrog* but later changed his mind (1965: 12.215)

<sup>46</sup> An identical sprig with few thick leaves is visible on the epitaph of Saul and Anna dating to the third-fourth century A.D. from the Thessalian Nea Anchialos and is interpreted as a doubly illustrated *lulav* (Noy et al., Inscriptioes Judaicae 131 no. 17).

<sup>47</sup> A fourth-century inscription found in Side mentions an administrator named Isaac who refinished or repolished the two lampstands (επιταμῶν) in the synagogue (Lifshitz, Donateurs et Fondateurs 37 no. 36; Levine, Ancient Syn-

the Episcopal Church (1904: 475, fig. 582).<sup>48</sup> This plaque is a square slab with simple relief, which shows a menorah with tripod foot. Above the tripod there are two volutes at the side of the menorah; a *lulav* and *shofar* appear on the left and on the right an *ethrog*.

### 5. Water Installation

Likewise, within the area of the niche Wiegand and Schrader (Priene 480–481, fig. 585) found a large basin 0.95 m in diameter like those found also in the synagogues at Sardis, Gaza, Beth She'arim, and Dura-Europos (cf. Ovadiah 1978, 860). The basin is still *in situ* in the southern side of the aisle.

The observation by Trebilco (Jewish Communities 55) that the synagogue was “probably undecorated” is not substantiated by our excavations. The marble objects, the reliefs, the pavement, the bench, the interior wall plaster, the wall painting in the niche and the graffiti all constitute the rich furnishings of the synagogue’s interior.

### III. The location and surroundings of the synagogue in Late Antique Priene

The synagogue is situated within the Hellenistic city wall in Priene’s west quarter, south of the West Gate Street in a residential area (Insula G). The layout of the surrounding area at the time of the synagogue is not well known. It is situated near the West Gate, which provides the only vehicular access to the Agora and its food market via the West Gate Street. Since the establishment of the city, the West Gate Street served as one of the most important streets of Priene. It is not certain if it were still used in this way at the time of the synagogue. At some point a water channel was installed running the entire length of the street to the West Gate. Such a channel would impede vehicular traffic substantially unless covered with bridging stones (Ruppe 2007, 293). Also, the steps of the main entrance of the synagogue provide an obstruction as they reach into the street (Fig. 2). A greatly increased level of Late Antique rebuilding, wall courses and sewers can be observed around the synagogue, particularly in the area east toward the Agora. Directly in front of the synagogue a line of shops had been built in Roman times. Later sidewalks were added on a level higher than the old street level in front of the shops, indicating their use in Late Antiquity too.<sup>49</sup> During the Hellenistic period an Alexandream (House No. 22) and a sanctuary of Cybele were situated in the Western quarter (Rumscheid 1998: 93–99), but we have no evidence for their use in later cult activities.<sup>50</sup> Wiegand and Schrader (Priene 479) indicate a chapel southeast of the Cybele sanctuary at West Gate Street; however, no traces remain of it. The latest coin found on the West Gate Street dates from the late fourth/ early fifth century A.D. (Wiegand

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agogue 343). Ovadiah (1978, 864) concludes from this description that the Torah shrine was symmetrically flanked by the two menorahs mentioned in the inscription.

<sup>48</sup> The illustration was republished by Kleiner (1962 sp.1221), Ovadiah (1978 pl. 273 fig. 3), Westphalen (1998, 337 cat. no. 42, 2 pl. 42, 2) and Berlin, Bode Museum of Ancient Antiquities and Byzantine Art inv. no. 4691. It measures 61.5 x 61 cm. Effenberger (et al., Kunst 103 no. 28) date the plaque to the third-fourth century A.D.

<sup>49</sup> For this information we thank Selma Dillmann who surveyed this area in 2009 as part of the University of Bonn excavations under the direction of Frank Rumscheid.

<sup>50</sup> For this reason Richardson (Building Jewish 167) has suggested that “the juxtaposition of the three cults (Alexander, Cybele, Jews) in neighboring houses implies that all three originated in similar community conditions.... The three buildings reflected the conditions of many associations, located on the town’s edge, relatively invisible, relying on patrons.” Richardson’s statement is misleading in two ways. First, the buildings were asynchronous. No findings in the so-called Alexandream date from the Roman period. Apparently it did not survive the destruction of the late Hellenistic period. The builders of the synagogue centuries later probably did not know that either cult sanctuary ever existed. Second, the west residential area was not invisible on the town’s edge but within two minutes of the city center and on a main east-west thoroughfare. Murray (2005: 197 ff.), following Richardson, makes a similar mistake in her attempt to see the juxtaposition of these three cults in a domestic setting as “typical of many Greco-Roman voluntary associations” (198).

– Schrader, Priene 478). So the synagogue does not seem to have been situated in a deserted quarter in Late Roman times.

The rest of the city offers the following picture in the Late Antique period.<sup>51</sup> The city wall still forms the boundary of the city (Ruppe 2007, 280). Within the city one falls back on existing structures. Thus anterooms were created in the Agora's north hall (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.) by installing walls between the central row of columns and the small rooms at the rear.<sup>52</sup> According to the structures, the north hall had perhaps a further commercial use, which is evident with regard to the east-west main street in front of the hall. In the back of the north hall, walls can also be observed built into the houses from Late Antique to Byzantine times. The housing added to the northern area of the Athena sanctuary dated, according to the coin finds, to the times of Valerian and Diocletian (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 478). Also in the Prytaneion, close to the east city gate and east of the Bouleuterion (area F 15), late irregular walls were uncovered above late Hellenistic features (Raeck 2006, 149; Raeck 2007, 340 and 346).<sup>53</sup> South of the theater street, in Insulae E 13/E 14, bordering the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods, the monumental *prostas* houses of the Hellenistic period were overbuilt by several small structures. Their exact dating is still pending.<sup>54</sup> And also in some of the houses around House No. 33 on the western Theater Street in the northwest quarter are to be found late rebuildings and installations.<sup>55</sup> In Late Antique times, residential buildings obviously were maintained as such, but adapted to changing requirements.

The debris of the sanctuary of Athena, obviously destroyed by an earthquake perhaps in the late second century B.C., partly remained in place, while some pieces were scattered into the southern housing areas or incorporated as *spolia* (Hennemeyer, Athena-Heiligtum 22, 27, 85–91, 206 pls. 63, 64). Examples can be found in the Episcopal Church (Rumscheid – Koenigs, Priene 114, 134) and in a late bathroom in the so-called Upper Gymnasium southeast of the Episcopal Church (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 478).<sup>56</sup> We know only little more about the later modifications in the theater, but it was still in use in the fourth century A.D. At this time the northwestern corner of the auditorium was covered. In the fifth century A.D. at the latest, the theater was used as a quarry for the building of the nearby

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<sup>51</sup> Since 2007, the study of the antique Priene is a main focus of the current Frankfurt excavation project. Jesko Fildhuth (Istanbul), the scope of whose thesis included Late Antique and Byzantine Priene, is head of the work in the north hall of the Agora, in the basilica in the cemetery near the east gate, in the chapel opposite the sanctuary of Asklepios, in the so-called South-complex, in the so-called Episcopal residence and in the Byzantine settlement on the Telo-neia. The authors wish to express their thanks to Jesko Fildhuth for his advice and suggestions.

<sup>52</sup> Within the western part of the northern area of the north hall of the Agora (PR 99 AG 2/5. 10th 13. 26–28) were found small fittings in form of relatively broad ashlar walls with finished front, which closed the gap between the middle row of columns and the small rooms. The final phase, according to finds of oil lamps, coins and pottery, was in the sixth century A.D. A reversed, round basis of a statue, with the inscription *HPQI*, possibly served as a counter (Koenigs et al. 2000, 182 figs. 1–3; Koenigs – Raeck 2001, 183, 190 fig. 4).

<sup>53</sup> They are characterized by the use of thin slabs of schist in floor pavements and walls, as they were observed also in other Late Antique buildings in Priene. Their exact dating remains uncertain. They could have been installed between the Late Antique period and the Middle Ages.

<sup>54</sup> The structures of the rooms in several small parts, though aligned for the most part east-west, are skewed. They partly reach into the theater street and into the road. According to the thresholds, it was a multi-space complex. See the maps in Hennemeyer 2005, 153; 140 plan 1:500 and in Raeck 2005, 159 fig. 6. Compare Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 166 fig. 158 with the sketch lines of the dismantled walls in the sanctuary.

<sup>55</sup> We thank Ulrich Mania (Oxford) for his helpful advice. The results of the excavations and measurements in this quarter are in preparation for publication by the excavation team from the University of Bonn under the direction of Frank Rumscheid.

<sup>56</sup> The baths could have been part of the bishop's palace south of the Episcopal Church. Parts of the building, like the western hall, are now oriented to the Episcopal residence. The water basin in the courtyard of the so-called Upper Gymnasium was installed even in Byzantine times (according to the clay pipe) and testifies to the long use of the area.

Episcopal Church.<sup>57</sup> And in the later centuries it was probably buried completely, since late alignments of various modifications ran straight over the stage building. The numerous chapels and churches visibly changed the urban structure in the eastern part of the city. They stand not only in older structures, but also at their entrances. Although the evidence for these buildings is scarce, we know the position of some of them: 1) on the step of the stairway above the western upper entrance of the Bouleuterion in the north-south connection to the Athena Polias temple street,<sup>58</sup> 2) in the eastern parados of the theater,<sup>59</sup> however parallel to the Theater Street which remained passable, 3) perhaps but very hypothetically within the eastern range of the temple of Athena (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 478) but not inside the temple, 4) east of the temple between it and the Episcopal Church,<sup>60</sup> 5) and southeast of the Asklepeion (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 479). Since numerous simple Byzantine graves were excavated around the sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods, there could well have been a (Byzantine?) chapel also in this area. Some of these small chapels are equipped with a pavement, colored plaster, marble slabs with reliefs, a bema, a bench, columns and capitals (Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* 139–140). From the area of the Agora's north hall comes a bema relief, which depicts a Christian cross in a circle (0.47 m diameter) set within a framework.<sup>61</sup> The steps in front of the shops also have some graffiti of crosses, but no chapel has been found in the surrounding area. There are not only crosses on the steps but also some small gladiators, phallic symbols, tridents, circles and one menorah.<sup>62</sup>

Other chapels, like those in the later castle opposite the temple of Asklepios in Street No. 10<sup>63</sup> and those southeast of the Episcopal Church in the so-called Upper Gymnasium, are from the Byzantine period and are integrated into earlier Roman buildings. These chapels thus follow the grid of the insulae (Hennemeyer 1998, 347). In the fifth century A.D. the Episcopal Church was established in front of the theater, which restricted the street in front of the theater even more and integrated parts of the east neighboring Roman bath. The next building to the south is called the Episcopal residence.

The chapels, churches and the graffiti of different-shaped crosses are concentrated in the middle of the city between the temple of Athena and the eastern city gate (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 477). Thus

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<sup>57</sup> The last comprehensive changes took place probably already in time of Antoninus, when a basement was built into the stage building and the walls moved and strengthened for the vault. Later, smaller annex buildings in the external area were added. At the western parodos wall a large water tank was established, built half into the rock with supporting pillars. It was kind of a water reservoir situated parallel to the building alignment. At the eastern wall of the stage building a small well house was added, whose basin was formed by a reused pithos. Several late clay pipes run throughout the theater area. The Late Antique level was approximately two meters above the level of Hellenistic times; see Westphalen 1998, 281 fig. 1.

<sup>58</sup> From this place comes a relief from the bema, according to Westphalen 1998, 340 n. 120, pls. 43 and 46, which shows a bead-decorated cross with a support in the form of steps; cf. Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 487 fig. 602.

<sup>59</sup> It was found in a level 1 m above the Hellenistic level and was cleared away in March 1897. Two reliefs of the bema are part of this chapel: a plate with grating pattern in form of scales and one with normal grating pattern (Westphalen 1998, 281 fig. 1; 339–40 nn. 118, 119; Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 486 fig. 599).

<sup>60</sup> The building with four apses lying between the temple of Athena and the Episcopal Church has not been excavated so far; it could also contain the baptistry of the Episcopal Church (Rumscheid – Koenigs, Priene, fig. 18 inside front cover; Schede, *Ruinen von Priene* 108; Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* 137 nn. 2, 3; Wiegand – Schrader, Priene, fig. 600).

<sup>61</sup> The measurements of the relief are: 0.59 x 0.30 x 0.095 m (Westphalen 1998, cat. no. 121 pls. 43, 45).

<sup>62</sup> This small menorah is scratched on the surface of the step of the ninth stone from the east in the second row. The menorah is visible at the right from the inner side of the north hall. Beside the menorah seems to be a small shofar and cross. The menorah graffito is similar to the one on the threshold near the synagogue in the Western quarter (see below). We thank Saskia Borngrebe (Frankfurt a. M.) for this useful advice.

<sup>63</sup> Rumscheid – Koenigs, Priene, fig. 18 inside front cover. Diagonally opposite the chapel, on the other roadside, there was uncovered during cleaning at the south foot of the terrace of the Asklepeion sanctuary a layer with homogeneous late ancient ceramic(s), which is in treatment (Z. Yılmaz, personal communication 2010).

the synagogue is not situated in an area dominated by Christian chapels and churches as far as known. Even the stones of the streets, corners and stairs surrounding the synagogue do not show any graffiti of crosses.<sup>64</sup> The larger Christian and Jewish buildings, such as the Episcopal Church and residence, the big church in the eastern necropolis before the East Gate and the synagogue in the Western city quarter, were built in new sacred areas. The inhabitants did not use the traditional religious places like the sanctuaries of Athena, Demeter, Asclepius, Cybele or the Egyptian gods, which seem to be out of use in Late Antiquity. So we find in Late Antique Priene a new sacral topography.

Despite the unsatisfactory findings from the area north of the temple of Athena Polias and from the southern and northern slopes of the city, we can notice at least that in the Late Antique period the western and middle parts of Priene were still inhabited.<sup>65</sup> Older streets and roads were retained and, only in exceptional cases, blocked and closed;<sup>66</sup> existing building material was integrated and used. The building of the synagogue – with its integration in a house, its position in an established city quarter on a main street of the city, its expansion into a small street and its shape represented in the description in this paper – fits well into the building patterns of Late Antique Priene.

A comparison with a similarly large community building in Priene – the Episcopal Church – suggests several things. The synagogue is nearly as wide as this largest church in Priene but half as long.<sup>67</sup> The pavement of the church's second building phase consists also of spolia, in this case marble or limestone slabs with inscriptions from the sanctuary of Athena. The columns are likewise spolia, further work-pieces originating from the sanctuary of Athena and the stoai around the Agora. At first the columns carried a simple roof; only later, after the installation of adequate pillars, was a vault put in. Some columns show scratched crosses, which would have been intended less as graffiti, but rather as real ornaments because some deep holes point to an employment of other material such as glass or bronze. However, as in the synagogue, some parts of the building were provided with clear references to the cult practiced within. A second synagogue is not known in the city. However, the relief with the menorah found in the floor pavement of the Episcopal Church might suggest another building (Fig. 19).<sup>68</sup> The 187.2 m<sup>2</sup> interior of the first building phase could accommodate 93 to 125 persons. Because

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<sup>64</sup> Only at the west gate on the city side is a graffiti of a Christian cross to be seen on a stone of the street's pavement.

<sup>65</sup> In contrast the areas along the western boundaries of the west and northwest quarters were used apparently less or hardly at all, because later traces of use are found rather inside the city. The subdivision of the older houses in the east district into small parts could go back well to a concentration of the population in this area of the city. Possibly an increased settlement took place around the Episcopal Church after its construction in the fifth century A.D., as it is visible from the chapels and even the later castle which are all concentrated in this area.

<sup>66</sup> As can be observed in the northwest quarter and also on the north side of the West Gate Street in Hellenistic times, the smaller streets between some houses were blocked in order to obtain room for the expansion. So it is not a purely Late Antique phenomenon in Priene.

<sup>67</sup> This church was a large building made of spolia; however, at least the simple ashlar of the arch, parts of the bema and the ambo are original. It measures 26.65 m long, 12.8–13.55 m wide, and has a 4.28 m long anteroom in the west. It also has an apse with seats for the presbyter and the bishop in the east, three entrances in the west, three aisles with two rows of ten pairs of columns (first phase). It is dated after the first known bishop in Priene in the middle of the fifth century A.D. (cf. Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 481–85; Westphalen 1998, 280–281, esp. works from 1995 to 1996, 280 nn. 10–11; Westphalen 2000, 275–280; Kleiner 1962, 1219–1222; Schede, Ruinen von Priene 108–111). The basilica *extramuros* (approximately 335 m<sup>2</sup>) in the east cemetery near the eastern city gate had nearly the same measurements as the Episcopal Church (approx. 361 m<sup>2</sup>); therefore the synagogue (187 m<sup>2</sup>) covered half of their area.

<sup>68</sup> The relief would not have been used as building material for the church while the synagogue in the west quarter was in use. Therefore, it could belong to an abandoned and possibly dismantled building in its periphery. On the other hand, it could likewise belong to a later floor repair of the Episcopal Church and so have been brought into it long after the fourth century A.D. Also, the small menorah graffiti in front of a shop in the north hall at the agora, which marked the shop as a Jewish one comparable to the Jewish shops beside the synagogue in Sardis, could be an indication of another Jewish area in the town.



the city was not large and the total population not very high, it is very possible that one synagogue was sufficient for the Jewish community of Priene.

#### IV. The Priene synagogue and other Jewish *realia* in Asia Minor

Jews are attested in Ionia since Hellenistic times through various literary references including Josephus and the New Testament.<sup>69</sup> These Jewish communities continued until Late Antiquity.<sup>70</sup> They are testified not only by synagogue buildings and small finds but also by epigraphical evidence such as gravestones, inscriptions, graffiti and theater seats in Laodicea,<sup>71</sup> Korykos in Rough Cilicia (Williams 1994; Fairchild 2012; Durugönül – Mörel 2012), Aphrodisias (Chanotis 2010), Hierapolis (Miranda 1999), Limyra (Seyer–Lotz 2013), Andriake (see note 78) as well as in Ephesos, Philadelphia, Miletos, Smyrna, Chios and Teos (Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae* 145–196). The number of synagogues must have been higher than the evidence suggests (Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae* 146).<sup>72</sup> The size, location and furnishings of the Priene synagogue attest also to this small congregation having an appropriate sphere of activity. Compared with the very large and richly equipped synagogue in Sardis that was part of a Roman bath and a gymnasium complex (Kraabel 1982, 231–233) or with the visual presence in Aphrodisias, where inscriptions indicate reserved places for the Jews in the bouleuterion/odeion and where Jewish graffiti decorate columns and walls of the ancient Sebasteion,<sup>73</sup> the Jewish community of Priene is far less visible in the public space. This becomes even more obvious in comparison with the inscriptions of a Christian connotation<sup>74</sup> and with the numerous Christian crosses on steps, roads, stairs and buildings in the middle and the eastern part of Priene.

The reliefs and graffiti from Priene show motifs also found in Asia Minor. A broken door or chancel screen from Pergamon depicts a seven-branched candelabrum flanked on its left by an *ethrog* and *lulav*. However, above the middle part was a little cup, and the candelabrum was set into a rhombus formed by narrow strips (Ovadia 1978, 857–858 and pl. 273 fig. 1). The relief and style of one of the three relief plaques with menorah found in Limyra (Seyer – Lotz 2013) are very similar to the piece in Priene. In one of the Byzantine shops beside the Sardis synagogue a menorah graffito was found on a stone wall; in Byzantine shop E 7 two menorahs were incised on the inside face of a block on the west doorjamb. One has seven branches while the smaller one has only three, similar to the menorah foot at Priene (Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* 18 and fig. 279). From the Sardis synagogue comes a marble slab with a seven-branched candelabrum in flat, narrow relief flanked by a *lulav* on the right and a *shofar* on the left.<sup>75</sup> The foot of the menorah is broken away and below the bases of the branches is placed a volute, as on the relief from Priene's Episcopal Church (Hanfmann 1963, 48 fig. 33; Ovadia 1978 pl.

<sup>69</sup> For Josephus see Ephesus (*Ant* 14.223–27, 228–29, 230, 234, 238–40, 262–64, 301–13, 314–17; 16.27–65; *Ap* 2.39). New Testament references include Acts 18:19–21; 19:8–9 and Revelation 2:9; 3:9. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 12.2 refers to Jews in Smyrna. Trebilco (*Jewish Communities*) provides a useful overview of all the evidence.

<sup>70</sup> In Lydia Jews were settled by Antiochus III already in the early second century B.C. (Josephus *Ant* 12.148–153; cf. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae* 1–7 and 144). Other written sources include Josephus *Ant* 12.199; 12.125; 16.27ff. For buildings and finds see Ovadia 1978, 857–866; Kraabel 1995, 95–126; Hachlili, *Jewish Art*; for mapping see Bloedhorn et al. *Jüdische Diaspora*.

<sup>71</sup> In the excavations of Nymphaeum A at Laodicea a column fragment was found, inscribed with a menorah that had tongues of flame, a *lulav* and *shofar*. Deeply etched above it was a cross with a globus at its base that obliterated the central stem of the menorah. The cross was obviously carved at a later period (Şimşek 2006, 343–346; Şimşek, *Laodikeia* 149 fig. 55; Fine 2012, 32 fig. 1).

<sup>72</sup> In A.D. 585 John of Ephesos is reported to have converted seven synagogues into churches in Asia Minor (van Ginkel 1995, 31 n. 42).

<sup>73</sup> Chanotis 2002, 219 fig. 3; 220 fig. 4 (late 5<sup>th</sup>/early 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.); 221–222; 236–237 app. II.

<sup>74</sup> Von Gaertringen, Priene 145 nos. 215–217; 176 nos. 348–349; Schultze, *Altchristliche Städte* 142–143.

<sup>75</sup> A glass stamp with a menorah and the letters C N, greenish in color and dating from the sixth century A.D., was found in the gymnasium area Pa-S just north of the synagogue (von Saldern, *Glass* 89–90 pl. 16 no. 674).

273 fig. 10). The two volutes besides the menorah have been interpreted as the ends of the Torah scrolls (Ovadiah 1978, 860). Images of the menorah appeared repeatedly in synagogues. Comparable to the three, possibly four, illustrations in the synagogue in Priene are the numerous ones found in the synagogue in Sardis.<sup>76</sup> The tripod foot of the Priene plaque is widespread in different variants: those of Pergamon and Sardis have a trident foot or forked foot.<sup>77</sup> This tripod foot is also found on the four menorahs inscribed uniquely on the interior of a lead coffin found at Aegeai (Ayas) in Cilicia (Aydn 2007, 137–138). Volutes besides the menorah as on the relief in Priene are found also in Sardis (Seager – Kraabel 1983, 170 fig. 250), Nicaea (Fine – Rutgers 1996, 11–17 fig. 3) and Andriake/Myra.<sup>78</sup> The addition of the volutes – the Torah scrolls – is an innovation of diaspora art. Also the arrangement of the candelabrum with other sacred articles is frequent.<sup>79</sup> Depictions of birds, particularly as heraldic motifs, are frequent in Jewish art too. They are seen on mosaics, wall paintings, reliefs and tombstones.<sup>80</sup> There is a second heraldic bird pair on the steps of the north hall at the Agora, not far from the menorah graffito. Reliefs with heraldic birds, peacocks and doves, are common in the Late Antique and Byzantine cities around Priene, often in combination with a cross.<sup>81</sup>

The accumulation of menorah symbols in the interior of the synagogue of Priene corresponds to the custom in other places like Sardis. The same phenomenon is to be observed in a Christian-influenced environment. However, the symbol of the cross was used also in an apotropaic sense and was left on the steps, gates, and columns of temples as well as on altars and statues (Langner, *Graffitzeichnungen* 33 fig. 8; 137 fig. 77; 138 fig. 78). Whereas in Priene pictures of crosses and menorahs mostly are found in separate civic areas, in cities like Aphrodisias they appear close together. The symbols are concentrated at some public places of the city like the Agora and the Sebasteion (Chanotis 2010, figs. 34, 36). The combination of a small cross with a small menorah was found only once at Priene; it also was in a public space on the steps of the north hall at the Agora. But at Aphrodisias such symbolic graffiti reach a maximum size of 20 cm, while the few Jewish pictures in Priene required a certain

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<sup>76</sup> For a complete list of these finds that include two reliefs with scratched menorah and a sculptured candelabrum, see Seager – Kraabel 1983: 176. In the neighboring glass shop E 12 a partial marble plaque reused in the upper story fill was found (Crawford, *Byzantine Shops* 78; fig. 386 E 12 S64.55:6587A-B).

<sup>77</sup> A plaque, found at Nicomedia and still unpublished, depicts a menorah on a tripod base with an *ethrog* on the left side and a *lulav* and a *shofar* on the right.

<sup>78</sup> In 2009 at Andriake, the ancient port of Myra (modern Demre) in Lycia, Turkish archaeologists uncovered a rectangular building with a large apse and a mosaic floor, which they identify as a synagogue. Discovered inside were three marble panels with menorahs: the first panel was complete, only half of the second panel survived and only a fragment of the third panel remained. All three displayed the Torah scroll volutes beneath the seven branches. The small menorah to the left of the inscription at the top of panel 1 had no volutes and a simple depiction of a *lulav* and *shofar*. The larger menorah below had a more stylized rendering of the *shofar*, *ethrog* and *lulav* above a two-pronged base. See Çevik et al. 2010, 341–343; 364 figs. 27 and 28; 365 fig. 29.

<sup>79</sup> For example, see Frey, CIJ 290 no. 374, Monteverde catacomb, marble plate, Lateran no. 108, under the inscription: horn, citron, menorah and a palm leaf. In the necropolis at Hierapolis four tombs (6, 10, 12, 20) with menorahs have been identified (Miranda 1999, 132). Tomb 148 B (no. 20 in Miranda) belonged to Marcus Aurelius Philoumenos Strenion, a Jew and is decorated with a menorah, *lulav*, and *shofar* (Ritti, *Hierapolis* 54–56. Another menorah, unmentioned in the above literature, is inscribed at the northwest corner of the base of a house tomb at the entrance of the north necropolis adjacent to Miranda's numbers 1–3. Also, at the top of an unpublished inscription of Tralles there is a menorah with a *lulav* at its left and an *ethrog* at its right.

<sup>80</sup> Marble plate, Lateran no. 71, ACTHP inscription, Esther?, two birds flanking a menorah, between them a little tree or a bunch, a little bird and a bottle (Frey, CIJ 241 no. 306; Hachlili, *Jewish Art* 389 fig. VIII 6, 7).

<sup>81</sup> Miletos Museum courtyard: relief slabs, inv. 534 and inv. 801: peacocks and doves beside a cross; Ephesos Museum courtyard: two reliefs with peacocks beside a cross and in a grape; Tarragona, basin with graffito: peacocks beside a menorah (Hachlili, *Menorah*, pl. 52 fig. II-94); Uşak Museum foyer: coffin relief: peacock beside a cross; a slab with a scratched menorah and two birds from the art trade (Fine 1996, 44 fig. 2.19c).

technical expertise with special effort, and they were attached at intended places, where they caught the eye of the visitor.

Even in comparison with the reliefs from the Episcopal Church, Westphalen noted the limitation of motifs, the simple decoration forms and the flat relief. The motifs such as grating, rhombus, crosses, peacocks and wine leaves have their parallels in early Byzantine times in Asia Minor. Westphalen (1998, 325) compares the style and motifs of the pieces of the late sixth century A.D. in the Episcopal Church with the art of the relief from the Priene synagogue, which he assigned to the third-fourth century A.D. He likewise saw a long tradition of style and motif reflected in these pieces. In comparison with the building phases of the synagogue, it seems more credible to date the reliefs to the late fourth-fifth century A.D., but we cannot exclude that they were produced earlier than the synagogue building. Together with the two capitals from the theater area<sup>82</sup> and the console from the synagogue, it is possible to accept a local workshop for such building appurtenances.

#### V. The Priene synagogue compared with other diaspora synagogues

None of the well-known synagogues of the diaspora corresponds exactly to another: they have different ground plans, sizes and furnishings. They follow local customs in building techniques and orientation of the walls. Their ground plans are partly affected by preceding buildings. Some are new buildings, other are rebuildings. Similar characteristics can, however, be filtered out and compared (Rutgers 1998: 100–110).

Multi-space complexes are appropriate and suitable in view of the various purposes of a synagogue.<sup>83</sup> This is valid especially for the diaspora synagogues which were used “just as much for cultural, political and social purposes, such as the lodging of guests, as for prayer and worship” (Bloedhorn – Hüttenmeister 1999: 269). Furthermore, the practice of placing the installation in a house could, except for economic reasons or because it was the founder’s house, go back to the institution of the house synagogue that met in a private home (Claußen 2002: 39–42). The synagogue in Sardis is part of a Roman bath and a gymnasium complex (Kraabel 1982: 231–33).

According to Kraabel (1995: 119–20), synagogues are not datable by the type of building because of their heterogeneous shape. They often have several annexes or are part of a complex. A synagogue served as the gathering place of the community for instruction and religious practices. It was the center of the diaspora community, their identification and meeting place; so it united several functions such as a school, hostel, dining room with kitchen and dwelling (Stobi, upper floor). Therefore, they appear with an appropriate ground plan, according to their varied purposes.

In Sardis, different objects of imperial times were reused for the equipment of the synagogue; the pavement consisted of spolia too, beneath which was found a reversed Hellenistic relief with gods (Mitten and Scorziello 2008: 138 figs. 2, 3). In the pillars were integrated unplastered Hellenistic inscriptions with the letters outward (Mitten and Scorziello 2008: 144 fig. 17; 146 figs. 20, 21), comparable to the visible inscriptions in the pavement of the synagogue in Priene.

Moreover, synagogues are difficult to identify. Jewish symbols and appropriate building decoration are rare. Not until the rebellion and the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 were synagogues regarded as holy houses. Symbols become more frequent, and the scrolls of the Torah obtained a fixed shrine. Characteristic components of synagogues include the Torah shrine, a niche in the long or short

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<sup>82</sup> Also in front of the chapel in the eastern parodos of the theater of Priene there stood two unfluted columns but with singular capitals (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 486).

<sup>83</sup> Meyers (1992: 6.255), noting the lack of pre-A.D. 70 synagogue remains in contrast to the abundant references to them in literary sources, states: “This apparent contradiction disappears if we assume that, in the first centuries, large private houses were used as places of worship alongside other buildings that came to be utilized for worship....”

side or in an apse, a bench, the bema, the baldachin, an architrave with relief and an upper floor with the gallery for the women. Also wall coverings, pilasters, pillars, columns, a marble table, marble seats, a basin, marble lions and reliefs can belong to the furnishings, in addition to mosaics and paintings. Krauss also determined that a reliable water supply was important for the sacred cleaning ceremonies in several synagogues (Krauss 1922: 273–383). The large water reservoir in the Priene synagogue could supply a smaller basin with running water. As mentioned before, water basins were found also in other synagogues like in Limyra (Seyer–Lotz 2013) and in Sardis (Ovadia 1978: 2.860).

The shrine for the scrolls of the Torah is usually situated, as in Priene, in the wall towards Jerusalem—the Misrach, the wall for prayer. The shrine could be shaped like a rectangular niche as in Priene, as a semicircular niche (Sardis), or as an apse (Andriake). They all are raised above the ground level of the nave by a low rostrum or some steps, which in the Priene synagogue is accessible by using the slightly increased threshold and the low, rock step. So the shape and equipment of the Priene synagogue correspond to standard practice (Suknik 1934: 42–43; Goodenough 1953: 3 pl. 879). While the Torah scrolls in the early synagogues did not have a fixed place, fixed shrines began to be constructed from the third century A.D. on. Starting from the end of third to the beginning of the fourth century A.D., the fixed shrine was oriented to Jerusalem (Dothan 1983: 24–25, esp. n. 112).<sup>84</sup> Fixed shrines, oriented towards Jerusalem, became standard at the end of fourth and the beginning of the fifth century A.D. in Palestine (Dothan 1983: 32).<sup>85</sup>

The bema, or bamah, does not house the Torah scrolls but was used for their reading. In the synagogue of Sardis it was a large marble table. In Priene it is possible that a table stood on the large slabs of the pavement in front of the main entrance of phase 2 or in front of the niche. Reused table feet and a tabletop with bunghole are lying in the area of the oikos of House No. 24.

#### Abbreviated Literature

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| Abadie-Reynal – Sodini, Thasos             | C. Abadie-Reynal – J.-P. Sodini, <i>La céramique paléochrétienne de Thasos</i> , Athens 1992 (Ecole française d'Athènes and Paris).  |
| Alexander 1973                             | O. Alexander, Εφορεία κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων Αττικής, 'Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον 23 Β'1 Chron: 31–181.   |
| Ameling, <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae</i>     | W. Ameling, <i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis II</i> . Kleinasien, Tübingen 2004.   |
| Aydin 2007                                 | A. Aydın, <i>Byzantine Studies at Museum in Cilicia</i> 2006, ANMED 5, 2007, 137–140.  |
| Bloedhorn et al., <i>Jüdische Diaspora</i> | H. Bloedhorn – Chr. Bandomer – L. R. Verlag, <i>Die jüdische Diaspora bis zum 7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.</i> , Wiesbaden 1992 (Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients B VI 18).                                 |
| Bloedhorn – Hüttenmeister 1999             | H. Bloedhorn – G. Hüttenmeister, <i>The Synagogue</i> , in: W. Horbury – W. D. Davies – J. Sturdy (eds.), <i>Cambridge History of Judaism: The Early Roman Period</i> , vol. 3, Cambridge 1999, 267–297. |
| Brants, <i>Terra-Cotta Lampen</i>          | J. Brants, <i>Antieke Terra-Cotta Lampen: uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden beschreven</i> . Leiden 1913.   |

<sup>84</sup> For synagogues in the diaspora see Kraabel 1995: 489–91 figs. 405–406; Rutgers 1998: 127–30.

<sup>85</sup> When Levine (2005: 300; cf. 326–30) states that “[o]rientation of the synagogue’s interior toward Jerusalem was universally adhered to in Diaspora synagogues,” it must be noted that such orientation was relative. Like the synagogue in Sardis, the Priene synagogue was built within a previous structure aligned according to the Hippodamian grid plan of the city. The main churches in Priene were likewise aligned according to this east-west plan. When the courtyard was converted to the synagogue, a new east wall was constructed which ran northeast to southwest. Along this wall the niche was installed, centered between the stylobates. Fine (1997: 106) makes a similar point that urban geography played a factor and that “[a]lignment of the Torah shrine toward Jerusalem was not absolute during this period and a number of synagogues had their shrines on walls other than the one aligned with Jerusalem.”

- Chanotis 2002 A. Chanotis, *The Jews of Aphrodisias: New Evidence and Old Problems*, *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21, 2002, 209–242.
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## Özet

### Priene'deki Geç Antik Dönem Sinagogu: Tarihi, Mimarisi ve İçeriği

Bu makale, 2009–2011 yıllarında gerçekleşen kazılar aracılığıyla açığa kavuşturulan Priene'deki Geç Antik dönem Sinagog'unun tarihini konu etmektedir. İlk olarak erken 20.yy'da bir sinagog olarak tanımlanan söz konusu yapı o zamanlar henüz bütünüyle kazılmamıştı. Burada, önce Sinagog'un gelişim süreci ile ilintili olan iki yapı katı evresi üzerinde durulmuştur. Ardından, kronoloji ve Sinagog'da açığa çıkarılan bazı buluntular sunulur. Bunu izleyen bölümde, Sinagog, kentin batı yerleşimindeki Prosta tipi bir konut olarak tarihsel bağlam içerisine yerleştirilir. Çalışma, Priene sinagogu'nun, Asia Minor'de bulunan diğer sinagoglarla ilişkisinin tartışıldığı bölüm ile sonlanır.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* Priene, Sinagog, Prosta, Menora, Geç Antik Dönem, Yahudi Mimarlığı.



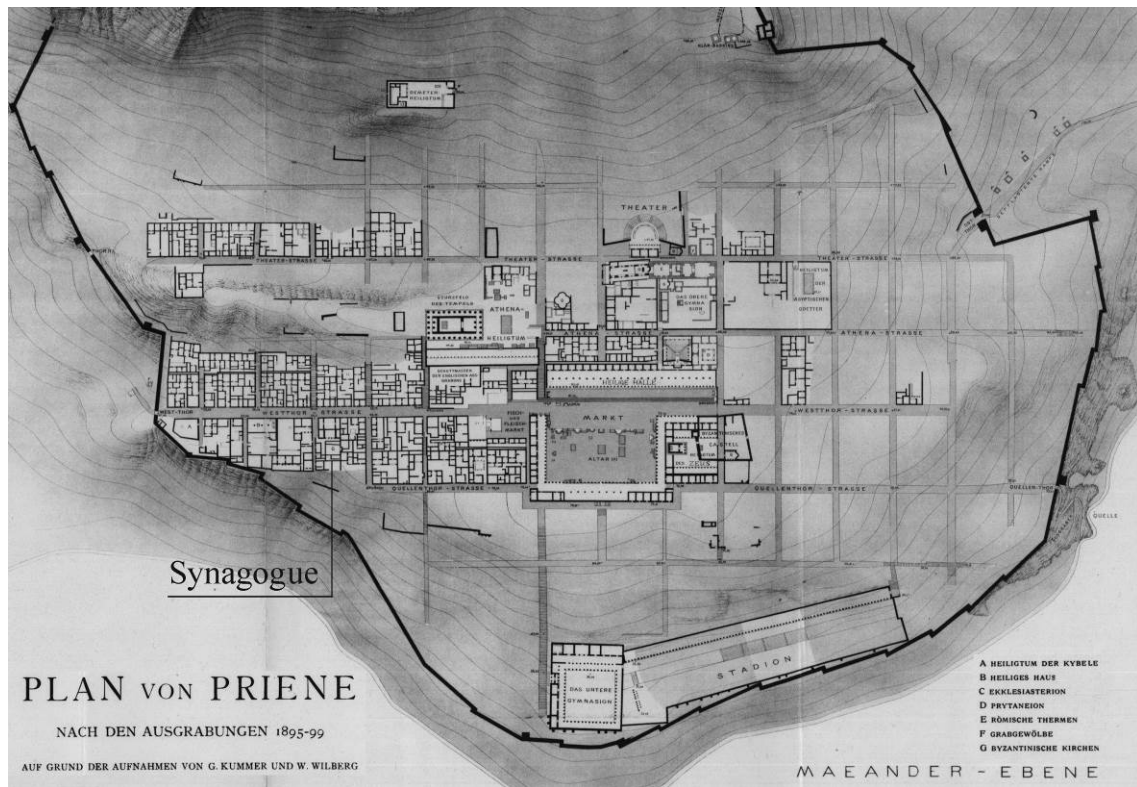


Fig. 1. Map of Priene (after map in Schede, Ruinen von Priene).



Fig. 2. Steps of main entrance of synagogue from the north (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).

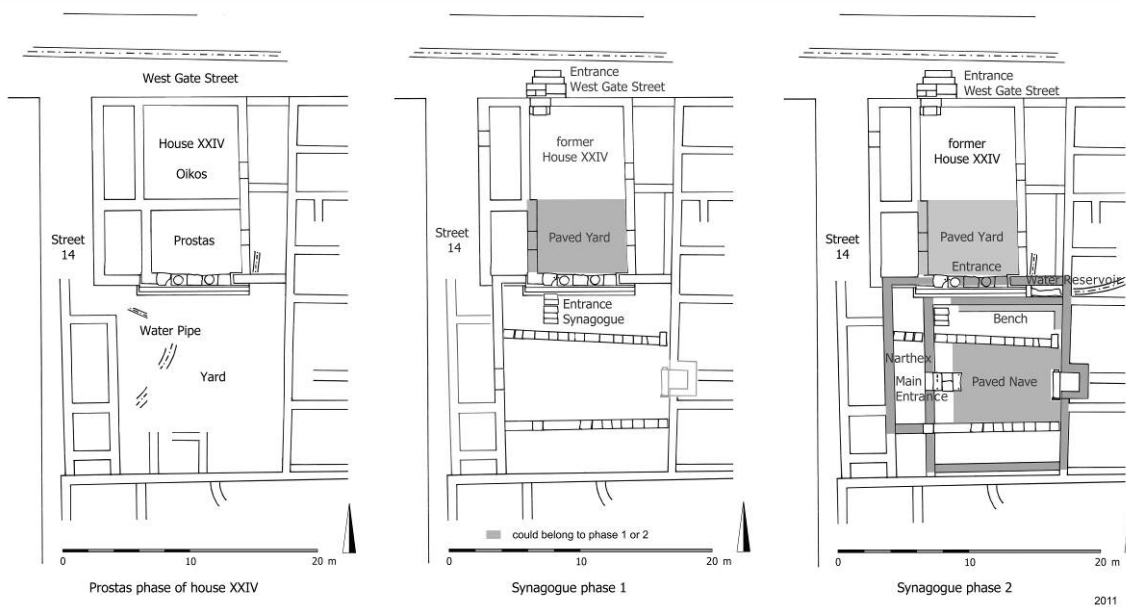


Fig. 3. Sketch with building phases of synagogue: a) prostas House No. 24; b) synagogue 1; c) synagogue 2 (sketch: Nadin Burkhardt 2009/10 after map made by W. Wilberg in 1897 with later corrections 1982).

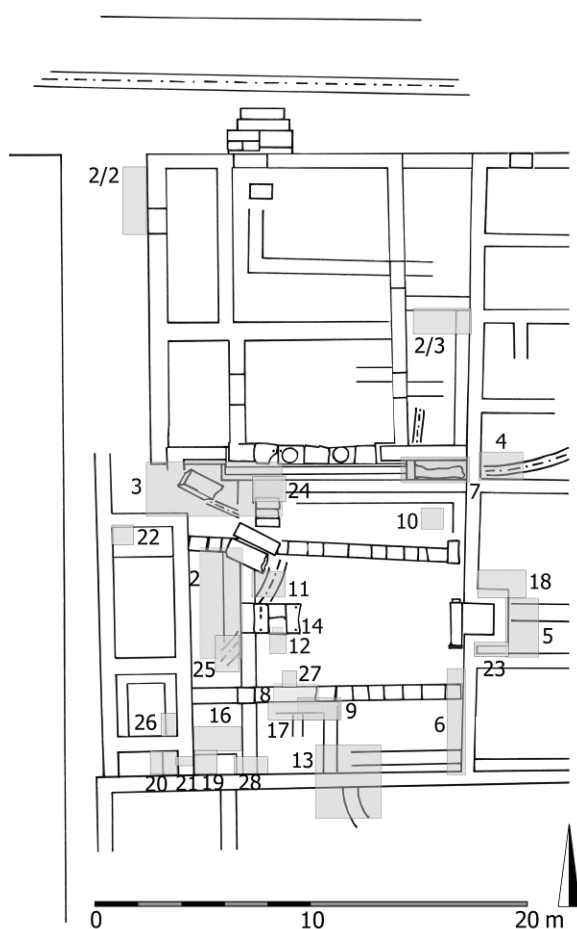


Fig. 4. Plan of sondages 2009-10 in synagogue (sketch: Nadin Burkhardt 2010).





Fig. 5. New entrance situation of synagogue, view from the north (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson, 2009).



Fig. 6a. Block (*Ante*) with upper part of menorah graffito



Fig. 6b.

Block (*Ante*) with foot of menorah graffito

(Photos 6a-b: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



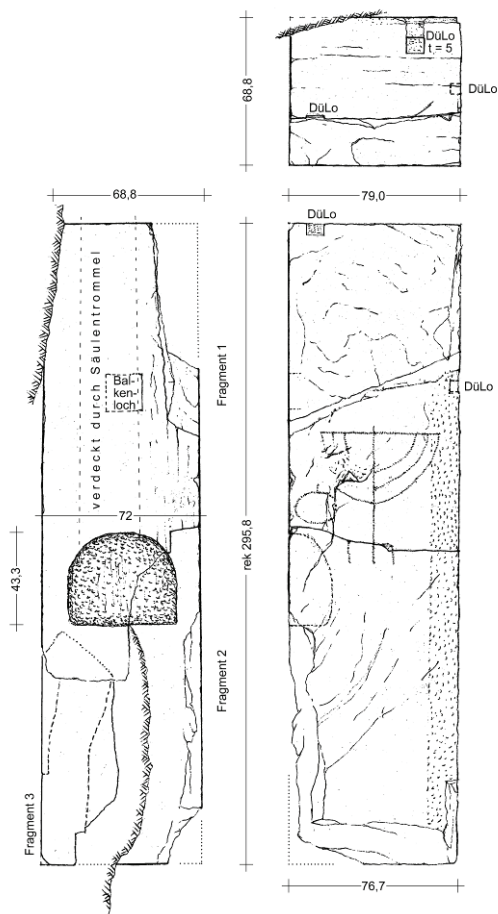


Fig. 7. Broken block (*Ante*) reconstructed (design: A. Bayer – A. Hennemeyer 2009).



Fig. 8. Interior of main nave from the east (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



Fig. 9. Niche in east wall of synagogue from the west (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



Fig. 10. Western part of north wall of synagogue, connecting to prosta: new narrower wall on Hellenistic wall, view from the east (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



Fig. 11. Detail of stele in front of niche with menorah and letters (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).





Fig. 12. View from the east to south side of new northern wall built with spolia (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



Fig. 13. Southern aisle of synagogue with disturbed western part, view from the east (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).





Fig. 14. Water basin or reservoir between old and new northern outside wall of synagogue (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).



Fig. 15. Glass fragment PR 09 SYN 12.1 G 33 (photo: B. Schödel 2009; sketch: M. Brückle 2009/10).



Fig. 16. Glass fragment PR 09 SYN 1.1 G 27 (photo: B. Schödel 2009; sketch: M. Brückle 2009/10).



Fig. 17a. Bronze coin PR09 SYN-1 N 23 (photo: B. Schödel 2009)



Fig. 17b. Bronze coin PR09 SYN-1 N 17 (photo: B. Schödel 2009)



Fig. 18a. Relief from synagogue (photo: N. Burkhardt – M. Wilson 2009).

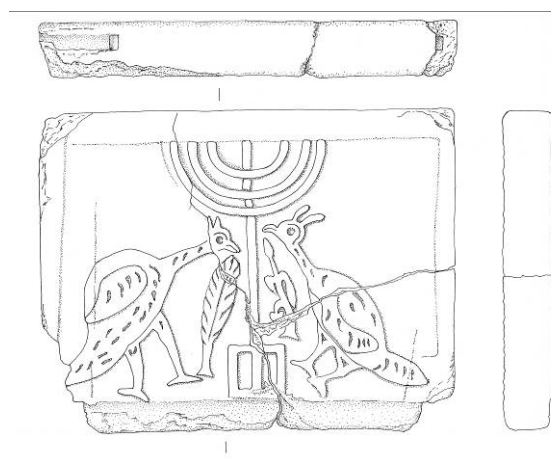


Fig. 18b. Relief from synagogue (sketch: N. Burkhardt 2009).





Fig. 19. Relief with menorah found in floor pavement of Episcopal Church (Wiegand – Schrader, Priene 475 fig. 582).

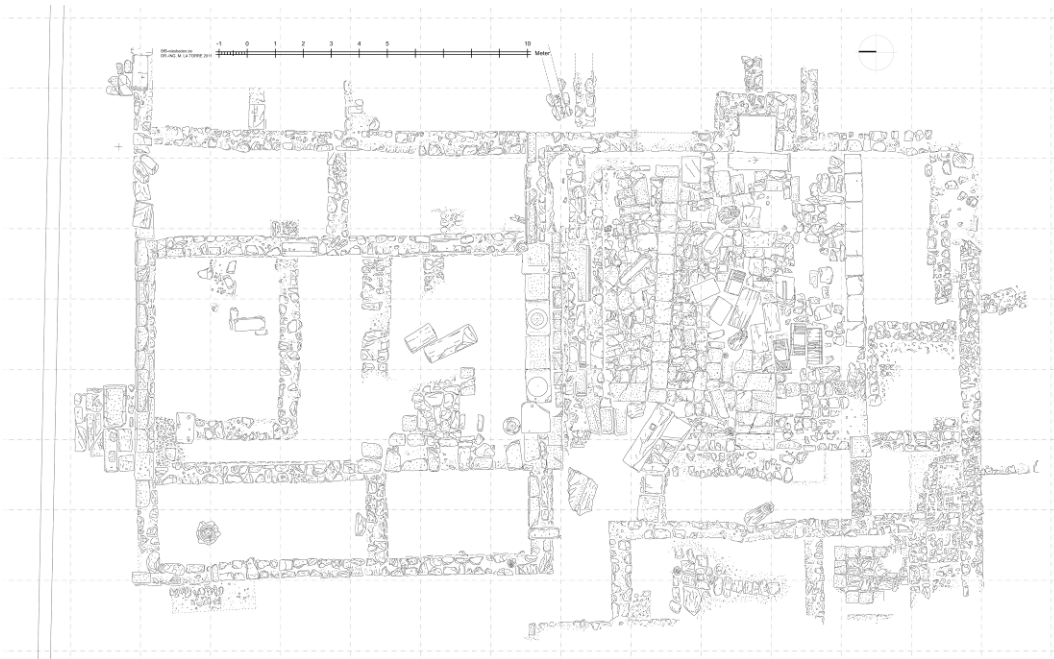


Fig. 20. Stone plan of synagogue (plan: Martino La Torre 2010).