

# ARCHISYNAGOGOI: OFFICE, TITLE AND SOCIAL STATUS IN THE GRECO-JEWISH SYNAGOGUE\*

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## I PLURALISM IN THE CITIES OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The cities of the Roman Empire were, on the whole, plural societies, which had in them significant sub-groups, ethnic, religious, or, indeed, both together — for the two categories were still only sometimes distinguishable. Such an environment carries many resonances for us and it is surprising to realize its neglect as a subject for study. The classical Greek *polis* had been a theoretically homogeneous institution of look-alike citizens, with outsiders excluded or enslaved. The notional Roman approach was, in the early days, to deal with outsiders by assimilating them. When we look at the cities of the Hellenistic kingdoms, we observe that they often did consist of several racial elements, though how these were accommodated has been for some time an issue for debate, and this remains an open question. But beyond that, our concern seems to stop.<sup>1</sup> Probably, we have been dazzled (if that does not flatter the subject unduly) by the uniform veneer of Greek culture which spread over the cities of the East during the high Empire. And, in general, the imperialistic processes of Hellenization and Romanization have been given pride of place in historical analysis, for reasons which derive from cultural preferences current until quite recently. And yet, as John North has made us aware, the direction of change in religious history was towards a society of choice in the late Empire (until Christian intolerance closed it down).<sup>2</sup>

The increasing visibility of Jewish and Christian elements in city life (and death) is thus a leading theme in the history of the Roman Empire, but it can only be effectively grasped within the perspective of civic pluralism. In the case of the Jews, who are, after all, the starting point and exemplar for the Christians, our problems are particularly acute. Although the fact that the Jewish communities of the Diaspora (and, indeed, in some cities in Palestine) were key participants in the great process of change is now less often forgotten than it used to be,<sup>3</sup> severe deficiencies in the evidence, and the absence to date of any framework for discussion, not to mention the tenacity of the age-old habit of marginalizing Jewry, all conspire to obfuscate the implications of their presence. Here, our aim is to explore a central feature in the intermeshing of Jewish communities with the societies in which they were located, by reinterpreting the most visible office among them, that of *archisynagogos*. This reading locates the communities

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In addition to the familiar abbreviations, the following acronyms and shortened titles will be used throughout: Brooten: B. J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue* (1982). *CIJ*: J. B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* (2 vols, 1936–52; vol. 1, rev. B. Lifshitz, 1975). *JIGRE*: W. Horbury and D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (1992). Levine ed.: L. I. Levine (ed.), *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (1987). Lieu, North and Rajak: J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* (1992). Lifshitz: B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (1967).

Linder: A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (1987).

Meeks: W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul* (1983).

Reynolds and Tannenbaum: J. M. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias* (1987).

Trebilco: P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (1991).

<sup>1</sup> But see F. Millar, 'Empire, community and culture in the Roman Near East: Greeks, Syrians, Jews and Arabs', *JJS* 38 (1987), 143–64. The approach in R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (1981), chs 4 and 5, is also worth noting.

<sup>2</sup> See J. North, 'The development of religious pluralism', in Lieu, North and Rajak, 174–93. A. T. Kraabel, 'Unity and diversity among Diaspora synagogues', in Levine ed., 53; repr. in J. A. Overman and R. S. MacLennan (eds), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor and in Dialogue with A. Thomas Kraabel* (1992), 25, speaks in terms of a 'need for community in a bewildering larger world' — bewildering, apparently, because of the demise of the *polis*.

<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that Lieu, North and Rajak (1992) has contributed to a new awareness. We cannot share the optimism of Seth Schwartz's review, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 3,3 (1992), 1–4, that the point is now widely grasped.

firmly within their society. A reassessment of the meaning of Greco-Roman office-holding is therefore central to it; against this the Jewish material makes sense.

At the heart of any enquiry about the survival of communities within a wider framework lie the issues of group cohesion and group distinctiveness. Given that a group must of necessity demarcate itself somehow from its environment, basic questions arise of how far group ethos emphasizes solidarity and separation, and how these are achieved by any group.<sup>4</sup> Characteristic social and moral values and, indeed, all the visible aspects of an apparently distinct culture can be constructively seen as symbolic indicators of separate identity. Of course, the response of the larger unit also comes constantly into play; a group's claims to allegiance are threatening to social control, and the group may in turn find itself, or perceive itself, to be threatened in one way or another. There are intricate and interesting correlations between any group's definitions of its own identity and its relations with the larger whole in which it exists.

## II. GROUP IDENTITY AND THE SYNAGOGUE

For Diaspora Jewry in the Greco-Roman world, the community was undoubtedly of overriding importance; as, indeed, it has generally been through history. The term συναγωγή comes to be overwhelmingly dominant in our record, although we do not find complete uniformity in the naming either of the united Jews of a city, or of smaller units inside a place. Alternatives to *synagoge* are known; and, on the other hand, we encounter such associations as the mysterious δεκανία, not to mention the πάτελλα of the Aphrodisias inscription.<sup>5</sup> Another significant feature of the concept *synagoge* is that it retains a double application, referring also to a building, the physical home of the 'congregation' or community. For that purpose, too, words other than *synagoge* were employed, but they seem, again, to have been gradually squeezed out. Thus, προσευχή — (place of) prayer — had currency at first,<sup>6</sup> but both οἶκος (house) and ἅγιος τόπος (sacred place) are found too.

Archaeological discoveries have meant that there has been more interest in the nature of the synagogue as building than in its role as community. Architectural and formal developments have been much discussed, especially in the light of the more copious Palestinian remains, and something of the range of possibilities in style and conception is emerging. There has also been research into the development of the sequence of service and of the liturgy.<sup>7</sup>

The synagogue as a social institution is altogether more problematic, and basic matters are obscure to us. Pagan authors, Josephus and the Rabbis are all oddly uninformative about it,<sup>8</sup> and the Pauline epistles are equally unhelpful. The question of how far synagogue organization became co-extensive with community structure has not been seriously raised, except in older discussions about Rome, the only place where we have definite evidence — the catacomb epitaphs — of more than one Jewish synagogue, apart from Philo's Alexandria.<sup>9</sup> Often, the question seems unanswerable. What do we know of the relation between the *dekania* and the *patella* at Aphrodisias to any synagogue which there might have been in the city?<sup>10</sup> But, above all, we should be asking what sort of a grouping the Jewish synagogue itself was. What group identity might it have assumed, in different contexts? And what range of individual identities did it offer to members? How much of individuals' lives might it absorb?

In discussions of the first churches, the Jewish communities of the Diaspora have been disposed of quite summarily. And yet the situation of the two groups was in many ways

<sup>4</sup> See Meeks, 74–5, 84–5; and, for an introduction to the sociological issues, George C. Homans, 'The study of groups', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vi (1968), 258–65.

<sup>5</sup> *Synodos* and *syllogos* are attested, as well as just of Ἰουδαῖοι. For Aphrodisias, see Reynolds and Tannenbaum, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> M. Hengel, 'Proseuche und Synagoge', in J. Gutmann (ed.), *The Synagogue: Studies in Origins, Archaeology and Architecture* (1975), argues that the use of the term *synagoge* for a building began in first-century A.D. Palestine and gradually spread to the Diaspora.

<sup>7</sup> See, for an introduction, Gutmann, op. cit. (n. 6) and also Levine ed.

<sup>8</sup> S. J. D. Cohen, 'Pagan and Christian evidence on the ancient synagogue', in Levine ed., 50–60; A. Momigliano, 'What Josephus did not see', in *On Pagans, Jews and Christians* (1989), 108–19.

<sup>9</sup> See H. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (1960), 135–66. An unpublished inscription refers to synagogues at Salonica, and the Side synagogue is described as 'first' (*CIJ* 781). An approach to the problems is in A. T. Kraabel, 'Social systems of six Diaspora synagogues', in Gutmann, op. cit. (n. 6), 79–91; repr. in Overman and MacLennan, op. cit. (n. 2), 257–69.

<sup>10</sup> Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 26–30.

strikingly similar and there were obvious interconnections. Even Wayne Meeks,<sup>11</sup> who reflects upon the synagogue as a possible model for Pauline churches and points to analogies in their activities, quite quickly rejects the model because of the surprising lack of explicit evidence in the Pauline letters for any Christian imitation of the synagogue in behaviour or organization. And yet conscious imitation is not the only form of influence to matter. Not just habits — scripture-reading, hymn-singing, prayers, common meals — were shared by Jews and Christians, but also many problems of principle and practice arising from participation in city life and interaction with idolatrous ‘pagans’. Both religions — or should we say ‘peoples’? — had to grapple constantly with the question of boundaries.

We may refer at this point to John North’s comments on the articulation of religious associations in the ancient world, for a workable set of criteria by which to evaluate what amounts to the ‘groupness’ of groups: the focus is not on beliefs or aspirations but rather on socio-religious behaviour.<sup>12</sup> These criteria, as North expresses them, are:

- (1) Existence as autonomous groups with their own organization or authority structure.
- (2) A level of commitment asked of the members of the group in terms of loyalty to the cult or the rejection of other or past modes of behaviour.
- (3) The existence of separate values and principles, unacceptable to other members of the society but required of members.
- (4) A degree of separation from the normal life of the city, to be marked by different rituals, different calendars, different dietary rules.

What North’s analysis highlights is that the definition and distribution of status and authority within a group is itself important information about that group: it is a pointer to the place of that group on a scale of openness/closedness or separation/assimilation. Patterns of status and authority are potentially relevant to all four of the suggested criteria, but especially to the first and third. Given the nature of our evidence for the Diaspora Jewish communities, this is particularly helpful, as we shall see shortly.

After the closing years of the first century, a small corpus of inscriptions, architectural remains, and the angled statements of pagan and Christian outsiders are virtually the only surviving evidence to tell us about the Jewish solution to the problem of being a minority. The internal literary tradition now becomes entirely unhistorical in character, and almost wholly undatable, consisting of Bible-derived pseudepigrapha and apocalypses that survive often in translated or modified form. They can make no contribution to our study. The Talmudic tradition — itself, of course, profoundly ahistorical — touches directly on Diaspora life (and then outside the Roman Empire) only with the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud in the first century or even later.

On the problem which concerns us, the nature of the Greco-Roman synagogue hierarchy, there exists a consensus which has gone wholly unchallenged; this gives primacy to the literary evidence, while drawing sporadically on impressions gleaned from inscriptions. Our approach, by contrast, is to re-read the literary texts with a proper recognition of their character as texts; and, at the same time, adequately to exploit the epigraphic evidence with the help of a hypothesis derived from Greek parallels. Much of the epigraphy consists of names of individuals, figuring in epitaphs or as donors, and those names often go with titles, not only that of *archisynagogos*, but also *archon*, *gerousiarch*, *presbyter*, father or mother of the synagogue, *grammateus*, *phrontistes*, and occasionally others. These evidently represent a spectrum of positions within the community. The titles give us some leverage on the communities which generated them.<sup>13</sup>

Our choice of focus, the key post of *archisynagogos* (roughly translatable as ‘head of the synagogue’), does not require long justification. The title is the one most widely represented in the ancient literature in association with the synagogue, and it is revealed there as the best known to outsiders. In inscriptions, the title figures prominently over a long stretch of time and a broad geographical span; the relevant inscriptions are collected in Appendix 1. With most other titles, the Roman evidence predominates. This title is almost exclusively Jewish in

<sup>11</sup> Meeks, 80–91.

<sup>12</sup> *op. cit.* (n. 2), 183–4.

<sup>13</sup> Trebilco, 4, expresses the excellent objective of not ‘approaching the evidence with an agenda from research in

the NT or in Rabbinic literature in mind’; but we may be less comfortable about the definition of the alternative goal — ‘to let the issues addressed arise from the material itself.’

its application, unlike other comparable titles. Its mode of operation will emerge as no different in principle from others in the set, and they will be considered where appropriate. But in the case of the *archisynagogos* there is the most work to be done, in examining and clearing away old and influential interpretations. We might also add, that, if our purpose is to make new sense of the synagogue, it is particularly appropriate to be able to offer a new angle on the office which, after all, appears to incorporate verbally the very concept itself.

### III. LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

In external perception, as reflected in literature, the *archisynagogos* is the synagogue notable *par excellence*, seen (at first unofficially, and later, it seems, officially too) as responsible for what went on in the community. Only the patriarch, who was right outside the synagogues and located far away in Palestine, could in due course come to be thought of as having precedence over the *archisynagogos*. A powerful emotive component is demonstrably present in such representations. They are reflections, direct or indirect, of Christian anti-Judaism, and should not be read literally as straight evidence on synagogue arrangements.<sup>14</sup>

We might ask why writers were apt to seize upon the *archisynagogos* as specially representative of the Jewish leadership. The real role of *archisynagogoi* is scarcely reflected in the choice. First of all, here to hand was a title with a distinctly Jewish flavour, whose very sound conjured up the synagogue. This could scarcely be said of archon or presbyter. Then, *archisynagogos* was, we discover, an almost exclusively Jewish term. Indeed, we find an even stronger exclusivity here than in the word 'synagogue' itself. For very few *archisynagogoi* indeed are visible in non-Jewish contexts, and those few tend to be restricted to a confined geographical area; yet meetings of various kinds, quite unconnected with Jews, might be called in Greek *synagogai*.<sup>15</sup>

The handful of epigraphic, pagan *archisynagogoi* known to us appears in Appendix II. They emerge as an esoteric collection, for we see that these inscriptions originate (apart from one or two highly dubious instances) from the coastlands of the north Aegean — Perinthus, Salonica, Olynthus, Pydna, and Beroea. They date from between the first and third centuries A.D. We note that, in that locality, the title was given to the principal sponsor, or perhaps even the founder, of a religious or craft association. In each case, the *archisynagogos* seems to stand apart from the other officers mentioned, and in three of the texts the formula 'those around' (οἱ περὶ) the *archisynagogos* indicates that the whole group was identified with him. In No. 6, the *archisynagogos* is made more important than the other officers by a curious prepositional phrase using ὑπὸ with the accusative case, which is presumably intended to mean 'under the control of'. A pagan cultic character emerges clearly from details in the texts such as the mention of an altar. The exception is No. 5, which has no such detail, and which has therefore, been occasionally regarded as Jewish; its use of the οἱ περὶ formulation, however, brings it close to the others in the group. The Zeus Hypsistos cult at Pydna (No. 6) has perhaps, in its epithet for the supreme deity, Jewish resonances, but scarcely on that account a Jewish identity. Our provisional judgement must be that, while Jewish influence behind this curious clutch of clubs is not excluded, there are at present no persuasive arguments for accepting it;<sup>16</sup> if, however, such suspicions were to prove justified, that would only go to reinforce the already overwhelmingly Jewish character of the *archisynagogue*.

In literature, the association of the *archisynagogos* with Judaism is fixed, from the Gospels on. In Mark and Luke, we encounter just two individual *archisynagogoi*; and synagogue heads play an incipient, but still fairly minor exemplary role in that Gospel demonology which is peopled by the Pharisees, the scribes and the high priests, a demonology

<sup>14</sup> On literary anti-Judaism in the early Church, see J. Lieu, 'History and theology in Christian views of Judaism', in Lieu, North and Rajak, 79–96; A. T. Kraabel, '*Synagoga caeca*: systematic distortion in Gentile interpretation of evidence for Judaism in the early Christian period', in J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs (eds), '*To See Ourselves as Others See Us*': Christians, Jews,

'Others' in Late Antiquity (1985), 219–46; repr. in Overman and MacLennan, op. cit. (n. 2), 35–62.

<sup>15</sup> See W. Schrage in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* VII (1971), 798–841, for a survey of the evidence.

<sup>16</sup> F. Poland, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (1909), 358, points out that Theos Hypsistos and Sabbatistes are deities close to the Jewish God.

to which later Christian literature admits the *archisynagogoi* as well. However, there is reason to think that even those brief Gospel appearances are not straight representations of a Palestinian reality, but rather embody assumptions which the authors have brought from their own contexts; these, of course, may not be Palestinian and are almost certainly from the second half of the first century. At best, the use of the titlature is somewhat impressionistic. For Jairus, the *archisynagogos* whose daughter was healed by Jesus, is regularly described by Mark as *archisynagogos* (5.22, 35, 36, 38), and by Luke once thus (8.49), but once, just a few verses earlier, as ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς (8.41). Matthew (9.18, 23) uses an abbreviated form of the second version, ἄρχων *tout court*. It may be that Matthew is trying to gloss over Jairus' connection with the synagogue, but that does not explain Luke's inconsistency.<sup>17</sup>

But there is more to it, for our second individual appears in Luke alone (13.14), where he is castigated as hypocritical when he objects to Jesus, who had been teaching in the synagogue, offering a cure on the Sabbath to a woman who had had a 'spirit of infirmity' for eighteen years. Here, a representative function for the Jewish religious leadership as a whole is assigned to this Galilean *archisynagogos*, in a section of Luke marked by its criticism of the Pharisees, and at a point where the author is preparing us for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, 'the city that murders the prophets and stones the messengers sent to her' (Luke 13.34).

It is again Luke, in Acts, who shows us *archisynagogoi* in action, apparently managing religious life in the synagogue. At Pisidian Antioch they invite Paul and Barnabas to address the people on the Sabbath and then ask them back for the following week (13.15, 42); here they seem to operate as a collectivity. At Corinth, two *archisynagogoi* are named: Crispus becomes a Christian, but Sosthenes heads a complaint to the proconsul Gallio and is beaten up (18.8, 17). As far as the author is concerned, these are important men (literary *archisynagogoi* are never women), who are emblematic of the Jewish community. Finally, a textual variant in Codex Bezae has Acts 14.2 claiming that the *archisynagogoi* of the Jews and the archons of the synagogues (in place of the 'unbelieving Jews') stirred up the Gentiles against Paul at Iconium. This appears to be late in origin.

There is no doubt that these images of *archisynagogoi* influenced later representations, for patristic writers readily incorporate New Testament allusion, and their image of the synagogue is visibly dependent on the Gospels.<sup>18</sup> But the literary prominence of *archisynagogoi* has now increased, relative to Pharisees and the rest, and this would seem to reflect the later synagogue, as the author saw it.<sup>19</sup> A particularly striking statement of Justin Martyr reveals both New Testament antecedents and a new awareness of the existence of *archisynagogoi* (who no doubt had proliferated), when he links synagogue leaders with Pharisees in an all-too familiar formula, supposedly urging Jewish readers not to 'agree to abuse the son of God, nor follow the Pharisees as teachers in jesting at the king of Israel, as your *archisynagogoi* teach you after the prayer' (*Dial. with Trypho* 137). Justin, a Samaritan by origin, was certainly well-informed about Judaism; but an intensely polemical passage of this kind is no proof that the *archisynagogoi* were either actual teachers or leaders of prayer.

Epiphanius (*Haer.* 30.11) tells a story, attributed to the time of Constantine, about the *comes* Joseph who, while he was still an emissary of the Jewish patriarch, was caught reading the Gospels and was attacked by other Jews: his enemies were led by '*archisynagogoi* and priests and presbyters and hazzans' — a curious and scarcely coherent collection of seemingly token titles. For Epiphanius himself, the presence of *archisynagogoi* can serve as a distinguishing mark between Christian and Jewish communities: he says of the Jewish-Christian Ebionites that they are people who have presbyters and *archisynagogoi* and that they call their church a synagogue and not a church (*Pan.* 30.18.2).<sup>20</sup> In a work dubiously ascribed to John Chrysostom (*de Eleemosyna* = *PG* 60.709), Paul (or rather Saul) is said to have been despatched by the *archisynagogoi* with instructions about taking Christians prisoner. Similarly, the author of the *Martyrdom of Peter and Paul* asserts that it was the Jewish *archisynagogoi* and pagan priests who resisted the apostles' message at Rome.<sup>21</sup> Scarcely less stylized, in spite

<sup>17</sup> We know of individuals in Italy who were both *archon* and *archisynagogos*: Appendix 1, Nos 1, 6. So the titles were not generally interchangeable.

<sup>18</sup> See Cohen, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 160.

<sup>19</sup> On such realism, see F. Millar, 'The Jews of the Greco-Roman Diaspora between paganism and Christianity, A.D. 312–438', in Lieu, North and Rajak, 117.

<sup>20</sup> For Epiphanius' view of Jewish 'heresies', see J. Lieu, 'Epiphanius on the Scribes and Pharisees (*Pan.* 1.1–16.4)', *JTS* 39 (1988), 509–24.

<sup>21</sup> §10 = p. 128 in *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. R. A. Lipsius (1959).

of its seeming precision, is the statement in the life of Chrysostom attributed to Palladius that 'the corrupt and false patriarch of the Jews changes the *archisynagogoi* each year or even within the year in his pursuit of silver' (*PG* 47.51). It is questionable whether the patriarch in Palestine, even at the height of his powers, could have intervened so actively in local appointments, and we shall see that even imperial legislation was capable of a gross misrepresentation of the relationship between the patriarch and the *archisynagogoi*.<sup>22</sup>

However, a significant change is reflected in this last Palladian passage. The advent of the Christian Empire produced, from Constantine on, a stream of laws concerning the Jews. The rigidly hierarchical structure of the late Empire meant that the upper echelons of the Jewish hierarchy acquired importance in the eyes of the imperial authorities, as responsible for implementing the legislation; to match this, they got a new status, because they were repaid with honours and, especially, with exemption from municipal burdens. One might, then, expect full precision about titulature in legislation, but this we do not get. We seem to find no more than a generalized awareness of the relevant Jewish officialdom in the varied descriptions of status which are incorporated in the laws. *Archisynagogoi* figure in a shifting pattern of reference to the Jewish leaders.

There are two important passages in the Theodosian Code which relate to exemption from municipal burdens. In the first case, in Constantine's law of 330, the application is said to be 'to the priests and *archisynagogoi* and fathers of the synagogues and others who serve in the same place' (*CTh* xvi.8.4).<sup>23</sup> The final, catch-all phrase covers any errors or ignorance there may be on the part of the legislators about what goes on in the synagogue, and ensures that Jewish communities using different titles (or at least some of them) will not be excluded. It may be observed that 'priests' are unlikely to have been central to synagogue practice so long after the end of the Temple cult, and that they most probably bore a limited symbolic role similar to that of today. Constantine appears ill-informed.

The version of the exemption law promulgated by Arcadius and Honorius (A.D. 397) is recorded as being applicable 'to those who are subject to the rule of the illustrious patriarchs, that is the *archisynagogoi* and patriarchs and presbyters and others who are involved in the rites of that religion' (*CTh* xvi.8.13; Linder no. 27). The same protection is included and there is the same lack of exactitude, with a different set of titles being offered this time. Other imperial legislation, which does not include *archisynagogoi*, selects yet other sets of titles.<sup>24</sup> Another law of Arcadius and Honorius, dated to A.D. 399 but revoked in 404 (*CTh* xvi.8.14, 17; Linder nos 30, 34) prohibits the delegates of the patriarch from collecting money from synagogues, and defines those delegates as *archisynagogoi* and *apostoloi* (emissaries). Only the latter can be correctly described as the patriarch's representatives, as Linder points out,<sup>25</sup> and the error is striking.

This time the culprit would seem to be less a New Testament-based understanding of Jewish leadership, than an inadequate grasp of its character. The legislation seems to assume an authority structure in synagogues comparable to that in the typical church. Admittedly, the legislators could well have brought about the paradoxical result of solidifying the position and enhancing the role of those very title-holders whom they had pinpointed. This process we cannot recover. Their vagueness, by contrast, stands out in their formulations. Apart from incompetence and ill-will, we may suggest an additional explanation for this vagueness: the real lack of fixed hierarchy in synagogues. By this we mean not just variation in nomenclature at different places, but a looseness in the use of titles and a lack of specificity about their functions. This is a point whose significance will emerge later.

Ordinary non-Christians, too, came to hear of *archisynagogoi*: here was a catchword which could evoke Judaism as a typical oriental religion, with suitable derision. There is plausibility in the well-known story told in the *Historia Augusta* of Alexander Severus' mobbing (the exact location of the incident is distinctly unclear): 'at a certain festival, the Antiochenes, Egyptians and Alexandrians, as is their custom, had hurled insults at him, calling him the Syrian *archisynagogos* and high priest' (*HA* Alex.Sev. 28). The ruler liked to deny his Syrian origins, which are here flung in his face; at the same time his noted tolerance to

<sup>22</sup> See below. The unsupported patristic evidence for the patriarch's power to appoint *archisynagogoi* is accepted by M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine* (1976), 62.

<sup>23</sup> Linder, No. 9, version B.

<sup>24</sup> e.g. *CTh* xvi.8.29: *primates*; *Nov.Just.* 146.1: *archipherekitai*, *presbyteroi* or *didaskaloi*.

<sup>25</sup> See Linder, 215.

the Jews and his supposed interest in Jewish and Christian teaching are mocked. As Momigliano put it, the juxtaposition produces a double insult.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that this outburst by a largely pagan crowd is assigned (by a fourth-century author) to a date earlier than those fourth-century legal developments which drew public attention to the Jewish hierarchy.

Then, in the life of Saturninus (*Quad. Tyr.* 8), a letter spuriously ascribed to Hadrian comments negatively on the religious climate in Egypt, observing that 'no *archisynagogos* of the Jews, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians is not an astrologer or soothsayer or wrestling master'. These sweeping words, whatever their origin, demonstrate, once again, how the stereotype of the *archisynagogos* had penetrated popular consciousness.

#### IV. RECONSTRUCTIONS, OLD AND NEW

The external literary tradition thus reveals that *archisynagogoi* had a high profile in the eyes of outsiders, for largely extraneous reasons. This literature embodies garbled images of the Jewish community but very little of its actual practices. What is perhaps more disturbing is the widespread modern assumption of precise knowledge. Scholars have thought it a straightforward proposition to define the functions of the *archisynagogos*, by a process of joining together dubious evidence, which they read wholly literally, extrapolating from the combination, and filling in the gaps with anachronisms. These reconstructions have acquired and retained the status of fact. And those who made the reconstructions had no reason to doubt that they could grasp what the *archisynagogos* was, since they saw no problem in understanding the nature of the ancient Jewish synagogue itself. They modernized unconsciously, and their implicit models were often the places of Jewish worship familiar to them, within the contemporary type of western community which they had come across. Judaism, after all, was reputedly unchangeable after the advent of Christianity, and that damaging theological doctrine is even detectable in interpretations of Jewish history or society by non-Christians.

A nineteenth- or twentieth-century synagogue (or indeed a church) located in a developed society will have multifarious responsibilities: a highly wrought and formalized sequence of religious services must be laid on; a high level of communal support for a membership with highly-differentiated social needs is expected; and the infrastructure, including property rights and the fabric of the buildings themselves, will require care and management — all within the framework of a highly complex society. All three branches of activity may have been represented in the ancient synagogue, but the necessarily rudimentary and therefore qualitatively different level of each is clear. As far as ritual goes, recent debates on the development of the synagogue service are not relevant here; but, on any account, the set sequence of prayer and poetry was still severely restricted, leaving Torah reading, short formal prayers and some sermonizing as the dominant acts.<sup>27</sup>

Emil Schürer evoked a picture of a specialized officialdom for the ancient synagogue, to match the synagogue's imagined functions, and this stands largely intact in the pages of the revised Schürer.<sup>28</sup> Samuel Krauss's learned and wide-ranging study<sup>29</sup> contributed a Talmudic slant and new refinement. Between Schürer and Krauss in date came Jean Juster's heavily legalistic approach.<sup>30</sup> There, it is perhaps easiest to see what was being constructed. A number of rigid distinctions are drawn by Juster. First, centralized institutions under the patriarchate are delineated.<sup>31</sup> Then, descending to the communal level, a wholly anachronistic separation is made between, on the one hand, lay leaders such as gerousiarchs and archons, and on the

<sup>26</sup> On Alexander Severus and Judaism, see M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on the Jews and Judaism* II (1980), 629–33; A. Momigliano, 'Severo Alessandro archisynagogos. Una conferma alla Historia Augusta', *Athenaeum* 12 (1934), 151–3.

<sup>27</sup> See for example, A. Shinan, 'Sermons, Targums and the reading from scriptures in the ancient synagogues', in Levine ed., 97–110.

<sup>28</sup> E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* II (rev. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, 1979), 423–53.

<sup>29</sup> S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertümer* (1922).

<sup>30</sup> J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'empire romain* I (1914), 450–3.

<sup>31</sup> In fact, there is no compelling reason to posit even notional patriarchal control over Diaspora synagogues until the late fourth century: A. T. Kraabel, 'The Roman Diaspora: six questionable assumptions', *JJS* 33 (1982), 454, repr. in Overman and MacLennan, op. cit. (n. 2), 10; Cohen, op. cit. (n. 8), 170–5; Millar, op. cit. (n. 19), 98. For a full study of the patriarchate, see L. I. Levine, 'The Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in third-century Palestine', *ANRW* II.19.2 (1979).

other, 'the clergy'. *Archisynagogoi* head the 'clergy'. We even discover how they get their jobs — there are tough qualifying examinations in law and medicine (*à la française*). For that assertion the leading item of evidence is, astonishingly, an offensive statement in a letter of Jerome, where the Christian polemicist discredits rabbis by satirizing the rabbinic regulations on sexual purity: 'They have in charge of the synagogues very wise men too, who are appointed to the foul work of judging by tasting, if they cannot decide with their eyes, whether the blood of a virgin or menstruating woman is pure or impure' (*Ep.* 121.10). To this is added a comment of Ambrose, together with the passage we have already encountered from the 'Hadrianic' letter about the dubious proclivities of religious leaders in Egypt.

Schürer's logic should not detain us much longer than Juster's. On the restricted basis of the first-century inscriptions from Cyrenaica, it is argued that 'the *archontes* were the chiefs of the congregations [every congregation?] and responsible for their direction in general'.<sup>32</sup> Since some archons in inscriptions have the title of *archisynagogos* too, 'the office of *archisynagogos* was therefore different from theirs. But he cannot have been the chief of the *archontes* either, since that person was known as a *gerousiarches* [always?]. He had accordingly nothing whatever to do with the direction of the congregation in general. Instead, his special responsibility was to attend to public worship...' And, again, 'an officer was needed to supervise the arrangements of divine worship and the business of the synagogue as a whole.' This reasoning rests on the assumption that titles represent consistently defined, specialized roles within a developed administrative system.

A fantasy realm opens out, of uniform, neat and tidy communities across the Jewish world, with serried ranks of officials, each with a clearly demarcated job to do. Some evidence is also adduced in support, but we have to ask what the force of this evidence is. We meet, again, the *archisynagogos* who invites Paul and Barnabas to speak at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13.15). Then an inscription from Aegina (Appendix 1 No. 17) has an *archisynagogos* 'directing' the building of a synagogue, as Schürer renders *οἰκοδόμησα*: in fact, the verb is a standard one in inscriptions for recording the name of the person who paid for a building.<sup>33</sup>

Schürer's most detailed support comes, however, from the Rabbinic world. The Mishnah (c. A.D. 200) assumes the existence of an office-holder designated in Hebrew as *rosh ha-kneseth*, 'head of the congregation or synagogue'. In a pair of parallel passages, this individual appears as officiating in an imagined version of a service of the reading of the Law in an imagined synagogue on the Temple Mount.<sup>34</sup> The descriptions are distinctly stylized: 'the *hazzan* of the congregation (*kneseth*) takes the scroll of the Law and gives it to the head of the synagogue and the head of the synagogue gives it to the deputy and the deputy gives it to the high priest; the high priest stands up and receives it and reads it standing' (Yoma 7.1, Sota 7.7). What stands out in the Mishnah is the conflation of contexts in these passages: the presence of the high priest is meant to evoke the golden age of pre-70 Jerusalem, but the synagogue and its congregation belong to an era when synagogues had become the religious focal points of Palestine, not much before the time of the Mishnah itself. There is also a text in the roughly contemporaneous Tosefta (Meg. 4.21) which states that the 'head of the synagogue' should not read from scripture until others have told him that there is no one to read. We may be disposed to take such texts, garbled as they are, to be indicating that the 'head of a synagogue' regularly had an important liturgical function in the Mishnaic milieu, although even this would be open to argument. There is obviously still less justification in extrapolating from the Hebrew to the Greek version of the title, and from Palestine to a pre-rabbinic Diaspora whose Judaism was quite independent at this time, and probably very different in character.<sup>35</sup> Schürer adds the support of the great commentator on the Mishnah, Rashi, and of another mediaeval Mishnah commentary, but these scarcely carry independent weight on a historical matter of this kind.

More recent authors have followed wholly in the footsteps of Schürer, Juster, and Krauss: that reconstruction is unquestioningly accepted as the basis of Schrage's entry in an

<sup>32</sup> op. cit. (n. 28), II, 435.

<sup>33</sup> cf. Luke 7.3–5, where the word is used for the centurion who has a synagogue built.

<sup>34</sup> On the imaginary nature of this synagogue, see S. B. Hoenig, 'The suppositious Temple-Synagogue', in Gutmann, op. cit. (n. 6), 55–71.

<sup>35</sup> In fact, even the rabbinic *rosh ha-kneseth* is a term more varied in its application than these authors have allowed: for a convenient collection, see S. Marmorstein, 'The inscription of Theodotus', *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1921), 24–6.

authoritative theological dictionary, and is now reiterated in van der Horst's guide to Jewish epitaphs.<sup>36</sup> It is a reconstruction with far-reaching implications. Our whole perception of the Diaspora community will be coloured by a supposition that its highest and best-known leaders, by whom it was defined, were people who made prayer their business and who were assigned to the sphere of the sacred. If, on the other hand, piety is located less visibly in the community, say with teachers or charismatics, then a more complex picture is suggested, with perhaps a greater degree of tension between competing values, and certainly with more potential for responsiveness to the outside world.

It is striking that Brooten's challenging study of women synagogue leaders takes a traditional line on the question of functions, and ascribes to *archisynagogoi* (whether male or female) the familiar dual role of liturgical prominence combined with practical duties.<sup>37</sup> For Brooten, the fact that *archisynagogoi* are commonly found in donor inscriptions to have constructed or paid for building portions of synagogues or restoring synagogues, serves to confirm the second of the two functions — which she describes in a revealingly modernizing way as responsibility for the 'plant of the synagogue'. Brooten too draws on the rabbinic evidence, emphasizing especially substantive religious aspects of the role, which she is eager to ascribe to women office-holders equally. 'Women synagogue heads, like their male counterparts, were active in administration and exhortation . . . Perhaps they looked after the financial affairs of the synagogue . . . ; perhaps they exhorted their congregations . . . We must assume that they had knowledge of the Torah in order to be able to teach and exhort others in it' (p. 32). As testimony to the scholarly character of the *archisynagogoi*, she makes much of a list in the Babylonian Talmud (Pesahim 49b; sixth century, but with earlier material): 'Our rabbis taught: let a man always sell all he has and marry the daughter of a scholar. If he does not find the daughter of a scholar, let him marry (one of) the great men of the generation. If he does not find the daughter of (one of) the great men of the generation, let him marry the daughter of a head of synagogue' — after that comes the organizer of a charity and below that an elementary school teacher. If the synagogue head is to be deemed a man of learning on this basis, as Brooten proposes, then what are we to make of the social grandees, 'the great men of the generation'? In any case, we are clearly dealing here with a thoroughly rabbinized view of the social order, with more than a whiff of wishful thinking about it.

Brooten offers an interesting etymological argument for the priority of the Hebrew term and the Hebrew institution over the Greek, which would seem to justify extrapolation from the rabbinic world to the Greco-Roman Diaspora. She classifies the Greek verbal formation *archisynagogos* as irregular, because the second part of the word does not designate a post or occupation, as in *archiereus* (chief priest) and other such common titles, but an institution (with the termination adapted appropriately).<sup>38</sup> That irregularity would be explained if the term had originated as an attempt at a literal rendering of the Hebrew *rosh ha-kneseth*. We might then be inclined to suppose that the Palestinian hierarchy, as glimpsed in the Mishnah, served as the pattern for the Diaspora; and this is implicit in Brooten's treatment.

It is more plausible, however, that the Hebrew term was secondary rather than primary. First, *archisynagogos* is not so odd a formation as suggested, given the existence in the pagan world of the titles *synagogos* and *synagogeus*. The former seems to have been particularly common in cult associations from the Black Sea area,<sup>39</sup> though there are a few fragmentary appearances elsewhere (none of them from the zone which produced the pagan *archisynagogoi*).<sup>40</sup> The latter appears to have been a slightly more popular title, marking individuals of somewhat greater importance. It is occasionally related to contexts with some affinity to Judaism.<sup>41</sup> It is understandable that the Jews did not adopt either of those terms: as words they are easily confused with *synagoge* and they lack weight (by comparison, say, with *archiereus* or Asiarch).

<sup>36</sup> op. cit. (n. 15); P. W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: an Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE–700 CE)* (1991).

<sup>37</sup> Brooten, 23–4 etc.

<sup>38</sup> Brooten, 5. In T. Rajak, 'The Jewish community and its boundaries', in Lieu, North and Rajak, 24, Brooten's argument is cautiously accepted.

<sup>39</sup> B. Latyshev, *Inscriptiones Regni Bosporani* II (1890), nos 19, 60–4; IV (1901), nos 207–8, 210–2, 469; from Tomi: G. C. Tocilescu, *Arch-epig. Mitth. aus Ost. 6* (1882), 19–20.

<sup>40</sup> e.g. Chios: G. Dunst, *APF* 16 (1958), 172–7. Egypt: *JIGRE* no. 26.

<sup>41</sup> Lucian, *Peregr.* II. Delos: G. Fougères, *BCH* 11 (1887), 256. Istria near Tomi, A.D. 138: *SEG* 1.330. Moesia, second century: *SEG* xxiv.1055. Cilicia, Augustan period or soon after: *OGIS* 573, a decree of 'the companions and *Sabbatistai* of the *theos Sabbatistes*', includes the crowning of Aithibelios (?) the *synagogeus*.

*Archisynagogos*, a more imposing word, can be understood as compounded of *archi-* and *synagogos* rather than as derived from *synagoge*. This undermines Brooten's premise. Second, a different line of formation, from ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς is conceivable, given the use of that term at Luke 8.41 to describe Jairus, who has been presented in the same narrative also as an *archisynagogos* (and in Matth. 9.18 and 23 as an archon).<sup>42</sup> Third, as we have seen, the designation has a solid and respectable pagan existence in one geographical region: not such as to lead us to conclusions about direct influence either way, but such at least as to demonstrate the word as quite at home in a Greek context.

Horsley<sup>43</sup> reviews the evidence in the wake of Brooten's discussion and argues instead for *rosh ha-kneseth* as a back-formation from *archisynagogos*. This is an attractive suggestion, though to test it would require intensive analysis of rabbinic data on the synagogue. If it were correct, there would be different implications to consider: Diaspora-Palestine interaction need not be a question of one-way traffic; perhaps the Jews of the Rabbinic world took at least certain external forms of organization from their co-religionists in other societies.<sup>44</sup>

#### V. ARCHISYNAGOGOI AND GREEK HONORIFIC TITLES

It should now be apparent that light on the Greco-Jewish *archisynagogoi* must come from within their own context. And there we shall confront a certain contradiction in the role, as it emerges from the inscriptions. For as we have seen, we are dealing with a term which is more or less specific to Jewry. And yet, the application evokes the Greco-Roman status distinctions in which standard civic inscriptions abound, and investigation reinforces those parallels.

Associations proliferated in Greek and Roman cities — and increasingly so as time went on. Whether religious groups, trade guilds or burial clubs, they show a tendency to replicate in miniature the organization and government of the cities themselves. Similar names for councils and offices may appear and also sometimes similar mechanisms for self-government.<sup>45</sup> Jewish synagogues or other community groupings have often been treated as instances of this kind of association, and not inappropriately; and the archonship is an example of a civic title transferred to the Jewish context.<sup>46</sup> Not only names and methods are transferable, however, but, more importantly, an ethos. We find in many clubs and associations echoes of that honour-driven pattern of office-distribution which increasingly characterizes the cities themselves. What this means is not, of course, that titles and positions were necessarily void of content, or that they were in their nature purely honorary, in the sense that empty titles were bestowed on some while others did the work. What is involved is in fact a fundamental and obvious feature of Greco-Roman society, which may be summarized under four heads:

- (1) Administrative 'jobs' required little expertise or investment of time compared with modern assignments.
- (2) The primary criterion for appointment was not competence; any definition of recognized merit would have to incorporate extraneous, social factors.
- (3) There was a markedly close correlation between social standing and appointment to high position.
- (4) Beneficence played a major role in getting chosen and in the performance of the office itself, making wealth a *sine qua non*.<sup>47</sup>

There are some interesting and extreme consequences of these principles among the inscriptions which are our main evidence on civic office-holding in the Roman Empire and, in

<sup>42</sup> cf. above, pp. 78–9, and Brooten, 15.

<sup>43</sup> G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. IV 1979 (1987), 214–17.

<sup>44</sup> cf. L. M. White, *Building God's House in the Roman World* (1990), ch. 4. However, the *hazzan* referred to by Epiphanius, above, and paralleled in a Greek inscription, *CIG* 805 from Apamea, is a real example of a loanword in Greek and of a post whose point of origin would seem to lie in Palestine.

<sup>45</sup> For this phenomenon already in a classical Athenian context, see R. Osborne, 'The *demos* and its divisions in

Classical Athens', in S. Price and O. Murray (eds), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (1990), 265–95.

<sup>46</sup> See especially, Meeks, 32–40. It does not follow, however, from manifestations such as the Jewish archonships, that Jewish communities had the special formal status of *politeumata*, operating as legal cities within cities, a view maintained in, e.g. E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (1976), 359–60.

<sup>47</sup> cf. R. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (1982), 94ff., on merit in relation to imperial appointments.

fact, virtually our only evidence on the doings of associations. Complete outsiders could be appointed, especially powerful outsiders like the emperor.<sup>48</sup> Women could hold titles even if they were not otherwise group-members or holders of full citizen rights.<sup>49</sup> Children could be appointed.<sup>50</sup> In fact, people could hold titles without even being alive: the recently deceased sometimes received posts. And it was not even necessary to be able to participate: gods were occasionally elected.<sup>51</sup> Such office-holders clearly had something to contribute which outweighed their lack of full civic status: influence, family connections, prestige or (presumably most important) wealth.

Other notable features of honour-driven hierarchies are fluidity, inconsistency and elasticity in the number and formulation of titles: these are natural consequences of the valuing of honour over function. It is, indeed, the indeterminacy of such systems, rather than shortage of evidence, which might explain our own difficulties in interpreting them. For example, epigraphists have been hard put to judge whether the prestigious office of Asiarch in the province of Asia was identical with that elsewhere called the High Priest of Asia, or a separate office: some have thought that the Asiarch was appointed Asiarch for the duration of a festival of the *koinon* of Asia; others that the title was gained after the holder's term of office as chief priest and retained in perpetuity; others again that the title was one quite distinct from that of chief priest.<sup>52</sup> It is perhaps unexpected that office-holding within the Jewish group shows clear signs of being governed by the same honour-driven principles; and it is particularly instructive to note indications of this in the case of the post which we are reviewing, the archetypally Jewish and supposedly clerical post of *archisynagogos*.

The sample of available inscriptions (Appendix 1) is small, with thirty-two apparently Jewish texts mentioning some forty *archisynagogoi*.<sup>53</sup> But this is enough to allow distinct patterns to emerge. *Archisynagogoi* do, at least, outnumber other posts, with the exception of the archonship, whose frequency is to be accounted for by the importance of the archonship in the synagogues of Rome, from which (thanks to the exploration of the catacombs) a disproportionately large number of inscriptions emanate.<sup>54</sup> The sample is also geographically and chronologically diverse. It covers Africa, Spain, Italy, Pannonia, Moesia, Greece, Crete, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, and it stretches from the first century down to the sixth. Local variation and development over the years were admittedly significant: it is, for example, striking that the *archisynagogos* had little or no presence in Greco-Jewish Egypt, and, again, that the three major Jewish inscriptions from Berenice in Cyrenaica, which come from the early to mid-first century A.D., list archons but no *archisynagogoi*, although two of them are formal decrees of the Jews in the city and the third does mention a *synagoge*.<sup>55</sup> But our concern is with a general pattern existing within a reasonably homogeneous Greco-Roman culture, and therefore we need not be too concerned about such divergences.

The first indication of a strong honorific component in the epigraphic titles is the phenomenon of office-holding in perpetuity, διὰ βίου, a later Greek practice which echoes Roman *perpetuus* appointments. Among the Jewish *archisynagogoi*, we find two who are explicitly described as appointed for life, Appendix 1, Nos 18 and 20.<sup>56</sup> At Akmonia (No. 20), in the early imperial period, the restoration of Julia Severa's synagogue was achieved by the *archisynagogos* for life, together with an ordinary *archisynagogos* and an archon. The *tria nomina* suggest that the first-named alone was a Roman citizen, as too was his second- or third-century counterpart at Teos (No. 18). It would have to be clear even to the most gerontocratic society that real continued competence can scarcely be guaranteed with a life appointment,

<sup>48</sup> e.g. from Cyzicus (*SEG* xxxiii.1056): 'When the Emperor Hadrian was hipparchos for the second time . . .'

<sup>49</sup> Evidence for Asia Minor is collected by Trebilco, 116–26.

<sup>50</sup> e.g. H. Pleket, *Epigraphica* 2, no. 34, first century A.D.: 'The city of Epidaurus honoured Cn. Cornelius Pulcher, son of Gnaeus, aged 4, former gymnasiarch, former *agoranomos* at the sacred festivals, for his virtue and goodwill towards the city.'

<sup>51</sup> D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* (1950), 470, 515, 650, 839 n. 24, 1508 n. 34.

<sup>52</sup> The issues are well set out by Horsley, op. cit. (n. 43), 48ff.

<sup>53</sup> This excludes the following very fragmentary texts

where either there is no clear evidence of Jewish connections, or restoration is very dubious, or only a single word is preserved: *CIJ* 638, 759; *BE* (1980), 230.30; *BS* 11.212. Also excluded is the fragmentary honorific inscription from Alexandria mentioned above, *JIGRE* no. 18.

<sup>54</sup> See Leon, op. cit. (n. 9), ch. 2.

<sup>55</sup> G. Lüderitz, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus Cyrenaika* (1983), nos 70–2.

<sup>56</sup> The existence of other Jewish honorands for life should also be noted, either simply displaying the formula διὰ βίου in some form (*CIJ* 266, 398, 416, 417, 503 (Rome); 533 (Ostia); 575, 589 (?) (Venosa)), or carrying the formula attached to another title: 561 (Puteoli, gerousiarch); 720 (Mantineia, πατὴρ λαοῦ)

and what is important in such an appointment must be the strong desire of those who honour to underline and prolong a temporary pre-eminence. This certainly demonstrates an important association between office and status. But it does not, we must admit, exclude the possibility that primarily honorific titles, such as these perpetual ones, could exist alongside annual appointments which were more functional and which were intended for lesser individuals.

There can be an inbuilt ambiguity in cases where a formula expressing status is added to a title, leaving a reader unsure whether the extra distinction belongs to the specific case or is rather a statement of the honour which is normally understood to inhere in the title. It should be noted that extra designations of honour are not confined to *archisynagogoi*.<sup>57</sup> That the honour is a concomitant of the title would seem to be suggested in the dating formula of the Apamea synagogue mosaic (No. 21), where ἐπί is followed by the names of three *archisynagogoi*, a gerousiarch and two presbyters — the presbyters, like the *archisynagogoi*, are designated τιμώτατοι. The date is 391, and the liberality of designation here ought perhaps to be seen as echoing that hierarchy of formal modes of address which characterizes late Roman imperial society. This is also apparent in the use of λαμπρότατος in the fifth-century inscription from Sepphoris in Palestine (No. 26): the Greek cities of the region in this respect come close to Diaspora practice. Rather earlier, at Beth She'arim, also in Palestine (No. 13), Eusebios from Beirut is already λαμπρότατος. At Rome (No. 1), we encounter Stafylus, an *archisynagogos* and archon who is said to have 'held all the honours'. We may quite reasonably suppose that in such a case the title of archon was held simultaneously with that of *archisynagogos*, and perhaps far beyond any fixed term. In fact, we should take the suggestion of a formal *cursus honorum* a little less than literally.

We have already learned that a proliferation of names for officials ought not to surprise us. A community might simply have enlisted more titles when it sprouted more notables. When we find individuals described as holders of more than one office (e.g. Nos 17, 24), or else holders of different offices listed as having presided together over a benefaction, we are more likely to be confronting records of accumulated honour and privilege than descriptions of precisely defined jobs held at precise times, as Schürer thought. As in the case of Stafylus, we cannot always know whether the titles held by an individual were held sequentially or simultaneously.

It may also be a function of the titular nature of the offices that both *archisynagogos* and other designations often stand unqualified, without any anchorage in a particular place; though there are exceptions in the cases of the *archisynagogos* of the Vernaculi and the *archisynagogos* Isaac at Rome, where affiliation to one of the eleven synagogues seems to have mattered (Nos 4, 2).<sup>58</sup>

At both ends of the chronological spectrum, we find the title of *archisynagogos* running in families. In the Theodotus inscription which was found in Jerusalem, and which presumably dates from before A.D. 70, the restorer of the synagogue and its hostelry declares himself a priest and the son and grandson of *archisynagogoi* (No. 25). The name of the founder's father, Vettenus, has led to the speculation that this was an enslaved family freed in Rome,<sup>59</sup> though where we are then to suppose that Vettenus acquired his *archisynagoga* title is unclear. Among the latest inscriptions there are also father and son *archisynagogoi* at Sepphoris and Venosa (Nos 26, 8). There is, of course, no reason to suggest that hereditary transmission operated in such cases.

Nor need the explanation of inheritance be used to account for the female title-holders who have aroused interest in recent years.<sup>60</sup> Three of them figure among the *archisynagogoi*. Theopempte from Myndos in Caria figures together with her son Eusebios in a text which is apparently a dedication of a chancel-screen (No. 19). Sophia of Gortyn is described on her tomb as προεβυτέρα κὲ ἀρχισυναγωγίσσα (No. 11). Rufina of Smyrna, called

<sup>57</sup> In addition to the instances below, and the officers 'for life', note *CIF* 85, 216, 324, 337 from Rome: archons πάσης τιμῆς.

<sup>58</sup> At Beth She'arim (No. 13), place of origin is indicated because the dead were buried far from their home countries. See M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim* II (English edn, 1974). Cf. also the affiliations in Nos 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 26.

<sup>59</sup> Notably R. Vincent, 'La découverte de la synagogue des affranchis à Jérusalem', *RB* 30 (1921), 247–77, who sought to identify the synagogue with the 'synagogue of the Libertines' in Acts 6.9.

<sup>60</sup> Brooten, ch. 1. There is also epigraphic attestation of a small number of women who hold other offices in the community: Brooten, chs 2–4. Trebilco, ch. 5, brings together the Jewish and pagan evidence for Asia Minor.

Ἰουδαία<sup>61</sup> and *archisynagogos*, built a tomb for her ex-slaves and so was clearly a woman of substance, head of a Jewish household (No. 12).

Child title-holders raise some of the same questions as women, and ought probably to be considered together with them. At Venosa, a three-year-old managed to become *archisynagogos* (No. 7).<sup>62</sup>

The parallel with the numerous civic inscriptions from Asia Minor where women and children appear as major donors, as holders of the highest titles in the male sphere and as prominent honorands, is an inescapable one. If we wish to look outside Asia Minor, we may invoke the fifteen-year-old son of a freedman who is a dedicatee at Pompeii.<sup>63</sup>

The question which arises in the Jewish context (scarcely addressed by Brooten) is whether these figures are, like the great pagan women, owners of wealth in their own right, who gain titles and honours because they are able to be benefactors, or whether they are merely inheritors, *faute de mieux*, of titles which happen to be hereditary. The evidence for female land ownership presented by van Bremen is strong, and there is no *prima facie* reason to expect the situation of Jewish women living in comparable urban milieux to be different on account of their Judaism. We have only to think of Babatha, that now renowned second-century Jewish lady from the Provincia Arabia, whose property and complex dealings are revealed in her papyrus archive.<sup>64</sup> In the case of Rufina at least, we have epigraphic proof that she had means of her own to dispose of. The first interpretation therefore commends itself. There also arises the question of whether women office-holders functioned, *qua* office-holders, exactly as did their male counterparts. Brooten's claim of functional equality is acceptable (though perhaps less so in the case of the small children), but the synagogue service is not the correct setting for that equality, and the contribution of women, just as that of men, must be envisaged as patronal and perhaps ceremonial rather than religious.<sup>65</sup> No doubt, too, the public behaviour of these women, like that of the benefactors of Asia Minor, 'was still defined and constrained by the . . . traditional ideology'.<sup>66</sup>

## VI. ARCHISYNAGOGOI AS BENEFACTORS

In many cases, Jewish officials are explicit benefactors. That of course is why they seem to be linked with the fabric of the synagogues — not because they looked after the 'plant'. *Archisynagogoi* are found as donors of whole synagogue buildings (Appendix I Nos 17, 18, 25), restorers of buildings (No. 20), or donors of parts of buildings: mosaic floors (Nos 21, 22, 24), a chancel screen (the location of No. 19), columns (No. 23). These Jewish benefactors operate essentially like Greco-Roman benefactors within a 'euergetic' framework of giving benefits and receiving honours, though it has been possible to demonstrate certain limitations within Jewish groups on the full adoption of the value-system inherent in that framework: not only honorific statues seem to have been generally eschewed, but also lesser visible payments of honour such as shields, as well as elaborate verbal eulogies. Group benefactions were relatively common, and gifts relating to the physical structure of synagogues seem to have been the only kind of benefaction made.<sup>67</sup>

*Archisynagogoi* share their role as benefactors of synagogues with other title-holders. This is to be expected, since, in our view, the major Jewish titles shared the same social functions. The exception is the *grammateus*, who may well have been a true functionary. It is impossible to offer meaningful comparative quantification of the records of the different post-holders as

<sup>61</sup> cf. R. Kraemer, 'On the meaning of the term "Jew" in Greco-Roman inscriptions', *HTR* 82 (1989), 35-54; repr. in Overman and MacLennan, op. cit. (n. 2), 311-30 for the possible meanings of this term, which may designate here and elsewhere a gentile adherent to Judaism.

<sup>62</sup> cf. the case of the twelve-year-old *grammateus* and *mellarchon* from Rome, *CIF* 284.

<sup>63</sup> See R. van Bremen, 'Women and wealth', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (1983), 233-42. For Pompeii: *CIL* x.846; White, op. cit. (n. 44), 31, makes the interesting

suggestion that preferment not open to the freedman father was available to the son.

<sup>64</sup> See N. Lewis (ed.), *The Documents from the Bar-Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri* (1989).

<sup>65</sup> On this point, see Rajak, op. cit. (n. 38), 23-5; also White, op. cit. (n. 44), 179, n. 50.

<sup>66</sup> Van Bremen, op. cit. (n. 63), 236.

<sup>67</sup> With the possible exception of the Aphrodisias inscription, where the editors tentatively identify a 'soup-kitchen' (Reynolds and Tannenbaum, 26-8); see T. Rajak, 'Jewish benefactors', forthcoming proceedings of a conference held at Tel-Aviv University.

donors, since our initially small samples for the different posts are hopelessly skewed by the domination of archons and, to a lesser extent, *gerousiarchs*, both of whom appear in the epitaphs of the Roman catacombs, where they naturally could not be recorded as donors. We cannot judge whether *archisynagogoi* were regularly the most illustrious of the title-holders, and this perhaps does not matter very much. But we notice that they do stand well as benefactors. The figure of nine *archisynagogoi* who are donors (out of the total of some forty names) is suggestive. For comparison, only one *gerousiarch* is known as a donor, while four archons figure in such a role. Furthermore, we have seen that *archisynagogoi* tend to be associated with what, in synagogue terms, are substantial gifts.<sup>68</sup>

To suggest that *archisynagogoi* were people of influence and standing in their own communities is not to say that all or even most of them were possessors of large-scale wealth by the standards of their cities, let alone in empire-wide terms. Even the donation of a whole synagogue building could not compare with the strings of massive benefactions attributed to great donors in the Roman East. The real means of Jewish benefactors evidently varied greatly, not only according to the character of the city they inhabited, but also, no doubt, according to the history and circumstances of the Jewish community within it (and communities suffered many vicissitudes in all centuries). While most donations may appear modest, it is not easy to get an accurate picture, given the apparent inclination of Jewish communities to play down the act of giving. The point is, at any rate, that archisynagogal status could not have been acquired without resources.

#### VII. ARCHISYNAGOGOI AS PATRONS

The *archisynagogos* was a patronal figure. With his wealth, his high standing, and the advantage of a title which the outside world could recognize instantly, he had the wherewithal to act as mediator for the community. It is conceivable, indeed, that you did not have to be Jewish to be an *archisynagogos*. It may have been enough to take a patronal interest in a Jewish community. Such may be the case with at least one of the refurbishers of Julia Severa's synagogue in Akmonia, those men who were honoured for their improvements to the original building (Appendix 1, No. 20). It has been noted that P. Tyrronius Cladus, the *archisynagogos* for life, has the same *nomen* as prominent pagans in Akmonia: a C. Tyrronius Rapon had been high priest together with Julia Severa. And Julia Severa herself, though a high priestess in the imperial cult and a very grand lady, had seen fit to build a synagogue or at least to donate a house to the Jews.<sup>69</sup> In parts of Phrygia, Judaism had a high religious profile,<sup>70</sup> and we need not be surprised to see this echoed in social contacts and mutual esteem. It is striking that the two *archisynagogoi* and the archon who are together honoured in the renovation inscription are presented with gilded shields, which is a form of recognition quite uncharacteristic of Jewish epigraphy.

There is no real problem in conceiving of a non-Jew being given archisynagogal standing. Momigliano's depiction of Alexander Severus quite literally as an *archisynagogos*, although it lacks supporting evidence,<sup>71</sup> is an ingenious and plausible one. For, after all, nothing by way of

<sup>68</sup> Most of the other apparently Jewish individual or family donors of whole buildings are named without titles: Alypus in Egypt (*JIGRE* no. 13, probably 37 B.C.); Papyrus in Egypt (*JIGRE* no. 126, first century A.D.); Tation at Phocaea (Lifshitz no. 13, probably third century); two brothers and their father at Tafas in Syria (Lifshitz no. 63, probably fourth century). There is one case of the holder of another title donating a whole building: Ti. Claudius Polycharmos the πατήρ τῆς ... συναγωγῆς at Stobi in Macedonia (Lifshitz no. 10, probably third century). In Cyprus, a presbyter and his son restored a whole synagogue (Lifshitz no. 82, probably fourth century).

<sup>69</sup> Julia Severa, who originally erected the building, is known to have been active in the 50s and 60s. The inscription records the restoration of the building, and while this might have happened as early as the 80s or 90s,

as is usually assumed, it could have been considerably later. White, *op. cit.* (n. 44), 81, suggests that the renovations were what made the house into a synagogue. On Julia Severa's connections and on the improbability of her being in any real sense a Jew, see Trebilco, 58–60; A. R. R. Sheppard, 'Jews, Christians and heretics in Acmonia and Eumeneia', *Anatolian Studies* 29 (1979), 169–80; W. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* (1897), 639, 650–1, 673, curiously reconstructed the whole family as Jewish.

<sup>70</sup> The milieu is nicely characterized by Sheppard, *op. cit.* (n. 69).

<sup>71</sup> *op. cit.* (n. 26). He cites an inscription from Rome (*CIJ* 501) apparently referring to a woman ἀπο τῆς συναγωγῆς Ἀρκίου Λυβανου, which was Alexander's birthplace.

Judaism or Jewish knowledge need have been required to be a satisfactory *archisynagogos*, beyond the capacity to display benevolent concern for the group. The *archisynagogos*, we may be inclined to say, was what he or she was, rather more than what he or she did.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

The echoing of the city's status system within the Jewish group represents at the very least an external acceptance within the group of civic political values. These echoes would necessarily be both the result and the facilitator of interaction. The result of redefining the archisynagogue in terms of a sound understanding of Greek civic titles, is thus to conclude that it belonged in an outward-looking type of community, which did not see fit to run its affairs in isolation, even if it might parade its cultural distinctiveness in chosen ways.

Nor does the loosely proliferating officialdom of the synagogue, with its polite designations and its reliance on benefaction, suggest a powerful authority structure with a strong hold on its members, such as existed in certain early Christian communities and such as is visible in ultra-orthodox Jewish groupings today. If there were any such strong figures in the Jewish communities of the Roman Empire, then they were not the *archisynagogoi* but others, perhaps prophets or charismatics, hidden from our view. The communities need not have been monolithic, and we do not pretend that the title-holders are the whole story. But they are an important part of it, over a long period; and the brief inscriptions produced by community members themselves, viewed without preconception, serve to locate the *archisynagogoi* in an intelligible civic context which we could never have divined from literary allusion alone. After discarding the old certainties about Jewish titles, we are in a position to understand not less, but more. The synagogue of Julia Severa is brought to life.

#### APPENDIX I. JEWISH TEXTS MENTIONING ARCHISYNAGOGOI<sup>72</sup>

##### *Epitaphs of Archisynagogoi*

1. Rome, via Appia: *CIJ* 265. 2nd–4th century.  
*Stafylo arconti et archisynagogo honoribus omnibus fu<n>ctus, Restituta coniux benemerenti fecit. ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἢ κοίμησὶς σου.*  
To the well-deserving Stafylus, archon and *archisynagogus*, who held all the honours. Restituta his wife made (the monument). In peace your sleep.
2. Rome, via Appia: *CIJ* 282; Leon, op. cit. (n. 9), 306. 2nd–4th century.  
[—] καὶ Ἰσαακ [— ἀρχισυν]άγωγος [—] συναγωγῆ[ς—] ἐπλήρωσ[εν ἔτη—] . . .  
. . . and Isaac . . . *archisynagogos* . . . of the synagogue . . . he completed . . . years . . .
3. Rome, via Portuensis: *CIJ* 336; Leon, op. cit. (n. 9), 314. 1st–3rd century.  
ἐνθάδε κεῖτε Εὐφράσις ἀρχισυναγωγῆς ὁ κα[λῶς βιώσας?].  
Here lies Euphrasis, *archisynagogos*, who lived a good life (?).
4. Rome, via Portuensis: *CIJ* 383; Leon, op. cit. (n. 9), 322. 1st–3rd century.  
[ἐν]θάδε κεῖτε Πολυ[ ] . . ]νις ἀρχισυναγωγὸς [συ]ναγωγῆς Βερνα[κλ]ων ἐτῶν νγ'. [ἐν] εἰρήνῃ ἢ κοίμησις αὐτοῦ.  
Here lies Poly . . nis, *archisynagogos* of the synagogue of the Vernacians, aged 53. In peace his sleep.
5. Ostia: M. Squarciapino, *Rassegna mensile di Israel* 36.7–9 (1970), 183–91; *JWE* 1, 14. 1st–2nd century.  
*Plotio Fortunato archisyn(agogo) fec(erunt) Plotius Ampliatus Secundinus Secunda P T N et Ofilia Basilia coniugi b(ene) m(erenti).*  
For Plotius Fortunatus, *archisynagogus*. Plotius Ampliatus, Secundinus (and) Secunda made (the monument) . . . , and Ofilia Basilia to her well-deserving husband.

<sup>72</sup> Accepted dates are given for the inscriptions in most cases. A number of the texts given here have been re-edited for D. Noy's forthcoming *Jewish Inscriptions of*

*Western Europe*, 1 (1993), cited below as *JWE* 1, under the auspices of the Jewish Inscriptions Project, University of Cambridge.

6. Capua: *CIJ* 553; *JWE* 1, 20. 2nd–4th century.  
*P. Alfius Iuda arcon archisynagogus, q(ui) vi(xit) ann(is) LXX mesib(us) VII dieb(us) X. Alfia Soteris cum q(ua) <vixit> an(nis) XXXXVIII coiugi incomparabil(i) bene merenti fecit.*  
 P(?) Alfius Iuda, archon and *archisynagogos*, who lived 70 years 7 months 10 days. Alfia Soteris, with whom he lived 48 years, made (the monument) for her incomparable, well-deserving husband.
7. Venosa: *CIJ* 587; *JWE* 1, 53. 5th century.  
 τάφος Καλλίστου νιπίου ἀρχοσσυναγωγού, ἐτῶν γ' [μη]νῶν γ'. ἐν [εἰ]ρέ[ν]η ἢ κόμη[σις αὐτοῦ.]  
 Tomb of Kallistos, child, *archisynagogos*, aged 3 years 3 months. In peace his sleep.
8. Venosa: *CIJ* 584; *JWE* 1, 70. 5th century.  
 τάφος Ἰωσήφ ἀρχισυναγωγῶς υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ ἀρχισυναγογού. [ךמכנ]. לא ורל[ש].  
 Tomb. Joseph, *archisynagogos*, son of Joseph, *archisynagogos*. Peace upon his resting-place.
9. Venosa: *CIJ* 596; *JWE* 1, 64. 5th–early 6th century.  
 τάφος ΑΧΛΑΝΟΥΑ ἀρχοσσυναγωγού ἐτῶν πενήντα. ορלש.  
 Tomb of . . . the *archisynagogos*, aged fifty. Peace.
10. Oescus, Moesia: *CIJ* 681; A. Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary* (1983), no. 10. 4th century (?).  
*Ioses arcisina[go]gos et principales, filius Maximini Pannoni, sibi et Qyriae coiugi sui vivo suo memoria dedicavit.*  
 Ioses the *archisynagogos* and leading decurion, son of Maximinus the Pannonian, to himself and Kyria his wife, dedicated the memorial while he was alive.
11. Kastelli Kissamou, Crete: *CIJ* 731c; Brooten, 11. 4th–5th century.  
 Σοφία Γορτυνία πρεσβυτέρα κὲ ἀρχισυναγωγίσσα Κισάμου ἔνθα. μνήμη δικέας ἰς εἶνα. ἀμήν.  
 Sophia of Gortyn, elder and *archisynagogissa* of Kisamos (lies) here. The memory of a just one (is) for ever. Amen.
12. Smyrna: *CIJ* 741; *I.Smyrna* 1, 295. 3rd century or later.  
 Ῥουφείνα Ἰουδαία ἀρχισυνάγωγος κατεσκεύασεν τὸ ἐνσόριον τοῖς ἀπελευθέροις καὶ θρέμασιν [followed by provisions against violation].  
 Rufina the Jewess, *archisynagogos*, built the tomb for her freedmen and home-bred slaves.
13. Beirut: M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim* 11 (English edn, 1974), 164. 3rd–early 4th century.  
 ἐνθάδε κίτε Εὐσέβις ὁ λαμπρότατος ἀρχισυνάγωγος ὦν Βηριτῶ[ν].  
 Here lies the most distinguished Eusebis, being *archisynagogos* of Beirut.
14. Caesarea: Schwabe and Lifshitz, 203. 3rd–early 4th century.  
 Ἰακῶς Καισαρεὺς ἀρχισυνάγωγος Παμφυλίας. ορלש.  
 Iakos the Caesarian, *archisynagogos* of Pamphylia. Peace.
15. Sidon: B. Lifshitz, *ZDPV* 82 (1966), 57 (from Beth She'arim). 3rd–early 4th century.  
 Ἰωσή ἀρχισυναγωγού Σίδονος.  
 (Tomb of) Ioses, *archisynagogos* of Sidon.
16. Jerusalem: *CIJ* 1414. Restoration and date uncertain.  
 Ἰαββὶ Σαμου[ήλ] ἀρχισυνάγωγος Φιρύγιος Δο[ρυλαεύς?]. δοξάσ<ε>ι α[ὐτὸν ἢ] ο<ι> <κου[μένη]. ךמכנ מ ל[ע] οרלש].  
 Rabbi Samuel, *archisynagogos* of Dorylaea in Phrygia. The world will honour him (?) Peace upon your resting-place.

#### Archisynagogoi as donors

17. Aegina: *CIJ* 722; Lifshitz, no. 1. 4th century (?); restoration uncertain.  
 Θεόδωρος ἀρχ[ισυνάγωγ(ος) φ]ροντίας ἐτη τέσσαρα ἐχ θεμελίων τὴν σ[υναγωγ(ήν)] οἰκοδόμησα· προσοδεύθ(ησαν) χρύσινι πε' καὶ ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Θε(εού) δωρεῶν χρύσινι ρε'.  
 I, Theodoros, *archisynagogos*, *phrontistes* for four years, built the synagogue from its foundations. 95 gold pieces were received<sup>73</sup> and 105 gold pieces from the gifts of God.
18. Teos: *CIJ* 744; Lifshitz, no. 16. 2nd–3rd century.  
 Π. Ῥουτίλιος Ἰωσῆς ὁ ἀξιολογώτατος ὁ διὰ βίου ἀρχισυνάγω[γος] σὺν Βισιννία Δημῶ τῇ συνβίῳ αὐτοῦ ἐκ θεμελίων ἐκ τῶν ἰ[δίων].  
 P. Rutilius Ioses<sup>74</sup> the most respectable *archisynagogos* for life, with Bisinnia Demo his wife, (built it) from the foundations, from his own money.

<sup>73</sup> Lifshitz gives this word the unparalleled meaning 'spent'.

<sup>74</sup> The interpretation of the name was made by L. Robert, *Hellenica* 1 (1940), 27–8.

19. Myndos, Caria: *CIJ* 756; Brooten, 13. 4th–5th century or later.  
[Ἐπὶ Θ]εωπέμπτῃς [ἀρχ]ισυν(αγώγου) κὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς Εὐσεβίου.  
From Theopempte, *archisyn(agogos)*, and her son Eusebios.
20. Akmonia: *CIJ* 766 Lifshitz, no. 33. Probably late 1st century A.D.  
τὸν κατασκευασθέντα οἶκον ὑπὸ Ἰουλίας Σεουήρας· Π. Τυρρώνιος Κλαδος ὁ διὰ βίου ἀρχισυνάγωγος καὶ Λούκιος Λουκίου ἀρχισυνάγωγος καὶ Ποπίλιος Ζωτικὸς ἀρχων ἐπεσκεύασαν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ τῶν συνκαταθεμένων καὶ ἔγραψαν τοὺς τοίχους καὶ τὴν ὀροφήν καὶ ἐποίησαν τὴν τῶν θυρίδων ἀσφάλειαν καὶ τὸν λυπὸν πάντα κόσμον, οὐστίνιας καὶ ἡ συναγωγῆ ἐτείμησεν ὄπλω ἐπιχρῦσῳ διὰ τὴν ἐνάρετον αὐτῶν δ[ι]άθ[ε]σιν καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὴν συναγωγὴν εὐνοίαν τε καὶ σπουδήν.  
The building was erected by Julia Severa. P. Tyrronius Cladus the *archisynagogos* for life and Lucius son of Lucius the *archisynagogos* and Popilius Zotikos the *archon* restored it with their own money and with what had been deposited. They painted the murals and ceiling, and made the reinforcements for the windows and all the other decoration. The community honoured them with a gilded shield for their virtuous disposition and their goodwill and zeal towards the community.
21. Aramea: *CIJ* 803; Lifshitz, no. 38. A.D. 391; also includes dating formula.  
ἐπὶ τῶν τιμωτάτων ἀρχισυνα[γ]ῶγων Εὐσεβίου καὶ Νεμέου καὶ Φινέου καὶ Θεοδώρου γερουσιάρχου καὶ τῶν τιμοτάτων πρεσβυτέρων Εἰσακίου καὶ Σαούλου καὶ λοιπῶν, Ἰλάσιος ἀρχισυνάγωγος Ἀντιοχείων ἐποίησεν τὴν ἰσοδὸν τοῦ ψηφίου πό(δας) ρν', ἔτους γψ' Εὐδνέου ζ'. εὐλογία πᾶσι.  
Under the most honoured *archisynagogoi* Eusebios and Nemeos and Phineas, and Theodoros the gerousiarch, and the most honoured presbyters Isaac and Saul and others, Iasios, *archisynagogos* of Antioch, made the entrance, 150 feet of mosaic. In the year 703, Audunaios 7. Blessing to all.
22. Aramea: *CIJ* 804; Lifshitz, no. 39. A.D. 391; same donor as No. 21.  
Ἰλάσιοῦ Εἰσακίου ἀρχισυνάγωγος Ἀντιοχείων, ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Φωτίου συμβίου καὶ τέκνων καὶ ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Εὐσταθίας πενθεράς, καὶ ὑπὲρ μνίας Εἰσακίου καὶ Ἐδεσίου καὶ Ἡσυχίου προγόνων, ἐποίησεν τὴν ψήφωσιν τῆς ἰσόδου. εἰρήνη καὶ ἔλεος ἐπὶ πάν τῷ ἡγιασμένῳ ὑμῶν πλήθει.  
Iasios son of Isaac, *archisynagogos* of Antioch, for the well-being of Photion his wife and of his children, and for the well-being of Eustathia his mother-in-law, and in memory of Isaac and Aidesios and Hesyhion his forebears, made the mosaic of the entrance. Peace and mercy on all your hallowed community.
23. Salamis, Cyprus: Lifshitz, no. 85 (inscribed on a marble column). Date uncertain.  
[---] πεντά(κις) ἀρχι[συναγώγου] υἱοῦ Ἀνανία δις ἀρχοντ(ος).  
. . . of . . . five times *archisynagogos*, son of Ananias who was twice archon.
24. Caesarea: Lifshitz, no. 66. 6th century.  
Βη[ρ]ύλλος ἀρχισ(υνάγωγος) καὶ φροντιστῆς υἱὸς Ἰούτου, ἐποίησε τὴν ψηφοθεσίαν τοῦ τρικλίνου τῷ ἰδίῳ.  
Beryllos the *archisynagogos* and *phrontistes*, son of Ioutos, made the mosaic of the *triclinium* with his own resources.
25. Jerusalem: *CIJ* 1404, Lifshitz, no. 79. Before A.D. 70.  
Θεόδοτος Οὐτεττήνου, ἱερεὺς καὶ ἀρχισυνάγωγος, υἱὸς ἀρχισυναγώγου, υἱωνὸς ἀρχισυναγώγου, φκοδόμησε τὴν συναγωγὴν εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν νόμου καὶ εἰς διδασχὴν ἐντολῶν, καὶ τὸν ξενῶνα, καὶ τὰ δώματα καὶ τὰ χρηστήρια τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς κατάλυμα τοῖς χρήζουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ξένης, ἣν ἐθεμελίωσαν οἱ πατέρες αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι καὶ Σιμωνίδης.  
Theodotos son of Vettenus, priest and *archisynagogos*, son and grandson of *archisynagogoi*, built the synagogue for reading the law and teaching the commandments, and the guest-house and the rooms and the water provisions, as accommodation for those who need it from abroad. His fathers and the presbyters and Simonides founded the synagogue.

*Archisynagogoi named in a dating formula* (cf. No. 21)

26. Sepphoris-Diocaesarea: *CIJ* 991; Lifshitz, no. 74. 5th century.  
(ἐπὶ) Ἰελασίου σχο(λαστικοῦ) κώ(μητος) λαμ(πρωτάτου) υἱοῦ Ἀετίου τοῦ κό(μητος) Εἰσοῦδα (ἀρχισυναγώγου) Σιδονίου ἀρχισυναγώγου ΠΕΠΙΕΡΘΟΝΤΑΔ Συβερριανο(ῦ) Ἀφρο(υ) ἀρχισυναγώγου Τύρου λαμπρο(στάτου).  
Under Gelasios the *scholastikos* and most distinguished count, son of Aetios the count, and Iuda, *archisynagogos* of Sidon, . . . Severianus Afer, most illustrious *archisynagogos* of Tyre.

*Archisynagogos in a votive inscription*

27. Intercisa, Pannonia: A. Scheiber, *Jewish Inscriptions in Hungary*, no. 3. A.D. 222–235.

*Deo aeterno pro sal(ute) d(omini) n(ostri) Sev(eri) A[lex(andri)] P(ii) F(elicis) Aug(usti) e[st] Iul(iae) Mamae]ae Aug(ustae) m(atris) Aug(usti) v(otum) red(dit) l(ibens) Cosmius pr(ae)positus sta(tionis) Spondill a(rchi)synag(ogus) Iudeor(um).*

To the eternal God, for the safety of our lord Severus Alexander Pius Felix Augustus and of Julia Mamaea Augusta the emperor's mother, Cosmius the superintendent of the guard-post of Spondill (and) *archisynagogus* of the Jews willingly repaid his vow.

*Archisynagogoi named in patronymics* (cf. Nos 9, 25)

28. Rome: *CIJ* 504. 2nd–4th century.  
ἐνθάδε κείτε Ἰουλιανὸς ἱερευσάρχων Καλκαρησίων υἱὸς Ἰουλιάνου ἀρχισυναγώγου.  
Here lies Julianus, gerousiarch (?) of the Calcaresians, son of Julianus, *archisynagogos*.
29. Hamman Lif, North Africa: Brooten, 164, no. 38. Date wholly uncertain.  
*Asterius filius Rustici arcosinagogi (et) Margarita Riddei partem portici tessellavit.*  
Asterius, son of Rusticus the *archisynagogus*, and Margarita daughter of Riddeus paved with mosaic part of the portico.
30. Side: Lifshitz, no. 37. 5th–6th century; restoration uncertain.  
[ἐ]πι Λεοντίου πρεσβ(υτέρου) καὶ ζυγ(οστάτου) [κ]αὶ φροντιστοῦ υεῖοῦ Ἰακώβ ἀρχ(ισυναγώγου) καὶ ζυγ(οστάτου) ἐγένετο ἡ κρήνη σὺν τῷ μεσαύλῳ· ἰνδ(ικτίονι) γ' μη(νὶ) ζ'.
- Under Leontios, presbyter and weight-checker and *phrontistes*, son of Jacob, *archisynagogos* and weight-checker(?), the fountain was installed with the inner court. Year 3 of the indiction-cycle, month 7.

*Inscriptions of uncertain nature*

31. Tarragona: W. P. Bowers, *JTS* 26 (1975), 395–402; G. Alföldy, *Die römischen Inschriften von Tarraco* (1975), no. 1075; *JWE* 1, 186. 5th–6th century(?).  
Fragments of an epitaph in Latin and Greek: ll. 7–12 read ἐνθα κατακ[εῖται] ῥαβ Λατουστ [---] PA τοῦ μακ[αρίσ(?)]του KM[. .]E[---] ἀρχησυν[αγωγού/ος---] Κυζηκο[νου/ος(?)]---
32. Ephesus: *I.Ephesos* IV. 1251. Date uncertain.  
τῶν ἀρχι<σ>υναγωγ<ῶ>ν καὶ τῶν πρεσβ(υτέρων) πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη.

APPENDIX II. NON-JEWISH ARCHISYNAGOGOI TEXTS

1. Perinthus, Thrace: E. Kalinken, *Arch-Epig. Mitth. aus Ost-Ung.* 19 (1896), 67. Early 1st century A.D. (?).<sup>75</sup>  
[--- ὁ] διοικητῆς καὶ Μάρκος Πομπή[ι]ος Κομ[ι]κός κω[. . . .]ος τὸν βω[μ]ὸν τῆ συν<α>γω[γ]ῆ τῶν κουρέω[ν] περὶ ἀρχισυναγ[ω]γον Γ. Ἰούλιον [Ο]ὔαλεντα δώ[ρ]ον ἀποκατέστη[σα]ν καὶ τὸν τόπο[ν] παρεσκεύ[ασα]ν.  
... the *dioiketes* and M. Pompeius Komikos (?) ... (They) restored the altar for the *synagoge* of the barbers around the *archisynagogos* C. Iulius Valens as a gift and fitted out the place.
2. Salonica: *IG* x.ii.i no. 288. A.D. 155.<sup>76</sup>  
οἱ συνήθει[ς] τοῦ Ἡρακλέος Εὐφρά[νο]ρι τῷ συνήθει μνήμης χά[ρι]ν ἀρχισυναγωγούτος Κωτυος Εἰρήνης, γραμματέωντων Μ. Κασσ[ί]ου Ἐρμωνος τοῦ καὶ Δημά καὶ Πριμιγὰ ἐπιμελητοῦ Πύθωνος Λουκειλίας Θεσσαλονικέος.  
The companions of Herakles to the companion Euphranor as a memorial, when Kotys son of Eirene was *archisynagogos*, M. Cassius Hermon, also known as Demas, and Primigas were *grammateis*, overseen by Python son of Lucilia of Thessalonica.
3. Salonica: *BE* (1972), no. 263; G. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* IV (1979), 215.<sup>77</sup> A.D. 75(?).  
... ἡ συνήθεια Ἡρωνος Αὐλωνίτου Γ. Ἰουλίῳ Κρήσκεντι· οἱ περὶ ἀρχισυναγῶγον Ἀρτέμωνα ζυγοποιού, ἱερῆ Τρούφωνα, τὰ ἐκ τοῦ γλωσσοκόμου γινόμενα αὐτῷ μνίας χάριν.

<sup>75</sup> Schrage, op. cit. (n. 15), 844, suggests first century B.C.

<sup>76</sup> *IG* x.ii.i no. 299 is very fragmentary but seems to follow the same formula: ἀρχισυναγῶγοντος [Κω]τι[σ]ος

Εἰρήνης, [γραμματ]εούτων Αὐλου[...].

<sup>77</sup> From Ph. Petsas, *Arch. Deltion* 24 (1969), Chron. 300–1.

... The association of Heron Aulonites to C. Iulius Crescens. Those around the *archisynagogos* Artemon the yoke-maker, (and) the priest Tryphon (paid for) the costs arising from the sarcophagus for him as a memorial.

4. Olynthus, Chalcidice: *CIG* II. 2007f. 1st–2nd century A.D.  
 Αἰλιανὸς Νείκων ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος θεοῦ ἥρωος καὶ τὸ κολλ<ή>γιον Βειβίῳ Ἀντωνίῳ Ἀντωνίῳ ἀνέστησεν τὸν βωμόν. τὸν δε πῖνακα ἀδέστησε γαμβρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἀσιδάρης.  
 Aelianus Nicon the *archisynagogos* of the Hero god and the college set up the altar for Vibius Antonius. His son-in-law Asidares set up the tablet.
5. Beroea, Macedonia: G. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* IV (1979), 215; *SEG* xxvii.267.<sup>78</sup> Imperial period.  
 Ἀμμία ἡ γυνὴ καὶ Κουαρτίων ὁ υἱὸς Γεμέλλῳ μνήμης χάριν καὶ οἱ συνήθεις οἱ περὶ Ποσιδῶνιν τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον.  
 His wife Ammia and his son Quartion to Gemellus as a memorial, and the companions around Posidonis the *archisynagogos*.
6. Pydna, Macedonia: J. M. R. Cormack, *Mélanges offerts à Georges Daux* (1974), 51–5.<sup>79</sup> A.D. 250.  
 ... οἱ συνελθόντες θρησκευταὶ ἐπὶ θεοῦ Διὸς Ὑψίστου ἔθεντο τήνδε τὴν στήλην, λογιστεύοντος Οὐρβανιανοῦ Βιλίστου, ἀρχοντος Αὐρ. Νιγερίωνος ὑπὸ ἀρχισυνάγωγον Αὐρ. Κηπίωνα τὸν πρὶν Πιερίωνος καὶ προστάτου Αὐρ. Σεβήρου καὶ γραμματέως Αὐρηλίου Θεοφίλου τοῦ πρὶν Πιερίωνος καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ θρησκευταὶ οἱ ὑπογεγραμμένοι. ...  
 ... The assembled worshippers of the god Zeus Hypsistos put up the stele, when Urbanianus Bilistus was *logistes*, Aurelius Nigerion was *archon* under the *archisynagogos* Aurelius Cepion formerly of Pierion, and Aurelius Severus was *prostates*, and Aurelius Theophilos formerly of Pierion was *grammateus*, and the other worshippers who are written below ... [list of twenty nine names, including three women and two slaves. On the side of the stele: 'Overseers Theophilos and Aurelius Cepion formerly of Pierion.']

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<sup>78</sup> Following A. Romiopolou, *Arch. Delt.* 28 (1973), Chron. 439.

<sup>79</sup> Discussed by G. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* II (1977), 26–71.