Jewish Communities in Asia Minor

PAUL R. TREBILCO
Professor of New Testament Studies
Knox Theological Hall
University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

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The city of Apamea in Phrygia was founded by Antiochus I Soter (280–261 BCE) as part of a scheme to strengthen the Seleucid hold on Asia Minor, to facilitate trade and to protect the highways. It was one of a series of garrison-cities and was built at a point of strategic importance on the Great Southern Highway. Antiochus I Soter founded the city on a plateau on either side of the Marsyas River by moving the inhabitants of nearby Celaenae into his newly created city. Celaenae itself was a large and prosperous city with a long history. Under Persian rule, Celaenae became the principal royal seat in Phrygia and a residence of the satraps. After Alexander conquered the city, it was designated as the Greek Capital of Inner Anatolia.\(^1\)

At the beginning of the common era, Apamea was the second most important market and distribution centre in Asia Minor owing to its geographical location. The city commanded the cut in the mountain range through which the Southern Highway climbed to the plateau of Central Anatolia, making it the commercial junction through which wealth-laden traffic passed to the East. Roads of commercial importance also led to Western Phrygia and into Pisidia.\(^2\) Its position meant it was a strategic city with regard to defence. Antiochus III used it as a defensive refuge after the battle of Magnesia ad Sipylum in 190 BCE and it was here that he signed the treaty in 188 giving up much of Asia Minor to the Romans, who entrusted the territory to the kings of Pergamum. They allowed the city to develop as a Greek polis with both a city council and a gymnasium. In 133 the city passed to Rome, who granted it in 129 to Mithridates V along with the rest of the province of Phrygia. On the death of Mithridates Rome declared it free, but this freedom was probably only nominal. In 88 the city surrendered to Mithridates VI in return for aid to rebuild after a recent earthquake. After the defeat of Mithridates in 85, Sulla incorporated Apamea into the Roman province of Asia. Although it twice formed part of Cilicia, it became permanently part of Asia in 51 BCE.\(^3\)
Apamea was also a regional centre having under its authority many towns and villages and was the seat of the conventus, probably from 133. Dio Chrysostom’s speech at Apamea shows how much the conventus both reflected and increased the importance and prosperity of the city. In the second century CE the name Celaenae reappeared on coins during a time of reinvigorated national sentiment encouraged by the Romans. This was also a period of prosperity, that lasted until the mid third century; Apamea declined to a third-rate city in the Byzantine Period. 4

1 The first Jewish settlers in Apamea

It is possible that Antiochus I included Jews among the original settlers of Apamea, since Seleucid kings seem on occasions to have used Jews as an element in the cities they founded. It is almost certain that Apamea was one of the cities in which Zeuxis settled Jews in around 205 BCE, at the instruction of Antiochus III, since Apamea was the most prominent city in Phrygia and the transportation involved sending Jews to Phrygia and Lydia alone. 5 The Jews were settled by Antiochus III on very favourable terms as we noted in chapter 1. Thus, it is likely that the Jewish community quickly became established in Apamea.

2 Cicero and the Jews of Apamea

In chapter 1, section 4 we discussed Cicero’s report of Jewish Temple tax seized by Flaccus from Apamea and other centres in 62 BCE. We concluded that the Jewish population in the city of Apamea must have been large and that Flaccus acted out of economic necessity and not anti-Jewish sentiments. Furthermore, the incident shows that the Jews of Apamea (and elsewhere) were prepared to defy a Roman edict in order to pay their Temple tax to Jerusalem. The tax, a significant feature of Jewish identity, was clearly highly important to the Jewish community in Apamea.

3 The Noah coins of Apamea

We have a series of coins minted in Apamea from the end of the second century CE which bear the scene of Noah and the Ark. These coins are unique in that they are the only coin type known to bear a Biblical scene. That it is the Biblical scene of Noah and his wife
and not, for instance, Deucalion and Pyrrha is clearly shown by the inscription ΝΩΕ on the side of the ark. The coins have often been briefly explained as the result of ‘Jewish influence’ in the city. Can we be more precise about the involvement of the Jewish community in the minting of these coins?

The coins depict Noah and his wife inside the Ark, shown not as a boat but as a rectangular box riding on the waves. It is most likely that the engravers followed the model of Greek artists who had already used box-forms to represent boats. Above the Ark are a raven and a dove holding an olive branch in its claws. They symbolise the subsidence of the waters and the end of the flood and are probably directly inspired by the Biblical account. To the left of the Ark Noah and his wife stand on dry land with their right arms raised. This is the ‘orans’ gesture and symbolises an attitude of grateful prayer for their salvation. Prayer is repeatedly portrayed in this fashion in classical and Hellenistic art. The Jewish community has followed this precedent, as did Christian art at a later stage. The coins thus juxtapose two successive episodes — the flood and the departure from the ark. This style of representing a narrative by portraying the principal actors in successive scenes is frequent in antiquity, especially in sarcophagus art. It is, however, unusual on a coin.

The coins bear the profile and inscriptions of five Emperors: Septimius Severus (193–211), Macrinus (217–8), Severus Alexander (222–35), Philippus Arabs (244–9) and Trebonianus Gallus (251–3). It seems likely that the coins formed a continuous series, with these five being the representatives of the series which have been found to date. The inscriptions on the reverse in chronological order are:

(i) ΕΠΙ ΑΓΩΝΟΘΕΤΟΥ ΑΡΤΕΜΑ. Γ. ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ
(ii) ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ
(iii) ΕΠΙ ΠΟ. ΑΙΛ ΤΡΥΦΩΝΟΣ ΙΠΠΙ. ΑΣΙΑΡ. ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ
(iv) ΕΠΙ. Μ. ΑΥΡ. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Β. ΑΡΧΙ. ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ
(v) ΠΑΡ. ΚΛ. ΑΠΟΛΙΝΑΡΙΟΥ ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ

The city of Apamea seems to have had an unusual preference for picturesque coins. A coin of Severus portrays the local legend of Athena and Marsyas; another coin portrays the legend of Zeus’ birth. It is also significant that our five Noah coins span a number of years, without significant change. Ramsay thought this implied that ‘a permanent model existed for engravers to copy’. This, together with the city’s preference for picturesque coins which sometimes portray a story, led him to suggest that all were taken from
models, probably a painted Stoa or a set of pictures devoted to Apamean legends on a public building. Since the earliest of these picturesque coins is from the reign of Commodus (180–192), he thought the building was erected before his reign.\textsuperscript{18} If this is correct, then Apamea not only had a Jewish scene on its coins but also had such a scene as part of a public mural of local legends.

The local flood legends

There were a number of flood legends in the ancient world, such as the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, the two survivors of a flood caused by Jupiter.\textsuperscript{19} We will discuss the local Phrygian flood legends which were antecedent to, or independent of, the Jewish community in Apamea, and we will then investigate the bearing these legends have on the interpretation of the coins.

Iconium in Lycaonia was the centre of the Nannakos flood tradition. In Suidas and Zenobius we read of Nannakos the ancient king of Phrygia who foresaw the flood that is identified in these sources with Deucalion’s flood. He gathered together all his people into the temple and ‘made supplication with tears’. According to Stephanus of Byzantium Nannakos received an oracle that all people would perish when he died. After the resulting flood, the earth was repopulated when Prometheus and Athena fashioned images (εἰκόνες) of mud at Zeus’ command. Iconium was named after these images.\textsuperscript{20} In this story original Phrygian characters are probably identified with the Greek heroes, and the framework is provided by the connection with Deucalion’s flood. The antiquity of (at least part of) the legend about Nannakos is shown by the fact that the \textit{Mimes} of Herondas of the third century BCE include the proverb ‘Though I weep like Nannakos’.\textsuperscript{21} Thus we have a number of different versions of an ancient legend about Nannakos, King of Phrygia, who was connected with a flood, that is identified in our sources as Deucalion’s flood.

It has been suggested that Nannakos, or Annakos as the name is given by Stephanus of Byzantium, was the Biblical Enoch so that this was not a Phrygian but a Jewish flood story. Apart from the similarity of name, they both lived for a long time directly before a flood, which both are said to have foretold.\textsuperscript{22} However, this suggestion does not stand up to investigation. Firstly, that a third century BCE source knew the proverb about Nannakos’ tears suggests that at least part of the tradition of a deluge predated known Jewish settlement in the area. Secondly, an inscription gives the name of a village as
The Noah coins of Apamea

Nonokokɔmŋ – ‘the village of Nonokos’; Nonokos for Nannakos is a common Anatolian vocalisation. This shows that ‘Nannakos’ was the name of a deified hero or a god in Anatolia and that the original name of the King was Nannakos not Annakos. Thus the Nannakos flood story had no connection with Enoch but is seen to be an ancient Anatolian tradition independent of any Jewish community.

A second flood story comes from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, written about the turn of the era. Jupiter and Mercury received hospitality from the Phrygian couple, Philemon and Baucis, after being turned away by all the inhabitants of the area. The gods then flooded the area because of its inhospitality, but Philemon and Baucis were saved by climbing a mountain at the instruction of the gods. Philemon and Baucis are then changed into an oak and a linden tree; added value is given to the veracity of the myth as a Phrygian tradition by the way that Ovid emphasises that his source is an eye-witness of the locality. In addition, many features such as the trees, the subterranean waters that cause the flood and the resulting lake are in keeping with Anatolian geography. The fact that Ovid pays no special attention to the flood also increases the likelihood that his story is reliable. Fontenrose suggests that ‘Baucis’ is a native Phrygian name and ‘Philemon’, whilst meaning ‘lover’ in Greek, probably translates a native name. Thus, we can be sure that here Ovid tells us a Phrygian flood story and not a flood myth that he decided to locate there.

This flood story is clearly distinguished from the Biblical account. Rain plays no part in the flood, which is caused solely by subterranean waters, there is no ark and Philemon and Baucis are saved by walking up a hill at the suggestion of the gods. This tradition is then independent of the Jewish community in the area.

A third flood tradition is found in the writings of Nonnios who wrote around 500 CE but who is a rich source of earlier mythology. The hero of the story is Priasos, later described as ‘the proud son of Phrygia’. Zeus caused torrential rain to fall on Phrygia so that everything was flooded including the house of Priasos, who then migrated to ‘the Aonian land to escape from the fatal showers of rain’ where he mourned his lost land. Zeus finally quieted the storm and drove the waters away, laying bare the cliffs. Priasos returned home and joyfully embraced Zeus who had saved him from destruction ‘for his pious works’. This is then another tradition about a flood in Phrygia, here involving a hero who escaped because of his piety.

Fourthly, Plutarch quotes a tale about King Midas and his son Anchouros set at Celaenae, the city which later became Apamea.
A chasm full of water opened in the earth and engulfed many people and their homes. An oracle instructed the King that if he threw his costliest possession into the chasm, it would close up. Finally, after everything else had failed, Anchouros leaped in on horseback and the chasm closed. The myth arose from local circumstances in the vicinity of Apamea where earthquakes had caused new lakes to appear and where an abundance of underground water, which here causes the flood, flowed from the ground. The tradition is clearly located at Apamea and shows the existence of a flood story in the area.

Accordingly, we have four distinct local flood traditions, although only one is from Apamea itself. One of the stories is located some distance away at Iconium, although perhaps close enough to be known in Apamea. The area is geographically suitable, with a large number of lakes, hot springs and frequent earthquakes. We have seen no detailed resemblance between these traditions and the Biblical story, a fact that implies that the latter did not create the former. We can, therefore, be confident that in Phrygian legend the area claimed to be the home of a flood hero or heroes. It is difficult to date these traditions. Ovid lived from 43 BCE to 17 or 18 CE, so the story of Philemon and Baucis must be dated then or earlier. Herondas in the third century BCE shows that in his time there was a legend of Nannakos which probably involved a Phrygian flood. It is possible then that the Jews who arrived in Apamea around 205 BCE already found a flood tradition associated with the area.

Apamea Kibotos

Apamea had a second name, ἡ κιβωτός, which means box, chest, coffer or ark. This name for Apamea is first mentioned by Strabo around 19 CE, and Pliny and Ptolemy also knew it. In addition, the word Κιβωτοί is found on a coin issued under Hadrian that also bears a representation of five rectangular chests. The coin, which shows Marsyas (a local river here portrayed as a god) lying in a rocky cave, above which are five chests, has the inscription Ἀπαμέων Μαρσύας Κιβωτοί – Of the people of Apamea, Marsyas, Kibotoi. Two other coins are similar, but they only have one or two chests depicted on them. It is important to note that κιβωτός is the Septuagint’s term for the Ark of Noah. Can we explain these facts?

Ramsay suggested that the name Kibotos was a Grecoising of a Phrygian name, which A. Reinach suggested was Kibyza. However, this Phrygian name is unattested for the city; in fact
Celaenae seems to have been the indigenous name. It is possible that the local flood traditions led the city to adopt the name Kibotos, thus claiming to be the landing place of an ark that survived the flood.\(^34\) However, this is most unlikely. An ark is never mentioned in these local traditions because escape is made on foot in marked contrast to the Deucalion tradition. It is possible that this later tradition with its ark was known, although our only reason for thinking so is that the Nannakos tradition has been joined with it. Yet, the most likely place for this to have occurred is in our sources rather than in the Phrygian version itself. The fact that the Ark, integral to the Deucalion tradition, is never mentioned in any of our flood traditions seems to indicate that the Phrygian traditions were originally independent of the Deucalion story. In any case, the word used for ‘ark’ in the Deucalion story is almost always λάρναξ and not κιβωτός.\(^35\)

Consequently, the city is very unlikely to have given itself this name as a result of the local flood traditions.

Head wrote that the name Kibotos arose because the city ‘became a commercial junction where goods arriving by the caravan route from the East were packed in chests to be forwarded to the various seaports, Ephesus, Pergamum etc’.\(^36\) The earliest evidence for this name comes from the period of the city’s considerable prosperity and importance. In addition, the plural ‘kibotoi’ on the coin of Hadrian’s time can only mean ‘chests’, which strongly points to Head’s interpretation. A city like Apamea is likely to gain some ‘nickname’ because there were numerous cities of that name in the ancient world. Thus, it seems probable that the name was attributed to the city in this period because ‘chests’ became a symbol of the city’s economic activity and eventually of the city itself.

Nevertheless, Ramsay, followed by Tcherikover,\(^37\) rejected this explanation in favour of the theory that a local legend of a flood led the Jews of Apamea to regard one of the neighbouring mountains as the resting place of the Ark and that their influence caused the name to be given to the city. However, this theory fails to explain why the coins of Hadrian’s time portray five ‘Kibotoi’. If ‘Apamea Kibotos’ was a shorthand for ‘Apamea, the resting place of the Ark’, how can we understand the city depicting five ‘kibotoi’ (which in this case would have to mean ‘arks’) on a coin?\(^38\) Clearly the only satisfactory explanation of the term’s origin is that which does justice to the commercial importance of the city.
A proposed hypothesis

We can now venture to suggest the following hypothesis to explain the Noah-coins of Apamea. The city gained the nickname 'Kibotos' in or before the time of Strabo because of its economic significance. 'Kibotos' at this stage only meant 'chest'. There was no ark in the local flood legends and if one had been known it would have been called a λάρναξ, in which case there would have been no reason for it to be connected with the city's name.

The coins clearly imply that the Ark's resting place was associated with Apamea. Sibylline Oracles I/II (see below) reflects the local Jewish tradition that the site was the hill of Celaenae behind the city. Were the Jews the first to identify this hill with the flood? A decisive point against this is the geography of the area, as was shown by Ramsay. The hill of Celaenae at 3660' is dominated by Mt Ai-Doghmush, which is only six miles away and 5580' high. Two other mountains in full view from the city are 6619' and 8013' high. Hence if the Jews had, de novo, chosen a landing site for the Ark it would almost certainly have been one of these lofty, more distant mountains. We also recall that Philemon and Baucis fled up a hill to escape the flood. The fact that the hill of Celaenae was chosen on the coins and in Sibylline Oracles I/II suggests that the local legend of the flood was strongly associated with this hill from the distant past and that the Jewish community did not wish to change the location. Perhaps this was the hill up which the Apamean equivalents of Philemon and Baucis were reputed to have climbed.

The Jews connected the city's name of Kibotos with the 'kibotos' they read about in their Septuagint as the vessel in which Noah had endured the flood, and thus they interpreted the city's name to mean 'ark'. This fully explains the Jewish community's action. There is no apparent reason why the Jews should have introduced the Biblical flood story into Apamea without any external cause. But with a pre-existent flood tradition in the area and with their own story using the very word that was the 'nickname' of the city, their actions are entirely understandable. The Jewish community also followed the strong local flood tradition in localising the landing of the Ark on the nearby hill. The city accepted as their own this different version of the flood story, with its account of an escape being made not by fleeing up a hill but by survival in an ark that later came to rest above the city. For the first time the nickname 'Kibotos' acquired the double meaning of chest and ark in Apamea. The connection between the chest, ark
and flood is uniquely a Jewish contribution. This acceptance of the
tradition by the city would only have been possible if the Jewish
community was already a respected element in the city’s population.

This gave the city’s nickname a prestige it had lacked; it was now
given an ancient significance. The name not only testified to the city’s
commercial importance but also to the fact that they had famous
ancestors – Noah and his wife.\textsuperscript{42} Cities were enthusiastic for this
sort of aetiology of their names that gave them a link with antiquity,
particularly cities like Apamea which were of relatively recent
foundation. It achieved this notable advance through the Jewish
community, which would thus be seen to add to the prestige of the
city. Part of the acceptance of this tradition by the city involved the
portrayal of the scene on coins of the city and probably in a public
Stoa. The city also accepted a new name for the flood heroes – Noah
and his wife. Many of the coins of the city portraying well-known
deities such as Hermes or Artemis Ephesia do not name the figure.
That Noah is named suggests that his name has suppressed a local
name. Without Noah being named expressly, the scene could have
been ambiguous.\textsuperscript{43}

It is important to note that our coins depict two people – Noah
and his wife. In the OT and NT mention is made either of Noah alone
or of the whole group of people involved. Noah and his wife are never
jointly emphasised.\textsuperscript{44} In fact, Noah’s wife is quite secondary to his
three sons. The emphasis in Jewish literature of the Intertestamental
Period and later is on Noah as the prime actor in the drama of the
flood. Noah’s wife, when she is mentioned, functions only as an
illustration of an attribute of Noah himself. Thus Philo mentions her
but only in the context of Noah’s abstinence from sexual intercourse
during the flood. In Jubilees she is named as Emzara, but in the actual
story she is ignored and plays no part.\textsuperscript{45}

This emphasis continues in the portrayal of the flood in Christian
art. Here we find an exceedingly standardised depiction of Noah alone
in a box-like Ark, with arms upraised and a dove flying towards him.
In one scene on the Trier sarcophagus eight people are depicted; in
only one other case – a Christian catacomb in Rome – do we see
Noah and his wife by themselves.\textsuperscript{46} Thus Biblical and Jewish
literature and Early Christian art do not explain why our coins have
two people in the Ark instead of Noah alone or a group of eight.
Christian art and Lewis’ analysis of the treatment of the Flood story
by writers of this period suggest that we should look to influences
in the local environment for an explanation.\textsuperscript{47}
In the light of our analysis of the local flood stories, the conclusion seems clear. The Jewish community found an already existent legend involving two people of equivalent importance who escaped the flood, the Apamean Philemon and Baucis. The community then identified the two with the heroes from its own tradition, Noah and his wife. Noah’s wife remained nameless despite ample room on the coin because there was no name for her in the local Jewish tradition.\textsuperscript{48} Yet the influence of the antecedent tradition meant that both appeared on the coin. This seems further evidence that the Jewish community did not create the local legend but rather reinterpreted it and that its version was accepted by the city. In the process the Jewish community allowed its own tradition in which Noah’s wife played a very peripheral role to be influenced by the pre-existent tradition.

It is difficult to date these developments. They certainly occurred before the end of the second century when the coins were first minted. The connection between Apamea, the Ark/Kibotos and Noah are all present in Sibylline Oracles I/II (see below), which was probably written around the turn of the era. The contribution by the Jewish community to the prestige of the city could date from then.\textsuperscript{49}

That the city accepted the superimposition of the Jewish version of the story on their own suggests that the Jewish community was influential and respected before this time and was probably active in public life. Jews made a real contribution to the life of the city by adding a prestigious local ancestor, which shows that the Jewish community was in no sense marginalised in the city’s life.\textsuperscript{50} Yet the community was also distinctive, their flood hero having a different name. On the other hand, the Jews accepted a modified significance for Noah’s wife from the position she had in their tradition, or in any other Jewish literature known to us. We see here some ‘give and take’. The city accepted the Ark and Noah as part of the local flood tradition, whilst the Jewish community accepted a female flood hero who had a significant place in the city’s tradition as part of its own tradition. The Jewish community re-interpreted its tradition in the light of the local story, though of course Noah is still called Noah. Thus we see that there was mutual recognition and respect between the Jewish community and the city, with reciprocal acknowledgement of each other’s traditions.\textsuperscript{51}

The style of the portrayal on the coin is also noteworthy. Although the engraving would probably have been done by the city authorities, it is likely that the Jewish community would have had some say. It is clear that the portrayal followed current artistic styles, for instance
in the shape of the Ark and in the ‘orans’ gesture. The Jewish community seems to have accepted these current styles.

4 Sibylline Oracles I/II

Even though it is often difficult to ascertain the provenance of the Sibylline Oracles because of their very nature, there is general agreement that the Jewish substratum of Books I/II was written in Phrygia, probably in Apamea. Firstly, in I, 195–8 Phrygia is said to be the first land to emerge after the flood and the ‘nurse’ of a new humanity. In I, 261–7 we read:

There is a certain tall lofty mountain on the dark mainland of Phrygia. It is called Ararat. When all were about to be saved on it, thereupon there was a great heartfelt longing. There the springs of the great river Marsyas had sprung up. In this place the Ark remained on lofty summits when the waters had subsided ... 

The spring which formed the Marsyas river was situated just behind Apamea; clearly, ‘Ararat’ is located there in this passage. Thus the case seems strong that part of Sibylline Oracles I/II is from Phrygia, probably Apamea. It is the only document to have survived from Jews in Asia Minor in this period.

The book as we have it contains both a Jewish substratum and a Christian redaction. There is general agreement that I, 1–323 and II, 6–33 are part of a Jewish oracle treating world history in ten generations. I, 324–400 is a Christian section dealing with the Incarnation and career of Christ. II, 34–347, an account of eschatological crises and the last judgement, is more difficult to assign. J.J. Collins thinks that the Christian writer modified the eschatological conclusion of the Jewish work by interpolations, although the extent of the redactor’s work is difficult to determine. Although the eschatological passages are probably substantially Jewish (and thus reveal a concern with the judgement of individuals after death), the difficulty of determining the Jewish sections in II, 34–347 means that we cannot use this part of the work as evidence for our study.

J.J. Collins has recently discussed the dating of the Jewish substratum. The mention of Rome in the tenth generation in II, 18 points to a period when Roman power was consolidated in the Near East and thus to a time after 30 BCE. The Jewish substratum contains
no reference to the destruction of the Temple or to Nero’s supposed return, a favourite Sibylline theme. The Christian section in I, 387–400, which does mention the destruction of the Temple, was probably added to bring the Jewish oracle up to date. Hence, the original oracle probably carried its review of history no later than the time of Augustus. Consequently, a date around the turn of the era is most likely with outer limits of 30 BCE and 70 CE.54

A conspicuous feature of Books I/II is the extent of the influence of Homer and Hesiod on the author. There are some verbal parallels that reflect direct use of Hesiod’s Works and Days and Theogony by the Sibyl, and the schema of the first five generations is inspired by Works and Days 109–174.55 However, the final composition is still very much the work of the Sibyl. For example, in Hesiod’s Works and Days the first generation is a golden, blameless race whereas in the Sibyl’s work this generation ‘sinned, smitten with folly’, and thus Adam tasted death. This disturbs Hesiod’s general scheme of a progressive decline. Nevertheless we can still see how the Sibyl accepts the scheme of world history and the detailed description of one of the Greek epic poets. Clearly these traditions were for him/her a respected guide to world history. However, the Sibyl is also dependent on Jewish traditions and these predominate, for instance, in the description of the sin of the first generation in I, 38–64. There are similarities here with the process which led to the minting of the Noah coins. The use of Hesiod, and indeed of the Sibylline form itself, emphasises the common ground between Jew and Gentile in the author’s context, which as we have seen was probably Apamea.

A large part of the Jewish substratum is devoted to the flood story (I, 125–282). Noah is introduced as the single upright and true man of the abominably wicked fifth generation (I, 120–6). This theme of the righteousness of Noah as unique in his time is frequently found in Biblical and Intertestamental literature.56 As in the description of creation, the narrative follows the Biblical flood story to a large extent. It seems likely that the author, in locating the landing spot of the Ark as the hill behind Apamea, was here re-interpreting the local flood tradition(s) in accordance with his/her Jewish tradition. (S)He was identifying the story he/she has told with the local flood stories, and identifying Noah with the indigenous flood hero(es). The impetus for this re-interpretation, and thus the localisation of the flood story, was probably Apamea’s nickname Kibotos. It seems then that the Sibyl was doing much the same thing as we have seen occurring in the late second century with the coins. It is possible that the Jewish community
was at that time following the lead the 'Sibyl' had provided at the
turn of the era.

It seems likely that the Sibyl was aiming his/her work at the city,
at those who knew only the local flood story. (S)He was identifying
for them a new and ancient flood hero. Perhaps the fact that the city
did accept this identification, as the coins show, is a sign of the success
and acceptance which the Sibyl's work achieved among his/her
intended audience.

In the book Noah is portrayed primarily as a preacher of repen-
tance,\(^57\) a feature which is entirely lacking in the Genesis account. In
Sibylline Oracles I, 128–9 God says to Noah: Νῶς, δέμας θάρσουνον
ἔδω λαοίς τε πᾶσιν κήρυξον μετάνοιαν ὑπὸς σωθώσιν ἀπαντες
— Noah, embolden yourself and proclaim repentance to all the
peoples, so that all may be saved. There follow in I, 150–170 and
I, 174–198 two sermons preached by Noah. The book is not alone,
however, in portraying Noah as a preacher of repentance. In
Josephus' account of the flood we read that Noah urged his con-
temporaries 'to come to a better frame of mind and amend their
ways'. Noah is not presented as a preacher of repentance in any of
the Jewish Apocryphal or Pseudepigraphical literature. The theme
is found, however, in Rabbinic writings. For example, in Ecclesiastes
Rabbah ix, 15, as an example of Noah's wisdom, we read: 'For he
said to the people, "Woe ye foolish ones! Tomorrow a flood will
come, so repent." They answered him, "If punishments begin, they
will begin with your house."'\(^58\) The emphasis in these Jewish
writings is on the wickedness of Noah's contemporaries who refuse
to repent. Noah's preaching functions as a foil; their wickedness is
proved by the fact that, even when urged to repent, they scorned
Noah's words.

In 2 Peter 2:5 Noah is described as δικαιοσύνης κήρυξ — a
herald or preacher of righteousness. In I Clement 7:6 as part of an
exhortation to repentance we read that 'Noah preached repentance
and those who obeyed were saved.' Likewise, mention of Noah as
a preacher of repentance is found in the Apocalypse of Paul and in
a number of patristic writers.\(^59\) Generally the statement is very brief
or is part of a piece of extended allegorical exegesis with the emphasis
on God providing an opportunity for repentance. The theme is used
for homiletical purposes in order to promote certain behaviour in the
listeners.

It emerges from this survey that Sibylline Oracles I/II is probably
the earliest written record which portrays Noah as a preacher of
repentance. It is also the only piece of writing in which a long sermon purporting to be preached by Noah is given. Against this background, our account in Sibylline Oracles I/II is seen to be unique. We will now investigate the content of Noah’s sermons in more detail. In I, 150–2 and 174–80 Noah outlines both the ethical values on which judgement is based and the way to avoid destruction. The list of sins given has much in common with the lists frequently found in Jewish literature of this period. Noah, faced with the imminence of the flood, exhorts his hearers to repent. If they will repent, propitiate God, change their ways of behaviour and live a holy life (I, 170) the wrath of God will be averted. However, the people sneer at Noah, whereupon he preaches against their wickedness again, describing what will happen to them when the flood comes (I.174–98). We see, therefore, that the work is basically hortatory and attempts to discourage the sins which lead to condemnation and to encourage the behaviour of which the author approves. The sermons are concerned with ethics rather than conversion. It would seem that the Sibylline Oracle genre was not appropriate for ‘conversion literature’ because then the pretence of being the Sibyl would have been exposed.60 On the other hand, it was an appropriate medium for religious propaganda that encouraged a certain type of lifestyle,61 a lifestyle which was perhaps a precursor to regular involvement with the Jewish community. The use of the Sibylline form and the incorporation of Hesiod were designed to increase the attractiveness of the book for Gentile readers and thus to further this apologetic aim.

The whole structure of I, 1–282 was devised to give weight and urgency to the thrust of Noah’s preaching. The five generations build up to the judgement, with the imminence of the flood providing the occasion for presenting these crucial ethical values.62 Judging by the structure of the first half of the Jewish substratum, the message of Noah’s preaching was a vital reason for the book’s composition. Given its probable provenance in Apamea, we can suggest that preaching to the people of Apamea was important to our author.63 Indeed, it seems reasonable to suggest that our Phrygian author put two sermons in the mouth of Noah because the Jewish community in Apamea was involved in just such preaching to its generation. Noah is a ‘preacher of repentance’ because the book mirrors the situation in Apamea. It is hard to see any other explanation for such long, detailed and unique sermons.64

We have seen that I, 261–7 makes it clear that Noah was the Apamean ‘flood hero’ who had probably settled in their city. Perhaps
the implication of the sermons was that Noah had preached to their ancestors in the fifth generation; they had not repented and so had been judged by the flood. Therefore, the generation in Phrygia to whom the Jewish community spoke, probably around the turn of the era, should now repent, stand in awe of the Great God, propitiate him and live a holy life, avoiding the sins of their ancestors, who sneered at Noah rather than responding to his preaching. The book seems to reveal an active concern on the part of the Jewish community to communicate its message to the city. Furthermore, although Noah fully condemns the wickedness of his generation, in 1, 189–94 he says that they do not respond to his preaching, he will still weep that they perished.65 Noah clearly hoped that people would respond to his preaching and that the flood would be averted. We can suggest that this likewise reflects the attitude of the members of the Jewish community in Apamea. They actively and fervently sought to convince the city to accept the content of their message, which they placed on the lips of Noah.

We can conclude that here we have a document from around the turn of the era, behind which are shared traditions from the Jewish community, from the local environment and from Hesiod and Homer. It seeks to encourage a turning away from an unacceptable lifestyle (as far as the Jewish author was concerned) and the adoption of a holy life — a lifestyle which would perhaps be a precursor to regular involvement with the Jewish community. It therefore reflects the message of the Jewish community to its neighbours.

5 The inscriptions from Apamea

We possess a number of inscriptions which may have come from the Jewish community in Apamea. Apart from one exception, they contain, or are related to, the so-called ‘Eumeneian Formula’. This formula was used by both Christians and Jews so that we cannot be certain of the origin of an inscription when no other indicator of Jewish provenance is present. This is the case for three of the inscriptions from Apamea.66 There is one other inscription, however, about which we can be more certain.
5.1

Aūρ. Ὁρᾶφος Ἰουλιανὸς Β’ ἐποίησα τὸ ἡμῶν ἐμαυτῷ κε [τῇ συμβίῳ μ]ου Αὐρ. Τατιανῆς ἱς ὁ ἄλλος οὐ τεθη, εἰ δὲ τις ἐπιτηδεύσι, τὸν νόμον οἴδεν [τ]ὸν Εὐοδέων. 67

Aurelios Roufos, son and grandson of Iulianos, I have made this grave for myself and for my wife Aurelia Tatiana. Let no one else be buried here. If, however, someone buries (another person) here, he knows the Law of the Jews.

This third century grave inscription reflects the common Phrygian desire to secure one’s grave against grave violators. What is unique here is the form of the grave curse: ‘he knows the Law of the Jews’. In 1897 Ramsay wrote that ‘We recognise there, not the law of Moses, but a regulation agreed upon between the city and the Jewish community for the protection of Jewish graves.’ 68 He later explained that since the Mosaic Law made no provision for the protection of graves, it must be some local legal convention agreed with the city protecting Jewish rights that is in view here. 69 However, in 1914 Ramsay changed his interpretation of this phrase due to the discovery of the inscription from nearby Acmonia which invoked the ‘curses which are written in Deuteronomy’ on grave violators. Thus, in the Apamean inscription, the ‘Law of the Jews’ must refer to the Book of Deuteronomy so that the protection of the tomb relies on the curses written in Deut 27–9. 70 Accordingly, our findings in chapter 3, section 3 with regard to the use of Deuteronomy by the community at Acmonia also apply to Apamea.

A further factor to note here is what is assumed in saying ‘he knows the Law of the Jews’. The inscription is veiled and seems to presume, at the very least, some knowledge of Deuteronomy on the part of the reader, even if only that it contained serious curses. More than that, however, the inscription also seems to presume that the reader will acknowledge the validity of this Jewish Law. This must be the case, or the inscription would offer no form of grave protection at all. The writer of the inscription clearly assumed that the mere mention of the ‘Law’, which contains these curses, would be a sufficient deterrent. 71 Obviously, this would only be true if the general population of Apamea had some knowledge of the Jewish Law. This in itself appears quite remarkable. However, when we combine this with our hypothesis regarding the Noah coins, it becomes understandable. Just as the Jewish flood tradition was accepted by the city, so we see here that a part of the Jewish Scriptures was also accepted as valid by the
wider community; the content of the Scriptures was also known to some extent. This shows again that the city had in large measure recognised the Jewish community and its traditions.\textsuperscript{72}

6 The Council of Laodicea

The canons preserved from the Council of Laodicea in Phrygia, which probably met in the last half of the fourth century CE, are helpful for our study. The canons clearly concern the situation that was prevalent in the surrounding area, as is shown by the introduction which reads, ‘The holy council, gathered together from various provinces of Asia at Laodicea’.\textsuperscript{73} It was not an international council and its evidence can be taken to reflect the situation in Phrygia and its capital city, Apamea.

Of interest here is what the canons reveal about the impact of Judaism on the Church and the frequent contact between Jews and Christians. The following canons are noteworthy:

(16) ‘On the Sabbath the Gospels and other portions of the scripture shall be read aloud.’
(29) ‘Christians shall not Judaise and be idle on the Sabbath, but shall work on that day; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honour, and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaising they shall be shut out from Christ.’
(37) ‘No one shall accept festal presents from Jews and heretics or keep the festivals with them.’
(38) ‘No one shall accept unleavened bread from the Jews or take part in their profanity.’\textsuperscript{74}

Canon 16 suggests that some Christians read only the OT on the Sabbath. Canon 29 shows that some Christians observed the Sabbath, at least to some extent. In view of these facts, a realistic rather than an idealistic line was adopted by the Council. Realising that it could not remove all prestige from the Sabbath, probably because of the influence of the Jews, the Council attempted to give the Sabbath a Christian character. It was to be a normal working day, with only Sunday being a day of rest. By prescribing the reading of the Gospels on the Sabbath, the Council attempted to ensure that the members of the Christian communities went to their own service and not to the synagogue where only the Old Testament would be read.\textsuperscript{75} Canon 29 also anathematises those
who actually ‘Judaise’ (Ἰουδαίζων) by adopting Jewish customs such as the Sabbath. In addition, some attendance at the Jewish synagogue by Christians is implied by the fact that some took part in the Jewish festivals, including accepting festal presents and unleavened bread. Close contact with the synagogue community seems to have been quite normal, with some Christians even attending Jewish festivals.76

This attractiveness of Jewish practices to Christians was certainly not unique in this period. Perhaps our best evidence comes from the ‘Homilies against the Jews’ preached by John Chrysostom at Antioch in Syria.77 The strength, vitality and attractiveness of the Jewish community is not surprising in Syria. Here daily contact between Christians and Jews was probably unavoidable. Lightstone writes of Antioch: ‘at the level of common believer ... Chrysostom could neither halt the praxis of Judaism among his Gentile Christians nor impede their actual participation in ritual along with the formal Jewish community.’78 The Council of Laodicea in effect shows us that the situation was very similar in Phrygia with Christians adopting Jewish practices and participating in Jewish festivals. The strength of the Canons from Laodicea reflect the crisis felt by the Church. It was seen by the Council to be vital to ban formal contacts completely although daily contact could probably never be legislated against.79 This in itself testifies not only to the attraction of Judaism to outsiders, but also to the strength and vitality of the Jewish communities in the area.

If a group of Christians participated by regular custom in the praxis of the synagogue then this must have been with the full knowledge and compliance of the Jewish people. These Christians seem to have acknowledged the validity and efficacy of Jewish rituals and traditions by their very desire to be involved. In return, the Jewish community allowed and perhaps encouraged such involvement. The most likely reason for this was the hope of converting these Christians to Judaism. We have noted that in an earlier period Sibyline Oracles I/II suggests the Jewish community actively sought to convince the city to accept its message. Similarly, in the fourth century it seems likely that the Jews sought to interest Christians in their Jewish faith.

The evidence of the Council also suggests that in the fourth century the Jewish community retained its elements of ‘Jewishness’. By combating Jewish practices, the Council shows that for the Jewish communities in the area the Sabbath was a holy day, the Scriptures were revered and read, and the community observed the Jewish festivals. These features, which were fundamental to Jewish identity,
remained intact. The evidence is all the more reliable because it comes from a ‘hostile’ source.

7 Conclusions

We have thus been able to draw together from diverse pieces of evidence a picture of the Jewish community at Apamea over a number of centuries. Firstly, although the evidence does not always enable us to trace continuities we can note that the community retained its ‘Jewishness’. Over a considerable time period we have evidence that the community was concerned about the Temple tax, it honoured Scripture as containing its sacred traditions, it observed the Sabbath, it encouraged Gentiles to adopt an acceptable lifestyle as a precursor to regular involvement with the community. Secondly, the community was not closed and insular but attempted, often successfully, to convince others, whether pagan or Christian, of the validity of its own traditions. We see this in the Noah coins, in Sibylline Oracles I/II, in the inscription which mentions the ‘Law of the Jews’ and probably also in the adoption by Christians of Jewish practices in the fourth century. But there was some give and take involved here, with the community accepting a modified significance for Noah’s wife. Thirdly, the community was an influential element in the city, where it seems to have been both accepted and respected. This influence certainly extended to the Christian community in the fourth century.