CHAPTER 7

The Judeans of Cyrene under the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians

1 Judean Ephebes in Cyrene

Josephus tells us that Ptolemy I sent Judeans to live in Cyrene and the other cities of Libya to shore up his power there.1 Cyrene itself was given a new constitution by Ptolemy I, and there were revolts in the city in 313, 308 and 301 BCE. It remained under Ptolemaic rule until 96 BCE.2 Strabo is probably his source, and so Josephus’s statements about the Judean Cyrenaeans are likely a bit more reliable than those regarding the earliest history of the Alexandrian Judean community.

Judeans had been living in Cyrene for centuries by the time of the Augustan principate, the first time we have strong evidence for the Judeans’ civic involvement. Three inscriptions survive that make it almost certain that Judeans were enrolled as citizens in Cyrene by this time. Two are likely from the principate of Augustus, and a third from that of Nero. In the first, a fragmentary list contains the names Ἰησουν Ἀντιφίλω and Φίλων Εἰρηναίω, likely Judeans.3 The list of names and patronymics, found with a dedication at its close to Hermes and Herakles, seems to be an ephebic list (I.8). Of the graffiti underneath the inscription, the first datable material is added in 2/1 BCE. The inscription likely predated the defacement by a few years, at least.4

The next inscription also seems to be an ephebic list, as it also ends with a dedication to Hermes and Heracles.5 It contains another four names which are

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1 καὶ Κυρήνης ἐγκρατῶς ἄρχειν βουλόμενος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἐν Λιβύῃ πόλεων εἰς αὐτὰς μέρος Ἰουδαίων ἔπεμψε κατοικῆσαι (C. Ap. 2.44).
2 For the re-establishment of the πολίτευμα there and his revised constitution for Cyrene, see SEG IX 1. For a brief account of the Ptolemaic history of Cyrenaica, see Jones 1937, 358; for the revolt in 313, see Diodorus Siculus 19.79; for 308, see the Suda, Δημήτριος; for Ptolemy’s reconquest in 301, see Pausanias, 1.6.8.
4 See Lüderitz and Reynolds 1983, no.6, and discussion regarding the date Λ' (13).
5 Lüderitz and Reynolds 1983, no. 7 (col. 11, ll.55–6).
almost certainly Judean, along with another five which are possibly Judean.\(^6\) The year given is 34, \textit{i.e.}, of the reign of Augustus, and so is from 3/4 CE.\(^7\) The original list contains 75 names and the sequels added in graffiti contain an additional 50 afterwards.\(^8\)

A little perspective on this second ephebic list makes this 4.2\% or even 7.2\% ratio of Judeans to non-Judeans more significant. Three inscriptions from nearby Berenike contain names of the benefactors of a synagogue or the \textit{archontes} of a Judean \textit{politeuma}. Only 12\% of their names are clearly of Judean origin, but the percentage of those who were Judean must have been much higher.\(^9\) If so, the estimates of four or nine Judean ephebes in 3/4 CE may well have been on the low side in estimates of the numbers who had completed their ephebic training at Cyrene.

In all likelihood, every one of the names that are clearly Judean points to a Judean who was a citizen of Cyrene. The extent of the connection between the ephebate and citizenship is dramatically demonstrated in Alexandria. It is clear from Claudius’s letter to the Alexandrians of 41 that those who had completed the ephebate there were then admitted to citizenship.\(^10\) Claudius would hardly have made a general declaration confirming the Alexandrian citizenship of all who had completed the course up to the start of his principate unless participants in the program in Alexandria had expected the ephebate to end with this result. Many have argued this much since the discovery of the papyrus.\(^11\)

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\(^6\) See Lüderitz and Reynolds 1983 for a discussion of the names found in no. 7, a col. 1, 57; a, col. 11.48, a col. II.43, c.13 and a., col. II.45, b.2, c.16, c.18, a. col. I.41.

\(^7\) Lüderitz and Reynolds 1983, no.7.1: ΛΔλ', thus 34 in the Actian era, and 3/4 CE.

\(^8\) Applebaum 1964 gives the first number as 88.

\(^9\) A statistic Lüderitz and Reynolds 1983 derives in his introduction (XI).

\(^10\) \textit{CPJ} II153.53–57: ἅπασι τοῖς ἐφηβευκώσει ἄρχει τῆς ἐμῆς ἡγεμονείας βαί[βον]βιοι διαφυλάσσωι τὴν Ἀλεξανδρείαν πολειτείαν ἐπὶ τοῖς τῆς πόλεως τειμείοις καὶ φιλανθόποις πάσαι πλὴν εἴ μὴ τινες ὑπῆλθον ὡς ὡς ἔγγυμναν γ[	extit{e}]

\(^11\) Cf. Jouguet 1925, 11, Bell 1926, 245, Bickermann 1927, 366–7, Reinmuth 1947, 433–34, Taubenschlag 1959, 217, Pélékidis 1962, 188–89, \textit{CPJ} II, 153.52ff., Baslez 1984, 323–24. Delia 1991, 73–75 has challenged the notion, though not convincingly. Delia instead claims that "he was associating these two institutions in the life of young men chronologically, not conditionally" (Delia 1991, 75). There is no sense in only discussing ephebes here if they had not enrolled on condition of their completion of the ephebate. Citizenship may indeed have been acquired by registration in deme and tribe, but it may have been acquired through the ephebate, as well. Delia’s objection to the connection is to the problematic case of Athens beginning in the late second century BCE (see Delia 1991, 74, n. 10 and 11).