

## PREFACE

The origin of this book can be traced to my somewhat drastic translation from the GHQ Press, Cairo, in the year 1943, to an undefined posting which turned out to be the care of the Antiquities of Cyrenaica for the British Military Administration of that territory.

The task was not an easy one, and some of its problems had to be faced alone and unassisted, while the rank of sergeant that went with it was not always commensurate with what was demanded of me. I also had to tackle the job with a minimum of literature and experience of Greek antiquities. Not all the archaeologists who devoted themselves to the territory after my release seem to have appreciated the difficult conditions in which I had to work. But it was an invaluable training in epigraphy, in field archaeology, in the study and conservation of excavated urban sites and in the surveying of their rural background. Above all, by virtually living for eighteen months in an ancient Greek city I was able greatly to enlarge my understanding of the hellenic religion.

But I also encountered an unanticipated facet of the country's history. My daily work in Cyrene revealed to me slowly but ever more clearly the historical episode known to Jews as "the revolt of the Diaspora" and to the Roman authorities of that time as the *tumultus Iudaicus*. In Egypt this rebellion is reflected chiefly in the papyri; in Cyrenaica it presents itself to view in inscriptions, in the destruction of inhabited centres and in the restoration of buildings. All this awoke in me the desire to explore the roots and character of the revolt in relation to the country's nature and history.

Much new work has been carried out in the realm of Cyrenaican studies both by historians and archaeologists since the present book appeared in Hebrew in 1969. This has involved much reading of new material and a considerable revision of the original text. The principal thesis of the work nevertheless remains as it was.

My first thanks must go to Professor Alexander Fuks, whose influence in no small measure enabled the publication of this book

in Hebrew. It has been to the enthusiasm of Professor J. Neusner and of Messrs Brill that I owe the printing of the English version. I can only mention a few of those who have assisted me in the scholarly field: such were Professor A. Schalit, Peter Fraser, Miss Joyce Reynolds, Professor P. Romanelli, Dr. Ruth Neuberger, Dr. A. Kasher and Professor David Asheri.

Among those who encouraged and aided me, and are no longer able to read of my appreciation, were Sir John Myres, who encouraged me to continue the work, my teacher and friend C. E. Stevens, who read and criticized the first text, Professor Sir E. Evans-Pritchard, whose understanding of the physiography of Cyrenaica gave me the key to its history, Dr. Irene Garbel, Sir Ian Richmond, Professor V. Tcherikover, R. G. Goodchild and Professor H. Z. Hirschberg. It was the late Professor M. Avi-Yonah who first drew my attention, in one of his articles, to the historical importance of the *ager publicus* in the Roman history of the territory. I also learned much from Dr. Frederick Wilson, who was then serving in Cyrenaica.\*

I was able to carry out the present translation and revision of the Hebrew version of this book in the year 1972-3 while enjoying the generous hospitality of All Souls College, Oxford. In the revision of the text from recent studies I am greatly indebted to the bibliographical guidance of Michael Vickers. I also received the assistance of the Deutsche Archäologische Institut and of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Israel, in the person of Professor A. Gerline, in the obtaining of illustrations; and of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, for botanical advice. Thanks are due to the Faculty of Arts of Tel Aviv University for a grant towards the preparation of the maps.

Finally I recall with appreciation the support of Brigadier General Sir Duncan Cumming, Chief Administrator of Cyrenaica during my service there, no less the assistance and encouragement of Major M. Hyslop, then antiquities officer of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, during his visits to the latter territory.

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\* Since the above was written, Professor Fuks has, to my great sorrow, joined those who can no longer read these lines.

Last but not least, I would remember the aid of many Libyan friends, whom I would be glad to meet again over a pot of tea and mint-leaves.

Tel Aviv University, Dept. of Jewish History  
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