

Participation by Ptolemy's Writ: Cyrene's Constitution and the *Diagramma* of Ptolemy I

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DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.292.c758

ABSTRACT: In 321 BCE, Cyrene came under control of Ptolemy, son of Lagos, the then satrap of Egypt. Possibly on the occasion of a visit to the newly conquered city in winter 321/0 BCE, he composed a *diagramma* that the Cyrenaeans inscribed on stone. Through this document, Ptolemy endeavored to reform Cyrene's constitution and consolidate his control over the city. In the present chapter, Ptolemy's provisions are discussed in detail to ascertain his goals and whether and to what extent he was influenced by the pre-existing political system of Cyrene, earlier solutions attested elsewhere, and philosophical views. Particular attention will be given to Ptolemy's reforms about the Cyrenaeans' participation in political affairs and city government, as well as the norms regulating access to civic offices.

KEYWORDS: Cyrene; *diagramma*; Ptolemy; constitution; inscription.

1. Ptolemy's *diagramma* to the Cyrenaeans

In 1922, Italian archaeologists working in Cyrene found a marble stele (see *Fig. 1*) in the late Roman baths of the sanctuary of Apollo, where it had been reused to pave the steps leading into a pool.¹ From the very beginning, two things became extremely clear to them: they had found a Ptolemaic *diagramma*² dealing with a constitutional reform, and it was in very bad shape. Over the years, the feet of the many bathers stepping in and out of the pool had worn out some parts of the inscription to the point that some lines were hardly readable anymore.

1 Unless otherwise stated, all dates are to be understood as BCE.

*IG Cyrenaica*² 010800 (formerly *SEG* 9.1; Bencivenni 2003, 105-49 no. 5; Rosamilia 2023b, 233-40 no. 3). For a detailed bibliography, see Bencivenni 2003, 105-108, and *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800.

2 On the *diagramma* as a document produced by Hellenistic kings, see Bencivenni 2003, 18-32, 90-93, 115-29; Mari 2018, 125-30; Boffo, Faraguna 2021, 383 note 21, 762.

The *editio princeps* was published in 1925 by Silvio Ferri³ and it was followed by a heated debate with Gaspare Oliverio, who proposed very different readings for many passages in an article published three years later.⁴ The debate of the first fifteen years since the inscription's discovery was distilled into a new reference edition by J.J.E. Hondius: *SEG* 9.1. In turn, twenty years later, this effort was heavily criticized by Peter M. Fraser, the first epigrapher to examine the stone since Oliverio, who proposed some more cautious readings for the badly worn sections.⁵ Thirty years later, a revision of the last lines of the document by André Laronde contributed greatly to our understanding of the *diagramma*'s original context.⁶ Lastly, in the last five years, two new editions—one by Catherine Dobias-Lalou⁷ and one by myself⁸—have been published and, together, they form the basis of a new reference edition, which will be quoted throughout the present chapter: *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800.

From a constitutional point of view, Ptolemy's *diagramma* is a source of unparalleled importance. Unlike other documents from the same period, in this text Ptolemy interacted with (as well as reacted to) the constitution that was in place in Cyrene before its publication. The document thus sheds light both on the Cyrenaean constitution before Ptolemy's intervention and on his reforms and motives. The *diagramma*'s relevance is also enhanced by the document's extension and level of detail: over 70 lines long, it consists of about a dozen separate clauses, many of them separated by *paragraphoi*.⁹ These include:

- ll. 2-5: The *politai*.
- ll. 6-15: The *politeuma* (the Ten Thousand); selection of the 60 *timēteres*.
- ll. 16-19: The *boulē* of the Five Hundred.
- ll. 20-25: The *gerontes* and eligibility norms for the priest of Apollo, who will be selected from their number.
- ll. 26-31: The *stratēgoi*.
- ll. 32-33: The *nomophylakes* and ephors.
- ll. 34-42: The workings of the constitution, trials involving death penalty, and norms on trials protecting the former exiles.
- ll. 43-45: Exclusion criteria for the offices held by members of the Ten Thousand.

3 Ferri 1925, 3-19 text I; see also Ferri 1929, 382-89.

4 Oliverio 1928, 183-222. On the complex relation between the two scholars, see Goodchild 1976, 303-6; Santoni 2014; Rosamilia 2014, 384-86.

5 Fraser 1958, 120-27.

6 Laronde 1987, 95-128. See also Bencivenni 2003, 105-49 no. 5, who adopts Fraser's and Laronde's new readings.

7 *IG Cyrenaica* 010800.

8 Rosamilia 2023b, 233-40 no. 3.

9 See Boffo, Faraguna 2021, 566-67 note 28; Amendola 2024, 188-89 no. 56.

- ll. 46-50: Offences leading to disenfranchisement and special exclusion criteria for candidates to the office of *stratēgoi*.
- ll. 51-52: Norm against the abrogation or alteration of the new constitution.
- ll. 53-55: Norm on the estates and assets of the exiles.
- ll. 56-72: Fragmentary norms dealing mainly with property rights.

To this part of the inscription—the actual *diagramma* sent to them by Ptolemy—the Cyrenaeans added two sections in their own dialect. At the time of its cutting, the text was prefaced with an invocation in larger letters of which little survives¹⁰, an addition which is quite common for local inscriptions. The second addition is more complex: after the text of the *diagramma*, under the title *archai*, we find a detailed list of Cyrenaean officials (ll. 72-87) which includes almost all boards of magistrates mentioned in the text. Since there are some discrepancies between the norms set out in the *diagramma* and the list—for instance, Peithagoras son of Annikeris was priest of Apollo for the third time,¹¹ and the *stratēgoi* are nine instead of six and Ptolemy is not one of them—we can infer that these were the magistrates in office at the time of the document's reception, not the ones elected as a result of its implementation.¹²

In the following pages, I focus on two of the main aspects of the constitutional reform set in place by the *diagramma*, namely the definition of the civic body and the interactions and role of councils and boards of magistrates. This will allow us to better appraise the extent and the scope of Ptolemy's actions. However, before tackling this topic, a preliminary discussion of new data on the *diagramma*'s date is in order.

2. Dating the *diagramma*

The date of the *diagramma* has long been debated among scholars, even though in recent years some form of consensus has been reached. The Italian scholars who first dealt with this text—Silvio Ferri, Gaetano De Sanctis, and Gaspare Oliverio¹³—all agreed on the fact that this stele preserved the constitution of a mid-third century Cyrenaean *koinon*, possibly the successor of the *koinon* founded by Ekdelos and Demophanes sometime after the death of king Magas.¹⁴

10 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, l. 1: ἀ[γαθὰ τύχ]α. Both Bencivenni 2003, 118-19 note 13, and Boffo, Faraguna 2021, 386-87 note 31, have expressed doubts on this reading and a slight preference for the alternative reading [π]α[ρὰ Πτολεμαίου] proposed by Fraser 1958, 122. This is not compatible with the traces of a second *alpha* at the end of the line.

11 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, l. 72-73: ἀρχαί· ἱερεὺς ἐς τρίτον ἔτ[ος] | Πειθαγόρας Αννικεριος.

12 As already pointed out by Oliverio 1928, 210-12.

13 Ferri 1925; De Sanctis 1926; Oliverio 1928, 183-222; De Sanctis 1928; Ferri 1929, 382-89; De Sanctis 1934, esp. 48; De Sanctis 1976, 338-43.

14 Laronde 1987, 381-82; Rosamilia 2018, 266-73; Rosamilia 2023b, 28; see also Cigaina, Vitale 2017, 93-96.

However, a few years after the discovery of the stone, Max Cary and Theodore Reinach¹⁵ pointed out that Ptolemy never called himself “king” in the *diagramma* and that the presence of exiles was compatible with a date around the end of the war of Thibron (324-321), when a group of Cyrenaean exiles sought the help of Ptolemy to get back their city.¹⁶ While much debate followed over the years, the higher date started gaining more and more consensus.¹⁷

In 1972, a new approach was proposed by André Laronde, who started arguing in favor of a higher date for the *diagramma* on the basis of prosopographical considerations.¹⁸ He proposed that the *diagramma* dated from the aftermath of the war of Thibron, *i.e.*, from 321 BCE. Despite some initial resistance,¹⁹ after the publication of Laronde’s book in 1987 and a much more detailed discussion of the evidence,²⁰ no further attempt was made to confute his hypothesis. The problem of the *diagramma*’s date thus became one of micro-chronology,²¹ but some adjustments were still needed. In 2001, Lucia Criscuolo pointed out that Laronde’s reconstruction did not take into account the revised date of the death of Perdikkas.²² In particular, Criscuolo proposed that the *diagramma* was issued in September 320, just after Ptolemy had secured his control over Egypt and was back from Triparadeisos. While Criscuolo’s intervention had the merit of reconciling the dates of Cyrenaean events and the low chronology of Perdikkas’ Egyptian expedition and death, her reasoning on the *diagramma*’s date partially rested on one troubling piece of information.²³ According to a reading that dates back to Gaspare Oliverio’s second edition,²⁴ below the text of the *diagramma* and the appended list of magistrates one further line of text was visible: the Egyptian dating “Epeiph 20”.²⁵ Both the plaster cast in Rome and the stele do not show any trace of this dating. This calls for further revision of the available data.

15 Reinach 1927; Cary 1928; see also Larsen 1929; Machu 1951, 43.

16 The *stasis* in Cyrene at the time of Thibron’s War and the flight of some *ktēmatikoi* to Egypt is mentioned by Diod. Sic. 18.21.6; see also Seibert 1979, 166-67, who connects the *diagramma* to these events as well.

17 For the opinions of early scholars, see Waisglass 1954, 190-205.

18 Laronde 1972.

19 For instance, as late as in 1975, Sandro Stucchi tried to argue in favor of a date around 300 BCE (Stucchi 1975, 89-90 note 6, 90-92 notes 2-3).

20 Laronde 1987, esp. 95-136.

21 See for instance the different chronology of Bosworth 1988, 291-92, for the events of the war of Thibron, although he does not take the *diagramma* into account.

22 Criscuolo 2001a.

23 See Criscuolo 2001a, 152 note 32.

24 Oliverio 1928, 189 and 194.

25 See *IG Cyrenaica* 010800, l. 88 (and Bencivenni 2003, no. 5, l. 90). In the revised edition (*IG Cyrenaica*² 010800), Catherine Dobias-Lalou accepts my new reading (Rosamilia 2023b, 238, apparatus on no. 3 l. 90) and omits the line altogether.

Another aspect has not been appreciated with due attention. From the list of Cyrenaean magistrates appended to the *diagramma*, we learn that the eponymous priest of Apollo at the time, Peithagoras son of Annikeris, had been holding this position for three years in a row.²⁶ Since in Cyrene the eponymous priests of Apollo never hold the office more than once and never for more than a year, Peithagoras' case emerges as totally exceptional.²⁷ When, in 321, Ophellas led the Cyrenaean aristocrats back to Cyrene on Ptolemy's orders, both he and his master must have recognized the aristocratic exiles as the only legitimate government. This means that any priest of Apollo appointed by the democrats as a result of the *stasis* of the summer of 322 would have been considered an unlawfully elected official. For some reason, instead of considering the months of democratic rule a period of *sede vacante* or *anarchia*—as the Athenians apparently did with Pythodoros' archonship after the Thirty fell²⁸—either the Cyrenaeans or Ophellas decided to consider Peithagoras' priesthood as still ongoing.

We know very little about the Cyrenaic calendar year and we have no clue as to when the official year began.²⁹ At the time of his flight, during the *stasis* of the summer of 322, Peithagoras might therefore have been either the priest for 323/2 at the end of his term of office or the newly elected priest for 322/1. At a closer look, the former alternative seems preferable. According to the chronology of events recorded in the Marmor Parium, Ophellas seized Cyrene during the year when Philokles was archon in Athens, *i.e.*, in 322/1.³⁰ This means that the city fell into Ptolemaic hands by late July 321 at the latest. This means that between Peithagoras' flight and the end of Thibron's war about a year had passed. If Peithagoras had been at the beginning of his priesthood when he left the city, at the end of the war he would have been at the end of his first term or at the very beginning of his second term. Consequently, since he was priest for three years in a row, the Cyrenaeans would have been unable to elect a new eponymous priest for almost two years after the return of the exiles and the end of the war of Thibron. On the other hand, if in July 321 he was close to the end of the second year since his first appointment, one would understand why the Cyrenaeans (or Ophellas) found it unfeasible to elect a successor and thus decided to prorogate his priesthood for another year: either they were still dealing with the war's aftermath or, more simply, the time for a new election had passed.³¹

26 See above n. 11.

27 Cf. Rosamilia 2023b, 98–110.

28 See Diod. Sic. 14.3.1.

29 See Trümper 1997, 186–87 §151.

30 Marmor Parium, *BNJ* 239, §111.

31 We are not well informed on the delay between election and start of term in Greek constitutions. In the case of Rhodes, the election of the priest of Halios took place the month before the beginning of the new eponymous year (Badoud 2015, 16–19).

A mitigating factor, which may contribute to explain the difficulties that the Cyrenaeans had to face, is provided by a fragment of Arrian's book on the history of the successors. There, after having described Thibron's gruesome death, Arrian recalls that a *stasis* took place in Cyrene and Ptolemy was forced to go there and set things right,³² and then sailed back to Egypt.³³ This is possibly confirmed by the Marmor Parium, which mentions Ptolemy's march to Cyrene at the end of its entry on the year 321/0.³⁴ The problem is posed by the sequence of these two events: Ptolemy's intervention in Cyrene and Perdiccas' invasion of Egypt. In the narrative of Arrian, which survives only in Photius' abridged version, Perdiccas' expedition takes place after Ptolemy's trip to Cyrenaica. However, in this text the events are not discussed following a purely chronological criterion but rather in conformity with a geographical approach. The second Cyrenaean *stasis*, the one following the end of Thibron's war, is presented as the conclusion of Arrian's Libyan excursus and as such may be out of chronological order. On the other hand, the Marmor Parium mentions Ptolemy's western expedition at the end of the year's record, after the dating formula, almost as an afterthought.³⁵

Thanks to the Babylonian astronomical diaries, we know that Perdiccas was killed in battle on May 31, 320 BCE.³⁶ In turn, this leaves little time between Perdiccas' death and the conference of Triparadeisos, which took place later that summer. Since Ptolemy's Cyrenaean expedition and stay might have taken a few months, it could have taken place either before Perdiccas' invasion or after Triparadeisos. The latter option was endorsed by Criscuolo,³⁷ but, in my opinion, it is the former that better explains our sources without an excessive lengthening of Peithagoras' priesthood in 320/19. The resulting sequence of events may contribute to explain the reason of Perdiccas' move against Egypt: if Ptolemy was in Cyrene, Perdiccas might have thought that he had the chance to outmaneuver him. This in turn sheds light on the different words used to describe Ptolemy's movements: he came to Cyrene by land (*epelthōn* in Arrian, but *eporeuthe* in the Marmor Parium), and possibly with enough troops to quell

32 The expression *πάντα καταστησάμενος* (see the following note) has frequently been considered a trace of the fact that Ptolemy wrote the *diagramma* in Cyrene; see Criscuolo 2001a, 147 note 17.

33 Arrian. *BNJ* 156 F 9.19 (τὰ μετὰ Ἀλέξανδρον, frg. 1.19 Roos): ἔτι δὲ τῶν περὶ Κυρήνην στασιαζόντων Πτολεμαῖος ἐπελθὼν καὶ πάντα καταστησάμενος ὀπίσω ἀπέπλευσε. See also Justin. 13.6.20 and 13.8.2, where the events are described in the same order.

34 Marmor Parium, *BNJ* 239, §112: ἐπορεύθη δὲ καὶ Πτολεμαῖος εἰς Κυρήνην.

35 Since the Marmor Parium does not include any record for the year 320/19, it has also been proposed that the registration of Ptolemy's actions was appended to the year 321/0 by mistake or oversimplification.

36 van der Spek *et al.* 2025, 254-56 Diary -319; see also van der Spek *et al.* 2025, 29-59 Chronicle 3, col. I, ll. 22-24, which describes this event in almost the same words.

37 Criscuolo 2001a, 145-53.

a rebellion, but, according to Arrian, on his way back to Egypt he traveled by sea (*apeplense*). The decision to face the sea rather than going more safely—and more slowly—by land points to a certain hurry on Ptolemy's part, which is more compatible with the fact that he may have received news of Perdiccas' intentions while still in Cyrene.

We can now propose a more detailed context for the *diagramma*.³⁸

- Summer 324: Thibron kills Harpalos in Crete.
- Winter 324/3: Thibron talks with Cyrenaean exiles in Crete and starts planning his expedition in Cyrenaica.
- Summer 323: Thibron arrives in Cyrenaica and wins his first battles. Cyrene is besieged for the first time and Thibron captures its harbor. Thibron allies himself with Barka and Euhesperides, while his aide, Mnasikles of Crete, defects to the Cyrenaeans. *Peithagoras is elected eponymous priest of Apollo in Cyrene (first year).*
- Winter 323/2: The Cyrenaeans attack Barka and Euhesperides and Thibron is forced to help his allies. Meanwhile, the Cyrenaeans seize back the harbor. Thibron's fleet avoids capture but is destroyed by a storm.
- Summer 322: Thibron recruits new troops from Greece and wins a major battle. Cyrene's harbor is besieged, and the city is frequently attacked. Famine and civil unrest follow. The democrats seize power while the aristocrats flee to Thibron and Ptolemy. *Before the end of his term, Peithagoras flees from Cyrene and likely seeks refuge in Egypt. While the Cyrenaean democrats might have elected a new priest, at the end of the war Peithagoras' priesthood is retroactively considered as still ongoing (second year).*
- Winter 322/1: Cyrenaean exiles in Egypt, *likely including Peithagoras*, ask Ptolemy to intervene on their behalf.
- Summer 321: Ptolemy sends Ophellas to Cyrenaica, and he in turn defeats Thibron and the Cyrenaean democrats. Cyrene is seized by Ophellas before the end of July. The fighting likely ceases early in the summer. *Since the election of a new priest of Apollo is not possible, either because of the situation in Cyrene is still too complicated or simply because the election date has passed, Peithagoras is confirmed as the eponymous priest of Apollo for a third year.* Around the end of the summer or in early fall, a second *stasis* takes place in Cyrene, and the situation becomes so dire that Ptolemy is forced to intervene in person.
- Winter 321/0: Ptolemy visits Cyrene and writes the *diagramma*, likely before leaving in a hurry to prepare for the fight against Perdiccas. *Peithagoras is still the priest of Apollo, now in his third year of tenure.*
- Summer 320: Perdiccas attacks Egypt and is defeated on May 31. *Peithagoras' successor is elected according to the norms set in place by the diagramma.*

38 Cf. Laronde 1987, 41-48, and Crisculo 2001a, 152-53.

In late summer, the meeting of Triparadeisos takes place with Ptolemy in attendance.

Taking the new date of the *diagramma* into account, we can now start examining the document from a constitutional point of view.

3. Participating in the polity

3.1. Being Cyrenaean

In the first paragraph of his *diagramma*, Ptolemy sets out the criteria to recognize someone as a Cyrenaean citizen.³⁹ As in almost any ancient Greek constitution, the main criterium for being accepted as citizen is birthright. In the case of Cyrene, Ptolemy provides prospective citizens with three alternative criteria. Firstly, he states that people with both a Cyrenaean father and a Cyrenaean mother are entitled to claim Cyrenaean citizenship. This first option cannot but recall Pericles' law on Athenian citizenship of 451/0⁴⁰ and one is left to wonder whether the text—if not the substance—of this norm was influenced by Athenian practices.

Secondly, Ptolemy makes an exception for people born of a Cyrenaean father and a Libyan mother, provided that she was born “between Katabathmos and Authamalak”. This option is hardly an innovation, as it is deeply rooted in Cyrenaean practice and self-representation.⁴¹ According to local traditions, mixed marriages play a central role in the events leading to the foundation of Cyrene, with ancient authors insisting on the fact that many such unions took place at Aziris, where the Cyrenaean colonists temporarily settled for a few years on their way to Cyrene,⁴² an event that Callimachus alludes to in his hymn to Apollo.⁴³ At the same time, mixed unions of Greek men and Libyan women were hardly an isolated instance in local traditions, as attested for instance by Pindar in his ninth Pythian ode. There, he described the games that Antaios organized at Irasa for the hand of his daughter, which were won by the honorand's ancestor, Alexidamos of Cyrene.⁴⁴

39 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 2-5.

40 Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 26.4; Plut. *Per.* 37.3.

41 Kwapong 1969, 107-9.

42 On the years that the colonists spent at Aziris, see Hdt. 4.157-158.

43 Callim. *H.Ap.* 85-89.

44 Pind. *Pyth.* 9.103-125. This is very likely Telesikrates' (*i.e.*, the honorand's) family tradition on the origin of their lineage. From this point of view, Antaios' presence—if he is to be identified with the giant defeated by Heracles—plays a twofold role: it traces back their lineage to the time of Heracles' labors (*i.e.*, way before Cyrene was founded by Battos) and reserves them a special role in granting Cyrene's right to rule over Libya through a charter myth of their own (see Malkin 2024², 182-84).

Libyan ancestors are hardly uncommon even in later times: according to Herodotus, Arcesilas III married a daughter of Aladdeir, king of Barka and allegedly his kinsman,⁴⁵ whose name is typically Libyan. Similarly, many prominent Cyrenaeans had Libyan names well before the *diagramma*, possibly as a result of family ties with Libyan kings and chiefs.⁴⁶

Of course, not all marriages between Greeks and Libyans took place between members of the elite. For instance, Herodotus discusses the similarities in sacrificial customs between the Libyans and the Cyrenaeans, possibly as a result of mixed origins.⁴⁷ Moreover, in a passage from his *Politics*, Aristotle states that at some time the expansion of the civic body caused a *stasis* in Cyrene, because the members of the elite did not react well to the admission of people of low birth or having only a Cyrenaeans parent out of two.⁴⁸ It is possible that the Cyrenaeans' reply to this crisis was not the disenfranchisement of citizens but rather the (re)introduction of some difference between *politai* and *politeuma*, which in turn would come to be the precursor of the system in place before the war of Thibron.

The geographical boundaries set out by Ptolemy are not without interest (see Fig. 2). On the one side there is Katabathmos, the traditional border between Egypt and Cyrenaica,⁴⁹ while on the other there is Authamalex/Automalex, which Richard G. Goodchild identified with Bu Sceefa, a small settlement in the gulf of Syrtis a few kilometers east of Arae Philenorum.⁵⁰ The broad geographical background of prospective Cyrenaeans citizens has long provided grounds for scholars arguing on the "federal" nature of the *diagramma*, from earlier attempts which considered this document a constitution of the third-century-BCE Cyrenaeans *koinon*⁵¹ to more recent and more nuanced ones.⁵² However, in this case federalism seems to be found more in the eye of the beholder than on the inscribed stone. No provision in the *diagramma* deals with the children of people from the other Greek *poleis* in Cyrenaica. For instance, according to the *diagramma*, the grandchildren of a Libyan chief who had given his daughter in marriage to a Cyrenaeans man would be fully-fledged citizens of Cyrene,

45 Hdt. 4.164.4. From Herodotus' point of view, they were related through the junior brothers of Arcesilaus II, who fled to the Libyans and founded Barka; see Hdt. 4.160.1.

46 Masson 1974 (on *IR Cyrenaica* 2020 C.515); Masson 1976; Colin 2000, 127-39. See, for example, Peithagoras son of Annikeris, the priest of Apollo at the time of the *diagramma*, whose father had a typical Libyan name.

47 Hdt. 4.186.

48 Arist. *Pol.* 6.1319b 6-18. It is not clear of what *stasis* Aristotle is speaking, although the most likely candidate is the *stasis* of Aristion/Ariston, at the end of the fifth century (see Rosamilia 2023b, 23). For a different interpretation, see Criscuolo 2001b.

49 Laronde 1987, 219-32.

50 Goodchild 1952, 103-9; Colin 2000, 13 note 9.

51 See, e.g., Ferri 1925, 8-19; De Sanctis 1926; De Sanctis 1928.

52 McAuley 2015, 419-20 and 428-30.

while the children of a Cyrenaean man and a Greek woman from Euhesperides would not be admissible as Cyrenaean citizens.⁵³ Rather than indicating the extension of a pan-Cyrenaican entity, these two reference points indicate the limits of Cyrene's area of influence as well as the area where the (at times) friendly Libyan tribes usually roamed. At the same time, the other three main Greek cities of the region—Euhesperides, Taucheira, and Barka—were hardly on equal footing with Cyrene at the time of Ptolemy's intervention, so that so that much of this area was likely *de facto* under Cyrenaean control.⁵⁴

To the two options examined above, Ptolemy adds a third one: children of the Cyrenaean colonists (*epoikoi*) from the cities (*poleis*) beyond Thinitis were eligible as Cyrenaean citizens. Thinitis (or Thintis) is the name of a small village mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy, who located it to the south of Cyrene (see *Fig. 2*). On the other hand, modern scholars prefer to identify it with modern Tert, to the east of Cyrene (see *Fig. 3*).⁵⁵ While we know the names of a few settlements in western Cyrenaica from ancient geographers, we hardly have any clue about their status or the provenance of their settlers. The text of the *diagramma* implies that at least some of them were of Cyrenaeans descent, which is confirmed by the survival of Cyrenaean *nomima* and names in the Marmarica well into the third century CE.⁵⁶ Only one settlement from the *chōra* of Cyrene left us a decree implying some degree of autonomy, and it is on the road between Cyrene and Thinitis.⁵⁷ The settlements east of Thinitis possibly enjoyed some degree of autonomy as well, but their proximity to Cyrene probably made full independence an unattainable goal. For this reason, at least after the *diagramma* but possibly even before, their relationship with their mother city might have been quite similar to the one between Athens and its cleruchies, especially as far as the conservation of civic rights by colonists was taken into account.⁵⁸

3.2 Becoming Cyrenaean

To those who did not qualify as citizens according to these criteria, Cyrenaean citizenship could be granted instead. In the *diagramma*, Ptolemy sets aside two founts of power who had the authority to grant Cyrenaean citizenship to foreign people notwithstanding the criteria discussed above: the Cyrenaean *politeuma*, that is, the “Ten-Thousand” Cyrenaeans who enjoyed all civic rights according to the constitutional arrangement set in place by the *diagramma*,⁵⁹ and himself. While the fact that a city could honor a foreigner and grant him citizenship

53 For this consideration, see Laronde 1987, 219–20. For a different opinion, see Colin 2000, 70–71.

54 On the complex relations between these cities up to the fifth century, see Giangiulio 2009.

55 Laronde 1987, 304 and 349.

56 Rosamilia 2024, 73–75.

57 *IR Cyrenaica 2020* M.245 (see also Laronde 1987, 334–36).

58 On the *chōra* of Cyrene, see now Marini 2018, 65–76.

59 See below.

rights is a well-attested practice in the ancient Greek world,⁶⁰ the same does not generally hold true for individuals. This is particularly striking in the case of Ptolemy, who was no king at the time and, from an official perspective, did not hold any official position except being the satrap of Egypt.⁶¹

The right to appoint new Cyrenaean citizens that Ptolemy reserves for himself confirms a position long defended by André Laronde, namely that in spring 331 BCE the Cyrenaeans did not submit to Alexander but rather allied themselves with him.⁶² If Cyrene was just Alexander's ally, Ptolemy could hold it not in the name of Alexander's successors but as his own private possession outside the empire, one that he had "conquered with the spear".⁶³

Ptolemy's motives behind the appointment of new citizens are somewhat different from the Cyrenaeans' ones. While the *politeuma* would grant citizenship to foreigners to honor them for their services and good deeds towards the city, Ptolemy might rather resort to the appointment of new citizens as a way to make sure that Cyrene's ruling class always included a few trusted agents and supporters of his. This in turn might prove useful to ensure that the city remained loyal to him and that he knew the Cyrenaeans intentions and plans from within. If we accept that the *diagramma* was never repealed under Ptolemaic rule, this norm could easily contribute to explain what took place in Cyrene in the 250s, when—after the city was brought back into the fold by Ptolemy II—a few high-ranking Ptolemaic officials held the eponymous priesthood of Apollo for at least five years in a row: from a constitutional point of view, it was likely on Ptolemy II's authority that they became Cyrenaean citizens in the first place and thus—once admitted among the *gerontes*—became eligible for the priesthood of Apollo.⁶⁴

3.3 Citizens vs. voting citizens: the *politeuma*

While one might be surprised by the somewhat broad definition of citizenship set in place by Ptolemy, the timocratic nature of the constitution provided a strong rebuff to the excessive broadening of the civic body. The second

60 Velissaropoulos-Karakostas 2011, vol. I, 138-68, 171-75, and 183-87. For Athens, see the cases collected by Osborne 1981-83.

61 Diod. Sic. 18.3.1; 18.14.1.

62 Laronde 1987, 28-29; see also Machu 1951, 41-43; Bosworth 1988, 72; Rosamilia 2023b, 25. The meeting of Alexander and Cyrenaean envoys is mentioned by Diod. Sic. 17.49.3 and Curt. 4.7.8.

63 On the status of Cyrene at the time of Triparadeisos, see Will 1960, 375-90. Despite an anachronistic reference to the "Ptolemaic kingdom", the same is implied by Diod. Sic. 18.21.9: οἱ μὲν οὖν Κυρηναῖοι καὶ αἱ περιοικοῦσαι πόλεις τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀποβαλοῦσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ὑπὸ τὴν Πτολεμαϊκὴν βασιλείαν ἐτάχθησαν. On the *chora doriketatos*, see Mehl 1980/81, esp. 188-89; Hammond 2000, 157-58; Virgilio 2003², 43-44 and 75-79.

64 The list of priests of Apollo: *IG Cyrenaica*² 096700 (formerly *Suppl. Cirenica* 71; Rosamilia 2018, 273-82; Rosamilia 2023b, 252-53 no. 9); see also Dobias-Lalou 2016, 250-51 and 258 no. 19. On these events, see Rosamilia 2018, esp. 263-82 and 294-96; Rosamilia 2023b, 28, 95-98, and 104.

paragraph of the *diagramma* (ll. 6-15) deals extensively with the criteria allowing participation in political processes and active suffrage. In particular, Ptolemy limits active voting rights to the *politeuma*, which consisted of the *myrioi*, *i.e.*, the “Ten Thousand”. Moreover, Ptolemy stipulates some conditions to become one of the Ten Thousand. In particular, admittance to the *politeuma* is reserved to:

1. Those who fled to Egypt, *i.e.*, the aristocrats that asked Ptolemy to intervene against Thibron;
2. Those whom Ptolemy may indicate;⁶⁵
3. Those who own “durable” assets, including their wives’ assets, with an estimated value of at least 2,000 drachms of Alexander;⁶⁶
4. Those who can bring in a declaration of their debtors attesting that what they are due will suffice to reach the 2,000 drachms of Alexander, provided that (they and) their wives possessed enough “durable” assets, equal to the obligation and the interest.

Ptolemy then sets an age limit—being at least thirty years old—but the expression *kai ontoi* at line 12 attests that not all four categories were affected by this clause, a fact that most scholars so far have not taken into account. In all vraisemblance, this age limit concerns either the last two categories or just the last one.⁶⁷ The difference is a substantial one. In the former case, since most of the members of the *politeuma* likely belonged to the third category, this means that the age clause encompassed the great majority of the Ten Thousand and that the only way to circumvent it was by Ptolemy’s approval. In the latter case, if this clause concerns only the fourth category, it was probably meant to avoid that too many young Cyrenaeans produce false attestations of debts with the complicity of their relatives and friends to obtain something akin to a British writ of acceleration.⁶⁸

65 In the present edition, the first two categories seem to be part of a single one. However, a *καί* is possibly missing at the end of line 6, because it was either lost in the reuse of the stone or omitted by the letter-cutter.

66 On the drachmas of Alexander in this passage, see Knoepfler 1989, 205-10; Knoepfler 1997, 42-43; Rosamilia 2016, 85-86; Rosamilia 2023b, 138.

67 This is confirmed by the fact that the *timēteres* must be at least thirty years old (*IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 12-14), which proves that at least some members of the Ten Thousand were not thirty yet.

68 Only members of the *politeuma* were eligible as magistrates and family assets were generally inherited, which means that long-lived fathers could become an obstacle for their sons’ political ambitions. Consequently, if they could have some relative or friend declare that they owed them enough money to reach the 2,000 drachms (without ever intending to cash in the debt), they would be admitted in the *politeuma* much sooner. An age limit would then reduce the risk of overexploitation of this legislative gap, forcing relatives and friends to donate the assets or wait until the age of thirty.

Ptolemy then proceeds setting the rules for selecting the board of sixty magistrates in charge of the evaluation of assets and estates, who are aptly called *timētēres*. The importance of their task is suggested by their huge number, the need to swear a lawful oath of office, and the fact that they are appointed by the *gerontes*, possibly the most important institution of the Cyrenaean constitution and the embodiment of the conservation of the *status quo*.

These norms prove extremely interesting to determine the extent of Ptolemy's alterations to the previous constitution. The timocratic nature of Cyrene's constitution seems to predate Ptolemy's *diagramma*, since the *timētēres* were asked to follow existing laws and, for the first year of the new constitution, the selection procedure relied on previous evaluations, which quite possibly dated from before Thibron's war.⁶⁹ At the same time, a few lines later we learn that Ptolemy altered the dimension of Cyrene's ruling body, which before the war was called *hoi chilioi*, i.e., "the One Thousand".⁷⁰ Although the numbers are not to be taken at face value—the One Thousand could be 900 or 1,200 people just as easily—the same does not hold true for the order of magnitude. The implications are self-evident: even though Ptolemy was supported by most members of the Cyrenaean elite, he favored a more moderate regime instead of the strictly oligarchic one existing before the war, which he possibly viewed as ultimately unstable.⁷¹

The distinction between "perishable" and "imperishable" assets (in Greek, *thnata* and *athanata chrēmata*) deserves a closer look.⁷² In the next century, the distinction recurs three times in treaties and decrees from Eastern Crete,⁷³ but earlier attestations from Gortyn of the two categories separately date back to the mid-fifth century and *tnata krēmata* are even mentioned in Gortyn's Great Code.⁷⁴ Ptolemy's *diagramma* constitutes the only attestation of this distinction outside Crete, a situation for which the long-lasting relations between Crete and Cyrene provide the most plausible explanation. In this case, Ptolemy, possibly at the instigation of his local advisors, adopted a concept from the previous constitution—*athanata chrēmata*—which the Cyrenaeans were familiar with and easily understood.

69 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 14-15: οἱ δὲ αἰρεθέντες τιμώντωσαν ὡς ἄ[ν] | ἐν τοῖς νόμοις γραφῇ· τῷ δὲ πρώτῳ ἔτει πολιτευέσθωσαν ἐκ τῶν πρότερον τιμημάτων.

70 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 34-35.

71 Cf. already Laronde 1987, 251-54.

72 Velissaropoulos-Karakostas 2011, vol. II, 20-22; see also Gagarin, Perlman, *Laws of Crete*, 97-99.

73 Chaniotis, *Verträge* 37, ll. 11-14 (treaty between Lato and Olus; early second century); 59, ll. 11-13 (treaty between Hierapitna and Lato; 111/0); *IC I* xix 3, ll. 34-36 (Mallian decree for foreign arbitrators; late second century).

74 Gagarin, Perlman, *Laws of Crete* G72, col. 5, l. 39 (around 450); G76B, ll. 7-8 (around 450-440); see also Chaniotis, *Verträge* 69A, l. 10 (treaty between Gortyn and Kaudos, third or second century).

On the other hand, the distinction between *politai* and *politeuma*—the former meaning “citizens”, the latter “ruling body”—is first found in Aristotle’s *Politics*.⁷⁵ While the term *politeuma* does not recur in any fragment of the Aristotelian constitutions, this may be due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence—the only well-preserved Aristotelian constitution being the Athenian one, where such a distinction is rather unnecessary—or rather to the fact that Aristotle in the *Politics* had to adopt new concepts and distinctions in order to sort out and make sense of the intricacies and whimsical nature of the different constitutions. In any case, the word *politeuma* is already employed by Alexander when dealing with Chios in 334,⁷⁶ which proves that the word was understood and already considered a technical term by Alexander and his entourage, possibly as a result of Aristotle’s teaching at the court of Macedon. In the case of Cyrene, the word *politeuma* was thus likely a specific addition by Ptolemy (or his advisors) in the effort to describe with clarity and precision the workings of the Cyrenaean constitution.

One last aspect about the Ten Thousand should be discussed. As a set of separate norms, Ptolemy includes in the *diagramma* some barring clauses. First, the *diagramma* singles out those who were not allowed to “participate in the offices of the Ten Thousand”, namely those who received a salary from the state, such as different kinds of teachers in the gymnasium, public heralds, and doctors.⁷⁷ The expression deserves a closer look: on the one hand, this may be read as a form of disenfranchisement (*i.e.*, exclusion from the Ten Thousand),⁷⁸ but, in my opinion, a milder interpretation is in order. The clause rather means that members of the *politeuma* could not hold unsalaried public offices as long as they received a public salary: they would still belong to the *politeuma*, but without any passive electorate. While the risk of a conflict of interests may have played a role in Ptolemy’s decision to uphold or introduce this norm, it also made it way more difficult for people who barely qualified as rich enough to belong to the Ten Thousand to further their political career by doing salaried work for the state in some intellectual capacity. Moreover, since the *boulē* was by definition one of the *myriakai archai*, this norm ensured that the members of this council had no other preoccupation and belonged to those who could live leisurely off their own estates for the two-year term of office.

75 Bordes 1982, 450–51. See esp. Arist. *Pol.* 3.1278b 10–11 (κύριον μὲν γὰρ πανταχοῦ τὸ πολίτευμα τῆς πόλεως, πολίτευμα δ’ ἐστὶν ἡ πολιτεία) and 3.1279a.26–27 (ἐπεὶ δὲ πολιτεία μὲν καὶ πολίτευμα σημαίνει ταῦτόν, πολίτευμα δ’ ἐστὶ τὸ κύριον τῶν πόλεων, ἀνάγκη δ’ εἶναι κύριον ἢ ἓνα ἢ ὀλίγους ἢ τοὺς πολλούς).

76 RO 84A (see also Bencivenni 2003, 15–38 no. 1), ll. 3–4: πολιτέομα δ’ εἶ[η] | ναι ἐν Χίῳ δῆμον, which should be translated as “the ruling body in Chios shall be the people”.

77 IG *Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 43–45.

78 See, for instance, Poddighe 2001, 47.

Next, Ptolemy singles out the different conducts that lead to the declaration of *atimia* and thus disenfranchisement.⁷⁹ These include:

- Having a physically demanding job or being seriously ill, depending on the meaning of the verb *kamnō* in this context. It is possibly the most obscure among these exclusion criteria.
- Some act that is not identifiable because most of the text is missing.
- Filing many lawsuits (*hos an ... polydikei*), that is, acting as sycophants. According to Heraclides Lembus' epitome of the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Cyrenaeans*, the ephors were in charge of prosecuting those who acted as sycophants (*hoi polydikoι*) or committed some other sort of wrongdoing (*hoi kakopragmones*) and could punish them and declare them *atimoi*.⁸⁰ This in turn proves that at least part of this list likely predated Ptolemy's *diagramma*.
- Some other infraction connected with lawsuits (there is a mention of [*pr*]o-dikia).
- Buying goods, hoarding them, and then reselling them for a premium when the market was more favorable, e.g., wheat in time of famine (*hos an ... palinkapēleuēi*).

In all these cases, we are dealing with forms of anti-social behavior: from Ptolemy's point of view, these people deserved to become *atimoi* because they put their own personal gain above the well being of the community, which they damaged by exploiting the legal system or the market at the expense of their fellow citizens. To this, a further clause on ineligibility for generalship follows, but we will discuss it below when examining the board of the *stratēgoi*.

4. Councils between innovation and conservatism

4.1. Councils (and the priest of Apollo)

If we look at the deliberative bodies in the Cyrenaean constitution, we notice that Cyrene had two different councils: a *boulē* (ll. 16-19) and a council of *gerontes* (ll. 20-24), which both predated the *diagramma* itself.⁸¹ The first council—the *boulē*—was composed of 500 councilmen drawn by lot⁸² among the Cyrenaeans with full rights that were over fifty years old. After a starting period of two years, half of the members would be replaced by new ones, while the remaining 250 councilmen would be replaced the following year. From that moment

79 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 46-48.

80 Heraclid. Lemb. *Exc. Polit.* 18 (Ottone 2002, Aristotele, F9): νόμος ἦν τοὺς πολυδίκους καὶ κακοπράγμονας ὑπὸ τῶν ἐφόρων προάγεσθαι, καὶ ζημιῶν τούτους καὶ ἀτίμους ποιεῖν. The use of the past tense can be due to the epitomator's perspective.

81 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 34-35.

82 Malkin, Blok 2024, 335-36 and, on the *diagramma* in general, 386-87.

onwards, each year half of the members of the *boulē* would be replaced. This solution creates a system where every councilman serves for two years and at any given time half the *boulē* is still composed by “veterans”, increasing stability and continuity in the administration of public affairs. Parallels for this solution—akin to the way the members of the U.S. House of Representatives are elected nowadays—are virtually nonexistent in the ancient Greek world, and we do not know whether it was a solution that the Cyrenaeans had already adopted before Thibron or an innovation by Ptolemy. A non-iteration clause further adds that a former councilman should wait at least two years before being eligible again for this office. Moreover, in case the eligible candidates were less than the available positions, Ptolemy stipulates that the ranks of the *boulē* be filled by Cyrenaeans with full rights drawn by lot from those who were over forty years old. This proves that, considering the starting conditions, the pool of eligible candidates was expected to be rather small, to the point that Ptolemy felt it necessary to add provisions in case the members of the *politeuma* over fifty years old became insufficient.

As already pointed out by De Sanctis, this might hint at the real number of citizens included in the *politeuma*, since the two councils required at least 1,101 members of the *politeuma* to be over fifty at any given time.⁸³ While this meant that the risk was not so remote to be excluded without worries, it also meant that it was not a standard situation, or a different number of members or selection criterion would have been chosen. One should notice that the number of councilmen was very likely a product of Ptolemy’s intervention: no matter how imprecise the definition “One Thousand” was for the Cyrenaeans with full rights before the war of Thibron, there is no way that they could support two councils of six hundred and one men in total. This would be the same as saying that at any given time every able-bodied citizen of Cyrene was either in the *boulē* or was going to be appointed at the first available occasion.⁸⁴ The fact that Ptolemy states “the *boulē* shall do what the *boulē* used to do in peacetime”⁸⁵ leaves us with a false impression that little was changed about this council. While it is apparent that Ptolemy’s model was the Athenian *boulē* of the Five Hundred, the differences between the two are substantial, both in terms of eligibility pool and iteration of office.

The second council (ll. 20-23) is even more interesting. It comprised 101 *gerontes*⁸⁶ who were appointed for life. As a new starting point after the *stasis* and the war, Ptolemy decided to personally appoint the *gerontes*. In other words, he reserved the right to revise the list of *gerontes* from before the war, filling any vacancy according to his own preference (*i.e.*, with people loyal to him) as well

83 De Sanctis 1926, 159-60.

84 The same holds true for the *gerontes*.

85 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 34-35.

86 The term *gerousia* is never used in the *diagramma*.

as dismissing from the council any person whose actions or political sympathies he might have found objectionable. For the future, Ptolemy set in place a system for the substitution of any *gerōn* who died or was impeached: in this case, the Ten Thousand elected a new member being at least fifty years old from their own ranks. This special attention proves the relevance of this council in the self-governing of the city of Cyrene, a conclusion confirmed by the fact that the *gerontes* were barred from holding any other office except general in time of war (*i.e.*, in a crisis situation, when the city might need its most capable men at the helm). The fear that they might accumulate too much power in their hands was so tangible that it warranted such a provision.

A second exception to the incompatibility clause set out by Ptolemy for the *gerontes* is provided by the eponymous priest of Apollo, who—according to the *diagramma* (ll. 23-25)—could only be appointed from among their ranks, with prospective candidates being at least fifty years old and never having held the same priesthood before. We do not know how much this norm differed from the one in place before Thibron's war, but Ptolemy's reiteration of the age clause for the election of the priest of Apollo might provide a clue on the fact that he did not play by the rules he set. In particular, his stipulation that the eponymous priest should be at least fifty years old might point to the fact that at least some of the *gerontes* he appointed were younger than that and thus should not be elected as priests of Apollo for a few years.⁸⁷ As a matter of fact, stacking the council of *gerontes* with younger men he trusted could prove extremely useful to Ptolemy, who thus ensured that his supporters had a major advantage and could literally outlive their opponents.

In the long run, Ptolemy's reform of the council of *gerontes* and the eponymous priesthood would lead to the possibly unforeseen consequence of creating a council-within-the-council that could have much sway in Cyrene's political life. Since they could be elected only once, the former priests of Apollo became an almost separate group within the council of *gerontes*, with their own privileges and duties. For instance, we learn from Ptolemy VIII that—at a time when he was priest of Apollo—on the evening of the festival of Artemis he was expected to host all his predecessors in a lavish way, having them over for dinner and gifting them a *tryblion*, that is, a huge vase containing many cold delicacies.⁸⁸ Moreover, during the first century, when the end of Ptolemaic rule left Cyrene in a power vacuum, it was the former priests of Apollo who took upon themselves to embody continuity of rule and provide their fellow citizens with a symbol they could rally behind.⁸⁹

87 See above n. 68.

88 Ptolemaeus VIII, *BNJ* 264 F 9; see Robert, *Hellenica* I, 13-15; Rosamilia 2023b, 94. A similar banquet is attested in the Tiberian period for the anniversary of the birth of Barkaios son of Theuchrestos: *IR Cyrenaica* 2020 C.276, ll. 28-33; see also Rosamilia 2025, 24.

89 Rosamilia 2023b, 94 and 208-10; Rosamilia 2025, 22.

4.2. Boards of magistrates

After discussing the two councils and the priests of Apollo, Ptolemy's next stipulations deal with the election of generals (*stratēgoi*),⁹⁰ *nomophylakes*, and ephors.⁹¹ All these boards of magistrates were already in place before the *diagramma* and the two conditions set by Ptolemy for holding these offices were being at least fifty years old and not holding the same office twice.⁹²

In the case of the *stratēgoi*, Ptolemy added some further clauses. First and foremost, he appointed himself *stratēgos* for life, so as to exert his power over the board and—if need be—order Cyrenaean troops about on a perfectly legal basis.⁹³ He also stipulated that the board be composed of five other generals selected in accordance with the criteria stated above. At the same time, considering the importance of *stratēgoi* from a military perspective, Ptolemy added some provisions that tried to compensate for the rigid criteria he had set in place, so as to tackle any dangerous fighting situation with the help of the best men available. In case of war, any member of the *politeuma* could be appointed *stratēgos*, with no consideration for his age, the fact that he was one of the *gerontes*, and possibly even the fact that he had held the position before. Moreover, in case the conflict was not a “Libyan war”,⁹⁴ the Ten Thousand should have a confidence vote immediately and decide whether the generals needed to be replaced. Further provisions, added by Ptolemy a few lines later, also prevented people having practiced a craft involving manual labor—stone-working and working as a porter among the explicitly listed ones—from ever reaching the rank of *stratēgos* under any condition,⁹⁵ confirming the contempt of Greek elites for the practitioners of what they called the *banausikai technai*.

Even though Ptolemy tried to balance his distrust for Cyrene's military commanders and meet the need for an effective command in case of war, in the long run his intervention caused the progressive loss of importance of the board of *stratēgoi* in Cyrene. While we have many votive offerings from the *stratēgoi* dating from the mid-fourth century—including a few impressive ones such as the so-called *strategeion* in the sanctuary of Apollo⁹⁶—none of them dates from after the *diagramma*, with the possible exception of one very fragmentary dedication.⁹⁷ The reduced importance of the board of the *stratēgoi* in

90 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 26-31.

91 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 32-33.

92 The age clause, which is not different from the one set in place for the election of *gerontes*, is not unparalleled. See, e.g., Heraclid. *Lemb. Exx. Polit.* 63 (from the constitution of the Chalkidians): νόμος δὲ ἦν Χαλκιδεῦσι μὴ ἄρξαι μηδὲ πρεσβεύσαι νεώτερον ἐτῶν ν'.

93 Zimmermann 1999, 150-51.

94 Zimmermann 1999, 138-39; Colin 2000, 95-96.

95 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 48-50.

96 Stucchi 1975, 94-99; Kenrick 2013, 197 no. 67.

97 See Rosamilia 2023b, 69-75, with 341-50 nos. 72-74 and 363-65 nos. 86-89. The only document possibly dating from after the *diagramma* is *IG Cyrenaica*² 108600 (formerly Rosamilia

the Hellenistic period is likely due to two factors. On the one hand, from this moment on Cyrenaeans did not fight wars on their own, but only if called upon by their ruler and, in this case, the *stratēgoi* found themselves in the less enticing role of junior officers under someone else's command. On the other hand, during peacetime members of the Cyrenaean elite could be appointed *stratēgoi* only once, which reduced the importance of strategic expertise as a way to stand out and transformed this office into one of the many stepping stones to reach the more exalted rank of *gerōn* and, possibly, eventually hold the eponymous priesthood of Apollo.

4.3. The workings of a constitution

As far as the *diagramma* is concerned, Ptolemy stated that the *boulē*, the *gerontes*, and the citizens with full rights should act as they used to do “in peacetime”, that is, before the war of Thibron and the new constitution possibly set in place by the democrats that had won the *stasis* of 322.⁹⁸ The workings of the constitution before the war may be deduced from one of the few surviving decrees from the region,⁹⁹ namely a mid-fourth-century proxeny decree for two Syracusans from Euhesperides:¹⁰⁰

ἐφόρων καὶ γερόντων
ἐπαγόντων, ἃδε ταῖ βολαῖ
Εὐβιον Εὐβιότω, Ἀγέστ
4 ρατον Μοσχίωνος, Συρ-
ρακοσίος, Εὐσπεριτῶν
προξένος ἦμεν αὐτὸς
καὶ ἐκγόνος.

Following a proposal by the *ephors* and the *gerontes*, it pleased the *bōla* (i.e., the *boulē*) that Eubios son of Eubiotos and Hagestratos son of Moschion, of Syracuse, be *proxenoi* of the Euhesperitae, themselves and their descendants.

In this text, we find three political bodies whose existence in Cyrene is equally attested by the *diagramma*. Two of them—the *ephors*, a board of magistrates, and the *gerontes*, likely a small council—were exerting probouleutic rights over a second council (the *bōla*), which in turn had the power to grant proxeny rights without needing to consult the assembly or secure its approval.

A similar—but not identical—situation is attested in the early first century by a decree from Arsinoe-Taucheira honoring Aleximachos son of Sosistratos.

2023b, 364-65 no. 88).

98 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 34-35.

99 On Cyrenaean decrees, see Rhodes, Lewis 1997, 470-71; Rosamilia 2023b, 52-56 and 58-63.

100 *IG Cyrenaica*² 064000 (formerly *SEG* 18.772; Rosamilia 2023b, 232-33 no. 2).

In it, the proposer(s) ask “that it may please the *gerontes* and the *bola* to praise Aleximachos”,¹⁰¹ meaning that on the proposal the two councils had to vote together and that neither had probouleumatic powers over the other. The ephors are only mentioned at the end of the text as executive officers in charge of erecting the statue.¹⁰² At a closer look, however, we learn that even here the *gerontes* had pride of place, and some isolated letters might hint to the fact that the proposer(s) were among the *gerontes* or had to secure their approval before submitting their proposal.¹⁰³ The fact that the votes in favor were 109 tells us little about the number of members of either council:¹⁰⁴ one might suspect that the number of voters was a multiple of three, thus making 120, 150, and 180 interesting candidates. The involvement of the *gerontes*, however, makes all things more difficult.

On the other hand, the only well-preserved Cyrenaean decree from before the war of Thibron dates from around 370-365 and provides us with a perfectly democratic enactment formula: “Damis son of Bathykles proposed... that it may please the people”.¹⁰⁵ For this reason, it has long been accepted that in early-fourth-century the “ruling body” of Cyrene was indeed the people and that the city had a democratic constitution for much of the first half of the fourth century.¹⁰⁶

Until very recently, we had little clue as to what a decree from Hellenistic Cyrene looked like. A fragmentary decree from the Augustan period provided the closest comparandum for the text from Euhesperides, although much of the text was supplied by editors. Here, we find once again the ephors and the *gerontes* acting with probouleumatic powers towards the *bola*, but other magistrates are involved as well as proposers or sources of secondment, such as the *episkopoi*.¹⁰⁷ A fragmentary decree from the end of the second century can now shed some more light on the nature of the Cyrenaean constitution in the late Hellenistic period. In it, we read a mention of the *gerontes*, but—like in Arsinoe-Taucheira—they are directly involved in the decision-making process, because they are named in the enactment formula: “[that it may please] the *gero[ntes]* and the *bola*”.¹⁰⁸ As far as we know, this might have been the standard practice for the approval of a decree throughout the region and the *boulē* and the *gerontes* shared responsibility in the decision, even though the latter exerted some control over the approval of the proposal, not unlike what happened with the people and the council in Athens. In any case, as far as Cyrenaean decrees can help us, we have no traces of a major change after the fourth century and the *diagramma*.

101 *IG Cyrenaica*² 066900, ll. 61-63; see also Laronde 1987, 472-78; Rosamilia 2023b, 60-61.

102 *IG Cyrenaica*² 066900, ll. 72-76.

103 *IG Cyrenaica*² 066900, l. 3.

104 *IG Cyrenaica*² 066900, l. 79; see also Laronde 1987, 477-78.

105 *IG Cyrenaica*² 011000 (formerly *SEG* 9.3; Rosamilia 2023b, 229-32 no. 1), ll. 2 and 11.

106 Laronde 1987, 249-52; Rosamilia 2023b, 23-26.

107 *IR Cyrenaica* 2020 C.737 (formerly *Suppl. Cirenaico* 105), ll. 1-6. On this document, see also Rosamilia 2023b, 62-63; Antolini, Marengo 2025.

108 *IG Cyrenaica*² 136500, l. 7: [- - - δεδόχθαι τοῖς γέροισι καὶ τῇ βουλῇ - -].

5. Ptolemy as a lawgiver

As a major aspect of the analysis conducted so far, I have tried to elucidate to what extent Ptolemy altered the previous constitution and what his motives were in doing so. Some aspects of the legislation are clearly the result of Ptolemy's intervention: his role in granting citizenship and in the appointment of the *gerontes*, his own appointment as *stratēgos* for life, his role as a court of appeal in capital trials,¹⁰⁹ some transitional norms on exiles and their goods that are not discussed here, and—possibly the most important innovation—the introduction of the *politeuma* of the Ten Thousand instead of the previous regime of the One Thousand.¹¹⁰

At the same time, other parts of the constitution were explicitly left untouched. For instance, Ptolemy does not intervene on the balance of power between the council, the *gerontes*, and the *politeuma*, nor in the laws about the accountability of magistrates.¹¹¹ As a matter of fact, existing laws are mentioned throughout the *diagramma*.¹¹² Similarly, we can surmise that aspects that are not mentioned in the *diagramma* were not influenced by Ptolemy's decisions, possibly because they were simply below his attention threshold. For example, in the *diagramma* there is no mention of any subdivisions of the civic body, even though we know that three tribes had existed in Cyrene at least since the archaic period;¹¹³ nor are the *damiorgoi* discussed at all, even though they had been publishing their accounts since the first half of the fourth century and continued doing so well into the second century.¹¹⁴

As a rule of thumb, Ptolemy seems to have modified the selection criteria for the *politeuma*, the councils, and the magistracies without intervening in the interplay between them. This way, the reform could be considered smoother and better received by the Cyrenaeans. In some cases, innovations are due to the evolution of political lexicon and mental categories more than to a change in the structure of

109 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 39-42.

110 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 34-35.

111 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 38-39; see Fröhlich 2004, 52, 396, 403-4, and 447; Boffo, Faraguna 2021, 566.

112 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 14 (ὁμόσαντες ὄρκον νόμιμον), 14-15 (ὥς ἄ[ν] | ἐν τοῖς νόμοις γραφῇ), 37-38 (χρέσθωσαν δὲ τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς προ[τέ]ροις ὅσοι μὴ ὑπεναντίοι [τῶι] | δε τῶι διαγράμματι), 38-39 (κατὰ τοὺς νόμους τοὺς [ὄν] | τα[ς]), 40 (ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δικάσασθαι), and 41 (ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δικαζέσθων). On this aspect, see Berthelot 2015, 225-26.

113 On Cyrenaean tribes, see Jones 1987, 216-19. The earliest attestation is likely provided by Demonax' reform described in Hdt. 4.161.2-3 (see lastly Cohen-Skalli 2014; Cecchet 2017, 61-69; Rosamilia 2023b, 20 and 23-24). As for the fourth century, the existence of Cyrenaean tribes and their subdivisions is confirmed by a clause of the so-called Oath of the Founders about the grant of *isopoliteia* to the Theraeans (*IG Cyrenaica*² 016700, ll. 15-16: καταστᾶμεν ἐς φυλὰν καὶ πάτρην ἐς θ' {ε} | ἐν νῆα ἑταιρήιας; ca. 370-365) as well as from a passage in late-fourth-century sacred norms, where a *triphyllia* is mentioned (*Greek Ritual Norms* 99, ll. 132-33; see now *IG Cyrenaica*² 016700, ll. 132-133).

114 See Rosamilia 2023b, 153-92; Rosamilia 2024, 53-73.

constitution. It is the case, for instance, of the definition of the Ten Thousand as Cyrene's *politeuma*, i.e., "ruling body" according to a word first used in this meaning by Aristotle and Alexander. At the same time, this shared set of ideas and concepts could well extend beyond the mere political lexicon. For instance, both Antipater's constitution of 322 for Athens and Ptolemy's *diagramma* two years later set the amount of durable assets needed to enjoy full citizen rights at 2,000 Attic drachms.¹¹⁵ This is hardly happenstance, but whether and to what extent Ptolemy was influenced by Antipater's decision or by some common idea they shared about what constituted a fair amount of assets shall remain forever a mystery.

As far as Athenian influence goes, the *boulē* of the Five Hundred in Cyrene provides a much more interesting case. Clearly Ptolemy's innovation, the new *boulē* likely replaced a smaller one from before the war of Thibron. However, Ptolemy had no reason to set the number of councilmen at 500 except for the strength of the model provided by the Athenian *boulē*: to use John Ma's adept definition,¹¹⁶ this is a great example of the Great Convergence in the making. In this case, the process is a top-down evolution, but we should not downplay the fact that Ptolemy was acting with the help and counsel of members of the Cyrenaean elite. A similar influence of Athenian practices can be recognized in the newly instituted jury for trials involving the death penalty, composed by the *boulē*, the *gerontes*, and another 1,500 members of the *politeuma* drawn by lot.¹¹⁷ The situation for the clauses on the origin of the mothers of prospective citizens is slightly different: they definitely presuppose the Athenian citizenship law of Pericles and they can easily be an evolution from an earlier norm focusing only on the provenance and status of the father. However, there is no reason to suspect that Ptolemy was the one using an Athenian framework to try and make sense of local Cyrenaean practices.

From the point of view of its origin, at least one magistrature calls for special attention: the *nomophylakes*. Cyrene's *nomophylakes* pre-existed the *diagramma*, as attested by the fact that they are mentioned in the appended list of *archai*.¹¹⁸ This means that they were possibly one of the oldest such boards in existence,¹¹⁹ even though by 320 the *nomophylakes* were already much discussed by philosophers.¹²⁰ Considering this situation, there are two different explanations: either we admit that the *nomophylakes* were a typically Cyrenaean office or we must look at a different moment (prior to the *diagramma*) when they could have been introduced in the constitution of Cyrene. The first hypothesis is hardly convincing, because the other attestations from the city are much later and there is no trace

115 Diod. Sic. 18.18.4-5.

116 Ma 2018, esp. 279-91 and 2024, 203-28.

117 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 35-37.

118 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 78-81.

119 Criscuolo 2021.

120 See, for instance, Plat. *Leg.* 6.755a-b. On the problem of the origin of the *nomophylakes*, see Faraguna 2015b; Criscuolo 2021.

of *nomophylakes* elsewhere in Cyrenaica.¹²¹ As for the second one, finding an appropriate moment for their introduction might not be easy. Plutarch knew a tradition according to which the Cyrenaeans asked Plato to become their lawgiver, but, according to the same tradition, Plato refused to comply.¹²² A possible clue might be provided by a board of magistrates whose members are listed below the *diagramma* as well: the five *nomothetai*.¹²³ Almost never taken into account when discussing the *diagramma*, they are never attested again in Cyrenaica. This is possibly due to the fact that they were not a stable feature of the local constitution but rather a commission entrusted with the revision of laws. At the same time, if they predated the *diagramma*, it is possible that they had been working on the reform of Cyrenean laws for quite some time and that some of their decisions had already been implemented, possibly including the institution of a new board of magistrates inspired by the most recent theories on the perfect constitution. This would leave us with another case of Great Convergence, one that we can rather describe as a bottom-up process.

One last aspect must be examined. Even though scholars devoted much attention to the *diagramma* over the years, little has been said so far about when it became obsolete. Despite the riots of 313 and 305, the inscription itself does not show any traces of obliteration before its reuse and it was still in the sanctuary of Apollo by the time the late-antique baths were built, likely after the earthquake of 365 CE.¹²⁴ Even more to the point, later Ptolemies had no reason to dismiss the *diagramma* outright. After all, this document stemmed from the will of the founder of their kingdom, to whose military successes they owed their claims on Cyrene and the surrounding region in the first place. This of course does not mean that every aspect of the *diagramma* was zealously upheld by the Cyrenaeans and their Ptolemaic rulers, but rather that any constitutional innovation during the Hellenistic period could be presented as a reform of the existing system dating back to (and set in stone in) the *diagramma* itself. For instance, the members of the board of ephors passed from five to six sometime between the *diagramma* and the early second century,¹²⁵ possibly to better accommodate participation from the three tribes. Similarly, Ptolemy IX in his *prostagma* to the Cyrenaeans instituted some exception clause about the prosecution of [*hoi en tōi ger]onteioi pheromenoi*, a periphrasis that likely describes the members of the

121 On the *nomophylakes* in Cyrene, see Ghislanzoni 1925.

122 Plut. *Luc.* 2.5; Plut. *Mor.* 779D; see also Laronde 1987, 251; Rosamilia 2023b, 25.

123 *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, ll. 85–87.

124 On these baths see Stucchi 1975, 468–70; Kenrick 2013, 196–97 no. 66.

125 The six ephors are likely first attested in the early-second-century dedication *IG Cyrenaica*² 063800 (see also Rosamilia 2023b, 360 no. 84), although earlier editions proposed a different layout and a board of seven ephors. The ephors are again six in *IR Cyrenaica* 2020 C.148 (first century). On the ephors in Cyrenaica, see Ottone 1998; Chevrollier 2010.

council of *gerontes*.¹²⁶ This in turn proves that the *gerontes* were still active in Cyrene around 108 and still held a prominent role in the city's political landscape. In any case, it is unlikely that the *diagramma* as a whole was officially discarded, at least until the end of the second century.

What is sure is that the people of Cyrene were not too pleased with the outcome of Ptolemy's reforms. The Cyrenaeans rebelled a few years later, in 313,¹²⁷ and again around 305,¹²⁸ which likely attests to the fact that Ptolemy's compromise solution pleased neither the aristocrats, who had lost much of their power, nor the democrats, who desired much more drastic reforms. If the late-fourth-century coins with the legend *damō kyraiaion*, i.e., "Cyrenaeen (coin) of the people",¹²⁹ are any indication, it was the people that in the end took action, probably because it realized something that Aristotle could easily have explained to them all: being a *politēs* without sharing in the *politeuma* was like being no *politēs* at all.

126 *IG Cyrenaica*² 011100, text B1, ll. 2-4. For the interpretation of this passage, see Fraser 1958, 127-28.

127 Diod. Sic. 19.79.1-3; see Laronde 1987, 356.

128 Paus. 1.6.8; see Laronde 1987, 356-57.

129 Mørholm 1970.

Appendix: a new translation of the *diagramma*, lines 2-52

The present translation is partially based on Catherine Dobias-Lalou's one in *IG Cyrenaica*² 010800, but with major alterations. The Cyrenaean additions before and after the actual *diagramma* (ll. 1 and 72-87) are omitted. The missing portion of the document's text (lines 52-72) is not included because of its bad state of preservation and the difficulties of making sense of the few surviving words. Among other topics, it deals with the estates of the exiles, the ownership of slaves, and the problems caused by the presence of mercenaries.

[ll. 2-5] Men born from a Cyrenaean father and a Cyrenaean mother shall be citizens, as well as those born from Libyan women between Katabathmos and Authamalax and those born from the *epoikoi* of the cities beyond Thinitis that the Cyrenaeans sent as colonists. Moreover, those whom Ptolemy may appoint shall be citizens and those to whom the *politeuma* (i.e., the assembly of all citizens with full rights) shall decide (to grant citizenship) in accordance with the following laws.

[ll. 6-15] The *politeuma* shall be the *myrioi* (i.e., the Ten Thousand). They shall include: the exiles having taken refuge in Egypt, anyone whom Ptolemy may appoint, and anyone who owns durable assets—including the ones belonging to his wife—with an assessed value of (at least) 20 *mnai* of Alexander, that the *timēteres* assess as mortgage-free. For anyone to whom 20 *mnai* of Alexander are owed—provided that (his and) his wife's durable assets have an assessed value at least equal to the obligation and the interest—the debtors shall confirm (the debt) by oath, even if the neighbors do not belong to the *myrioi*(?).¹³⁰ These too shall be part of the *myrioi*, if they are not younger than thirty years old. The *gerontes*, after having sworn the oath requested by the law, shall select the *timēteres*, sixty men not younger than thirty years. Those who are selected shall proceed with the assessments in accordance with what is written in the laws. For the first year, access to the *politeuma* shall be regulated on the basis of previous assessments.

[ll. 16-19] The *boulē* shall consist of 500 men, who will be drawn by lot, being not younger than fifty years old. They will be appointed for two years and, in the third year, half of them will be removed by lot. (Those who cease to be members of this council) will let two years pass (before being eligible again). If the number is not reached, (the missing men) shall be drawn by additional lot from those not younger than forty years old.

[ll. 20-25] The *gerontes* shall be 101, and Ptolemy will appoint them. Whenever one of them dies or is removed from office, the *myrioi* shall choose a new one for the 101, not younger than fifty years old. The *gerontes* shall not be eligible for any other office except that of *stratēgos* in case of war. The priests of Apollo shall be chosen among the *gerontes* that have not been priests of Apollo yet, not younger than fifty years old.

[ll. 26-31] Ptolemy shall be *stratēgos* for life. In addition, five *stratēgoi* shall be appointed from those who have not been *stratēgoi* yet, not younger than fifty years

130 The clause is somewhat obscure.

old. If there is a war, (they shall be appointed) from among all the citizens with full rights. If there happens to be some other war, and not a Libyan one, the *myrioi* shall decide whether the same *strategoi* should continue holding office or not. If they decide that some change is needed, (the new *strategoi*) shall be appointed from among all the citizens with full rights.

[ll. 32-33] There shall be nine *nomophylakes*, (selected) from those who have not been *nomophylakes* yet, and five ephors, (selected) from those who have not been ephors yet, not younger than fifty years of age.

[ll. 34-42] The *gerontes* shall do what the *gerontes* used to do in peacetime, the *boulē* what the *boulē* (used to), and the *myrioi* what the *chilioi* (i. e., the One Thousand) (used to). The *gerontes* and the *boulē*, alongside 1.500 jurors drawn by lot among the *myrioi*, shall judge all trials involving death penalty. They shall make use of the previous laws that are not in contradiction with this *diagramma*. Public officials shall have to submit the accounts of their administration in accordance with the existing laws. For three years, anyone who, being accused by the *strategoi*, is going to be judged by the *gerontes* and the *boulē* in a death penalty trial, shall have the possibility to declare whether he wants to be judged according to the laws or by Ptolemy. All other causes they shall judge according to the laws. However, they shall not condemn an exile without Ptolemy's approval.

[ll. 43-45] Whoever, being part of the *politeuma*, is paid by the state to work as a doctor or a physical trainer, or to teach archery, horse riding, or how to fight in hoplite formation, or even works as a herald in the *prytaneion*, he shall not partake(?) in the offices of the *myrioi*. Whoever does any of these activities.

[ll. 46-50] Whoever of the citizens happens to have a serious illness(?),¹³¹ agrees to [- - -], files many lawsuits, [- - -] advocate, or buys up goods in order to resell them later at a higher price, he shall be deprived of civic rights. Whoever happens to work as a [- - -] or a stonemason, becomes a porter, or practices some other menial job, or even agrees that he has practiced a menial job (in the past?) [- - -], he shall never become *strategos*.

[ll. 51-52] Whoever [repeals] the decisions [that] Ptolemy took [for the Cyre]naeans shall be punishable by death. (...)

131 Alternatively: "happens to have a physically demanding job".

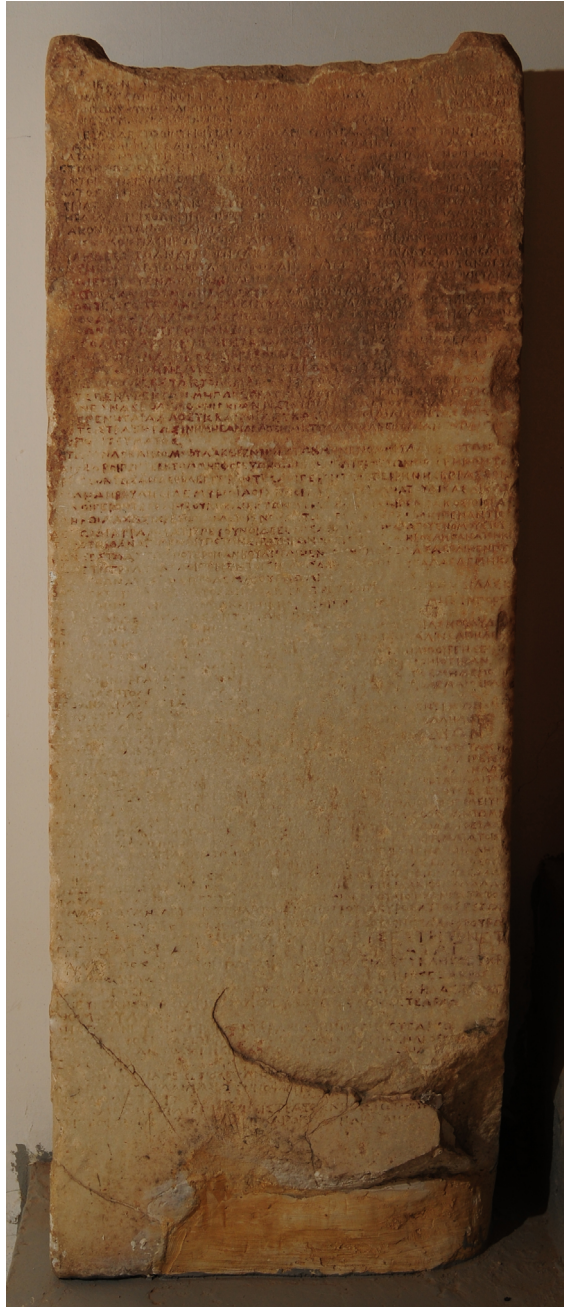


Fig. 1 – Cyrene, Museum. The *diagramma* of Ptolemy I, winter 321/0 BCE (IG *Cyrenaica*² 010800). Photograph by G. Dromedari, 2010. © Missione Archeologica Italiana a Cirene – Università di Urbino.

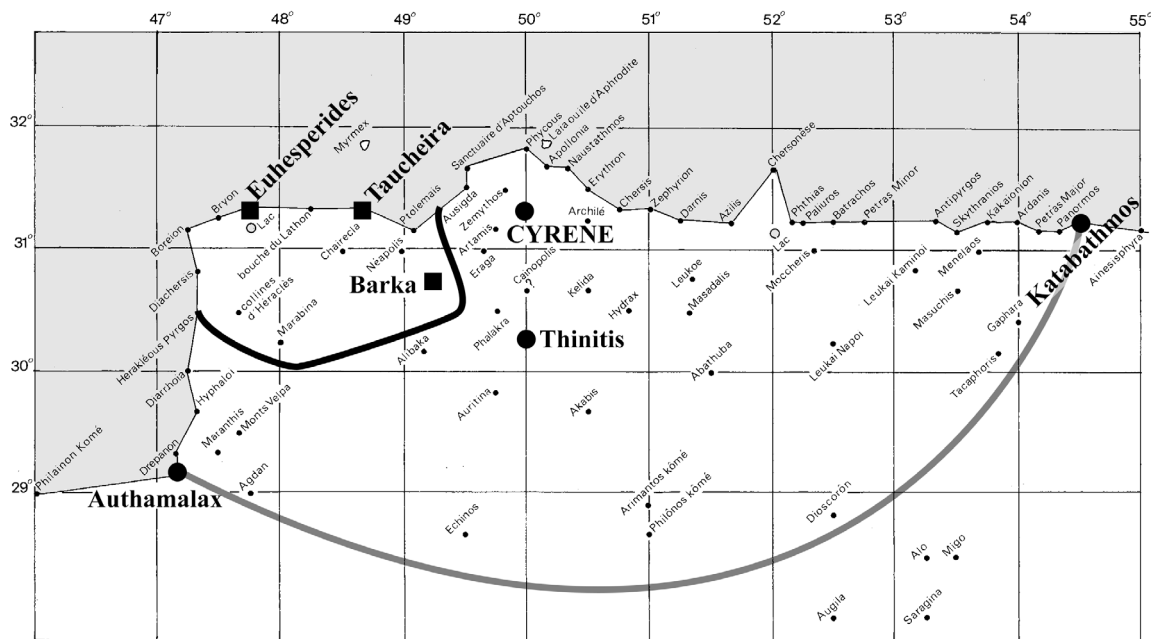


Fig. 2 – Cyrenaica according to Claudius Ptolemy (from Laronde 1987, 280 fig. 83 © Éditions du CNRS, with additions by the author). N.B. The boundaries between the *chorai* of Cyrene and the other *poleis* in the southwest area are not precisely known.

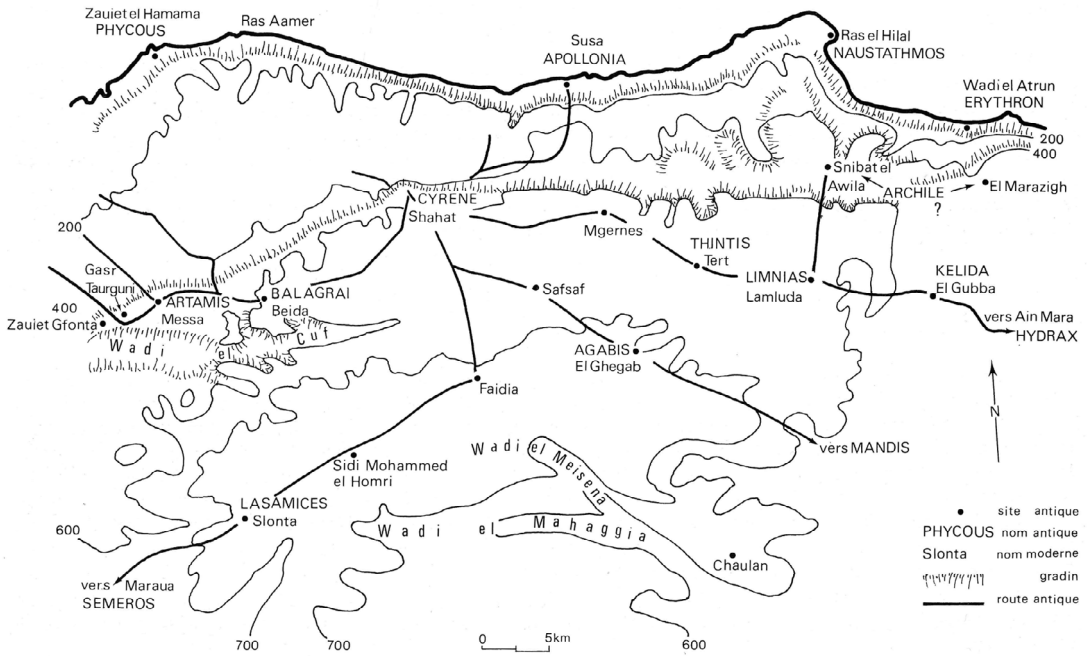


Fig. 3 – The central part of Cyrene's chôra (Laronde 1987, 280 fig. 83 © Éditions du CNRS).