

TWO NOTES ON CERCIDAS OF MEGALOPOLIS

Few figures in the Hellenistic world were more impressively versatile than Cercidas of Megalopolis, who combined the roles of statesman, military commander, legislator, poet, and Cynic philosopher. It is a pleasure and a privilege to offer some observations on Cercidas to Manuel Fernández-Galiano, whose own energy and versatility have done so much for the study of Greek both in Spain and abroad, and who may fittingly be described in the words Cercidas used of himself:

τὴν διέφευγε καλῶν οὐδέν ποκα·
πάντα τεοῖσι δ' ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις
ἔσκ' ἄβρα Μουσᾶν
κνώδαλα· Πιερίδων θ' ἄλιευτὰς
ἔπλεο ... καὶ ἰχθυεὺς ἄριστος.

(fr. 7.6-10 Powell)

i) CERCIDAS' LEGISLATION

Several sources refer to the legislative activities of a Cercidas of Megalopolis¹: only one offers any evidence for the content of that legislation. It is a fragment of Porphyry² preserved in Eustathius' commentary on Homer (B 494):

παρασημειοῦται δὲ καὶ ὁ Πορφύριος τὸν ὀμηρικὸν κατάλογον πᾶσαν περιεχεῖν ἀλήθειαν ἔν τε χωρογραφία καὶ πόλεων ἰδιώμασιν, ἱστορῶν καὶ ὅτι νόμους τινὲς ἐξέθεντο ἀποστοματίζειν τοὺς παιδευομένους τὸν Ὀμήρου κατάλογον, ὡς καὶ ὁ Κερκίδας νομοθετῶν τῇ πατρίδι.

(p. 212.33 Stallbaum; p. 401 Van der Valk)

¹ Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Μεγάλη πόλις speaks of Κερκίδας ἄριστος νομοθέτης καὶ μελιᾶμβων ποιητής; Ptolemy Chennos, in Photius, *Bibl.* 151a Bekker (vol. 3, p. 65 of the edition by R. Henry, Paris, 1962) relates that ὁ ... νομοθέτης Ἀρχάδων Κερκίδας ordered that the first two books of the *Iliad* should be buried with him. I suspect that the death-bed anecdote preserved by Aelian, *V.H.* 13.20 may derive from a collection of stories about lawgivers, even if not from Hermippus περὶ νομοθετῶν (F. WEHRLI, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, Suppl. I 'Hermippus der Kallimacheer', Basel/Stuttgart, 1974, 105, protests at the tendency to attribute all death-bed scenes to Hermippus: cf. A. MOMIGLIANO, *The Development of Greek Biography*, Cambridge, Mass., 1971, 79), rather than being an extrapolation from fr. 7 Powell, as T. B. L. WEBSTER, *Hellenistic Poetry and Art*, London, 1964, 232 suggests.

² Cf. H. SCHRADER, «Porphyrios bei Eustathios zur Βοιωτία», *Hermes* 14, 1879, 231-52, esp. 233.

The reading Κερδίας in Eustathius' manuscript need not detain us: such a name is not attested elsewhere, whereas the anecdote coheres well with the other traditions of a legislator called Cercidas, and of Cercidas' devotion to Homer³. Eustathius could have erred either when excerpting Porphyry (whose text could of course have been already corrupt), or when writing up his notes, and the slight change to Κερκίδας⁴, proposed over four hundred years ago by the Dutch scholar Cuperus⁵, is a certain correction: it is surprising that M. Van der Valk, the most recent editor of Eustathius, does not even mention it.

In addition to its intrinsic interest, this *testimonium* can shed useful light on the vexed prosopographical problem of which of the individuals named Cercidas was the legislator. It has sometimes been argued that the Cercidas who was contemporary with Demosthenes must be meant⁶, on the grounds that a legislator would be working in the early years of the city's existence rather than a century and a half later⁷. Other scholars have urged that the poet and the legislator were one and the same man⁸, but one telling argument has not, I think, been deployed to demonstrate that the elder Cercidas could not have been the legislator.

Aristotle complains in his *Politics* that legislators should, but in practice do not (except in Sparta), pay great attention to the education of the young⁹. Aristotle was of course writing after the foundation of Megalopolis, and if he had been aware of the kind of detailed legislation on the content of the school curriculum that is implied by the fragment of Porphyry, it is inconceivable that he would not have mentioned it as an honourable exception to the general rule. The foundation of Megalopolis took place in a blaze of publicity, and the anecdotal tradition that Plato was invited to be its νομοθέτης, though unlikely in itself, at least suggests that the city was regarded as something of a

³ Cf. the *testimonia* cited in n. 1.

⁴ Or Κερκίδας: on the accentuation of the name, see now O. MASSON, *ZPE* 11, 1973, 1-19 (favouring Κερκίδας), as against WILAMOWITZ, *Kl. Schr.* II, Berlin/Amsterdam, 1971, 128 n. 4 (= *SB. Preuss. Ak. Wiss.* 1918, 1138).

⁵ *Apotheosis vel consecratio Homeri*, Amsterdam, 1683, 130-31; it was supported by J. Perizonius in his edition of Aelian, *V.H.*, Leiden, 1701, p. 824, and A. MEINEKE, *Analecta Alexandrina*, Berlin, 1843, 387-8.

⁶ Demosthenes, *de cor.* 295: cf. GERHARD, *RE* XI.1 (1921) 293-4.

⁷ Cf., e.g., F. LEO, *Hermes* 41, 1906, 441-6.

⁸ E.g. A. MEINEKE, *Analecta Alexandrina*, Berlin, 1843, 385-94; A. S. HUNT, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* VIII (1911) 26; M. CROISSET, *Journal des Savants* 9, 1911, 482; F. RÜHL, *RM* 67, 1912, 169; GERHARD, *R.E.* XI.1 (1921) 295.

⁹ *Pol.* 8, 1337a 10 ff.

constitutional laboratory¹⁰. By the third century, Aristotle's strictures were out of date: in the Hellenistic age proper city authorities regularly concerned themselves with the provision of school education¹¹. A particularly striking indication of this change in attitudes is that, according to Cicero, the only complaint that Polybius had against Roman institutions was the absence of any state system of education¹²: a Greek of the second century, however philo-Roman, regarded such provision as normal and desirable. It seems to follow that the detail recorded by Porphyry, which belongs no doubt to a more extensive set of regulations governing school education, must be attributed to the Cercidas who lived after Aristotle and before Polybius: in other words, the poet and the legislator are demonstrably the same person.

Porphyry's fragment shows therefore that Cercidas shared the concern with education displayed by Cynics generally and by Diogenes in particular¹³. According to the tradition, Diogenes too, when employed as a tutor, made his pupils learn by heart long passages from the poets and other writers¹⁴. Porphyry's words might suggest that the Homeric *Catalogue* was studied for the geographical information it contained¹⁵; one can however imagine other benefits: memory-training was important throughout antiquity, and the memorizing of the *Catalogue* may well have provided an equivalent to the kind of memory-system based on a series of *loci* which was later elaborated by professional teachers of rhetoric¹⁶.

A further point: Cercidas' law reminds us that the kind of detailed acquaintance with even the more austere parts of the Homeric epics that we might expect only in a restricted circle of scholars in such cultural centres as Alexandria could be widespread, even in a provincial and predominant-

¹⁰ See A. S. RIGINOS, *Platonica*, Leiden, 1976, 191-3; cf. L. EDELSTEIN, *Plato's Seventh Letter*, Leiden, 1966, 164 n. 87. M. MOGGI, *I sinecismi interstatali greci I*, Pisa, 1976, 316 rejects the tradition.

¹¹ Cf. H. I. MARROU, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, Paris, 1948, 150.

¹² Cicero, *Rep.* 4.3: *principio disciplinam puerilem ingenuis, de qua Graeci multum frustra laborarunt, et in qua una Polybius noster hospes nostrorum institutorum neglegentiam accusat, nullam certam aut destinatum legibus aut publice expositam aut unam omnium esse uoluerunt.* Cf. F. W. WALBANK, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius III*, Oxford, 1979, 515. There is good reason to suspect that Polybius' admiration for Philopoemen (who was probably an enemy of Cercidas) prevented him from giving Cercidas his due.

¹³ Cf. D. R. DUDLEY, *A History of Cynicism*, London, 1937, 87-8.

¹⁴ Diogenes Laertius 6.31.

¹⁵ Cercidas' alleged wish to meet Hecataeus in the next world (Aelian, *V.H.* 13.20) may be another indication of an interest in geography.

¹⁶ See L. A. POST, «Ancient Memory Systems», *Classical Weekly* 25, 1932, 105-10; FRANCES YATES, *The Art of Memory*, London, 1966, esp. cc. 1-2.

ly rural community. The implications for the study and interpretation of Hellenistic literature are important ¹⁷.

ii) αἰθεριβόσκας (*fr. 1.3 Powell*)

In *fr. 1* Pow. Cercidas extols Diogenes the Cynic's heroic suicide, achieved by retention of the breath ¹⁸, and his subsequent catasterism as the Dog Star ¹⁹. He describes Diogenes in a series of resonant compounds: βακτροφόρας, διπλοείματος, αἰθεριβόσκας. The first of these, βακτροφόρας, refers obviously to the fact that Diogenes habitually carried a stick ²⁰; the second, διπλοείματος, equally clearly denotes his wearing of the double cloak, the διπλοῖς ²¹. The meaning of the third compound, αἰθεριβόσκας, is less immediately obvious.

All recent editors have accepted the reading αἰθεριβόσκας of all but one of the manuscripts of Diogenes Laertius 6.76, where this fragment is preserved ²². Many interpreters seem however to construe the word as if it were αἰθεροβόσκας ²³. Thus L.S.J. have 'feeding on ether'; the new *DGE* has 'que se alimenta de éter'; Croiset ²⁴ translates 'qui se nourissait d'éther', Pennacini ²⁵ 'mangianuvole', and Webster ²⁶ 'aither-eater'. This view is open to two objections: not only does it fail to do justice to the

¹⁷ R. VON SCALA, *Die Studien des Polybios I*, Stuttgart, 1890, 68-9 draws attention to the influence of early exposure to Homeric geography on Polybius: cf. F. W. WALBANK, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius III*, Oxford, 1979, 585.

¹⁸ For this legend, see K. VON FRITZ, «Quellen-Untersuchungen zu Leben und Philosophie des Diogenes von Sinope», *Philologus Supplementband 18*, Heft 2, Leipzig, 1926, 30-33, 40. Metrocles (D.L. 6.95) and Zeno (D.L. 7.28) were alleged to have committed suicide in the same implausible way.

¹⁹ For the catasterism, cf. M. POHLENZ «Die hellenistische Poesie und die Philosophie», in *Χάρτες Friedrich Leo*, Berlin, 1911, 80 and n. 4; other ancient sources are *A.P.* 7.63 (adesp.), Ausonius *epit.* 28 Peiper (which is not a mere translation of the last). Cf. the similar poem on Zeno's ascent to heaven by Antipater Sidonius (*ap. D.L.* 7.29 = GOW-PAGE, *Hell. Ep.* 424 ff.).

²⁰ See further, p. 86 and n. 41.

²¹ On this garment, see J. F. KINDSTRAND, *Bion of Borysthenes*, Uppsala, 1976, 161-3, and M. BILLERBECK, *Epiktet Vom Kynismus*, Leiden, 1978, 56-7, both with references to other discussions.

²² The exception, F (=Laurentianus 69.13), reads αἰθεριβόσκοϋς: given Cercidas' predilection for adjectives in -ας, this can be dismissed as a trivialization (I am grateful to Professor F. Heinemann of Basel for kindly communicating to me P. Von der Mühl's collations of this section of D.L.).

²³ Which was indeed conjectured by Menagius.

²⁴ *Journal des Savants* 9, 1911, 483.

²⁵ 'Cercida e il secondo cinismo', *Atti dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino: classe di scienze morali storiche e filologiche* 90, 1955-56, 280.

²⁶ *O.c.* (n. 1) 231.

unusual formation in αἰθερι-, it also implies an overall interpretation of the fragment as satirical in intent²⁷: presumably these scholars have assimilated the compound to the superficially similar expression which Aristophanes put into the mouth of Euripides at *Frogs* 890: αἰθήρ, ἐμὸν βόσκημα²⁸. But since the discovery of the Oxyrhynchus fragments revealed that Cercidas himself was a cynic of some sort²⁹, there has been no reason to see any satiric intent in this fragment³⁰.

Another view has given proper weight to the form of the first half of the compound: thus Crönert³¹ glossed the word as *sub divo vivens*, and compared the compound αἰθριοκοιτεῖν at [Theoc.] *Id.* 8.78; Hicks³² translated 'lived in the open air', and Knox (none too happily) 'liver in ether'. They are undoubtedly right to interpret αἰθερι- in a locative sense: Cynics stressed the importance of their outdoor life³³. The Aristarchan distinction between αἰθήρ 'the upper air' and ἄήρ 'the lower air', as Dover remarks on Aristoph. *Clouds* 264-6, 'is not always made consistently either by philosophers or by poets'³⁴, and commentators have rightly adduced Eubulus' word ἀερίοικος (*fr.* 139 Hunter), also applied to ascetic philosophers, as analogous to αἰθεριβόσκας.

But it would be wrong to neglect the second part of the compound: -βόσκας refers very specifically to eating, an aspect of life to which Cynics generally³⁵ and Cercidas in particular³⁶ paid considerable attention. Diogenes, in defiance of normal Greek custom³⁷, habitually ate out

²⁷ The interpretation of the fragment as satirical was normal before the discovery of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus: it is documented by G. A. GERHARD, *Phoinix von Kolophon*, Leipzig/Berlin, 1909, 206.

²⁸ The concept is reversed at *Clouds* 331, where clouds πλείστους βόσκουσι σοφιστάς.

²⁹ On the nature of Cercidas' cynicism, cf. WILAMOWITZ, *Glaube der Hellenen*, Basel/Stuttgart, 1959³, II 272, comparing him with Cleanthes; A. PENNACINI, *o.c.* (n. 25), a useful and intelligent article marred by a strange misinterpretation of *fr.* 1 Pow.

³⁰ Cf. K. VON FRITZ, *o.c.* (n. 18) 40.

³¹ In his revision of PASSOW'S *Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen, 1912.

³² Loeb edition of D.L. London, 1925, ii 79.

³³ Cf. for example Epictetus 3.22.15 (ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ), 16, 87, with Billerbeck's notes *ad loc.*; Dio of Prusa, *or.* 6, *passim*; W. CAPELLE, *De Cynicorum epistulis*, Göttingen, 1896, 22 n. 3 had already interpreted the word as relating to the Cynics' outdoor life.

³⁴ Cf. appendix H to Leaf's edition of the *Iliad*, vol. ii (2nd ed., London 1902), Bühler on Moschus, *Europa* 144, *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* and E. FERNÁNDEZ-GALIANO, *Léxico de los Himnos de Calímaco*, s.v. αἰθήρ.

³⁵ See KINDSTRAND, *o.c.* (n. 21) 215, with refs.

³⁶ Cf. *fr.* 4.15-16, 11, 16 Powell.

³⁷ Herodotus 2.35 cites as an example of Egyptian topsy-turvydom that εὐμαρεῖη χρώονται ἐν τοῖσι οἴκοισι, ἐσθίουσι δὲ ἐξω ἐν τῆσι ὁδοῖσι: cf. DUDLEY, *o.c.* (n. 13) 5.

of doors; cf., for example, D.L. 6.58: ὄνειδιζόμενός ποτε ὅτι ἐν ἀγορᾷ ἔφαγεν, «ἐν ἀγορᾷ γάρ» ἔφη «καὶ ἐπέινησα»³⁸. We should therefore interpret the word as 'eating out of doors'³⁹. Thus interpreted, the word fits in well with other literary references to Diogenes and his followers. From a very early date, it is normal for three identifying marks of the Cynic to be mentioned: the staff, the doubled cloak, and the knapsack in which he carried his food⁴⁰. The staff and the cloak Cercidas has already indicated: note that the compound βακτροφόρας lends an air of grandeur to a humble object; in later Cynic literature the staff is often assimilated to the σκῆπτρον carried by kings or even by Zeus himself⁴¹. In αἰθεριβόσκας Cercidas is alluding to Diogenes' frugal diet and austere self-sufficiency, symbolized by the πήρα, the knapsack which was so important in Cynic ideology and iconography: Diogenes is credited with a significant pun on the word⁴², and Crates devoted to it a famous parody of epic⁴³.

Just as Cercidas has dignified the Cynic σχῆμα as a whole by an accumulation of epithets in the hymnic style, and has alluded to the humble staff with the impressive compound βακτροφόρας, so too in αἰθεριβόσκας he is exalting Diogenes' unconventional practice of eating in the open from his πήρα. The august overtones of αἰθήρ are exploited to prepare for the revelation of the Cynic's Zeus-like nature: for though there are no extant parallels in earlier literature for the compound in αἰθερι-, one is reminded of the Homeric phrase αἰθέρι ναίων which is fre-

³⁸ Cf. D.L. 6.61, 69.

³⁹ As was seen by H. Stephanus, who translated it as 'sub divo pastus' in his edition of D.L. (Geneva, 1570).

⁴⁰ The iconography was evidently not quite fixed at the time of Leonidas of Taras, who at A.P. 7.67.5-6 (= Gow-Page, *Hell. Ep.* 2337-8) attributes to Diogenes ὄλην, πήρην, and τὸ παλαιὸν ἔσθος, but significantly Archias, in his imitation of Leonidas, A.P. 7.68.5-6 (= Gow-Page, *Garland* 3670-71) gives him ὄλην, σκίπωνα, διπλόον εἶμα, πήρην. Elsewhere stick, double cloak, and haversack are almost invariable: cf. Antipater Thess., A.P. 7.65.3-4 (= *Garland* 499-500), A.P. 11.158.1-4 (= *Garland* 621-4), Honestus, A.P. 7.66.1 (= *Garland* 2404), Antiphilus Byz., A.P. 333.1-2 (= *Garland* 1063-4). For Lucian, *Peregrinus* 24 πήρα καὶ βάκτρον καὶ τρίβων are equivalent to 'Cynicism' (cf. *ibid.* 36); cf. D.L. 6.22 (at 6.13 he attributes the outfit to Antisthenes). For modern discussions of the Cynic σχῆμα, see KINDSTRAND and BILLERBECK, *loc. cit.* (n. 21).

⁴¹ E.g. Epictetus 3.22.57, 63, where see Billerbeck's notes; [Diogenes], *ep.* 19 (Diogenes a re-incarnation of Agamemnon, with staff for sceptre), *ep.* 26 (Cynic staff compared with Heracles' club: a frequent motif); cf. also [Crates], *ep.* 16: τὸν τρίβωνα καὶ τὴν πήραν, τὰ θεῶν ὄπλα.

⁴² D.L. 6.33: «ἀναπήρους» ἔλεγεν οὐ τοὺς κωφοὺς καὶ τυφλοὺς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας πήραν.

⁴³ *Supplementum Hellenisticum* 351; cf. R. HÖISTAD, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King*, Uppsala, 1948, 126-31.

quently applied to Zeus⁴⁴, and in the last line of the fragment (which may well have been the last line of the poem as a whole) Cercidas insists on the accuracy of the etymology of Diogenes' name: he is truly Zeus' offspring, Ζανὸς γόνος. Just as, on this lexical level, Diogenes' godlike qualities were implied by his name, so his immortality was already implicit in his austere way of life on earth⁴⁵.

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⁴⁴ B 412, etc. For the construction of a new compound from an earlier phrase, cf. Callimachus' εὐρύνασσα (*h.* 6.121), seemingly formed on the model of Pindar's εὐρὺ ἀνάσσω (*Ol.* 13. 24).

⁴⁵ The tradition represents Diogenes as comparing his own self-sufficiency with that of the gods: D.L. 6.104 Διογένης ... ἔφασκε θεῶν μὲν ἴδιον εἶναι μηδενὸς δεῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ θεοῖς ὁμοίων τὸ ὀλίγων δεῖσθαι.