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## [Dudley. Cynism in the 3rd century BC - suite]

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upon them and their wealth taken away'.<sup>1</sup> But this seems to miss the bitterness of the passage: Cercidas does not speak of himself as one of the governing classes, but rather as one oppressed by the unequal distribution of wealth. 'Why not give to us the wealth that flows on useless expense?' and again, 'Why does the impartial balancer never incline the scales to me?'

We know from Polybios that social distress was particularly rife in Megalopolis about the time of the refounding of the city after its destruction by Cleomenes, and I suggest that it is to these years that we must assign the poem. Polybios says that there was a party which proposed to force men of property to contribute a third of their land to make up the numbers of new citizens required; and it is significant that the poem twice refers to the division of superfluous wealth for redistribution amongst the poor. The bitterness of the reference to Xeno harmonizes well with the 'disputes, jealousies, and mutual hatreds' which Polybios says were rife amongst the Megalopolitans. If we accept Knox's attractive suggestion that τὰ δ' ἔσχατα βρογυῖα Μυσῶν are the Macedonians, the nature of the allusion (ἄζομαι δὲ θὴν λεγεῖν) is understandable. Cercidas, who had played a leading part in securing the Macedonian alliance, could hardly complain if its results were unsatisfactory. That Antigonos would do little for the reforming party is likely enough, as Tarn says, Macedonia was always the bulwark of law and order and the existing state of affairs. The Peripatetics, too, were always more or less dependent on Macedonian protection, and it is likely that the code of Prytanis, which caused so much dispute, unduly favoured the wealthy. On this interpretation, the poem is not a warning to the governing classes to mend their ways while there is time, but a call to the party of reform not to wait for the vengeance of Heaven to strike the rich, but to act themselves under the inspiration of a new triad of deities, Paean and Sharing, and Nemesis. The tone in which the false deities of popular belief are assailed is essentially Cynic, as is the attack on luxury. The three deities are especially interesting. As Hunt well observes, the Cynics had a particular reverence for doctors, they themselves were ἰατροὶ of men's souls, so the reference to Paean is readily intelligible, it implies healing both physically

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. vii, p. 755.

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