Sparta

Second Edition

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PREFACE

This is, to my knowledge, the first ever full-scale sourcebook on Sparta.[1] By filling that considerable and long-standing gap the LACTOR committee hopes to make easier the teaching of topics on Sparta on school and university syllabuses. This volume has long been promised, and does now finally appear in time for the latest change to UK A-levels.

As an absolute *neodamodes* in studying Sparta I have been greatly dependent on the help offered to me by the two kings and some of the ephors of Spartan studies, (if they will excuse my referring to them in this way!). Professor Paul Cartledge saved me from a huge number of errors, small and great, by his careful reading of a draft, and his comments have greatly improved the text and notes at many points. Stephen Hodkinson's advice was instrumental in forming the structure of the volume; he provided comments on several sections and wrote the introduction to Spartan Epigraphy; I have also reused, with his kind permission, some of the notes he has previously written for schoolteachers. Maria Pretzler will also recognize many of her notes written for JACT incorporated into this volume. Bill Cavanagh provided the notes on Spartan Archaeology (an area which goes way beyond my understanding) and two of the maps. Paul Christesen has generously shared some of his current research on Sparta, even to the point of allowing a new interpretation of an important text to appear here in advance of its full publication. Naturally, though, none of these experts are to be held in any way responsible for the errors and faults that remain.

I am also very grateful to a number of people who have helped translate the texts included here. Brian Wilson translated all the main prose texts: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians*, and Plutarch's *Life of Lykourgos*. It has been a great pleasure working with him on various LACTORs over the years. Ken Hughes translated Tyrtaios, Alkman and Aristophanes. Both these gentlemen will have wondered if their superb work would ever appear in print, and I thank them for their patience as well as their skill. Terence Edwards translated a good deal of Plutarch, not all of which appears here (some will be on the LACTOR website) and meticulously checked the text. Andrew Harker translated several passages of Xenophon. Other translations are mine.

Most of the photos are from the wonderful British Museum non-commercial images service. I am grateful to Matthew Nicholson, Polly Low, and the Ashmolean Museum Cast Gallery for assistance with other photos.

I dedicate this book to a great friend and former colleague, Jeremy Thomas.

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Head of Scholars, Warwick School

[1] Talbert's 'Penguin' volume translates Plutarch's most important works on Sparta, as well as Xenophon's *Constitution*. Rhodes, *Greek City States* has an excellent section on Sparta. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia* has a very useful appendix, giving all the texts relating to helots.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES, MAPS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

Illustrations

Tables

NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

'Archaic period' is used to refer to the years 800–500 BC; 'Classical period' for the years 500–323 BC; 'Hellenistic period' for the years 323–100 BC; '(Roman) Imperial Period' for the years 31 BC – AD 200.

Square brackets enclose editorial material inserted into the texts. This includes chapter and section numbers, references to the texts, explanatory glosses, and supplements to fragmentary literary or epigraphic texts. In some cases I have used square brackets part of the way through a word or name to indicate roughly how much of the original Greek word survives.

Like almost all modern editors I have been inconsistent in transliteration of names. In principle I have converted *kappa* to 'k' and *chi* to 'ch'. But some names are so familiar in Latinised or Anglicised versions that a consistent rendering would be pedantic and confusing. So Thucydides and Sicily appear (not 'Thoukudides' and 'Sikelia').

I have tried to be more consistent in translating to refer to the 'Lakedaimonians' as Greek authors always do. They are less consistent in referring to their town as 'Sparta' or 'Lakedaimon', but I have replicated whichever name they used. 'Spartiate' translates that particular term by which a Greek author designated a full citizen. I do of course use the term 'Spartan' in notes to refer to the people and their culture.

BM	The British Museum, London
BSA	The British School at Athens
Cartledge, *SL*	P. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia, A Regional History 1300 – 362 BC* (Routledge 2002)
Cartledge, *Agesilaos*	P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (Baltimore 1987)
CQ	*The Classical Quarterly* (Oxford University Press)
Diels-Kranz	H. Diels & W. Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Fragments of the Pre-Socratic philosophers), 6th ed. Berlin 1952
FGrH	F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker,* Berlin 1923–58
Hodkinson, *PWCS*	S. Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* (Classical Press of Wales 2000)
Hodkinson, NSW	S. Hodkinson, '*Transforming Sparta: new approaches to the study of Spartan society' in* Ancient History: Resources for Teachers Vol 41–44 (2011–2014) Macquarie University, NSW, Australia
Hornblower, *Commentary*	S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* (3 vols, Oxford, 1991, 1996, 2008)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae,* Berlin 1873–
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
LSAG	L. Jeffery, *Local Scripts of Ancient Greece* (rev. A. Johnston, Oxford 1990). Numbers refer to the Lakonia section unless otherwise stated.
LSJ	Liddell & Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon,* 9th ed., rev, H. Stuart Jones (Oxford 1925–40)
ML	R. Meiggs & D.M. Lewis, *Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century,* (rev. ed., Oxford 1988)
OCD	S. Hornblower & A. Spawforth (eds) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary,* 3rd ed., Oxford 1996
RO	P. Rhodes & R. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions* 404–323 BC, Oxford 2003
OR	R. Osborne & P. Rhodes, *Greek Historical Inscriptions* 478–404 BC, Oxford 2017
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum,* Leiden 1923–

GLOSSARY

agathoergoi: men on state missions: see **D22**.
agoge: a term used by post-classical sources to refer to the education of a Spartan boy (cf. *paideia*).
agora: the religious, commercial and political centre of a Greek *polis*.
apella: a feast of Apollo, celebrated on the seventh day of each month. As the Spartan assembly (*ekklesia*) was also held on this day it is sometimes wrongly used to mean the assembly-meeting itself.
dekarchy: literally 'rule by ten', set up in many parts of Athens' former empire by Lysander in 404 BC. The rulers were military despots; their rule unpopular and mostly short. **E130–1**.
eiren (pl. *eirenes,* anglicised to *eirens*): a Spartan man in his twenties.
ekklesia: general Greek name for a voting assembly of all full citizens. See note before **D23**.
enomotia: small group of Spartiate soldiers.
ephor: one of five, annually elected chief magistrates.
gerousia: council of elders (*gerontes*): see note before **D12**.
hebon (pl. ***hebontes***): a Spartan man in his twenties.
homoioi ('equals'): the name the Spartiates gave to themselves.
krypteia: group of young Spartans sent out on night-time training exercise of unclear purpose (**D42–D44**).
Lakedaimonians: the Greek term always used to describe 'Spartans'.
Lakedaimon: alternative name for the town 'Sparta' and for the state territory.
lochos: 'unit', led by a ***lochagos*** (**D85**).
m(i)na (pl. *minai*): unit of currency.
mora (pl. *morai*) a division of the army comprising 500 or 700 or 900 men (**D87**).
mothakes: those adopted as children by wealthy Spartan families: see **D30–D31**.
navarch (Gk. *nauarchos*): commander of the Spartan navy (a regular office only from 409 BC).
neodamodeis: helots probably set free to serve in the army (**D45**).
oliganthropia: shortage of Spartiate manpower.
paidagogos: usually a slave, in charge of a child's education throughout Greece.
paideia: the usual term used by classical authors to describe the education of a boy (***pais***, pl. ***paides***) in Sparta and elsewhere in Greece.
paidonomos: a senior Spartan, responsible for supervising boys' education (**D74**).
pentekostys: group of Spartan soldiers.
phidition: the mess-meal, see **E77**.
polemarch: 'war-leader'.
polis (pl. *poleis*): the Greek 'city-state' with its own laws and systems of government. Often translated 'city', but much more the population of a modern town, and including some land and villages around it.
politeia: how a *polis* operated, its constitution, but also customs and general ideas about behaviour of its citizens (*politai*).
proxenos: representative of one Greek state in another (**B1** note).
Pythia: the priestess of Apollo at Delphi (**D8**).
rhetra: a generic term for set of rules forming the basis of the Spartan constitution: the main one attributed to Lykourgos is the 'Great Rhetra': see **D48**

***skytale**:* secret message stick: see **D21**
stele (pl. *stelai*): a slab of stone or bronze on which inscriptions were carved/incised.
syssition: mess-meal (also known as *phidition*, *syskania*).
xenos: 'guest-friend', the friendship being between men from different states and including their descendants.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERARY SOURCES

Source criticism is a crucial aspect of any study of ancient Sparta. Many literary texts from the fifth century BC onwards reflect an idealisation and distortion of traditions about Spartan society, a concept now generally referred to as the Spartan 'mirage' (see introduction to Section F). It is important to understand that there is no ancient text that can serve as a 'main source', especially because the most extensive accounts, e.g. Plutarch's works on Sparta, were written in the Roman period. Moreover, the information about Sparta's history and culture which is recorded in the surviving literary sources was not recorded by Spartans. Apart from two poets of the seventh century BC, namely Tyrtaios and Alkman, we do not have any literary sources that originate from Sparta. In the classical period, Sparta was not easily accessible to strangers, and therefore many accounts of this period were probably written without personal knowledge of the place, and with little access to primary evidence. Xenophon is a noteworthy exception, but this does not mean that his account is without difficulties. Sparta changed considerably after Messenia was liberated (370/69 BC), and all ancient sources written after the mid-fourth century are either dealing with very different circumstances, or they were actually describing a historical situation which was no longer accurate. Many later sources probably represent a mixture of both failings, combined with Spartan stereotypes.

Since Sparta played a central role in Greek history, especially in the Archaic and Classical periods, its foreign policy and military campaigns are prominent in the historical texts that provide the main narrative for these periods, especially Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon's *Hellenika*. The goings-on behind the scenes are more difficult to reconstruct, usually by combining the few details about events in Sparta reported by outsiders with our general knowledge of the Spartan constitution and careful analysis of Sparta's activities abroad.

Alkman: poet of the late-seventh century, BC, probably Spartan. See intro to **A13–A20**.

Aristophanes: Aristophanes' comedies were written between 427 and 386 BC to entertain an Athenian audience at a particular religious festival. They are topical and engage with the political situation of the day, but, since playwrights were competing for the audience's favour, they were probably careful not to present political opinions which would antagonise a large part of the audience. The *Lysistrata* (performed 411 BC) is among a number of Aristophanes' comedies which advocate peace with Sparta, and although there are references to some points of contention in the conflict (chosen for double entendre as much as for topicality), the debate about war and peace is mostly conducted in very general (and of course comical) terms. Aristophanes offers us a number of comedy Spartans, both male and female; the *Lysistrata* is particularly useful as a guide to Athenian stereotypes of Sparta in this period.

Aristotle: (384–322 BC) philosopher and polymath from Chalkidike, but based in Athens for much of his adult life. One of his many interests was in the different constitutions of Greek states. His students researched and described 158 constitutions, among them that of Sparta. This does not survive, but was used extensively by later authors, including Plutarch. Aristotle also used this research for his theoretical work in

the *Politics*. He offers valuable criticism of the Spartan system, informed by Sparta's decline in the fourth century.

Athenaios: (flourished *c.* AD 200). From Naukratis in Egypt. His *Deipnosophistai* – '*Scholars at Dinner'* presents, in 15 books, the lengthy discussion of a wide variety of subjects, citing some 1,250 authors and quoting over 10,000 lines of verse. Athenaios thus offers a treasure-trove of extracts from authors whose works do not survive, but he does not offer historical criticism himself.

Diodoros: (active 60–36 BC). A native of Sicily, Diodoros wrote a *Library of History* in 40 books, attempting to set events in Greece alongside those in Rome. For much of his account of fifth-century Greece he seems to have followed Ephoros (see below), but his attempts to convert Ephoros' topical treatment into the year-by-year accounts he wanted can result in mistakes in his apparently certain chronological framework (e.g. **H64**). At his best he conveys the virtues as well as the vices of his sources, at his worst he garbles even the accounts he has before him.

Ephoros: (*c.* 405–330 BC), from Kyme (Greek city on the Aegean coast of modern Turkey). His large-scale *History* from early times to his own day was important in antiquity but now lost, except where quoted directly or used as a major source by other writers (e.g. Strabo, Plutarch and Diodoros). Thought to have been pro-Athenian and inaccurate in military descriptions.

Herodotus: wrote *c.* 450s–420s BC. Herodotus was from Halikarnassos in Asia Minor, and is therefore one of the few Greek authors of the classical period who were not Athenian. He did, however, know Athens well and, some of his views are influenced by the growing conflict between Athens and Sparta in the mid-fifth century. Most of his work is based on original research and inquiries, and is therefore informed by the views of his own time. He often refers to (unnamed) informants, "the Spartans say", "the Corinthians have a different version", and it is a characteristic feature of his method that he presents different points of view on many issues. In some instances he also claims to have based his account on Spartan sources which clearly add a different point of view, although we have no way of telling how much of this information is indeed authentic. Herodotus generally admires Sparta's laws and the virtue and courage they inspired in individual Spartans. His narrative of the Persian Wars, especially the account of the battle of Thermopylai (**F9–F26**), had a lasting influence on ancient as well as modern perceptions of Sparta. Herodotus does, however, also present a less admirable side of Sparta: her imperialist tendencies, for example the episode of early attempts to conquer Tegea (and all of Arkadia), and the activities of Kleomenes I.

Kritias: (*c.* 460–403 BC). Most famous from Xenophon's portrayal (*Hell.* 2.3–4) as the extremist leader among the Thirty Tyrants of Athens (404–3). He was also a well-known cultural and intellectual figure (friend of Socrates, related to Plato) who wrote plays and works showing his admiration of contemporary Sparta, which survive in occasional quotations. He seems to have started the Spartan 'mirage' (see section F).

Oxyrhynchos Historian: the name usually given to the Athenian author of a narrative history of Greece found in quite substantial papyrus fragments at Oxyrhynchos. He cannot be identified for certain, but appears to be reliable and a near-contemporary of the events he describes. It is clear that Ephoros and Diodoros followed his account rather than Xenophon's.

Pausanias: (2nd century AD, from Asia Minor) wrote a detailed *Description of Greece*, based on his own visits, and divided into 10 books, by regions. Pausanias was particularly interested in ancient monuments, cults and traditions, and offers many useful details on these, often confirmed by archaeology. Book III deals with Sparta and Lakonia, but little of the information provided can be firmly linked to the classical period, offering instead a detailed insight into perceptions of Sparta in the Roman period. Book IV, on Messenia, offers a lengthy history of the Messenian Wars now regarded as an invention of the fourth century BC.

Plato: (*c.* 429–347 BC) the great Athenian philosopher. Grew up during the Peloponnesian War and with family members split pro- (e.g. Kritias) and anti-Sparta. Not surprisingly his philosophical dialogues sometimes refer to contemporary Sparta.

Plutarch: (before AD 50– after AD 120, from Chaironeia in Boiotia), author of biographical and philosophical writings. Plutarch was a very prolific writer and diligent researcher: often preserving information that is otherwise lost. The *Life of Lykourgos* illustrates this very well: Plutarch cites dozens of earlier works, and assembles a narrative from divergent opinions. But much of his material also dates from after Sparta's decline in the fourth century, and any information in his text that is not explicitly identified as taken from a genuinely archaic or classical source should be considered as secondary material. Moreover, while Plutarch was interested in historical detail, he insisted that his *Parallel Lives* of Greeks and Romans were not history – his main aim was to draw characters which could be instructive as moral examples (see Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 1), not to provide historical analysis. This explains why for Plutarch the vague and contradictory traditions about a 'historical' Lykourgos were not an obstacle to writing his biography. Plutarch produced a number of works which deal with Sparta or individual Spartans: *Lives* of Lysander, Agesilaos, Agis and Cleomenes III; and in preparation for writing these he compiled *Sayings of Spartans and Spartan Women* and *Lakedaimonian Institutions* later included as part of his *Moralia.*

Simonides: (poet from Keos, flourished around Persian Wars, see on **A21** and **F20**).

Strabo: (64 BC – after AD 21). Wrote a *Geography* in 17 books, a rich source of information about the whole of the Roman Empire, but only occasionally informative about classical Greece.

Theopompos: historian from Chios, lived 378/7-*c.* 320. His summary of Herodotus and continuation of Thucydides survive only in later quotations. His erudition and strong invectives were famous in antiquity and he was known to have been critical of Athens.

Thucydides: (*c.* 455–400 BC). 'Thucydides the Athenian wrote the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians' as he tells us in the first words of what we call the *History of the Peloponnesian War.* Later he explains something of his sources of information:

> "I lived through it all while being old enough to understand it, and applied my attention so as to understand it accurately. In addition it happened that I was exiled from my own country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis (424 BC) and became familiar with affairs on both sides, especially the Peloponnesians', because of my exile, and getting a better understanding of them through my leisure." (5.26.5).

The work does indeed seem to draw on information about the goings-on within the Peloponnesian League, although it is difficult to tell how much he really knew about exact details, for example speeches delivered at league assemblies (see Thuc. 1.22.1). Sparta herself remains a somewhat mysterious place (e.g. Thuc. 5.68.2; cf. 4.80.3). Thucydides does not present the Spartans in a deliberately negative light: both sides receive praise and blame for their actions. However, Thucydides' general view of Sparta seems to be strongly influenced by an Athenian perspective, not so much as an enemy, but rather as a polar opposite, and some of Thucydides' general statements about Sparta can be read as subtle comments on Athens (see 2.5).

Tyrtaios: elegiac poet of mid-seventh century BC, probably Spartan. See intro to **A1–A12.**

Xenophon: (*c.* 430-*c.* 350 BC) writer of various prose works. From a wealthy Athenian family, Xenophon fought in Asia Minor for Cyrus and then Agesilaos II, and again for him at the battle of Koroneia, resulting in his exile from Athens. The Spartans gave him an estate near Olympia, and he may have lived in Sparta and even had his sons participate in the Spartan education system (Plut. *Mor.* 212B). Certainly he had access to first hand information about Sparta and reason to be grateful to Agesilaos and Sparta.

The *Constituton of the Lakedaimonians* (*Lakedaimonion Politeia*) was probably written in the late 390's or 380's BC (chapter 14 is generally considered later). The work offers us the only detailed and well informed information about Sparta before the changes that followed the defeat at Leuktra. Nevertheless, Xenophon's description remains vague in many respects: it was not meant to be a detailed anthropological study, but rather a kind of political pamphlet, defending Sparta against its critics. The text probably depicts a somewhat idealised Sparta, and Xenophon's view of Lykourgos represents an extreme position: he credits more aspects of Spartan society to the lawgiver than any other ancient source, and he expresses a particular admiration. It is impossible to determine how much of this reflects genuine Spartan views, but we can probably assume that this is the perspective of a well-informed sympathiser. Xenophon also used his knowledge about Sparta in his other works. The *Hellenika* (political history covering 411–362 BC) includes many details on Peloponnesian history. Xenophon's biography of *Agesilaos* develops the image of the ideal, noble Spartan. Various comments on Sparta can also be found in Xenophon's philosophical writings.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPIGRAPHY OF LAKONIA AND MESSENIA

The evidence of epigraphy has been a comparatively neglected aspect of Spartan studies: a neglect that this sourcebook aims to redress. The sources presented include a range of inscriptions displaying the thoughts and actions of a variety of individuals (mostly Spartiate men, but also a sprinkling of others) and collective groups (not just the Spartan *polis*, but also its enemies, including rebel Messenians). These inscriptions are far from complete or fully representative in their coverage. However, their evidence is more diverse and inclusive than the literary texts, providing contemporary 'insider' evidence unmediated by the lens of external or later literary commentators.

The comparative neglect of inscriptions is partly due to the Spartiates' undeserved reputation for illiteracy. Despite Plutarch's claim that their 'reading and writing lessons were restricted to the minimum necessary' (**D76**), recent studies have shown that the Spartiates were far more literate than previously supposed and that the written word was central to the conduct of *polis* affairs. The ephors, whose remit included diplomatic negotiations (**E43, E144**), were elected from the whole citizen body and could include poor citizens (**D18**). Consequently, 'the minimum necessary' was that even ordinary Spartiates needed sufficient literacy to engage with written foreign policy texts, such as the treaties and interim negotiation documents recorded with precision by Thucydides (**B16–22**). These and other official documents, such as records of Delphic oracles and laws such as the 'Great Rhetra' (**D8, D48**), were probably stored in a rudimentary archival system spread across different locations, including the main sanctuaries and the houses of the kings and other citizens engaged in foreign affairs (**E135**).

How many of these official documents were 'monumentalised' as public inscriptions is uncertain. Not secular laws, and probably not oracles either. However, we should not be misled by the small number of public inscriptions surviving today. After antiquity the deserted site of Sparta served as a quarry for lime burners. Also, because the local marble was hard to work, many inscriptions were probably written on bronze plaques, later melted down for their metal content. Diplomatic agreements were often publicly displayed at Sparta itself (**B15, B17, B18**), as were official lists of sporting victors (cf. **C62**). Probable lists of victors in contests at local festivals have been found at both Sparta and the perioikic *polis* of Geronthrai (*LSAG* 195, 201 nos. 44–47). Dedications celebrating military victories were also frequently inscribed at sanctuaries abroad.

These epigraphic practices first become evident in the mid-sixth century, when an agreement with Tegea was displayed on a (now lost) *stele* set up on the banks of the River Alpheios (Aristotle, fr. 592). Around 500 BC the Spartiates dedicated an inscribed bronze cauldron at Olympia (**B3**). They also commemorated their exploits in the Persian Wars with monuments at Thermopylai and Delphi (**B4–5**), and also at home (**F27**). Similar inscribed dedications after military victories continued at Olympia (**B8, 10a–b)** and Delphi (**B23**) for the rest of the fifth century – a practice mirrored by several of Sparta's enemies (**B11, B29, B31–B33**). Among enemy dedications, two examples are especially intriguing: first, the dedications of two spear-butts by the Messenian rebels of the 460s, one at Olympia, the other at the sanctuary of Apollo Korythos at Longa in Messenia itself (**B9a–b**); secondly, the

joint dedication by the exiled Messenians and the Naupaktians of the famous winged Nike of Paionios at Olympia in *c*. 421 BC (**B14**). Around 470, Sparta set up public inscriptions at Sparta and Olympia listing the multiple athletic victories of one of their former Olympic victors (**C45–C46**). Public inscriptions at Sparta recording treaties, alliances and a unique war-fund donation list are not attested until the late fifth century (**B12, B15, B17–B18**), but we should not assume that it was a new practice. The late fifth century also sees the first direct epigraphic evidence for the burial abroad of fallen Lakedaimonian soldiers, the tomb of the war-dead from King Pausanias' expedition to Athens in 403 (**B25a–b**); but we know from literary evidence that this practice went back to the sixth century (**E11, H12**).

These public inscriptions are outnumbered by a much greater number of surviving private inscriptions. The vast majority are formal in character: the main categories being religious dedications – including sporting and military dedications – and epitaphs for the deceased. There are just a few examples of informal literacy, most notably at Amyklai: graffiti inscribed on certain terracotta plaques at the sanctuary of Agamemnon and Kassandra (G. Salapata, *Heroic Offerings* 55) and masons' names scratched on architectural blocks from the late-sixth-century throne of Apollo (*LSAG* 200 no. 32). On sixth-century Lakonian black-figure pottery there are a few dipinti clarifying pictured scenes (*LSAG* 199 no. 8), but no potters' or painters' names; even the dipinti disappear from classical Lakonian red-figure pottery. There are no abecedaria and no informal boasts or obscenities.

As indicated, the vast majority of private inscriptions are religious in character, expressing a dedication made to a god or hero, most commonly as a thank-offering **(C1–C36)**. These dedications were made at diverse sanctuaries, mostly within Spartan territory, though a significant minority were made at foreign sanctuaries, especially at Olympia and Delphi but sometimes beyond mainland Greece (**B7, C16)**. Some of the private foreign dedications overlap with official inscriptions: for example, the regent Pausanias' personal inscription on the tripod and serpent column at Delphi celebrating his victory at Plataia, which was erased and replaced by an official Spartan inscription (**B5–6**); or the so-called Navarchs' monument at Delphi, which celebrated the Lakedaimonians' victory at Aigospotamoi, but also gave centre stage to the personal achievement of Lysander and his subordinate naval commanders (**B23**). Others intersect more indirectly with public foreign policy, such as the inscribed marble seats at Olympia of two Spartiates who acted as *proxenoi* for the *polis* of Elis (**B1–2**), or the memorial to the deceased King Agesipolis I set up by his father, the exiled former king Pausanias (**B28**). However, the largest category of private inscriptions at foreign sanctuaries is those accompanying the dedications of Olympic athletic and equestrian victors, attested sometimes through the survival of the original inscription (**C49, C55, C59**), but more frequently through the evidence of Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, which describes the surviving monuments and inscriptions of Spartiate chariot-race victors in his account of the sanctuary of Olympia in the second century AD (**C52**).

The private inscriptions within Spartan territory go back to the late seventh century BC (**C6, C29**) and continue throughout the period covered by this volume. The religious dedications are inscribed on various kinds of objects and materials. The most common is diverse types of bronze items, such as figurines and statuettes of humans, gods and

animals (**C3–C4, C17–C19, C27**), mirrors (**C2, C14**), plates or vessels (**C8, C29**) and miniature bells (**C15**). There are a significant number of inscribed dedicatory marble or limestone *stelai* or plaques ((**C7, C11–C12, C28, C31, C34, C36**), including a notable series of hero-reliefs, as well as some dedications on ivory objects (**C6**), pottery (**C21**, **C32**) and terracotta plaques. Stone or marble *stelai* were also used by athletes listing multiple victories (**C67, C79, C83**), for epitaphs (**B36–B55)** and for a small group of manumission inscriptions (**C20**). The intrinsic value of the materials used and the production costs of the objects bearing the inscriptions, not to mention the costs of the inscriptions themselves, all suggest that the individuals who commissioned them were mostly well-off persons with a fair degree of disposable wealth.

One striking (and perhaps connected) feature, in a society with a reputation for prioritising the collective over the individual, is that the private inscriptions within Spartan territory share the same intensely personal focus as the inscriptions abroad. Many of the dedicatory inscriptions advertise the dedicator's name (**C1, C4–C5, C7–C18, C25, C27–C29, C31**). The athletes' dedications celebrate their individual prowess by listing their victories (**C67, C78, C79, C83, C86, C88, C89**) or by inscribing the dedication on an object – typically a jumping weight or a discus (**C80–C82**) – that they used in the contest. Notably, these sporting dedications are far more numerous than the small number of inscribed dedications with military associations (**C4, C10**). In contrast, most of the inscribed epitaphs are explicit memorials for fallen soldiers (**B36, B40–B43, B47, B49–B53**) or for priests (**B38, B44**); but they too are mostly individual memorials, and the deceased's athletic success is sometimes also mentioned as a supplementary mark of personal esteem (**B53**; cf. **B25a & c**).

Another striking feature is that these various types of inscriptions come not just from Sparta and its environs, but also from elsewhere in Spartan territory, especially in Lakonia. For example, dedications to Artemis and Apollo occur not only at Spartiate sanctuaries like Artemis Orthia and Apollo at Amyklai, but also at sanctuaries in perioikic areas such as the sanctuaries of Artemis at Pleiai (**C9**), Apollo Hyperteleatas at Cotyrta (**C2–C3**), Apollo Maleatas at Prasiai (**C4**) and Apollo Pythaieus at Tyros (**C5**). Dedications by athletes at Amyklai and at Athena Chalkioikos on Sparta's acropolis are matched at perioikic sanctuaries such as that of Apollo at Geronthrai (**C79**) and the hero Timagenes at Aigiai (**C80**). Epitaphs for deceased soldiers or priests are found both at Sparta and at perioikic *poleis* or other settlements such as Pellana (**B49**), Geronthrai (**B43**), Leuktra (**B39**), and Gerenia in Messenia (**B44**). This implies that free Lakedaimonians across Spartan territory shared common religious practices and epigraphic habits: a sign of the cultural homogeneity underpinning the mutual solidarity of Spartiates and *perioikoi* in both peace and war.

A final notable aspect is a small number of dedicatory inscriptions commissioned by women: mostly by Spartiate women, but at least one inscribed mirror dedicated by a woman, a certain Alkido, is known from the perioikic sanctuary of Apollo Hyperteleatas (P.G. Kalligas, *Lakonikai Spoudai* 5, 1980, 21). Though few in number, these inscriptions frequently shed light on wider bodies of archaeological evidence. The bronze figure of Eleuthia (**C27**) – i.e. Eileithyia, goddess of childbirth – dedicated, probably in the fifth century, by a certain Aristomacha, is of unknown provenance; but it plausibly links with two earlier dedications, a bronze pin-head and

die, to the same goddess, found at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia (*LSAG*, rev. edn. 1989, 447 no. A). The die is dedicated jointly to Eleuthia and Orthia, which fits with Pausanias' statement (*Description of Greece* 3.17.1) that Eileithyia's shrine was 'not far' from Artemis Orthia, perhaps within the same *temenos*. Aristomacha's dedication also confirms the presence of female dedicators at the sanctuary, already inferred from the large number of bronze jewellery votives and numerous lead figurines depicting model looms and female figures with elaborately patterned dresses. Equally significant is the prominence of female dedicators to Sparta's patron goddess Athena on the Spartan acropolis. Of the four inscribed bronze offerings found on the acropolis that bear the dedicator's name, three were dedicated by women: a mirror dedicated by a certain Euonyma (**C14**) and two bells dedicated, respectively, by Kalikratia and Eirana (for the first of these, **C15**). The bells, which date between *c.* 475 and the early fourth century, were not associated exclusively with women: the dedicator of a third inscribed bell was male. However, the fact that two of the three known dedicators of the bronze bells were women makes it probable that women also dedicated many of the surviving 34 bronze and 102 terracotta bells from the sanctuary that are uninscribed or whose inscription omits the dedicator's name (cf. A. Villing, *BSA* 97, 2002, 223–295). Bells made in the same workshop also occur outside Sparta: at the Menelaion, at Aigiai in Lakonia and the sanctuary of Apollo Korythos at Longa in Messenia: further evidence, along with the inscribed mirrors, that Spartiate and perioikic women, like their menfolk, shared common religious practices.

Of course, the most dramatic piece of female epigraphic evidence comes from outside Spartan territory: Kyniska's epigram on her statue-base at Olympia, celebrating her four-horse chariot-race success in 396 or 392 (**C55**), which not only emulated but exceeded the inscriptions of male Spartiate chariot-racing victors by boasting about her royal breeding and her unique position as the only female victor at the Olympic games. Unlike her Spartiate male counterparts, Kyniska's epigraphic victory celebrations continued inside Lakonikē, to judge from a small inscribed Doric capital and abacus that she dedicated to Helen at the sanctuary of the Menelaion (*IG* 5.1.235): a fitting dedication for someone whose hero-shrine (**C56**) was later placed close to the sanctuary of Helen, the role-model for all female Spartiates. Thus the epigraphic texts provide precious evidence for the voices of a few, largely wealthy, women speaking in their own words. Sadly, this inclusivity does not extend to the enslaved populations of Lakonikē, especially the helots, whose voices or condition are revealed only at the moment of their self-liberation (**B9**) or manumission (**C20**) from slavery.

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INTRODUCTION TO LAKONIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeological evidence for the Spartan state is, like the written evidence, fragmentary, biased and open to interpretation. Lakonia and Messenia, the regions dominated by Sparta in the Classical period, are among the better researched parts of Greece, but even so archaeological exploration has barely scratched the surface. Sparta's sanctuaries, such as those of Apollo and Hyakinthos at Amyklai or of Orthia by the R. Eurotas, have been extensively explored, but much of the town is known only from scattered remains and excavations in advance of modern development; furthermore, the Archaic and Classical levels are often masked or destroyed by Roman building. With a few notable exceptions, such as Geronthrai and Messene, other towns are even less well-known. Happily, a long tradition of archaeological exploration recording the location and surface remains of ancient sites has mapped the main centres in Lakonia and Messenia, and intensive survey has, in recent years, revealed a pattern of small farmsteads and villages. Recording of ancient quarries and road systems adds to our understanding of ancient topography. All the same there are large gaps in our knowledge, and the database of archaeological information, in contrast with the historical sources, is constantly increasing. Careful study of pottery and other artefacts has improved the precision of archaeological chronology, but dates can seldom be refined even as closely as to a generation or two, so archaeological evidence can only rarely be tied in with historical events but serves better to distinguish broad trends in social and economic history.

Archaeological Background to the Rise of the Spartan State

The Late Bronze Age period (roughly 1700–1100 BC) saw the rise, dominance and fall of Mycenaean kingdoms. Each was ruled from a palace whose king (*wanax*) exercised military control over its territory, harnessed its economic resources, directed large numbers of skilled and unskilled workers, controlled officials in subsidiary towns, patronised local leaders, oversaw religious festivals, priests and priestesses. All these transactions are recorded on clay tablets (in the script known as Linear B). The palace in Messenia, the area later annexed by Sparta, was at Pylos. In Lakonia, Linear B tablets have recently been found and excavated in another imposing palace at Ayios Vasilios, 13 km south of Sparta. The palatial system declined and disappeared – the palace at Pylos was destroyed around 1200 BC, that at Ayios Vasilios perhaps 100 years earlier. The later centuries of the 2nd Millennium saw the fall of major powers over much of the east Mediterranean, as well as Greece. For the period 1100–800 BC archaeology indicates widespread and catastrophic depopulation, as severe in Lakonia and Messenia as anywhere. Around 900 BC graves around Sparta indicate an early sign of the scattered 'villages' from which the later city grew. Pottery of the same period has been found at sanctuaries which were to be the focus of Sparta's calendar of festivals: of Apollo and Hyakinthos at Amyklai, of Athena on the acropolis, of Orthia by the R. Eurotas. Sparta is not alone: sites elsewhere produce similar pottery, some later to be perioikic towns. Over the next two centuries the offerings become richer, and site-numbers slowly increase. But still both Lakonia and Messenia were thinly populated, and archaeology alone, if we did not have the testimony of Tyrtaios, would not indicate that by then Sparta was well on the way to dominating Lakonia and Messenia. A few warrior graves in Sparta and Messenia are our only hint of unsettled times. Modern scholarship indicates a

gulf between the Mycenaean kingdoms and the city states of historical times. The Greeks of the 8th and 7th centuries BC, if in very different terms, recognised that the age of heroes described in the epic tradition was remote from their own world; the Spartans bridged the gap by reference to myth, notably that the Spartan kings as the descendants of Herakles had a right to the land which they and their followers, after moving down from central Greece, had reconquered **(A3)**. How much, if any, historical truth lay behind the myths we cannot say.

Early Archaic (8th–7th centuries BC)

The increasing prosperity of Sparta is witnessed mainly through finds from the sanctuaries: bronze tripods, elaborate pottery, iron weapons, jewellery, carved ivories.

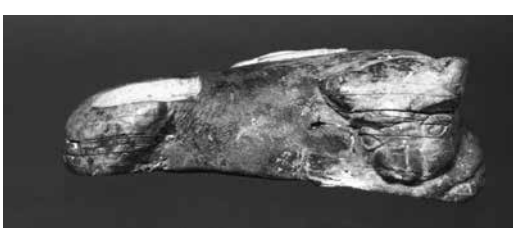


Figure 1. Ivory Lion of 7th century BC, from Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. The lion is 7.5 cm long. BM 1923,0212: photo © Trustees of the British Museum.

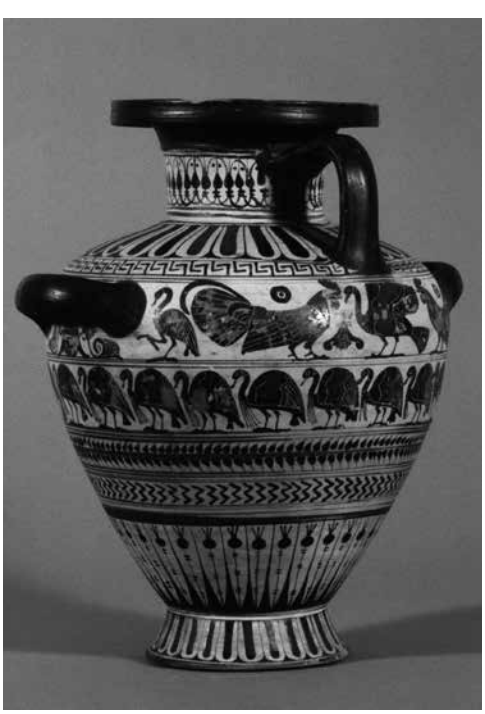
Small temples were built, such as the early one at Pellana (20 km north of Sparta); by the mid-7th century distinctive terracotta roof-decorations (disc *akroteria* [finials], antefixes, *simas* [gutters]) characterised Spartan temples. They are found not only at the major sanctuaries such as Orthia and Amyklai, but throughout Sparta and its environs (e.g. the sanctuaries of Zeus Messapeus, Athena Chalkioikos, Agamemnon and Alexandra, Helen and Menelaos) and elsewhere in Lakonia (at Aigai and Kastraki – 35–50 km south of Sparta); the style was imitated widely in the Peloponnese. Even for their time, these are modest buildings – the temple of Orthia measured about 16 x 7 m (roughly one eighth of the size of the peripteral temple of Hera at Olympia, with its great akroterion). Already the Spartans avoid excessive monumentality at home, but the skill and grace of these artefacts serve to undermine the notion of a grim austerity. Little lead figurines, humbler votives, celebrate the participants in festivals: hoplite warriors, female celebrants – perhaps members of choruses **(A14)** and processions, flute and lyre players, gods and goddesses and the animals sacred to them, token imitations of rich offerings, and the wreath-crowns worn at festivals.

The earliest inscriptions found in Lakonia belong to the later 7th century **(C6, C29)**, but the alphabet was first introduced to Greece over a century earlier and almost certainly to Lakonia too; writing will already have formed part of a Spartan's education.

Figure 2. 6th-century bronze statuette, 10 cm. tall of warrior, found at Sparta. BM 1929,1016.6: photo © Trustees of the British Museum.

Later Archaic (6th–early 5th centuries BC)

The artistic trends observed in the preceding period continued with increasing sophistication. Lakonian pottery includes vessels for *symposia*, some painted with scenes of luxury, others with images of heroes, but also the unexpected, such as the cup with king Arkesilas of Kyrene in Libya weighing out silphium; great storage jars had elaborate scenes impressed from moulds. This period saw the stone hero reliefs, which have been found both in Sparta and in perioikic Lakonia; however, as in much of the Peloponnese (in contrast to Attica and other regions), free standing *kouroi*/*korai* are not attested. Bronze working reached a high point with massive vessels *intricately* decorated like the famous Vix krater. The Spartans were *au fait* with the latest developments in architecture, as witnessed by a few Doric capitals (from near Sparta and from Geronthrai and Kalamai), a triglyph from the Menelaion, and the famous 'Throne of Apollo' at Amyklai; but evidence for large temples is hard to identify. The Spartans seem to have had a taste for unusual monuments, often finely worked in valuable materials, such as the 'Bronze House' of Athena Chalkioikos.



Lakonian pottery of the mid-sixth century BC.

Figure 3 (left): Hydria, 39.37 cm tall, found at Vulci in Italy as prized grave-goods. BM 1849,0518.14.

Figure 4 (above): Kylix by 'the Rider Painter', diameter 17.75 cm. BM 1842,0407.7

Photos © Trustees of the British Museum.

For the 6th and 5th centuries intensive archaeological survey has revealed a major change in rural settlement and the development of a dense network of small farmsteads and hamlets. A similar process has been recognised in other parts of Greece, though sometimes starting earlier than in Lakonia. Close to Sparta a mixture of sites ranging from the modest to larger and more prosperous ones has been distinguished; on Kythera sites in the interior were given over mainly to production, those on the coast were larger and more prosperous. A scatter of small sites has also been observed

in southern Lakonia, for example around the town of Helos. Intensive survey in Messenia, however, has revealed a completely different configuration made up of larger village communities; these evidently housed the helots who worked the land for the Spartans. A large building excavated at Kopanaki in Messenia contained storage jars and loom weights and other finds indicating agricultural activity. These discoveries indicate changing responses to agricultural production; to a degree Sparta and Lakonia followed a trend recognisable elsewhere in the Peloponnese and central Greece, but at the same time its peculiar social and economic organisation influenced the patterns of rural exploitation.

In Lakonia, as elsewhere in Greece, pairs of grooves spaced an axle width of 1.4 m apart have traced a network of roads; they were carved to prevent carts from slipping. Our best guess dates them, from the settlements they connected, to the 6th century and later. They are found widely, even high in the mountains, and served for both military traffic and the transport of heavy goods, crops and even people.

Classical (5th–4th centuries BC)

The picture of Sparta as no more than a collection of villages is an overstatement by Thucydides (**H1**); like many classical cities it had much open space given over not only to public buildings, but to squares, hippodromes and *palaistrai*. Unfortunately, archaeology has not provided clear evidence for much of its layout, and we are more reliant on written sources. The agora was a hub from which roads led out to the NE, to the Orthia sanctuary and to the main routes northwards, and the Aphetaïs was the processional road leading south to Amyklai; the agora's exact location is disputed. Pausanias, writing in the 2nd century AD, lists shrines and temples dedicated to gods and heroes many of which must have gone back to Archaic and Classical times, and there were tombs within the city, some evidently the locus for cult. The royal cemeteries of Sparta's kings have not, alas, yet been located; they were the most noteworthy but not the only examples of cult dedicated to contemporaries not just to heroes of the mythical past.

Public buildings included the Skias, built to shelter the assembly, the Persian Stoa, promoting Sparta's victory at Plataia, the Spartan messes, and the areas where, much to the shock of other Greeks, not only boys but also girls exercised. Public performances were grand occasions. There is mention of a 'theatre' as a site of religious ceremonial, and clay masks imitating original performance masks were dedicated at the sanctuary of Orthia by players of a series of stock characters. The religious processions also saw display in particular, special carriages (*kannathra*) were decorated with griffins and other beasts while the horses were richly caparisoned. All the same, monumentality was generally muted; though they were kept in repair and re-roofed every so often, evidence for large-scale stone reconstruction of temples is hard to identify.

Some perioikic towns (maps 3–4), to judge from surface remains or the area enclosed by their fortifications, were relatively small, no more extensive than some of the Attic demes: Sellasia 3 ha, Epidauros Limera 4 ha, Zarax 3.7 ha, Geronthrai 3.8 ha, Akriai may have reached 7–8 ha. Others such as Gytheion and Boia, for which we do not have data, may well have been much larger. Some of the identifications on

maps 3–4 are secure, but uncertainty surrounds both the location and the status of others, while some of the more obscure towns cannot be placed on the map even approximately. Fortifications, such as those of Epidauros Limera, are thought to belong to the classical period, but are not dated precisely. The Athenian attacks during the Peloponnesian War (and earlier, Thuc. 1.108) on towns near the coast no doubt led to the construction of some defences; we know that Gytheion was fortified at least by 370 BC and excavations at Geronthrai have revealed a late classical phase of construction. The town of Sparta remained open until the Hellenistic period.

The port of Gytheion must have been important from early on and was the site of shipyards for the Spartan fleet. Boia also has a harbour and was important for its mineral resources: traces of iron workings are common there, and the more general area has deposits of lead and copper which may well have been tapped in antiquity. In addition to the agricultural commodities (corn, oil, wine), in particular of Messenia, timber may well have been another significant economic resource; the area around Kythera was famous for producing the prized purple dye.

Evidence from intensive survey close to Sparta has been used to argue for a gradual transformation in rural settlement. The smaller, possibly more marginal, sites become fewer and their holdings perhaps were swallowed up by the larger, more dominant sites. The location of sites also hints at both more investment in farming and perhaps greater diversification in the exploitation of the landscape.

Conclusion

In this brief review some of the contributions to our understanding of early Sparta have been summarised. As in the interpretation of the written sources so in understanding archaeological material there is much that is controversial; for example, some argue that it is possible to recognise the onset of Spartan austerity through an apparent decline in artistic creativity in the later Archaic period, whilst others argue that in this respect the Spartans were no different from other contemporaries elsewhere in the Peloponnese and the decline in arts such as vase painting or the making of bronze vessels does not reflect a political or social reform. These and other debates continue. Furthermore, every year there are fresh archaeological discoveries and new evidence leads to new interpretations. Such uncertainties make the study of archaeology both frustrating and stimulating – this section, perhaps more than any other in this book, will certainly need to be rewritten in the future.

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