

고대 그리스 역사의 소개

스파르타

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🔊 [0:00]

Well, as we continue with our investigation of the emergence and development of the *polis*, we come to the *polis* that just to use its proper name in Greek, Lacedaemon, and that is the proper Greek name for it, but the capital city of it was Sparta and its people were called Spartans.

So, it's okay to keep talking about Sparta and Spartans. Now, when you come to Sparta you are coming to a *polis* that you almost want to spell it in capital letters with stars between them. It's like the *polis* lifted to a new level in the sense of all the sort of theoretical elements and psychological elements that go into creating a *polis* is intensified in Sparta to such a degree that it seems to be almost a different thing.

And it's important to remember that the other Greeks felt that way too.

Sparta had a special place in their minds, in their imaginations. They admired the Spartans very, very much, because the Spartans carried to this extreme degree the feeling that the *polis* was the center of a Greek man's life, and that it had the virtues that were associated with the *polis* to an extraordinary degree.

Now, they admired it very, very much but they didn't admire it so much they were ready to live like the Spartans, because the price was very high indeed.

One other thing to remember as we take a look at the way the Spartans lived was that they became a sort of a model for the philosophers who came along in the late fifth and into the fourth century.

I mean especially Plato and Aristotle, who certainly had some criticisms of the real Sparta that existed, but who modeled their notions of ideal poleis in a with the variations that they wished to introduce.

So, it's worthwhile, and of course it's added to these ideas and feelings about the Spartans, there is the fact that Sparta would emerge in the sixth century as the most powerful of the poleis and the first leader of a lasting alliance of states with the Spartans as the leading power among them, the first international organization you might say if you were speaking loosely, so that there is a practical aspect to it.

The Spartans became the most powerful and most important state in Greece, right down to and including, the Persian Wars.

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Well, first I guess, we ought to take a look at how Sparta got to be what it ultimately became and once again I have to say that all we can do is to reason from very limited evidence, better than what we've had up to now, but still mostly from written evidence that comes from a time after the facts we are talking about, practically no contemporary evidence, although we do have a bit and the archaeological remains that we do have and then reason from that.

Well, of course, that kind of reasoning leads to controversy and there are different opinions about all these things.

Again, what I will be attempting to pass on to you is the most widely accepted set of opinions about these things, but one cannot be sure that other evidence might not emerge or new ways of seeing things might change the picture somewhat.

As you will see, or have seen in your problems book, on one question there really is no consensus, but again just a majority opinion as to the question of how and when Sparta got to be what it was. So here's the most common interpretation I'll be giving you now.

The story is you come into the Peloponnesus at the beginning of the Dark Ages and it's before the Dorians have taken over, so that the people inhabiting that area are Greeks who are of the branch of the family who speak an Achaean kind of Greek, meaning the language the Greeks spoke in the Mycenaean Period.

But that's not what they're doing when we first see them historically and when they emerge in the form of the people who will make the polis. By then they are Dorians who have come into the Peloponnesus at some point after the fall of the Mycenaean world and in most places, almost all places, have become the dominant people in the Peloponnesus.

So, when you first see anything that is Sparta, we see Dorians running it, and we see subordinate Greek peoples in different degrees of subordination, who are presumably Achaean Greeks who have lost out in the competition and who are under the Spartans. It looks like from a very early time you hear about people called helots and how to define a helot is not simple.

Helots in a certain sense are slaves, but they are not the kind of slaves we are accustomed to think about who belong to a particular master.

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They are slaves who belong to the state, to the *polis* as a whole and then to further complicate matters when we come upon them functioning, although they work and



they belong to the state they are assigned to a particular part of the farmland of the region occupied by Sparta, which is called Laconia. They are assigned to that piece of land, which piece of land, will also be assigned to a particular Spartan citizen so *de facto* the helots are working the plot that provides the food for a particular Spartan, not for the Spartans in general. So, that's moderately complicated, but the helots are going to be a very critical part of the story and of understanding what makes Sparta tick.

Now, there are also, from the first time we hear of the Spartans, there are people living in Laconia, some of them in the neighborhood of Sparta, but one of their fundamental defining characteristics is that they do not live in the city of Sparta, they are not citizens of Sparta, they are not what the citizens of Sparta are called, Spartiates.

It looks as though they're probably Dorians, although we can't be sure about that, but it looks as though they are. These people are called *perioikoi* and their name means people who live around Sparta, that means anywhere in the territory controlled by the Spartans, but not in the city and as we shall see they are free. They are not slaves or serfs or helots.

Each *perioikoi*, presumably, has a farm that he works for himself. The *perioikoi* also are engaged in trade such as it is in Sparta, which is very, very small relatively speaking and also in industry again which is not a big deal, but somebody has to be working the bronze and the iron and the making the pots, and these people would be *perioikoi*, because the Spartans, when we finally see them in the developed state of Sparta, won't be doing any of that stuff.

When Sparta is Sparta, the Spartiates do only one thing. Well, I guess not, they do two things; they fight and they prepare to fight. That's it; they are soldiers. They do nothing else. They have no economic function whatsoever.

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Now, it wasn't always so, there is well, before I tell you the story as we tell it today based on modern interpretations, let me tell you what the Greeks and the Spartans said about it.

They said at one point back there in those early days, there was a man called Lycurgus, who brought laws to Sparta and set up the regime of Sparta as we will know it in the sixth and the fifth centuries.

And he did it, and there's a lot of arguing about what his date was, but if you take the ancient Greek sources seriously, maybe in the ninth century B.C., this was done and so it was forever thereafter.

Well, not only is this date not widely believed, hardly any scholar would take that seriously, and then people do argue about when would the changes have taken place, and if there was a Lycurgus, when he would have introduced these laws.

A skeptic of nineteenth-century historian put it this way, he said, Lycurgus was not a man he was only a god. That is to say, he was somebody invented by the Spartans as somebody who put together this.

I myself you know me. I'm credulous by trade and I believe in the higher naiveté. I think there might have been a guy named Lycurgus, and I think there's a pretty clear if there was such a man he probably proposed some laws which became important to the Spartans.

But I am not so completely credulous as to believe the system was established by one man, way back when, and it didn't change, because there's a good deal of evidence to suggest the contrary that there are developments that happened that make Sparta what it will be ultimately.

The first sort of historical event that we know about, and we think we know about Sparta was towards the end of the eighth century, perhaps in the years between 725 and 700.

There was a war in which the Spartans conquered the neighboring territory to the west of Laconia, which is called Mycenae. I hope you're becoming familiar; I hope you're looking at maps a lot and becoming familiar with the geography of Greece and the Peloponnesus.

You can notice to the west there is a kind of a promontory that comes out and it's on that extreme western side of the Peloponnesus that Mycenae is located and it looks like it's right next to Sparta, and it is, but there's an important thing that you have to be aware of.

There's a mountain range that separates Sparta from Mycenae, the Taygetus range and it is striking.

If you go to Sparta and come up from the Spartan port of Gythium and head up for the town itself, pretty soon if you look to your left there is this really serious range of mountains that makes it clear it was a barrier; it was not something that you could just think away.

It meant they were very separated. So, if a Spartan wants go to Mycenae he doesn't just head west, he has to go north and then hang a left when the mountains have stopped and go around and come on back down. That's going to be a very important part of the story of why Sparta is the way it is.

But the conquest of Mycenae in the first Mycenaean War, as this is called, is very important, because now the Spartans conquer a very large number of people whom they turn into helots.

These are not just like all the other people that were living around Sparta, who the Spartans happened to make helots at an early stage; this is a whole people with a sense of themselves, who think of themselves as Mycenaean.



They are conquered and enslaved and they become a critical part of the Spartan population from the standpoint of the Spartan economy, essential for the kind of state Sparta becomes, and they are permanently dissatisfied.

They are permanently angry, they are permanently thinking about somehow getting free and permanently, therefore, presenting a threat to whatever the Spartan regime is at the time. So, that's a very, very important development

Now, probably before that happened, the Spartans like some of the other states, send out colonies, only two.

One of them is out west in the southern Italy at a place called Taras, that town becomes under the Romans becomes Tarentum. It's Taranto in modern Italy.

And in the Aegean Sea the Island of Melos is colonized by the Spartans. And so my guess is they did that as a way of handling that population growth problem that was beginning to be felt around Greece before they conquered Mycenae and that settled their problem forever

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Thereafter, they didn't need any more land; they had all the land they needed to feed themselves and take care of what they needed, and to be farmed by these captive helots.

Yet, if we imagine ourselves let's say for the sake of argument in the year 675, it looks as though Sparta has certainly not yet become the kind of place we will see in its fully developed state.

For instance, it is still engaging in the kinds of cultural activities that are characteristic of the other states, which will not be true when we get to the Classical Period.

Two striking examples are in the area of pottery where we find Spartan made pottery, painted pottery of the same kind of quality, but of its own unique style, as we find in the other Greek city states.

When you get to the late sixth and into the fifth century, that's over.

There isn't like that anymore, and so that's a change.

But the other thing that's striking is that in the period before the final, or I should say the major change in Spartan life, we discover poets, fragments of whose poems remain.

There are two famous Spartan poets of this early period, Terpander and Alcman, and they wrote beautiful poetry of the same kind as the other Greeks.

That will stop by the time we get to the period we're talking about.

So, the next great historical event that makes a difference in Sparta is the second Mycenaean War, which occurs in the years, of course these are approximate, somewhere between 650 and 625 this happens.

Notice in each case, first and second war, our guess is a whole quarter of a century of fighting; that's very important to realize.

These were not your typical Greek war of later years.

This was not one day we'd have a battle and we'd go home.

This was a campaign that lasted a generation, that's how hard it was to conquer Mycenae, and then in the second Mycenaean War, how hard it was to put down the tremendous rebellion that brought about the second Mycenaean War.

It was a helot rebellion.

The helots could not have succeeded in making this such a hard fight had they not been assisted by some of the neighbors of Sparta.

Argos, you will remember, from the time of Pheidon, they have been an enemy and a competitor of the Spartans, and so the Argives are quick to join and help the helots in their rebellion against Sparta, but so too do a number of cities to the north of Sparta, from the region called Arcadia, also join in with the helots and even so far as the northwestern corner of the Peloponnesus, a town called Pisa near Olympia also joins the coalition against the Spartans.

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So you can imagine that the Spartans push forward created opposition and the helots took advantage of that, and joined with the other states to put Sparta in danger.

The ancient tradition says the Spartans really were in terrible danger and it was a very, very hard fight and what happened was going to turn out to be the first of a pattern.

When the helots were defeated in battle they didn't quit, they didn't stop fighting, they retreated to the safest place they could find and there in Mycenae there is very rugged mountain called Ithome which is a kind of a natural fortress and which the helots fortified still more.

So, they could stay up there on that mountain and fight off Spartan attacks for quite a long time.

Remember, the Spartans are hampered in this war by having to cope with neighboring cities battling them as well.



By the time that is over, you move towards the ultimate arrangement of life in the Sparta that we will come to know.

One set of scholars, they probably are as numerous as any, would suggest that it's only after the second Mycenaean War that the Spartan constitution that I will describe for you comes into being.

Probably we shouldn't even imagine that it was all the laws were laid out, all the customs were established in one fell swoop, but rather that there was a basic set of things that was laid out and then over time other changes were made that produced what we're talking about.

So, that's why I think we can't accept the traditional Lycurgus story; that he came down, set up the laws, even if we do accept that Lycurgus who was a kind of a law giver.

Now, before I describe it in detail, let me make a general statement about it.

What is established in this constitutional ultimate reform is to make Sparta like no other state in the Greek world, and then perhaps — well, like hardly any other state in all of history, and to make it the subject of attention and interest, and of usual admiration, although not always, throughout the millennia.

You will find when people know about the Greeks and they know about Sparta, I'm talking about of course in the West, philosophers and others are struck just as Plato and Aristotle were by certain things about the Spartan way of life that make them take it seriously and admire it.

🔊 [21:17]

Rousseau was a great admirer of Sparta for a variety of reasons.

But one of the things that I don't want you to lose sight of is that Sparta becomes a slave holding state like no other Greek state.

Now, there was slavery all over the ancient world.

There was no society that we know of in the ancient world that was without slavery and Greece was no different, but in the period we're talking about there were not very many slaves among the Greek states as a whole, and there was certainly nothing like what the Spartans did.

To have a system of life that allowed the Spartan citizens not to work in order to live; no other Greek state would have that.

If you want to think about Greek slavery in the seventh century B.C., think about what I told you about Hanson's reconstruction of the development of the polis.

Think about farmers who themselves worked the fields, and are assisted in their work in the fields by one or two slaves that they owned.

That's not the Spartan system.

The Spartan system will be Spartans at home, training constantly for their military purposes, never working any fields, never engaging in trade or industry, others doing that for them.

Something that in a small way begins to resemble slavery as we think of it in the antebellum south in the United States, where great armies of slaves are doing all the work and where the plantation owners, the Spartans don't do any work at all, but in the south to maintain the kind of a military aristocracy of a certain kind.

Please don't push that analogy too far and I hope I haven't misled you by suggesting it.

But why I do is because it may help us understand the Spartans a little bit better.

I remember my old colleague who taught history of American slavery and so on, John Blassingame, said to me at one point, he said when the emancipation came, the slaves were freed and so were the masters and I think that's a very perceptive thing to say.

They were sitting on a powder keg, those southern plantation owners.

They were in terror constantly that if everything didn't go just right something like Nat Turner's rebellion would take place, and they'd come home and find their wives and children with their throats cut.

🔊 **[24:06]**

They were in constant terror and they had to live a life that required all sorts of things that they might not have liked to do, in order to repress the slave population on which they relied, and that is what I want to communicate.

The Spartans, after the two Mycenaean Wars, were in constant fear.

I think it's not too strong a word of helot rebellions, which might then be assisted by neighboring states that were jealous or disliked the Spartans.

Thucydides says flat out that, that's what the spring is to understanding Spartan policy and Spartan thinking, it is their fear of the helots.

Most scholars would have accepted that without question; lately, some scholars have come up and wanted to question it.

I must say I'm not at all persuaded by the new interpretation.



I do think to understand the Spartans we have to comprehend the continuing permanent concern about the helots, as we'll make clear as we talk about some of the details of their lives.

All right, let's take a look now at the way the Spartan constitution looked fully developed.

We begin with the training and education of the young; the treatment of the young indeed from the time that they are born.

The Spartans and the Greeks referred to this system of training and education as agoge. To begin with, a Spartan — let's start with the men.

A Spartan boy is born.

Already from the very beginning this is not merely a matter that concerns his family, his father and his mother.

The decision as to whether or not he should be allowed to live is made by the elders of the Spartan community who examine the child.

What are they examining him for?

Mainly, almost entirely, for his physical condition.

If he is crippled, if he is deformed in any way, they will have him put to death.

The child, the infant, brand new baby will be killed.

The reason for that was that they had a clue about eugenics.

They understood that healthy children grow up to be healthy adults, who grow up typically to have healthy children and vice versa.

They could not afford, was their thinking, to have men grow up who would not make good soldiers, because that's what Spartans — and worst of all who would then sire boys who were not good material for soldiers.

 **[27:13]**

So, there you see already something that was totally different from any other Greek state.

It's not that other Greeks did not engage in infanticide; they clearly did, but that decision was made by each family and it was usually made by poor families — I mean, the bad decision to kill a child was made by poor families who just simply couldn't afford to raise the child.

But in any case, it was as it would be, in almost any society you ever heard of a family decision.

Not in Sparta, it was a state decision as to whether you should live or not.

Well now, suppose the child made it through that first ordeal, now he has six years of more or less normal life.

He lives at home like any other little boy with his mother mostly, and with his father I suppose too, not so much.

You'll see why I say not so much in a bit.

Finally, at the age of seven, he is taken away from home, put into a word in Greek that really means pack, just like the — don't the Cub Scouts call them, their little groups packs? Is that right?

So, there they are and they're taken away from home and they live in a military school, which is the only school there is for boys in Sparta.

The school is governed by a magistrate and it is run by the older boys.

In many respects, when I think about it, it strikes me as being like an upper class British — what they call public school, which means of course private school.

The descriptions of Eton and Harrow, and even more harrowing places than that; surely, you must have read novels by Englishmen talking about their school days and each one sounds like a torture chamber.

Well, that's what we've got here.


But the worst part about those schools so far as I could tell were the other boys.

Because they were allowed, the older boys were allowed to deal with younger boys the way older boys deal with younger boys, badly.

They are bullies, they push them around, they mistreat them; it's tough to grow up in a place like that.

That was what they were up to; tough is one of the critical words that you need to understand if you're thinking about a Spartan education.

But they made it now to the age of 12, they live in these barracks, they have a communal life, they have nothing resembling luxuries available to them — more and more it sounds like an English public school of the nineteenth century.

 **[29:00]**



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They don't have shoes, they are given one cloak.

Now, whatever you may think about the sunny Mediterranean and Greece.

Go to Sparta in the middle of the winter.

It's damn cold, so that one cloak isn't enough, and that's intentional.

The idea is for them to learn how to bear cold.

They are fed enough, of course, to keep them healthy and going, but no more, not to satisfy their appetite.

This is meant to make them, first of all, to make them lean and tough but also to accustom them to the hardships of a campaign and basically to make them tough.

They are... therefore constantly on the hunt for food and the funny thing is that the ethos of the situation was this...that it was understood they would try to steal whatever they could.

It's hard for me to know where they would find things to steal and how to steal it, but kids are very ingenious.

So, anyway they would be encouraged to do that but they would be punished severely if they were caught.



So the trick was to steal but not to get caught.

That was also part of the training.

But I always thought that some wonderful focus of what it was like to be a kid in one of those Spartan schools is revealed by the story that Plutarch tells and it doesn't really matter if the story is true or not.

Because it tells something real in the telling.

🔊 **[32:00]**

The story is that one Spartan boy had succeeded in hunting an animal that he could eat and the animal he caught was a ferret.

And he would have killed it and eaten it except that at just at that point the call was for them to get into formation and so he had to immediately get into formation it would have been deadly not to do that.

But he didn't want to lose the ferret so he tucked it under his cloak.

So there he is standing with the other boys at complete attention.

Meanwhile, the ferret is gradually eating his way into the boy's side.

Naturally, he doesn't even blink because if he lets on that he did he would be severely punished for being caught stealing the ferret.

So finally, the ferret finds its way to a vital organ and the boy without saying a word drops dead right there in the ranks.

Now, of course, the point of that story is to show how brave the boys were and how tough they were and how rigorous was the Spartan training.

I was always struck by how hungry do you have to be to want to eat a ferret?

But however you see the story, you see what the message is.

Might be exaggerated and all that, but that's the picture that comes out of Sparta.

Now, they are also in addition... they are given physical training.

They're already beginning to get physical training, the use of weapons, formations and so on.

But at the same time they are taught what the Greeks called, I think I mentioned in an earlier talk... musikae, music.

What we call the translation is music, but it means poetry.

It means poems that are accompanied by musical instruments and sung, but the words are what matter more than anything else.

The kind of things that they are taught are moral lessons that are meant to be the things that they live by that they are raised by and in a few moments I'll read to you an example of the kind of thing that was part of that musical training.

Of course, gymnastics and military training I mentioned before.

The boys until the age of 20 are trained by older boys or I should say young men between the ages of 20 and 30.

So this educational element will consist of boys from the age of seven to men at the age of 30, but the guys between 20 and 30 will be the teachers and the boys below them will be their pupils.

🔊 [35:00]

Now, other elements involved in this picture, there was as you always find in systems where boys are packed together and there are older and younger boys hazing is part of this game, all part of the business of being tough and manly and so on and so forth.

But for the Spartans, that wasn't enough.

As we will see, what they are shooting for is not developing...not merely developing individuals who have the qualities that are desired.

They are interested in developing people, young men who are so closely intertwined with each other as to be tighter, even I would argue, than a family.

And one aspect of this was very clearly sexual.

The typical arrangement was a young teenage boy would be associated with an older man but could be one of the men between the ages of 20 and 30... it could be an older man, and they had a formal arrangement.

The older man was what the Greeks called an erotes, a lover and the boy was the eromenos and that means the beloved.

Xenophon who is an Athenian but who spent a good deal of his life in Sparta and knew the Spartans very well is very, very eager to tell us that there was no physical side to this association that it was purely spiritual and it was between teacher and pupil between mentor and the boy that he provides mentorship for, but that's all.

But forget it. I mean these were very much homosexual relationships.

But the extraordinary thing to remember is this was a phase, a passing phase.


That is this relationship started when one was a boy and one was a man...and when the boy reached manhood himself... then he was no longer in that relationship and he himself could become an erotes... and find himself an eromenos,

Although, it would be surprising if he didn't continue to have a very close friendship and association with the older man who had been his erotes.

This is the other thing.

Every Spartan went on, thereafter, I'll come to it in a minute, was married and was supposed to produce children, most desirably male children who would serve as soldiers for them.

So, we should think of this as being all part of a state system of training and education to produce fighting men, who would also be practically all a single family as close and tight with one another as they could be.

 **[38:00]**

Because of the quality it would give to the Spartan phalanx made up such men.

I was going to say the... Spartan man when he reaches 20, the guys that were there between the ages of 20 and 30, are allowed to marry.

But they are not allowed to live with their wives.

They continue to live in the barracks.

Talk about strange and peculiar arrangements.

On the other hand, of course, they had a natural desire to visit their wives, which they could do if they weren't caught.

So, you had to sneak away to be with your wife but if you were caught you were punished.

Now, what's that all about.

Well... it shows you one of the main many conflicts that exist in the Spartan system.

On the one hand, you have to do that because you need children to perpetuate Spartans but also to provide soldiers.

So, you have to have that much normality in the system.

On the other hand, you want to resist as much as you can, building a family in the traditional sense because loyalty to the family might be in conflict with the loyalty to



the polis.

The polis wins that argument, because the separation takes place.

I don't know whether the Spartans understood this or not, but it seems to me there's a psychological element in here that might even have physical consequences for all I know...I'm thinking about imagine what it was like when a wife and a young husband and a wife actually got together all that time.

I mean, there's an argument for quality as being at the opposite end of quantity.

Never mind....In any case, those are some of the strange arrangements that were now but... when the man gets to be 30 he stops being an instructor in the school.


Now he has his own home, he lives at home with his wife, and if he has young children below seven they'd be there.

And the situation looks more normal.

Except that these Spartan men did not eat dinner at home.

They had their meals together at a common mess... each one of which was called a syssition then that words means having food, having grain, having bread together and there were 15 men to each one of these syssitia... this mess and they ate together, had their meals together for the rest of their lives.

There again, you have a sense of tremendous community building, unit building.

 **[41:00]**

What is that...About the size of a platoon isn't it, or is it a squad?

The size of a squad.

Everything in this thing is military.

Now, think about the kind of a loyalty to one another, which we have learned and is so critical to success in warfare that came from people who had come through that system and were fighting as they did... right next to the guys that they saw everyday at meals.

So, that was part of that game.

So, even when there are grown men and living at home, they are still maintaining their close quasi familial association with their fellow fighting men.

What are the qualities that are supposed to be produced by this system?

Discipline. First and foremost. Every aspect of your life is governed by the laws and



the customs of the community...you better conform.

There is nothing else for you. Self reliance, strangely enough.

Because all of these encouragements to theft and discouragements to getting caught have to do with building the ability to do things like that.

Social cohesion. Who can imagine a system more constructed to bring about such a goal.

Loyalty to one another, whatever group we're talking about, but of course beyond that loyalty to the community at large is implicit in all of that.


Obedience to your superiors. Physical and moral endurance.

Courage, and another quality that is important, and again, something that appealed very powerfully to other Greeks, uniformity.

You are all just like one another, you go through exactly the same experiences; there's no distinction among you.

On the other hand, and this is another one of the so... interesting contradictions about Spartan system.

Every one of those boys and then young men, and the older men is in competition for honor.

 **[44:00]**

And that is a contradiction.

And it's a very interesting kind of tug.

I think you know this.

You have to understand that the Spartans are living in a condition of strain.

It seems to me, much greater than most societies impose on people.

But it's obviously arranged so effectively that it works.

We don't have an evidence sort of mass insanity or great need for psychiatrists or anything like that.

If it was an insane society they were all insane in the same way and they didn't know it.

And I think that we have to face that fact.



This business of sameness I think is important.

They referred to one another and they were referred to the men who had grown and become full citizens, we called *homoioi*.

Sometimes people translate this as equals.

No, that's not right.

It is similar, they are all like one another.

I think they wouldn't have called themselves equals because there was this constant sense that they are vying to be the best even as they are so similar to one another.

The legend has it that when Lycurgus established the system, he divided all of the land controlled by the Spartans into 9,000 patches of land.

The Greek work is *kleroi*, singular is *kleros*.

That was the theoretical thing, again they were all.

In this case, they were all equal in their economic resources because each one had a *kleros* whose food, the product of that *kleros* was his to deal with, and of course, that amount, we're talking about that food was being produced on that *kleros*.

So, in theory, there's all of this similarity and quasi equality.

But age was another important distinction among the Spartans.

As is true in most primitive societies, and the older the society I think the truer it is, age is given tremendous respect.

Just by being older than somebody you are treated as, in some sense, better than a younger person.

But it wasn't pure age, because it's also true that the honor that you had gained in your life would also produce respect in proportion to how great had been your contribution to the state.

I don't think they had formal ways of indicating that.

I don't think there's a question of medals or anything like that.

Everybody knew in a state of this size, everybody knew who was who and treated them accordingly.

Now, there were also over time, there grew up to be inequalities not only of age and of honor but also of wealth.



It's a little bit hard to know how all this came about.

But at different times in Spartan history you see there are people who have managed to lose their *kleros*.

And when you don't have a *kleros* you don't have the necessary wherewithal to make your contribution to the *syssition*.

The mess at which you all dine, and when that happens you have dropped out of the Spartan citizen body.

You are no longer a Spartiate, you are something lesser and that is a very tough kind of thing for a man to have to live in as a Spartan.

So poverty could keep you out of the system, and if for any reason, you had not gone through the *agoge* from beginning to end.

You were not a regular full Spartan.

Also, if anybody had been declared to be cowardly in fighting in the war, that person could be stricken from the roles of Spartan citizens and yet they had no place else to go.

And so as we will see they lived a rather wretched life in Sparta after that situation.

Similarly, if people were thought not to be the children of two Spartans.

Spartan father, a Spartan mother then they were not Spartiates.

They held an inferior place in that society and in a society so, you know, riddled with issues of honor and respect.

You can imagine that was a very big deal.

Keep that in the back of your mind because as we move on in the course and as we get into the fifth century especially, we will be running into Spartans who fit these categories, who are not 100% Spartans.

And yet, some of them become tremendously important and powerful figures in Sparta and we'll want to ask how that happened, but even more we'll want to ask how that shaped the way they behaved once they became important people.

Now, up to now, I've been talking about men.

But it's important to talk about Spartan women too.

Because they were different from other Greek women, just as the men were different.

Just to make that clear, let me make it plain that the rest of the Greeks treated women very, very differently from men.

And one thing that was very striking and the difference was that the men engaged in physical exercise.

Especially in these competitions that were part of the great games and those were always carried out in the nude.

Women did not engage in these sports activities and it would have been the greatest conceivable shame for a woman to be seen in the nude.

It was just absolutely unthinkable for the ordinary Greeks.

But the Spartans do things their own way, and their women engage in dancing and athletics, and in competition.

And they did so in the nude, just as the boys did, and so they were not shut away from the boys all the time in the way that Greek girls were kept away from the boys.

I don't mean to say they were allowed to mingle socially, but that is to say, if the boys were exercising here the girls might be exercising there, someplace else.

They would not be kept so far apart from one another, and again, think about all this.

All of the things that normal human desires think, how that would get exciting and this kind of stuff that I've been describing and yet they would never have a crack at them until they got to be 20 years old.

It all reminds me of a wonderful footnote in a book about English History from 1914 to 1945 by A.J.P. Taylor.

Some of the best stuff was in his footnotes and this one says.

He was telling about the drop of the birth rate in England, late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

And he says, that it was not accompanied by a growth of knowledge of or use of contraceptive devices.

And he concludes anybody who studies in England in this period must realize that he is dealing with a deeply frustrated people.

Well, if that's true of the British, I mean think of what life in Sparta was like for a young man and a young woman.

So, on the one hand, you have women who are treated more like men in Sparta than in other places and indeed they even had greater legal rights than they did in other states.



And I think all of that plays a part in the notion of degrading the family as it is usually understood in the Greek world.

And elevating the notion of a male dominated, a male centered society for the purpose of producing warriors.

Why are the women given this special status?

Because of the recognition that women play a critical role in producing the same kinds of warriors and that's what they're about.

One aspect of this, to show you that it's all for the *polis* and it's all for the business of producing good fighting men.

There were actually in a sense group rights with the women.

For instance, if a man found that his wife couldn't bear children it was legal and proper, and normal for a man who was his friend to lend him his wife and that the child who came from that union would belong to the man who had been childless.

Again, think. I mean, what is happening to all the normal feelings about people have for one another and the central role that family plays in almost every society you can think of.

On the other hand, we should not imagine that women had a role in Spartan society that was anything equal to the men.

Like in every other part of the Greek world, the women were excluded from political life entirely, and yet, there's all this conflicting stuff.

Let me tell you the next thing I want to tell you about.

The marriage ceremony in Sparta shows you a very odd kind of a thing.

First of all, it happens, these are all ritual activities, but you ritually seize the girl you're going to marry.

It's as though you're saying that the fundamental basic way you find a family is you grab a woman and she becomes yours.

Then the marriage ceremony itself, the girl has her head shaved and she is dressed as a man, and sits in a darkened room awaiting her groom.

And it seems to me that they're trying to make her as much like a boy as they possibly can at this moment of the consummation of the marriage for the first time.

Well, whatever my interpretation, you've got to accept the weirdness of the world that I have been describing to you.



Well, all of this you know had this interesting impact.

One other thing, I haven't told you, my last thing I want to tell you about women.

When a Spartan woman was a mother she, pericles in this funeral oration ends the funeral oration and is saying, now as to the wives and mothers of these great men who have just died.

Just shut up and go home.

Because the highest thing that can be said about a woman is that she is never spoken of for good or for ill.

This is democratic Athens we're talking about.

Well, nobody ever told a Spartan mother to shut her mouth.

Because Greek literature is filled with quotations from Spartan mothers telling people stuff, like telling their son to go out to battle and come back with your shield or on it.

You know what the shields were like?

You could use them as, what do you take bodies out with now?

Stretchers.

And so, her message was you come back, but if I heard you threw your shield away and ran, don't come home, and there are all kinds of tales.

So, Spartan women obviously, I'll give you one other.

One time, late in their history when things are going bad for the Spartans, a hostile army actually gets into Sparta and the women are up there on the roofs of their houses, throwing roof tiles as projectiles against the enemy army.

So Spartan women were really something else and there they are.

But if you take the whole picture, what is it?

It is, as I say, the degradation of the family in favor of the importance of the *polis* as a whole, its needs, and its structure.

It is a warrior ethic, it is based upon the principle of the hoplite phalanx and I want to read to you a piece of poetry written by this Spartan poet, Tyrtaeus, who is dated somewhere in the seventh century that gets at a number of the topics I've been talking about so far.

Here's how it goes.



"I would not say anything for a man, nor take account of him for any speed of his feet, or wrestling skill he might have.

Not if he had the size of a Cyclops and the strength to go with it.

🔊 [58:00]

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It is based upon the principle of the hoplite phalanx and I want to read to you a piece of poetry written by this Spartan poet, Tyrtaeus, who is dated somewhere in the seventh century.

That gets at a number of the topics I've been talking about so far.

Here's how it goes. "I would not say anything for a man nor take account of him for any speed of his feet or wrestling skill he might have. Not if he had the size of a Cyclops and the strength to go with it. Not if he could outrun Boreas the north wind. Not if he were more handsome and gracefully formed than Tythonius or had more riches than Midas had or Cenarius too. Not if he were more of a king than Tantalus or Pelops or had the power of speech and persuasion that Adrastus had."

That is a catalog of all the things that people admire and want for themselves, and regard as important in Homer...everything.

Those are the characteristics that every hero wants and he says.

I don't give a damn for all that says Tyrtaeus for no man I'm sorry I skipped an important line.

"I don't care about any of those things not if he had all splendors except for a fighting spirit. For no man ever proves himself a good man in war unless he can endure to face the blood and the slaughter ...to go close against the enemy and fight with his hands."

Here is arete, which my translator translates as courage, which is fair... that's the most fundamental meaning of it, but anyway, it is the word arete.

"Mankind's finest possession, here is the noblest prize that a young man can endeavor to win. It is a good thing his city and all the people share with him, when a man plants his feet and stands firm among the foremost spears relentlessly. All thought of foul flight completely forgotten and as well trained his heart to be steadfast and endure. And with words encourages the man who is stationed besides him. Here is a man who proves himself valiant in war. With a sudden rush he turns to fight the rugged battalions of the enemy and sustains the beating wave of assault."

I don't care about any of those things that you read about in the Iliad and the Odyssey.



All I care about is how do you fight when you're in the phalanx.

And if you don't have it there you're nothing.

🔊 [61:00]

To continue...he's now going to examine the question of what happens if you die.

I mean, that happens doesn't it.

Here's what he says, "And he who so falls among the champions and loses his sweet life."

Notice that I want to teach that...here he is telling... he's going to tell you in a moment how good it is to die in this way, but he's not kidding himself.

Life is sweet, you've lost it.

Here is that wonderful Greek realism that I told you about.

"And loses his sweet life so blessing with honor, his polis, his father, and all his people with wounds in his chest where the spear that he was facing has transfixed the massive guard of his shield and gone through his breastplate as well. Why such a man is lamented alike by the young and the elders, and all his city goes into mourning and grieves for his loss. His tomb is pointed to with pride and so are his children, and his children's children, and afterward all the race that is his. His shining glory is never forgotten. His name is remembered, and he becomes an immortal though he lies under the ground, when one who was a brave man has been killed by the furious war god, standing his ground, and fighting hard for his children and his land."

I hope you noticed all of the things we've been talking about that are contained in that statement.

All of those are reasons why you should be willing to risk your life for your polis.

Because thereby... you can win yourself immortality one of the few ways that you can do that as a Greek.

Okay, but there is another what if things go well. What if you don't get killed.

"But if he escapes the doom of that death, the destroyer of bodies and wins his battle, and bright renown for the work of his spear, all men give place to him alike. The youth and the elders, and much joy come his way before he goes down to the dead. Aging, he has reputation among his citizens. No one tries to interfere with his honors or all he deserves. All men withdraw before his presence and yield their seats to him, the youth and the men his age, and even those older than he. Thus, a man should endeavor to reach this place of courage with all his heart and so trying never be



backward in war. "

So it pays off for you to be brave and a good soldier in the phalanx whether you live or die.

Both of them are good ends.

And notice how slyly he makes the point about, even if things go well for you before you die.

🔊 [64:00]

Meaning...Don't imagine if you don't get killed in this battle you're going to live forever.

You're going to die anyway.

Now, there was yet another element in...by the way... the Tyrtaeus... the songs would have been the songs that the boys would have been learned and would have been taught in school and they would have been marching along to the music of that poem.

But then Xenophon who wrote late in the fifth, early fourth centuries, an Athenian who knew the Spartans well as I say, tells us about how the Spartans dealt with this problem of instilling courage in their soldiers and the...avoiding opposite.

Here's what he says, "In other states when a man proves a coward, the only consequence is that he is called a coward. He goes to the same market as the brave man and sits beside him. He attends the same gymnasium if he chooses. But in Sparta everyone would be ashamed to have a coward with him at the mess or to be matched with him in a wrestling bout. Often when sides are picked for a game of ball he is the odd man left out. In a chorus he is banished to the ignominious place. In the streets he is bound to make way when he occupies a seat he must need give it up even to a younger man. He must support get this, his spinster relatives at home and he must explain to them why they are old maids."

Nobody's going to marry the sister of a coward.

And think of the joy of meeting your sister at home every day as she looks at you and realizes she's not going to have a husband because of you.

"He must make the best of a fireside without a wife because who would marry such a man. And yet, pay forfeit for that. He may not stroll about with a cheerful countenance."

If he walks around with a smile on his face somebody's going to knock it off.

"Now behave as though he were a man of unsullied fame or else he must submit to be beaten by his betters."




"Small wonder," I think says Xenophon.

"That where such a load of dishonor is laid on the coward, death seems preferable to a life so dishonored, so ignominious."

Now the truth is, I think, Xenophon is exaggerating.

I don't think it would be fun to come home after behaving like a coward in any Greek city but I do think it's fair to say that it would have been intolerable if you're talking about Sparta.

 **[67:00]**

Yeah, we have some time.

Let me turn now to the more formal constitution of the state as we would use the term today.

It is a unique in Greek life...it is a mixed constitution.

It is not democracy, it's not a monarchy, it's not an oligarchy, it's not an aristocracy...it contains elements of every one of those more normal constitutions.

There are kings.

Notice... I say plural, because there are two kings at any one time, each descending from a different royal family.

These kings have priestly responsibilities.

They serve ...and this is very important...as generals who lead the Spartan army.

They are judges in all sorts of cases.

At any gathering of a public nature they hold a seat of honor.

At banquets they get a double portion.

I don't think we should understand that to mean that you get very big fat kings who eat twice as much as anybody else.

I think this gives them an opportunity to share that with their friends and to hand out honors and to be thanked for that.

When the Spartans appoint somebody to be their representative in another state that's their form of diplomatic relations.

The man who appoints the proxenos, that's the Greek word, is...the kings make that



appointment.

When the Spartans have to consult a Delphic Oracle, men called the pythioi, are the ones who are sent to make the inquiry and bring back the answer, the kings select them.

Well these are, of course, the enormously honorific activities.

So the kings are in a position to hand out very important honors to their fellow Spartans and that I think is another one of the important privileges they have.

If there is an heiress who does not have a husband this could be typically a woman whose husband has died and now she needs to be married to somebody else that assignment is made by the kings.


They tell that woman whom she's going to marry.

The reason behind it is that she has no brothers, no uncles who could inherit her father's kleros and other wealth that now goes with her.

She has to be assigned to somebody on behalf of the Spartan state.

Likewise, if there are adoptions of children from one family to another, it is the kings who make these decisions.

The kings also sit on the council that is the dominant advisory consulting element in the whole Spartan state.

 **[70:00]**

It is called thegerousia, which would be translated into Latin as senatus, our word Senate.

It is a council of elders.

It consists of twenty eight men over the age of sixty who are elected by the Spartans and the two kings who sit with them to produce a council of 30.

The kingship is hereditary in each line with this little bump in it and that is it's necessarily the first son of the previous king.

It's the first son born after the king has become king.

So, if there's any question about that, that's the determining element.

The kings are the only Spartans who are not required to go through the agoge.

I think the idea was it would be demeaning for the royal figure to have to be beaten up by older boys, that's probably what's behind it.



On the other hand, I think we should be aware that these are even less than the ...you remember we spoke of the Greek basileus in the early days as perhaps having some kind of a royal function, but never a real one.

Well, the Spartans have the power, but the Spartan kings have that power that I've just described, but another thing that reduces their kingly character is that there are two of them.

That means one can always veto the other, and that means they never can have the kind of power that a true king, in our sense, would have.

One other thing...Two other things.

One is the gerousia, this council of elders has very important powers and some of them relating to the kings.

There is another group of Spartans, another council and annual council.

I should have told you that the gerousia, once the men are chosen they serve for life, but there's another council in Sparta of men, five of them called ephors.

These ephors are ordinary Spartans who come just from anybody who is a Spartan.

One of the powers they have vis a vis the kings, is they can bring charges against the kings, if they believe that either of the kings has done wrong, violated the law, done something improper.

And then the kings are tried by the gerousia.

And then...if you think that's just proforma activity, Spartan history is filled with kings who have been convicted of some crime or other and are driven off into exile and removed from the kingship.

So these are very powerful limitations.

I think I'm out of time.

So, I'll start next time by completing our discussion of the Spartan state and move forward from there.