

Week 5: Tyranny; Sparta

Lecture 8, **Tyranny**, Key Words

Tyrannos

Lydia

Gyges

Archilochus

Monarchos

Hybris

Oedipus

Pheidon

Argos

Hysiae

Olympic Games

Peloponnesus

Aegina

Corinth

Sicyon

Megara

Theagenes

Cypselus

Bacchiads

Orthagoras

Oligarchy

Aeschylus

Persians

Prometheus

Zeus

Orestes

Tyrannicide

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Red figure volute krater: Orestes takes refuge at the omphalos

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Harmodius and Aristogiton

Lecture 9, **Sparta**, Key Words

Dorian invasion
Achaean
Helots
Perioikoi
First Messenian War
Taras
Terpander
Alcman
Second Messenian War
Argives
Arcadia
Pisa
Ithome
Lycurgus
Agoge
Eugenics
Erotes
Eromenos
Andreia
Syssitia
Homoioi
Kleroi
Tyrtaeus
Xenophon
Proxenoi
Pythioi
Gerousia
Ephors
Hoi tuchontes
Delphi
Tegea
Peloponnesian League
Agamemnon
Mycenae
Stesichorus
Cleomenes
Cynuria
Cythera
Spartan Alliance

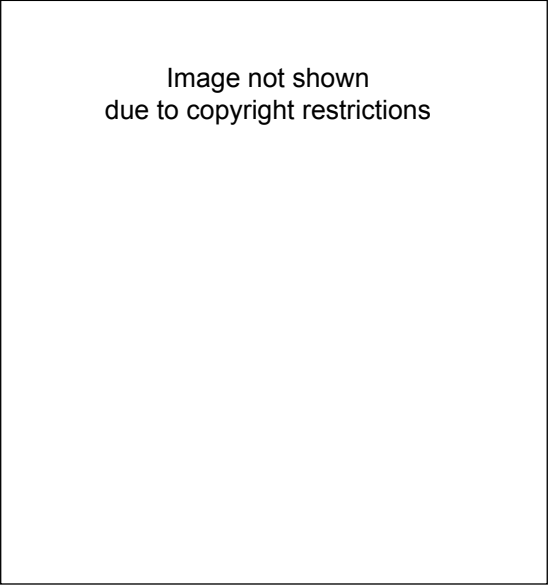


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Archaic: Male: Warriors

Timeline for Spartan History from the Late Bronze Age to 479

1300-1200 archaeological evidence for over 50 cities in Laconia

1200 Messenia, as part of Mycenaean civilization, enters a dark age with various small communities-some Dorian, some Mycenaean, some mixed.

1100-1000 Dorian presence in the Argolid and Laconia (division of the 3 Dorian tribes: Hyleis, Dymones and Pamphylae); *syssitia* probably introduced at this time

1000-800 the unification of four villages on the west bank of the Eurotas River from which historic Sparta evolves; evidence for settlements characterized by proto-geometric pottery in the area of the Messenian gulf

800-750 Spartan conquest of Laconia complete with the incorporation of the fifth village, the Mycenaean town Amyclae, into Sparta-Sparta now has control of the entire Eurotas valley; Dorian settlements become politically subordinate to Sparta as Perioikoi: they retain a large amount of local autonomy but owe military service to Sparta; perioikoi lived in the numerous communities, 100 according to tradition, scattered throughout the territory controlled by the Spartans; Mycenaean survivors reduced to serfdom; beginning of the Helot system.

800-700 division of public land among nobles which natives cultivate as Helots; before hoplite army

730-700 First Messenian War; partial conquest of Messenia, a considerable part of the Pamisus valley.

706 Spartans found colony Taras (Tarentum) following the rebellion of the *Partheniai*, who were involved in a dispute with the nobles over their share in the Messenian land.

675-650 Lycurgus received the great *rhetra* (?)—the character of aristocratic “republican” government at Sparta—from the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, which recognized the dual kingship, with each king selected from the prominent families of Agiads and Eurypontids, and a 30 member probouleutic council, the Gerousia, formed from a previous Council of Elders, which included the 2 kings and 28 elders. The right of ratification resided with the ecclesia attended by all male citizens; citizenship requirements for *Spartiatatai* (Spartiates) included possession of a Kleros of public land, membership in one of the military messes and successful completion of the Spartan *agoge*.

669 Battle of Hysiae: Argives under tyrant Pheidon defeat Sparta; military tactics of nobles obsolete.

650 Second Messenian War: Sparta adopts hoplite tactics; hoplite constitution with Spartans organized according to the three Dorian tribes: Hylleis, Dymanes and Pamphyli; with the conquest of both Laconia and Messenia complete, the land in the Eurotas and Pamisus valleys has become public land in the form of *kleroi*, assigned to 9,000 or 10,000 Spartans and worked by Helots.

650-550 archaeologists have found Laconian pottery dating from this period at sites as distant as Ephesus in the East, Etruria and Messalia in the west, and Naucratis, Cyrene and Carthage in Africa; evidence also exists for imported ivory, amber and gold, and for elaborate bronze work by local perioikoi artisans.

600 Sparta attains near maximum territorial expansion with control over Laconia and Messenia; hereafter they extend their political influence through a system of alliances instead of by conquest; Sparta organized by the five territorial tribes (*obai*), each tribe identified with one of the five component villages of Sparta; the board of five ephors, one from each tribe, increases in importance for the Spartan government.

570 Sparta defeated by Tegea in an attempt to gain control of the northern frontier; chained with the fetters that they brought to enslave the Tegeans (Hdt. 1.66-68).

556 Chilon the ephor banishes all “unnecessary and superfluous arts”; foreign goods no longer imported; all activity of artists and artisans ceases; austerity and militarism linked to the problem of suppressing the Helots

550 Sparta defeats Tegea after heeding an oracle to take the bones of Agamemnon’s son Orestes from Tegea to Sparta to ensure victory; Tegea retains territory but required by treaty to furnish troops whenever needed.

547 Spartans defeat Argives in the “Battle of Champions” (Hdt. 1.82); as a result Sparta incorporates Thyrea, a disputed area on the border between Laconia and the Argolid, and its plain into its territory; moreover the whole district of Cynuria and the island of Cythera become permanently Spartan; these were the Spartans’ last territorial conquests; thereafter, Sparta concluded alliances, as with Tegea.

547-507 Spartans actively suppress tyrannies and support aristocratic and oligarchic regimes.

525 Sparta brings down Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos.

510 King Cleomenes heeds Delphi and deposes Hippias, the tyrant of Athens.

507 King Cleomenes makes an unsuccessful attempt to install Isagoras and an oligarchy at Athens.

506 Cleomenes and Demaratus lead a Peloponnesian army against Athens until Demaratus decides to withdraw; thereafter, only one king dispatched on foreign military expeditions.

500 first definite reference in the ancient sources to the Peloponnesian League (Hdt. 5.91), a permanent offensive and defensive alliance; the allies include the entire Peloponnesus except Argos and the twelve small towns of Achaea, along the southern coast of the Corinthian Gulf.

494 Sparta defeats Argos in the Battle of Spea; greatly strengthens Sparta’s control over the Peloponnesian League and stabilizes the organization of the league.

481 Hellenic League formed with 31 members under Spartan leadership.

480/79 Persian War; 8,000 full Spartan citizens in existence (Hdt. 7.193)

479 Samos, Chios, Lesbos and other islanders admitted to the Hellenic League. After sailing into the Hellespont with the Greek fleet, and finding Xerxes’ bridge no longer in place, Leotychides sails home with the Peloponnesian contingents.

Sparta and the Lycurgan Reforms

BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY:

Laconia, Lacedaemon, Amyclae, Tegea (c. 560-50), Messenia, Mt. Ithome, Hysiae (669); *homoioi*, Agiads, Eurypontids, gerousia, ephors, Lycurgus, Tyrtaeus; *Partheniai*, *perioeci/perioikoi*, helots; *krypteia*, *syssitia*, *pheiditia*; *rheta*, *eunomia*, *kleros*, *agoge*, *obai*, hoplites, synoecism

CONSIDER:

1. How reliable are our sources for the Spartan revolution? Which seem more reliable and why? From when do they date? What evidence would these writers have had that we do not?
2. Who was Lycurgus? Does it matter? When do the ancient sources date his reforms? Why do modern scholars disagree with these (and with each other's) dates? What reforms, exactly, are we trying to date? Were these actually reforms, revivals or imagined events?
3. Did the Spartan constitution result from a single period of revolutionary legislation or was it an amalgam of ancient and modern customs that slowly evolved into a coherent structure? Which elements of this structure represent customs preserved from the Dark Ages and which were novel?
4. What happened to Sparta in the eighth and seventh centuries? (Consider wars and social pressures.) Did these events and pressures in any way cause or provoke the changes associated with Lycurgus?
5. How willingly did the Spartans accept the reforms associated with Lycurgus? What roles did Delphi, political expediency and violence play in their adoption? Were the reforms welcomed, accepted, tolerated or resisted?
6. What is the significance of the Great Rhetra and its rider? What type of government does it prescribe?
7. What is the significance of the ephorality? How important are ephors in the Spartan system?
8. Did the Spartan system as described by ancient writers ever exist, or is it the nostalgic fictive recreation of fourth-century writers?