

SPARTA

Part Two : Spartan Society Origins and Collapse

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Origins & Collapse

1. Origins
2. Thermopylae : Identity
3. Empire & Decline
4. “Spartan” Sparta

Why Sparta “Spartan”

Xenelasia – Excludes Foreigners

Idealised : Aristocratic Foreigners : Mythical

Land Redistribution : *Spartiatatai*

Homoios

Kleros

c. 40 Acres

Archaia Moira

+ State Land

Helot / Serf



Why Sparta “Spartan”

No Written Law (Rhetra): Oracles, Gods

Age Classes (Gerousia = Senate) : Kings

Agoge (Life Test) : Ritual

Aristocratic : Conservative : Isolated

Sparta Exceptional

No Coinage





When (Why) Sparta “Spartan”?

Conquest of Messenia (720 - 620 BC)



Tyrtaeus' Poetry : War

For 'tis a fair thing for a good man to fall and die fighting in the van for his native land, whereas to leave his city and his rich fields and go a-begging is of all things the most miserable, wandering with mother dear and aged father, with little children and wedded wife. For hateful shall such an one be among all those to whom he shall come in bondage to Want and loathsome Penury, and doth shame his lineage and belie his noble beauty, followed by all evil and dishonour. Now if so little thought be taken of a wanderer, and so little honour, respect, or pity, let us fight with a will for this land, and die for our children and never spare our lives.

Abide then, O young men, shoulder to shoulder and fight; begin not foul flight nor yet be afraid, but make the heart in your breasts both great and stout, and never shrink when you fight the foe. And the elder sort, whose knees are no longer nimble, fly not ye to leave them fallen to earth. For 'tis a foul thing, in sooth, for an elder to fall in the van and lie before the younger, his head white and his beard hoary, breathing forth his stout soul in the dust, with his privities²⁰ all bloody in his hands, a sight so foul to see and fraught with such ill to the seer, and his flesh also all naked; yet to a young man all is seemly enough, so long as he have the noble bloom of lovely youth, aye a marvel he for men to behold, and desirable unto women, so long as ever he be alive, and fair in like manner when he be fallen in the vanguard. So let each man bite his lip with his teeth and abide firm-set astride upon the ground.

Tyrtaeus : Messenia

... to our king, the friend of the Gods, Theopompus, through whom we took spacious Messene, Messene so good to plough and so good to plant, for which there fought ever unceasingly nineteen years, keeping an unfaltering heart, the spearmen fathers of our fathers, and in the twentieth year the foeman left his rich lands and fled from the great uplands of Ithome.

(Helots) galled with great burdens like asses, bringing to their lords under grievous necessity a half of all the fruit of the soil.

Founding of Taras (Taranto) *Partheniai* (c. 700 BC)



Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia



Hoplite Figurines



Sparta in 540 BC

Military – Hoplite -Revolution



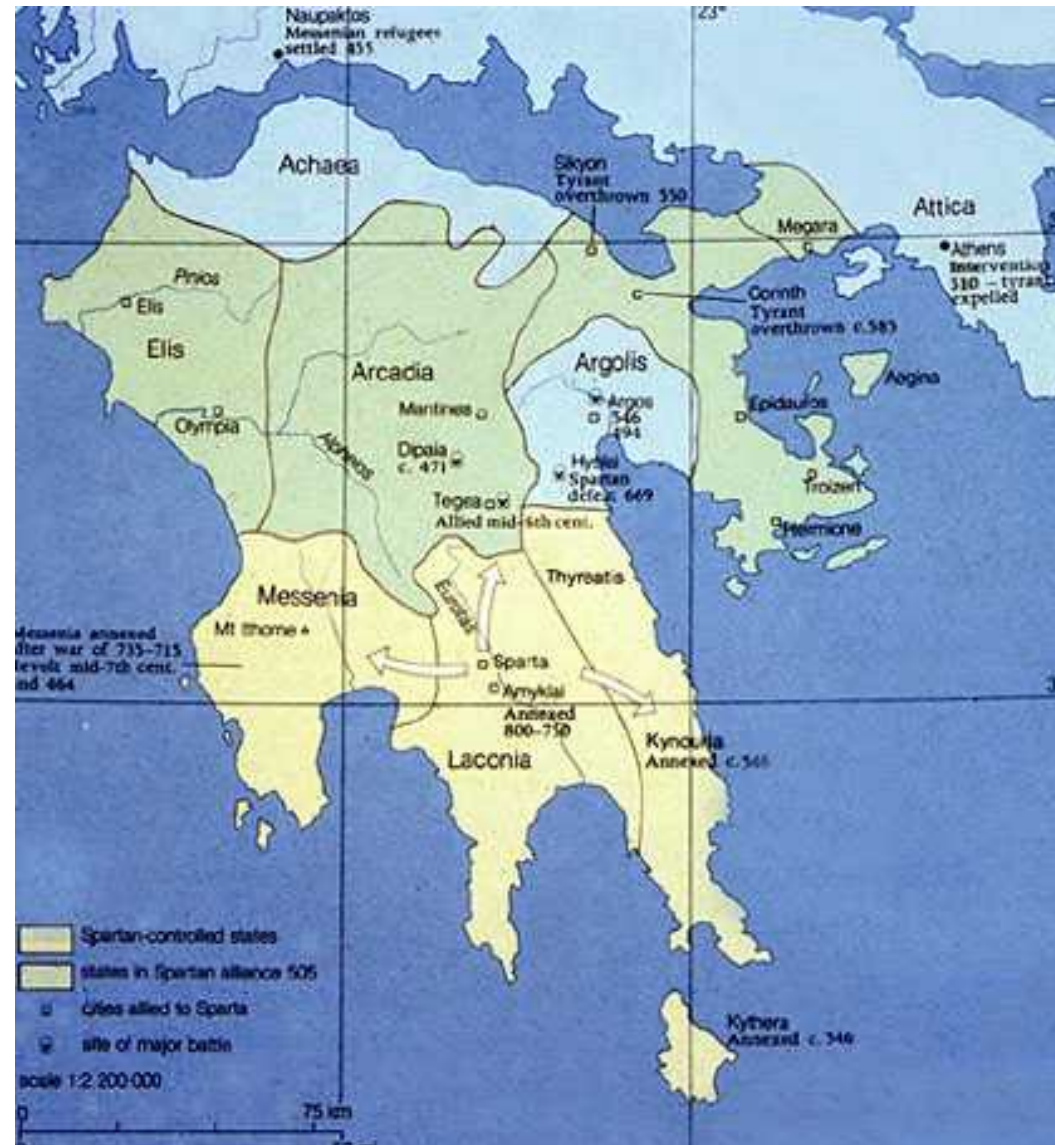
Sparta in 540 BC

Land and Helot Redistribution

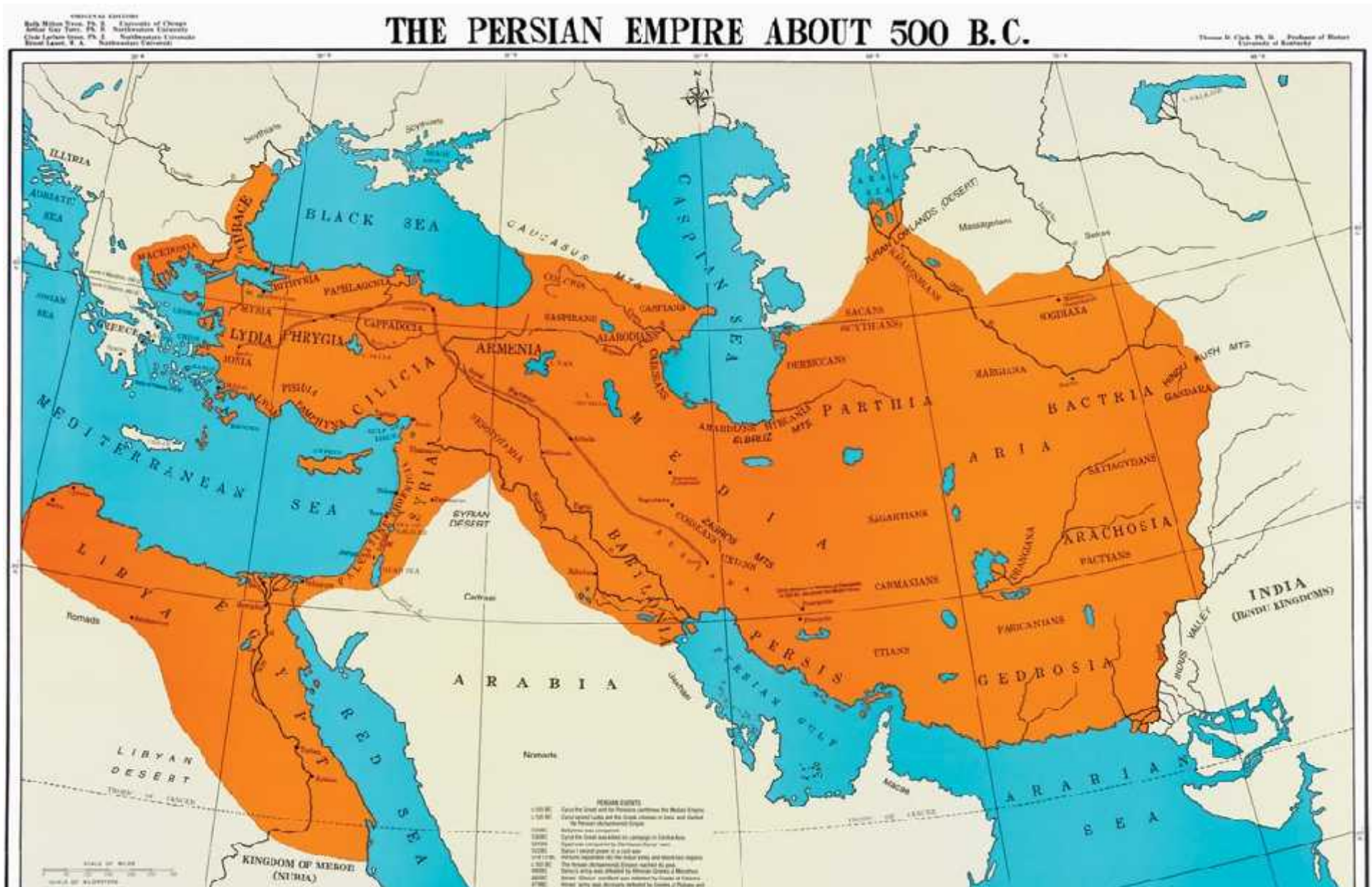
A political system based on *Rhetrae* (Oracles)

Ritual system mapping out lives (*Agoge*)

Treaties with the Arcadians (560-540 BC)



Persia and the Greeks c. 500 BC



The Great King



Penguin Classics



HERODOTUS
THE HISTORIES



Persian War 480 BC



Thermopylae 480 BC

Xerxes invades Greece with a huge army and navy. The Greeks attempt to hold him at a narrow pass called Thermopylae with a small force led by Leonidas of Sparta.

Leonidas and 300 Spartans defy him for several days, but are surrounded and die fighting to a man. The rest is legend!

Simonides Praise Poetry

Other
Traditions:
Diodorus
Plutarch



Thermopylae & Artemisium





Battle



The Immortals



David's *Leonidas*









The Glorious Defeat

A Greek Concept

Poetry (Homer)

Funerary Lament - Song

Tragedy: Phrynichus, Aeschylus

Funerary Epitaphia

The *Polis*

Never Surrender : With or on the Shield



That Film : 300



Country – Purity - Family
N.B. Gladiator



Persian War 480 BC



Key Concepts & Values

Sparta/West v Persia/East

Freedom v Slavery

Nuclear Family v Empire

Monogamy v Promiscuity

Country v City

Austerity v Luxury

Honesty v Deceit & Corruption

Land v Money

Purity Homogeneity v Multiethnic Hybridity

New Civic Identities

Thermopylae = Spartan (no retreat by land)

Salamis = Athenian (retreat to naval safety)

New Warfare (Naval, Aggressive, Destructive,
Expensive)

Athenian Empire : Spartan Isolation

Polypragmosyne v Laconic Culture

The Peloponnesian Wars

460-445 The First Peloponnesian War
431-404 The Second (Great) War





Sparta-Persia Allies : Money Athenian Defeat & Surrender









The Polis in Decline : 414-338 BC

1. Constant Warfare

The Corinthian War 395-387 BCE

2. Specialisation (Money)

The Rise of Professionals

Decline in Importance of Hoplites

Navies, Peltasts, Archers, Cavalry

3. Persian Hostility

Decline and Failure of Sparta

Attitudes (Arrogant, Aristocratic, Exclusive)

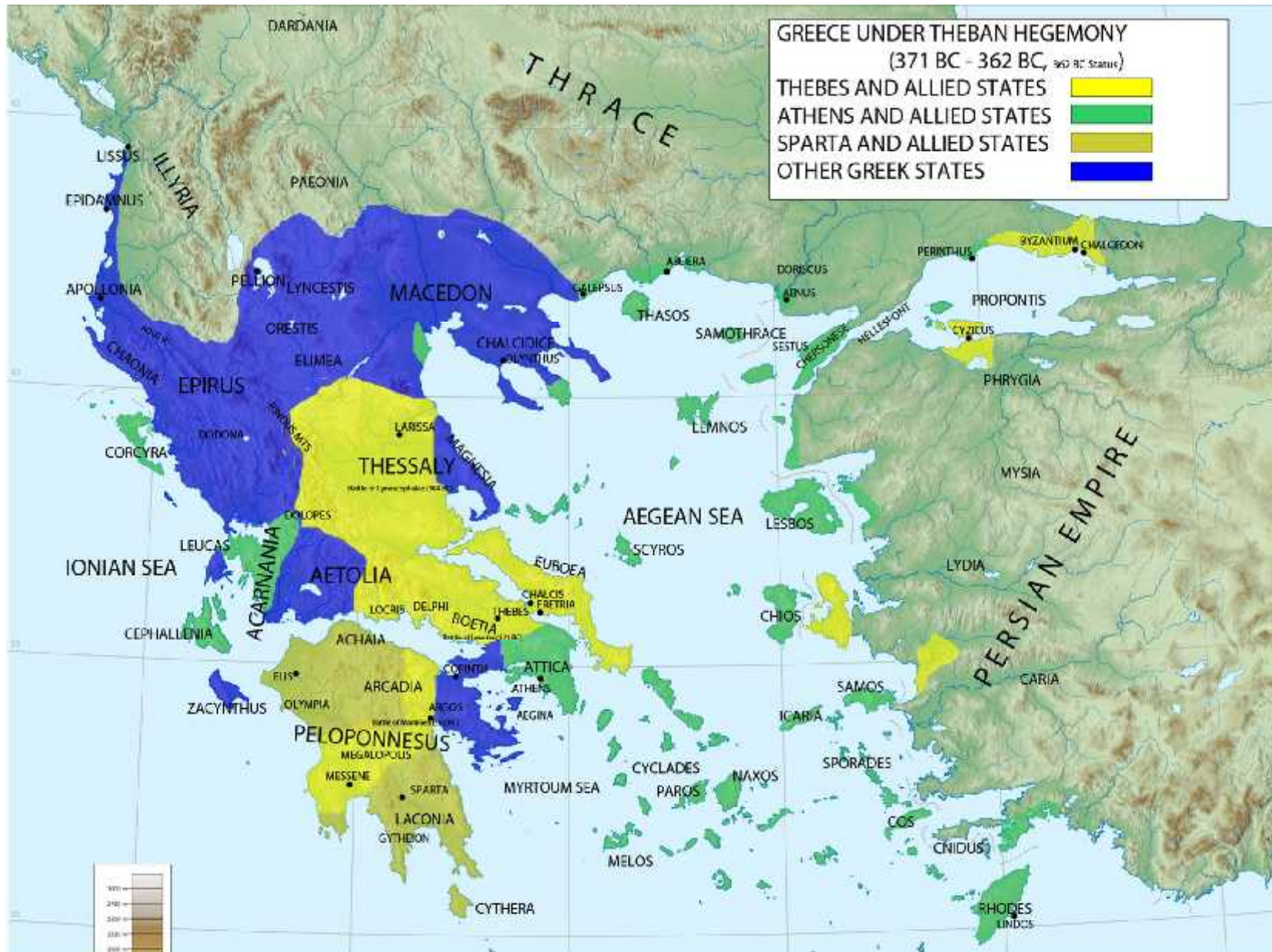
Demography (Exclusive)

Property and Wealth : Women (Aristotle)

Kinadon (Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.4-11)

One of the *Hypomeiones*

The Rise of Thebes



The Macedonians



Alexander & the Greeks except the Spartans defeated the Persians



Sparta 338-146 BC

Defeated by the Macedonians 331 BCE

Agis IV, Cleomenes III
The Third Century Revolution
Spartan Sayings and Institutes

Roman War against Nabis 194 BCE
Sparta Fades to Political Obscurity, but...

& Sparta Becomes “Spartan”!

Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (2.7-9)

360s BCE : There can be no doubt then, that all this education was planned by him (Lycurgus) in order to make the boys more resourceful in getting supplies, and better fighting men. Someone may ask: but why, if he believed stealing to be a fine thing, did he have the boy who was caught beaten with many stripes? I reply: Because in all cases men punish a learner for not carrying out properly whatever he is taught to do. So the Spartans chastise those who get caught, for stealing badly. He made it a point of honour to steal as many cheeses as possible [from the altar of Artemis Orthia], but appointed others to scourge the thieves, meaning to show thereby that by enduring pain for a short time one may win lasting fame and felicity.

AD 120 : Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 18

The boys make such a serious matter of their stealing, that one of them, as the story goes, who was carrying concealed under his cloak a young fox which he had stolen, suffered the animal to tear out his bowels with its teeth and claws and died rather than have his theft detected. And even this story gains credence from what their youths now endure, many of whom I have seen dying under the lash at the Altar of Artemis Orthia.



Mystras





Thank You