

ARISTOTLE
AND XENOPHON ON
DEMOCRACY AND
OLIGARCHY

ARISTOTLE'S
THE CONSTITUTION OF ATHENS

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ATHENIANS
Ascribed to XENOPHON THE ORATOR

XENOPHON'S
THE POLITEIA OF THE SPARTANS

THE BOEOTIAN CONSTITUTION
From the OXYRHYNCHUS HISTORIAN

TRANSLATIONS WITH INTRODUCTIONS
AND COMMENTARY BY

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THE POLITEIA OF THE SPARTANS

- 1 I was reflecting one day on the fact that, although Sparta has one of the smallest populations, it has become the most powerful and famous of all Greek states, and I wondered how this could have come about. However, when I examined the way of life of the Spartiates, I
- 2 ceased to be surprised. None the less I do admire Lycurgus, the man who established the laws under which they flourished; I consider him a remarkably wise man. Not merely did he not imitate other states, but he adopted opposite institutions to the majority with outstandingly successful results.
- 3 Let us begin our survey at the very beginning, with the begetting of children. In other cities, the girls who are to become mothers, and are brought up in the approved fashion, are reared on the simplest possible diet, and with a minimum of luxury foods; they either drink no wine at all, or only drink it diluted. Girls are expected to imitate the usually sedentary life of craftsmen, and to work their wool sitting quietly. How could one expect girls brought up in such a way to produce
- 4 outstanding offspring? Lycurgus felt that slave girls were perfectly capable of producing garments, and that the most important job of free women was to bear children; he therefore decreed that women should take as much trouble over physical fitness as men. Moreover, he instituted contests of speed and strength for women parallel to those for men, on the grounds that if both parents were strong the offspring would be more sturdy.
- 5 He saw that, generally, husbands spent a disproportionate amount of time with their wives when they were first married, and decreed the opposite here too, for he made it disgraceful for a man to be seen entering or leaving his

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wife's apartment. Thus their desire would inevitably be heightened when they did meet, and any offspring which might result would therefore be stronger than if the
6 parents were surfeited with each other. Furthermore, he did not allow men to take wives as and when they wished, but decreed that marriage should take place at the period of physical prime, thinking that this also was
7 likely to produce fine children. He realised that old men with young wives tend to be particularly jealous, and again made the opposite customary, for he made it possible for an old man to introduce to his wife a man
8 whose appearance and character he approved and so have children. Further, if a man did not wish to live with a wife, but wanted children worthy of note, Lycurgus made it legal for him to select a woman who was noble and the mother of fine children, and, if he obtained the
9 husband's consent, to have children by her. He approved many such arrangements, for the women wish to run two households, and the men to get more brothers for their children—brothers who will share in the honour and position of the family, but will make no financial
10 claims. Lycurgus thus took the opposite position to the rest of the Greeks on the begetting of children; it is up to the observer to decide whether he managed to make the Spartans outstanding in stature and strength.

11 Having discussed the subject of birth, I wish to turn to the educational systems of Sparta and the rest of Greece. Outside Sparta, those who claim to educate their children best put servants in charge of them as *paidagogoi* as soon as the children can understand what is said to them, and immediately send them to teachers to learn to read and write, to study the arts, and to practise gymnastics. Moreover, they soften their children's feet by giving them shoes, and weaken their bodies by changes of clothes; their diet is limited only by their capacity.
2 Instead of leaving each man to appoint a slave *paidagogos* privately for his children, Lycurgus put in charge of all of them a man who was drawn from the same class as those who hold the major offices of state; he is called the

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Paidonomos, and Lycurgus gave him authority to assemble the boys, inspect them and punish any faults severely. This official was also given a group of young men provided with whips for floggings where necessary; the result is considerable respect and obedience there.

3 Instead of softening their feet with shoes, Lycurgus decreed that they should harden them by going barefoot; he believed that if this were their practice, they would climb more easily, go downhill more sure-footedly, and that a man would leap, jump up and run more swiftly barefoot than wearing shoes, as long as his feet were

4 accustomed to it. Instead of pampering them in matters of dress, he decreed that they should habitually wear one garment all the year round to make them more tolerant

5 of heat and cold. He laid down each Eiren's contribution at such a level that nobody should be burdened by over-eating or be without experience of going short. He thought that those brought up under such a regime would be better able to labour on without food if the situation demanded it, and to hold out longer on the same rations if ordered to do so; they would miss delicacies less, be less interested in food altogether, and live a healthier life. He thought that food which tended

6 to produce slimmer figures would make them grow taller, rather than that which produces fat. To prevent their being too distressed by hunger, while he did not make it possible for them to take whatever they wanted without trouble, he did permit them to steal something

7 to alleviate their hunger. As I am sure everyone realises, he did not allow them to feed themselves through their own resourcefulness because he lacked the means of providing for them. Obviously, a man who intends to steal must stay awake at night, and deceive and lie in ambush during the day, and if he is to succeed he must also have spies out. It is clear then that he included this element in their education to make the boys more resourceful in obtaining the necessities of life, and more

8 suited for war. Someone may ask why, if he thought theft a good thing, he decreed a severe flogging for anyone who was caught. My answer is that this is parallel

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to the way in which punishment is always handed out for not carrying out well what one is taught—those who
9 are caught they punish for stealing badly. Lycurgus made it honourable to steal as many cheeses as possible from the altar of Artemis Orthia, and detailed others to whip the thieves in the process, wishing to demonstrate in this way that a brief moment's pain can bring the joy of enduring fame. This shows that where speed is needed
10 the idler gains nothing except a mass of trouble. To prevent the children being without control even if the supervisor left them, Lycurgus laid it down that any citizen who was present could give the boys whatever instructions seemed necessary, and punish any misconduct. By this means he produced more respect in the boys; in fact, adults and boys alike respect nothing more
11 than the men who are in charge of them. In order that they might not be without someone in charge even when there was no adult present, he put the keenest of the Eirens in charge of each company; therefore boys at Sparta are never without someone to control them.

12 It seems that I must say something also about affection for boys since this too is relevant to education. Elsewhere there are varying practices: in Boeotia, men and boys live together as if they were married; in Elis, they attract a young man by favours;* again, there are states where men are absolutely forbidden even to speak
13 to boys in these circumstances. Lycurgus yet again took a totally different course; if an honourable man admired a boy's character, and wished to become his friend in all innocence, and spend time with him, he approved, and thought this a very fine form of education. If, however, a man was clearly physically attracted to a boy, he classed this as a heinous disgrace, and so ensured that in Sparta there is no more physical love between men and boys than there is between parents and children or
14 brother and brother. I am not surprised that some find this difficult to believe, for many cities tolerate love between men and boys.

* Or possibly: 'in Elis they win short periods with young men by favours.'

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Such, then, are the educational systems of Sparta and of the other Greek States; which of them produces men who are more obedient, respectful and self-controlled is again for the reader to decide.

- III When a boy begins to grow up, the other Greeks release him from his *paidogogos* and no longer send him to school; no one controls him, and he is totally his own master. Lycurgus again chose the opposite. Realising that at this age pride is greatest, insolence at its height and temptations towards pleasures most insistent, he selected this period in which to subject them to the most demanding regime, and arranged for them to have as little free time as possible. By adding the provision that if anyone should avoid this stage of the training he should be deprived of all future privileges, he ensured that not merely those appointed by the state but also those who cared for each individual would take care that the boys did not, by shrinking from these duties, utterly destroy their standing in the city. Apart from this, because he wanted modesty to be firmly implanted in them, he decreed that they should keep their hands inside their cloaks in public, walk in silence, and not look about them, but keep their eyes fixed on the ground in front of their feet. Here it has become clear that in self-control as well as other fields men are stronger than women—
- 5 you would be more likely to hear a stone statue speak than them, more likely to catch a wandering glance from a bronze figure, and would think them even more modest than the pupil of the eye.* At the common meals you have to be content if you can even get an answer to a question.

Such, then, was his care for those who were growing up.

- IV He took by far the greatest care about those who had just reached manhood, thinking that if they became the

* Accepting a reading found only in ancient quotations, this sentence contains an untranslatable (and very frigid) play on words; the Greek word translated 'pupil' normally means 'maiden'—hence Xenophon plays on the modesty of a 'maiden' who has no chance of being anything but modest, and also gives a strict parallel to the other two illustrations.

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sort of people they ought to be, they would have a very
2 great influence for good in the city. He realised that the
greater the rivalry involved, the better choruses are to
listen to and athletic contests to watch; therefore, he
thought that if he could induce a spirit of competition
among the young in the field of virtue, this would bring
them to the highest levels of manliness. I will explain
3 how he brought it about. The Ephors pick three men in
their prime who are called *Hippagretai*; each of these
chooses a hundred men, giving his reasons for choosing
4 some and rejecting others. Those who do not achieve
this honour are at odds with those who rejected them and
with those selected instead of them, and keep a close
watch on each other for any lapse from the accepted
5 standards of honour. This is the strife most favoured by
the gods and most beneficial to the city, since it demon-
strates what a good man ought to do; each group
individually aims at being outstanding, and collectively
they protect the city with all their might if the need
6 arises. They are compelled to take care of their physical
fitness, for this strife leads to scuffles wherever they meet;
however, any passer-by has the right to separate the
combatants. If such an order is disobeyed, the *Paid-
onomos* takes the offender to the Ephors, who punish him
severely, wishing to ensure that passion never becomes
stronger than obedience to the laws.

7 The men who have reached maturity, who also fill the
highest offices in the state, are relieved by the other Greeks
of the duty of preserving their fitness, although they are
still required to undertake military service. Lycurgus,
on the other hand, established the principle that hunting
was the noblest occupation for them, unless prevented by
public duties, so that they, no less than the young men,
should be able to stand the strain of campaigning.

v After this description of the occupations laid down by
Lycurgus for each stage of a Spartan's development, I
will now try to describe the type of life which he arranged
2 for everyone. The Spartiates were in the habit of living
at home like the other Greeks, and he realised that this led

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to considerable neglect of duty; he therefore instituted public messes, believing that this would be the most effective check on disobedience. He specified a quantity of food which would not be too much nor leave them short; however, many unexpected additions come from hunting, and rich men sometimes contribute wheat cakes instead. The result is that as long as they are together their table is never without food, and yet is not extravagant. He stopped anything involving compulsory drinking, which harms the body and fuddles the wits, but permitted each to drink when he was thirsty, believing this to be the least harmful and most pleasant form of drinking. When men live together like this, how could anyone ruin himself or his family through gluttony or drunkenness? In other cities it is usually contemporaries who meet, and in their company there is the minimum of restraint; Lycurgus mingled the age groups in Sparta so that the younger learn from their more experienced elders.* It is customary for noble deeds in the city to be recounted in the messes, with the result that there is the minimum of insolence, drunkenness, wickedness or foul talk there. The custom of eating in public has a further beneficial consequence, in that men are compelled to walk home; they know that they will not spend the night where they eat, and must be careful not to stumble through drink; they must walk during the night as they do by day, and men of military age may not even use a torch.

8 Lycurgus realised that the same food gives someone who is working a good colour, health and strength, but makes an idle man fat, flabby and feeble. He did not neglect this either, but, noticing that even when someone works hard of his own free will in doing his duty, he clearly stays satisfactorily fit, he required the senior members of each gymnasium to ensure that the rations were not out of proportion to the exercise undertaken.†

* There appears to be an omission in this sentence; a suggested restoration has been incorporated in the translation.

† The text of this sentence is uncertain; the translation contains a possible free interpretation.

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9 In my judgement he was again right; it would be difficult to find a healthier or physically more well-developed people than the Spartans, for they exercise their legs, arms and necks equally.

VI Another field in which Lycurgus' institutions differed from the normal was that of authority; in other cities each man controls his own children, servants and property, but Lycurgus, because he wished the citizens to benefit from each other without doing any harm, gave fathers equal authority over all children, whether their
2 own or those of others. When a man realises that such men have the authority of fathers, he will inevitably control those he has authority over as he would wish his own sons to be controlled.* If a boy tells his father that he has been beaten by another man, it is a disgrace for his own father not to beat him too—to such an extent do they trust each other not to give improper
3 commands to the children. Lycurgus made it possible for someone to use another man's servants in case of need, and established a similar system of sharing hunting dogs; those who need dogs invite the owner to join them, and if he has not time himself, he lends his pack with pleasure. Similarly with horses, when someone is ill, needs a carriage, or has to get somewhere quickly, if he sees a horse, he takes it, uses it carefully
4 and returns it. Another unique custom concerns hunting parties which are caught out late and need food but, have none prepared; they open sealed caches of food which others, according to Lycurgus' rule, have left ready after eating, take what they need, and reseal them.†
5 Because they share in this way, even those who are not well off have some part in all the resources of the country when they need something.

VII There is yet another respect in which Lycurgus' institutions are unique in Greece. In other states, every-

* The text of this sentence is uncertain; the translation contains a possible free interpretation.

† Freely translated to make the sense clear.

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one, I suppose, makes as much money as he can; one farms, another is a ship-owner, another is a merchant, and
2 others follow trades for their living. In Sparta Lycurgus forbade the free citizens to have anything to do with making money, and ordered them to devote themselves
3 solely to activities which ensure liberty for cities. Anyway, what need was there to worry about wealth in a society where the establishment of equal contributions to the messes and a uniform standard of living excluded the search for wealth in order to obtain luxury? They do not even need wealth for clothes, since, for them, adornment
4 is not rich fabrics but bodily health. Money is not even to be acquired to spend on the other members of one's mess; he made working physically to help one's companions more honourable than spending money to this end, showing that the former involves the use of character, the latter of wealth. He prevented the acquiring
5 of money by dishonesty. First, he established a currency such that even ten minas could not be brought into the house without the knowledge of the master and servants—it would take up a lot of space, and need a
6 wagon to move it. There are also searches for gold and silver, and if any is found, the possessor is punished. Why, then, should anyone devote himself to making money when the pains of possessing it must outweigh the pleasure to be had from spending it?

VIII Everyone knows the outstanding obedience of the Spartans to their rulers and laws; in my view, however, Lycurgus did not even try to instil this discipline until he had secured agreement among the leading men of
2 the state. I deduce this from the fact that in other cities the most powerful citizens do not even wish to give the impression that they are afraid of the magistrates, thinking that this is illiberal, while in Sparta the leading citizens show the greatest respect for the magistrates, and pride themselves on being humble, and running rather than walking in answer to a summons. They think that if they set an example of exaggerated obedience the rest will follow; this has proved to be the case.

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- 3 It is likely that these same people helped to establish the power of the Ephorate. They realised that obedience was of vital importance in the city, in the army and in the home, and they thought that the greater the power of the office, the more likely it was to over-awe the people.
 - 4 Ephors have the right to inflict punishments at will, to require immediate payment of fines, to depose magistrates during their term of office, to imprison them, and even to put them on trial for their lives. Since they have so much power, they do not always allow office-holders to complete their year of office as they see fit, as is done in other cities, but, like tyrants or presidents of the games, they punish an offender as soon as the offence is detected.
 - 5 Among many other excellent ways in which Lycurgus encouraged the citizens to obey the laws willingly, one of the finest seems to me the fact that he did not deliver his laws to the people before going to Delphi with the leading citizens, and asking the oracle whether it would be more desirable and better for Sparta to be governed under his proposed laws. Only when the reply was that it would be better in every way did he deliver his laws; thus he made it not merely illegal but sacrilegious to disobey laws sanctioned by Delphi.
- ix Another aspect of Lycurgus' institutions which may properly be a source of wonder is his establishment of the principle that a noble death is preferable to living in dishonour. Investigation shows that fewer of those who believe this are killed than of those who choose to retreat
- 2 from danger. In fact, one is more likely to avoid an early death through courage than cowardice, for courage is easier, more pleasant, more resourceful and stronger. Manifestly glory goes particularly with valour, for all
 - 3 wish somehow to be the allies of the brave. It is proper not to omit the means by which Lycurgus achieved this; he made it clear that the reward for the brave would be
 - 4 happiness, for the cowardly misery. In other cities the coward suffers nothing more than the stigma of cowardice—he goes to the same market-place as the brave man,

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sits with him, and attends the same gymnasium if he wishes. In Sparta anyone would think it a disgrace to take a coward into his mess or be matched against him in a wrestling bout. When teams are being selected for the *sphairai* contests, such a man is often not picked, and in the chorus he is relegated to the most ignominious position; he must give way to others in the street, and rise even for younger men when seated. He must keep the unmarried women of his family at home, and answer to them for the disadvantages his cowardice inflicts on them;* he must endure a house without a wife, and yet pay the penalty for being a bachelor. He must not go about the city looking cheerful, nor must he imitate those who are without reproach; if he does, he must submit to a beating from his betters. When such disabilities are attendant on cowardice, I am not surprised that Spartans prefer death to such a deprived and disgraceful existence.

x The provision by which Lycurgus required men to practise virtue even into old age seems to me good. By placing selection for the *Gerousia* toward the very end of life he ensured that they would not neglect the virtues of an upright life even in old age. The protection he offered to good men past their prime is also worthy of admiration; by putting the members of the *Gerousia* in charge of capital trials he made old age more honourable than the strength of youth. The contest for the *Gerousia* is correctly regarded as the most important that a man can enter. Gymnastic contests are noble, but they depend on the body; selection for the *Gerousia* depends on nobility of character. Just as the character is more important than the body, so rivalries hinging on it are worth more effort than physical contests.

4 Another admirable feature of Lycurgus' institutions was based on his realisation that where the encouragement of virtue is left to individual initiative the result is not sufficient to promote the good of the state; he therefore

* Or: 'answer to them for the fact that they are unmarried'.

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decreed that all citizens must practise all the virtues in public life. Just as individually those who practise virtue surpass those who disregard it, so it is reasonable that Sparta is outstanding above all cities in virtue because she is the only one where nobility is consciously practised in public life. For is it not also noble that, where other cities punish a man for wronging someone, Lycurgus decreed no less severe penalties for a man who openly did not live as nobly as possible? His principle, it seems, was that if someone enslaves people, deprives them of something or steals, then only those who are directly harmed are wronged, but that wickedness and cowardice are a betrayal of the whole city. It therefore seems to me right that they should receive the severest punishment. He laid down an inflexible requirement to practise all political virtue. Those who carried out their legal duties were given an equal share in the life of the states. He did not take into account physical infirmity or poverty; if anyone shrank from fulfilling what was required of him, Lycurgus decreed that he should no longer even be considered one of the *Homoioi*. It is obvious that these laws are very old, for Lycurgus is said to have lived at the time of the sons of Heracles. Old as they are, they are very strange to the other Greeks; it is a most extraordinary phenomenon that they all praise such practices, but no city is willing to imitate them.

XI The aspects I have discussed up to now are blessings common to times of peace and war; I will now demonstrate how Lycurgus' arrangements are superior to those of other states for military purposes. First, the Ephors proclaim the age-groups to be called up, listing cavalry and infantry, and then also craftsmen, with the result that the Spartans have a sound supply of everything which is available in the city while on campaign as well. All equipment that the army needs centrally is specified, to be produced on wagons or baggage animals; in this way omissions are least likely to be overlooked. He devised the following costume for battle: red cloaks,

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thinking that this was least effeminate and most warlike, and bronze shields since they are quickest to polish and slow to tarnish. He also allowed those who were grown up to wear their hair long, on the basis that they would thus appear taller, more noble, and more terrifying.

- 4 Having equipped them in this way, he divided infantry and cavalry into six regiments. Each infantry regiment has one commanding officer, four company commanders, eight section officers and sixteen junior officers. At the word of command, each regiment forms
- 5 up in platoons two,* three or six abreast. The prevalent impression that Spartan formation under arms is extremely complicated is the opposite of the truth; the front rank man in the Spartan formation is in command,
- 6 and each file is self-sufficient.† The formation is so easy to understand that anyone who can recognise another man cannot go wrong, for some are designated to lead, others to follow. Deployments are ordered by the junior officers orally, acting as heralds, and the depth of the line of battle is established as they deploy. There is
- 7 nothing remotely difficult to learn in this. However, to fight on with whoever is at hand after the line has been disrupted is a secret not easily mastered except by those
- 8 trained under the system of Lycurgus. The Spartans also carry out with considerable ease manoeuvres which instructors in tactics think very difficult. When they are marching in column, obviously with every platoon following the one in front, if an enemy force appears in front of them, the word is passed to the junior officers to deploy to the left, and so down the column until the line is drawn up facing the enemy. If the enemy appears from the rear when the Spartans are in this formation, each file takes up reverse order so that the best men always
- 9 face the enemy. The fact that the leader thus finds himself on the left is not regarded as a disadvantage, but on occasions as a positive gain; should the enemy

* This number is missing from the text; two is the most likely restoration, though single file is possible.

† There is some doubt about the exact text here which renders the sense doubtful.

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attempt an encircling movement, they would do so not on the unprotected side but on the shield side. If it seems right at any time or for any reason for the commander to have the right wing, they reverse the stations of the army by countermarching until the commander
10 is on the right wing and the rearguard on the left. If the enemy appear on the right flank while the Spartans are in column, they just swing each company to face them head on, like a trireme; thus the rear ranks occupy the right wing. They are no more disturbed by an enemy appearing on the left, but run forward,* or swing the companies to face them; this time the rear company will be on the left.

xii A word about the type of camp approved by Lycurgus. Because he realised that the corners of a square were useless, he used a circular camp except where a hill provided security, or there was a wall or river in the rear.
2 By day sentries were stationed by the arms dumps looking inwards, for they watch out for friends, not enemies. Cavalry keep watch for the enemy from points where they have as wide a view as possible to detect an enemy
3 approach. By night the Skiritai were assigned to the outposts around the main force, though now this duty may also be undertaken by mercenaries if there happen to be
4 any present. One must be quite clear that the rule that spears should always be carried has the same purpose as the banning of slaves from the arms dumps, and the fact that those who leave their posts for necessary purposes go only so far from their companions and their weapons as they must to avoid giving offence; the
5 common basis is safety. They change the sites of their camps frequently to harm the enemy and help their friends. It is laid down that all Spartans must take exercise all the while they are on campaign, with the result that they improve their own splendid physique and appear more dignified than other men. The exercise area and running track must not exceed in size the

* There is some doubt about the exact text here which renders the sense doubtful.

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- area covered by the camp so that no one may get far
6 from his arms. After exercise the senior officer present
has the order given to sit down; this is a form of inspection; after this comes the order to break their fast, and to relieve the outposts quickly. There follow amusements and a period of relaxation before the evening exercise.
7 The order is then given for the evening meal, and, after singing a hymn to the gods to whom they have sacrificed with good omens, to rest by their arms.

There is no cause for surprise in the length of my account; it would be very difficult to find anything meriting attention in military matters which the Spartans have overlooked.

- xiii I will now describe the power and the honour which Lycurgus decreed for the king on campaign. First, the king and his entourage are maintained at public expense when in the field. The regimental commanders eat with the king, so that, since they are always present, they may take a larger part in any necessary deliberations. Three others of the *Homoioi* also eat with them and see to their every need, so that nothing may distract them from concentrating on matters connected with the war.
2 But I will go back to the beginning, to the moment when the king leaves the city with the army. First, he sacrifices in Sparta to Zeus the Leader and to the gods associated with him. If the omens here are good, the fire-bearer takes fire from the altar and leads the way to the frontiers of the state. There the king sacrifices again to Zeus and
3 Athena; when the omens from both are good, then he crosses the frontier. The fire from these sacrifices is carried in front, and never put out, and sacrificial victims of all sorts follow. Whenever the king sacrifices, he starts the rites before dawn, wishing to obtain the favour of the
4 gods before the enemy. There are present at the sacrifice the regimental and the company commanders and the section officers, the commanders of foreign detachments and of the baggage train, and any of the commanders of the detachments from individual cities who
5 wish to be present. Two of the Ephors are also present,

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but take no part unless the king invites them to do so; needless to say, by watching each man's conduct they exercise a restraining hand on all. When the sacrifice is over, the king summons everyone and issues the orders for the day. Watching this, one might think that the other Greeks were amateurs in military matters, and the
6 Spartans the only true professionals. When the king is leading the army, if no enemy appear, nobody marches in front of him except the Skiritai and cavalry outriders. If they expect a battle, the king takes the first company of the first regiment and wheels to the right until he
7 takes up his position between two regiments and two regimental commanders. The senior member of the king's council arranges the necessary supporting troops. The council consists of the *Homoioi* who share the king's mess, prophets, doctors, *aulos*-players, the commanders of the army and any volunteers present. There is therefore no problem about making the necessary arrange-
8 ments, for nothing is unforeseen. Other Lycurgan provisions affecting battles seem to me useful: when a goat is sacrificed with the enemy already in sight, it is the custom that all the *aulos*-players present should play and all the Spartans wear garlands; all armour must be
9 polished. Young men are also permitted to go into battle with their hair oiled, looking cheerful and impressive. Words of encouragement are spoken by the junior officers, for not even a whole platoon can hear the words of the junior officer of the next platoon. The regimental commander is responsible for seeing that the process is
10 effectively carried out. When they decide that it is time to camp, the king is in charge, and indicates the site; however, he has no authority to despatch embassies, whether to friends or enemies. All are subject to the king's authority when they have any business to transact.
11 Lawsuits are referred by the king to the *Hellanodikai*, applications for money to the treasurers, and any booty which is brought in is handed over to the auctioneers. With this system, the king is left with no duties on campaign except those of a priest in the religious field and a general in human affairs.

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xv* I would also like to describe the agreement which
Lycurgus made between king and state. The royal
authority at Sparta is the only one which remains to-day
unchanged in its original form; investigation would
show that all other constitutions have undergone
modifications and are even now in the process of change.
2 He laid it down that the king should make all public
sacrifices for the state because of his divine descent, and
3 should lead the army on any foreign campaign. He
granted the king the choice parts of the sacrificial victims,
and set aside enough land in many of the surrounding
cities to ensure that he was not without adequate means,
4 and yet was not too rich. So that the kings should eat in
public, he established a state *sussition* for them; he also
honoured them with a double portion at meals, not so
that they should eat twice as much but so that they
should have the means of honouring anyone they
5 wished. He also gave them the right of choosing two
companions each for their *sussition*, who are called
Puthioi. They also received the right to take one pig
from each litter, so that a king would never be without
6 victims should he need to consult the gods. A spring near
their houses provides a plentiful supply of water; those
without such an amenity will realise its manifold uses.
Everyone stands when the king enters except Ephors
7 seated on their official thrones. Oaths are exchanged
every month, the Ephors swearing on behalf of the city,
the king for himself. The king swears to rule according to
the established laws of the city, the city to maintain the
royal authority unimpaired as long as the king keeps his
8 oath. Such are the honours the king receives in Sparta
during his lifetime; they do not greatly exceed the posi-
tion of a private citizen. Lycurgus did not wish to en-
courage a tyrannical attitude in the kings, nor to make
9 the people envy their power. The honours given to a
king after death by Lycurgus' legislation are intended

* Chapter xiv appears to be an intrusion in its present position, and may well be a later addition to the main treatise; it is therefore printed at the end. For discussion, see the Introduction, and the Commentary on xiv.

THE POLITEIA OF THE SPARTANS

to demonstrate that kings of Sparta are honoured not as men but as heroes.

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xiv If someone were to ask me whether I felt that the laws of Lycurgus still remained unchanged, I could not
2 confidently say yes. I know that in the past the Spartans preferred to stay in Sparta in moderate prosperity rather than expose themselves to the flattery and corruption involved in governing other cities. In the past
3 they were afraid of being proved to have gold, but there are those now who even pride themselves on possessing
4 some. In the past the purpose of the expulsion of foreigners and the ban on foreign travel was to prevent citizens from being infected with idleness by foreigners; now I understand that the apparent leaders of the state are eager to govern foreign cities for the rest of their lives.
5 There was a time when they worked to be worthy to lead, but now they are far more interested in ruling than
6 in being worthy of their position. This is the reason why, whereas formerly the Greeks used to come to the Spartans and ask them for leadership against reputed wrongdoers, now many are encouraging each other to prevent
7 a revival of Spartan power. There is, however, no cause for surprise that such reproaches are being cast at them; they obviously do not obey either the gods or the laws of Lycurgus.