

SPARTA & WAR



edited by
Stephen Hodkinson
and
Anton Powell

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INTRODUCTION

Stephen Hodkinson

The papers in this volume were originally given at the Fifth International Sparta Seminar held on 1st–4th September 2004 at the Université de Rennes II. The first two meetings of the Sparta Seminar took place in the form of specialized conferences in Cardiff in 1991 and Hay-on-Wye in 1997 (subsequently published as Powell and Hodkinson 1994; Hodkinson and Powell 1999). From the Third International Sparta Seminar onwards, our meetings have taken place as a panel within the recently-founded Celtic Conference in Classics: at Maynooth in 2000 (published as Powell and Hodkinson 2002), Glasgow in 2002 (Figueira 2004), and Rennes in 2004. The establishment of a long-term home for the Sparta Seminar within the framework of the Celtic Conferences provides for its future continuity through a regular series of biennial meetings. The Sixth International Sparta Seminar takes place around the time of publication of this volume, at the Fourth Celtic Conference at the University of Wales, Lampeter in late summer 2006; and initial plans are under way for our seventh Seminar, to be held at the Fifth Celtic Conference at the National University of Ireland, Cork, in summer 2008.

Placing the seminar within the Celtic Conferences also reflects our belief that the development of Spartan historical research is best served by interaction with scholars working in other fields of classical and ancient historical studies. Since the format of the Celtic Conferences gives participants in each panel the opportunity to attend sessions of other panels, the papers in this volume were given to, and have benefited from discussion by, audiences embracing both Spartan specialists and a range of experts in other fields. In addition, Anton Powell's paper was the opening general keynote address to the Rennes conference.

The first Sparta Seminar in 1991 (published as *The Shadow of Sparta*) took as its subject a specified subject: images of Sparta as reflected in the thought of other Greeks. At the following three seminars participants were given the freedom to select the subjects and themes they judged most pressing in Spartan research. For the Fifth International Sparta Seminar we decided to return to the original conception by choosing a particular theme: Sparta and War.

Behind this choice lay several academic reasons, personal and generic, immediate and longer-term. A long-term perspective of Powell's work – manifested in the sub-title of his first edited volume on Sparta, *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind her success* (Powell 1989) – has been an awareness of the unusual and effective procedures which enabled her to achieve such extraordinary success (considering her size) in the face of major enduring difficulties. Sparta's policy and practice in the field of war were undoubtedly among the most important 'techniques behind her success' – techniques not explored in the 1989 volume, but which he had recently begun to address in his contribution to the Fourth International Sparta Seminar on the subject of Spartan women and war (Powell 2004).

Military aspects of Spartan society have also been an occasional theme of my own previous research. My first published article on Sparta included discussion of the social implications of her military organization and the behaviour of her commanders abroad (Hodkinson 1983); and a subsequent article examined the impact of her prolonged engagement in foreign warfare during the late fifth and early fourth centuries on the growth of Sparta's internal social crisis (Hodkinson 1993). The decision to expand this occasional interest into a more concerted focus on the theme of 'Sparta and war' has been influenced by intellectual currents within the universities of Manchester and Nottingham. The theme for the present volume was initially conceived within the context of the creation, by the School of History and Classics at the University of Manchester, of a new Centre for the Cultural History of War.¹ (This is an appropriate point to acknowledge the academic and financial support that the International Sparta Seminars received from the University of Manchester during the first twelve years of their existence.) It has subsequently come to fruition following my move to the Department of Classics at the University of Nottingham: a department with a strong and longstanding expertise in Graeco-Roman warfare which had been jointly responsible for the volume from a seminar series on 'War and Society in the Ancient World', in which my 1993 article was published (Rich and Shipley 1993). The theme also fits well with the Department's current project on 'Sparta in Comparative Perspective, Ancient to Modern', in which the history and tradition of Sparta's military orientation, both real and imagined, are central issues.

Our choice of theme, we felt, was also highly appropriate for a conference to be held at the Université de Rennes II, the academic home for so many years of the distinguished social historian of ancient Greece, Yvon Garlan. Garlan's three books on ancient Greek warfare (*La Guerre dans l'antiquité*, *Recherches de poliorcétique grecque* and *Guerre et économie en Grèce ancienne*) – the first of which was published as early as 1972 – were ahead of their time

in their focus, not so much on the details of equipment, technology and battle, as on war and military organization in their changing socio-economic, political and ideological contexts.²

Beyond these personal and contingent factors, however, our choice of ‘Sparta and war’ was influenced by our perception of a significant gap in recent Spartan historiography – a general paucity of studies exploring the interaction of war and society of the kind that Garlan provided a generation ago for Greece as a whole.

This gap in modern research is in some respects surprising, since the role of war has been a central theme in representations of Spartan society from antiquity to the present. The earliest literary evidence from archaic Sparta, the poetry of Tyrtaios, revolves around the military role of Spartan citizens and their duty to fight for the community. The alleged orientation of Spartan education and society towards war and empire is a significant theme in Plato’s *Laws* and Aristotle’s *Politics*. Images of fearsome Spartan mothers commanding their sons to return with their shields or on them, cheerfully burying their fallen menfolk or killing them on their cowardly return were a favourite topic of Hellenistic anecdotes and epigrams. Within the Roman Empire real or imagined Spartan military debates were prominent themes of rhetorical exercises, such as declamations and educational *progymnasmata* (‘preparatory exercises’), from the first century AD to late antiquity. In Renaissance and early modern Europe Sparta’s citizen militia formed an important model in the political thought of Machiavelli and classical republican theorists in England and France. Nineteenth-century liberal thought, in contrast, typecast Sparta’s society as a warlike brotherhood; whilst theorists of social evolution such as Herbert Spencer categorized her as a classic case of the militant type of society in opposition to the modern industrial state. In the 1930s and 1940s Sparta was evoked by Nazi ideologists as a model of a military master race; and, conversely, German self-identification with Sparta was taken up eagerly by contemporary British intellectuals who portrayed both societies as reactionary militaristic land powers. Within U.S. Cold War defence analysis Sparta was frequently invoked as an ideal type for interpreting the Soviet Union as an economy and society in which military needs received first priority. Through all these periods the death of the 300 at Thermopylai has stood as a defining example of the character of Spartan society, embodying heroic military self-sacrifice in obedience to the law.

The role of war in Spartan society and policy was a central element in the two studies which inaugurated the modern era of Spartan historical research. Moses Finley’s 1968 essay – which appeared in the edited volume, *Problèmes de la Guerre en Grèce Ancienne* – was a magisterial attempt to view the nature and significance of Sparta’s military characteristics within the overall

context of her social institutions. Ste Croix's 1972 book, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, grounded a profound examination of Sparta's policy towards Athens in an interpretation of the military pressures deriving from her internal exploitation of the helots and the character of the Peloponnesian league. However, the resurgence of Spartan research stimulated by these seminal studies has, with certain exceptions, left the military aspects of Spartan society and policy to one side.

This was in part a consequence of Finley's and Ste Croix's own work. Finley argued that classical Sparta's military institutions were not in themselves the most distinctive or pivotal element of her citizen organization; and Ste Croix's study demonstrated that a proper investigation of her strategic policy required an understanding of its roots in her socio-economic and political structures. Prompted by these conclusions, the considerable outpouring of new research on Sparta since the 1970s has focused primarily upon issues of economy, society and culture. It has provided insights into a wider range of aspects of Spartan society than ever before: its alimentary customs, artistic and material culture, educational system, foreign connections, matrimonial and sexual practices, political organization, property system, religious cults, settlement patterns, subject populations – and much else besides. In place of older images of a narrow and limited society, these studies have given us a richer perception of the breadth, and sometimes even the diversity, of Spartan social life.

In contrast, classical Sparta's military institutions have been relatively neglected. Paul Cartledge's studies have shed important light on the development of those institutions in the archaic period;³ and there have been several studies of the army's organization and military campaigns.⁴ But, with certain exceptions, especially within French scholarship,⁵ there has been little study of the impact of war on Spartan society or the interaction between her military and social organization and culture. As a consequence, whilst our comprehension of other aspects of Spartan society has been significantly renewed, and often revolutionized, over the course of the last generation, current understandings of Sparta's engagement in the sphere of war have remained largely unchanged.

This comparative neglect has not, of course, been confined to the history of Sparta. As recently as 1999, the editors of a volume on *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* could assert that 'scholars of antiquity had focused rarely and then only selectively on how the experience of war and the needs of military organization affected and were affected by their broader social milieu'.⁶ As they noted, the paucity of studies on the relation between ancient Greek (and Roman) war and society was, in one sense, surprising because the interaction between military practices and institutions and their

economic, social and cultural contexts has long been regarded as axiomatic by anthropologists, sociologists, and students of medieval and modern warfare. Even these fields, however, were affected by the tendency of historians in the second half of the twentieth century to treat 'military history' as a separate, traditional, elite-orientated, and somewhat inferior area of research in comparison with newer, vibrant fields such as social history and women's history – fields which aimed to view history 'from below' and (in their early years at least) largely shunned the sphere of war. This historiographical tendency – which influenced the direction of my own early research – took place against a broader contemporary backdrop of Western intellectual disenchantment with war and the 'military establishment', in the context of the Vietnam War, the escalating nuclear arms race, and the development of the Peace Movement.

In recent years, especially since the end of the Cold War, many of the barriers separating military and other branches of history have broken down. Military history, at least at the level of professional historiography, is undergoing a process of reinvention (Black 2004); and the experience of war, both 'from below' and 'from above', is a frequent theme in historical curricula and research. At the time when we were planning the Rennes seminar in winter 2002/03, we were aware that in ancient Greek history too the previous paucity of studies of the wider context of war was in process of being remedied by the recent or prospective publication of a number of pertinent edited volumes or monographs.⁷ The time, we judged, was therefore ripe for a thematic seminar which would give historians of classical Sparta the opportunity to reassess the nature and role of her military institutions, practice and policy in the light of the revised understandings of the character of Spartan society that have developed over the last thirty years.

The enthusiastic response to our chosen theme, both from Spartan specialists and from scholars coming to the subject from other areas of expertise, reassured us of the accuracy of our judgement. In this volume we publish articles developed from ten of the papers given at Rennes. But the seminar also profited from five other papers (by Pamela de Condappa, Edmond Lévy, Nicolas Richer, Stefan Stanke, and Hans van Wees) which enriched our understanding of further aspects of our theme: warrior bodies and the creation of Spartan identity; Sparta in Plato; the *Gymnopaïdai*; representations of Spartan generals in Xenophon's *Hellenika*; and myths and realities of the Spartan army. One notable aspect of the profile of participants, apart from the Sparta Seminars' customary international representation, is its gender balance: on a theme traditionally thought more appealing to men, forty per cent of the papers at Rennes and half the articles in this volume are the work of women. Interestingly, despite this academic gender balance, the

papers both here and at Rennes focus overwhelmingly on the practice and experience of war by Spartiate men.

The articles in the volume fall into three broad, though overlapping, sub-themes: war and society; military and civic geography; military practice and policy.

War and society. The four articles in this section deal with various aspects of the question of how Sparta's military practices in the sphere of war impinged upon and were moulded by the character of her civic society. The opening couple of papers discuss two distinct groups of citizens whose military performance earned them contrasting lifestyles and social opportunities. JEAN DUCAT discusses the group of citizens known to modern scholarship as the *tresantes* ('tremblers'), men judged guilty of cowardice in the face of battle. Despite (or perhaps because of) the apparent normative standing of Damaratos' famous pronouncement in Herodotus' *Histories* that Spartan warriors were commanded by law either to conquer or to die, there has been no previous detailed study of the range of evidence for the treatment and status of those men who failed to live up to this standard. Their treatment by the polis, Ducat shows, was by no means consistent, nor was their status as clear-cut as the sources' accounts would lead us to expect: so much so that Ducat expresses his doubt whether the *tresantes* ever existed as a general status. Useful as an ideological tool and as exemplary punishment for the errant behaviour of prominent individuals, the practicality of the harsh penalties claimed in general statements by ancient writers diminished when the behaviour of larger numbers of soldiers was concerned, especially in the face of Sparta's growing manpower shortage. In practice, Sparta's treatment of cowards in his day may not have differed as sharply from Athenian practice as Xenophon asserts.

THOMAS FIGUEIRA discusses a very different group of citizens (mainly young men in their 20s) whose achievements in the upbringing and army had gained them the conspicuous honour of selection for the corps of the 300 *hippeis*, which formed the lifeguard of Spartan kings. Despite their title, the *hippeis* of the classical period were no longer cavalry like their earlier predecessors, but hoplite foot-soldiers: a change that probably took place as part of the broader re-organization of Spartan society in the later archaic period which entailed the harmonization of elite lifestyles and behaviours with those of the mass of citizens. From this point onwards the *hippeis* no longer came exclusively from wealthy families, but were chosen on merit in an annual process of selection in which three commanders known as the *hippagretai* each chose a personal contingent of 100 men. As Figueira's analysis indicates, the *hippeis* embody a close integration of the military and civic spheres. They acted as a military unit, either independently or as the king's lifeguard within

the larger Spartan army; but they also served other public functions. They appear as an internal police force and are credited by one source as playing a counter-balancing political role within Sparta's mixed constitution. The process of their selection was a civic event, in which the reasons given for selection or rejection no doubt covered their performance in both military and non-military spheres. As with the *tresantes*, the institution's significance was weakened by the decline of Spartiate numbers, compelling their military integration with the standard citizen regiments at the same time as selection became less significant as a mark of social prestige owing to the reduced numbers of eligible citizens.

The categories of persons discussed by Ducat and Figueira were both distinctively Spartan. In contrast, the category of persons analysed in POLLY LOW's article, the war-dead, was clearly common to all Greek poleis. Yet, she argues, Sparta's modes of commemorating her war-dead fit into her political landscape in distinctive ways. Focusing on the period before the region's first external invasion in 370/69 BC (a period in which all Sparta's wars were fought outside, or at worst on the margins of, Lakonian territory), she notes an interesting differentiation between internal and external commemorations. The bodies of fallen warriors were given official burial away from Sparta, in collective tombs on the site of the battlefield or in nearby allied states. These tombs served public purposes: marking the borders of Spartan territory or the sites of Spartan victories and, even in the case of defeats, cementing alliances through a visible reminder to allied states that Spartans had died in defence of their lands. With the burial of the war-dead and its associated public ceremonial reserved for external contexts, commemoration inside Lakonia took on a different form, one unique to the region. This form was characterized by modestly sized, plainly decorated and sparsely inscribed memorial stones commemorating individual soldiers, some set up in Sparta itself, but others dispersed around Lakonia. These stones were probably private memorials put up by the kin of the deceased, which acted as sites of mourning and personal commemoration in the absence of a body, and also as modest tokens of family prestige at their kinsman's noble death. Though operating within the constraints imposed by the polis, they constitute a 'bottom-up' commemoration of military death which contrasts with the way that such commemorations were conducted in Athens and in many other poleis.

The papers of Ducat, Figueira and Low share at least two points of similarity. In method, each conducts its initial arguments through careful exposition and close interrogation of the relevant texts – whether literary or epigraphic – before proceeding to an examination of broader synthetic issues. In substance, each paper raises interesting and important questions about the

interrelationship between the aspects of their subject that pertain specifically to the conduct of war (for example, the *hippeis*' roles on campaign, or the military factors behind the treatment of cowards and the war-dead) and those aspects that pertain to peacetime civic functions or to private concerns (the *hippeis*' policing and political roles and their members' prestige as an internal elite; the civic sanctions on cowards and their personal disgrace; the limits on family commemoration of their fallen kin). Similar methodological procedures and substantive issues characterize my own paper, which addresses the consistent tendency in twentieth-century historical scholarship and political ideology to view classical Sparta as a militaristic society, a polis which differed from other Greek states in its predominant concentration on military concerns. Tracing the development of contemporary representations of Spartan society from Tyrtaios to Aristotle, I argue that the earlier ancient sources viewed Sparta's military characteristics in primarily civic terms; and that perceptions of the overwhelmingly military orientation of her society emerged only later, in the politicized contexts of the Peloponnesian war and Sparta's early-fourth-century empire; and that even then such perceptions were not unqualified or unchallenged. In a subsequent synthetic analysis of the Spartiates' preparations for war and other facets of their society, I suggest that the military elements in Spartan life were significant, but not dominant over other aspects of their civic arrangements. A Spartiate's role as a warrior was only part, albeit an important part, of a wider range of citizen activities and duties: to borrow the succinct formulation of Jean Ducat (1999, 36), he was not so much a professional warrior as a professional citizen.

Military and civic geography. The articles in this section both address, though in very different ways, important spatial aspects of the interaction between Sparta's civic and military arrangements. JACQUELINE CHRISTIEN's paper distils the fruits of many years of first-hand topographical research in the Lakonian countryside and brings together a mass of disparate evidence scattered across diverse archaeological publications into a global survey of Sparta's fortifications and frontiers in the fourth century BC. The study of Sparta's historical geography offers, she believes, one means of unblocking the obstacles to our understanding created by the mirage rooted in most of the literary texts: especially in the late classical period, when the undermining of Sparta's hegemony made the defence of her extensive territory a pressing concern and archaeological evidence for the region's fortifications first appears in significant quantity. Retracing the development of her earlier studies, she records how she became aware that in Sparta's different border regions the configuration of fortified places created various lines of defence linked to the presence of key routes stretching towards and beyond the confines of Spartan territory: routes identifiable through a combination of

traces on the ground and descriptions of military movements in ancient texts. Some of these lines of defence were created by the Spartans themselves during the period from the Peloponnesian war onwards. Others were the creations of neighbouring poleis, Argos and especially newly-liberated Messene, aimed at preventing Spartan incursions. The attribution of yet others remains unclear, especially in the complex, changing geo-political circumstances of north-western Lakonia and southern Arkadia following the foundation of Megalopolis. These geo-political changes, Christien argues, also stimulated institutional changes within Spartan society. It is no accident, for example, that in the period before the liberation of Messenia in 369 BC ancient discussions of Sparta's youngest military age grades focus on the *hippeis*, but that after Messenia's liberation the *krypteia* makes its first appearance, in Plato's *Laws*. The *krypteia*, she innovatively proposes, was an institution newly-designed for contemporary mid-fourth-century conditions, for the purpose of guerrilla-style campaigns against Sparta's former helots in Messenia: the model, according to a forthcoming article by Vincent Azoulay, for the novel argument in Isokrates' *Archidamos* that the Spartans should abandon their polis and form themselves into an army on the move.

In contrast, MARCELLO LUPI examines a longstanding ancient and modern controversy arising from the literary evidence: a controversy that originated in the fifth century BC regarding the existence and identity of a military unit called the 'Pitanate *lochos*', which Herodotus mentions in his account of the preliminaries to the battle of Plataia in 479 BC. Pitane is mentioned elsewhere by Herodotus as a village inhabited by Spartan citizens. In modern scholarship Herodotus' text has been combined with evidence from Roman times that Pitane was one of five Spartan villages (*ōbai*), in support of an influential thesis that the Spartan army in the late archaic and early classical periods was organized according to its villages (often described as the 'obal army'). Examining the problematic evidence regarding the status of the 'Pitanate *lochos*' and its commander Amompharetos, along with the traditions regarding their military role at Plataia, Lupi concludes that the unit should be identified with one of the three groups of 100 young citizens which together formed the 300 *hippeis*, with Amompharetos their commander being one of the three *hippagretai*. (This conclusion concurs with Figueira's study of the *hippeis*, which also argues for the separate identity of each of the three groups of 100 under its *hippagretēs*.) This identification means that Amompharetos' unit can no longer be viewed as deriving from one of five putative villages. Lupi suggests, instead, that it was based on one of Sparta's three civic tribes (Figueira, too, sees the tribes as the basis for the three groups of *hippeis*). But the question remains: why did Herodotus associate such a tribal unit with the village of Pitane? The answer, Lupi

argues, lies in a radical reinterpretation of Sparta's citizen settlement pattern, which earlier scholars have misleadingly reconstructed on the very different Roman situation when the city was enclosed by a fortification wall. The citizen villages of unwalled classical Sparta, he suggests, were located over a much more extensive area of the Eurotas valley than that enclosed by the later wall. The village of Pitane covered the entire central area of the polis and, containing the joint residence of the two kings and the burial ground of at least one of the royal houses, was identified with the tribe of the Hylleis, named after Hyllos son of Herakles, from which the royal houses claimed descent. Hence Herodotus could describe the tribal unit loosely as the 'Pitanate *lochos*'. Lupi's paper offers a fascinating insight into how the link between the meritocratic-military units of the *hippeis* and the civic tribal divisions was also integrated with the geographical residence patterns of Spartan citizens; and how new interpretations of their military arrangements can lead to broader revisions in our understanding of the civic and spatial organization of the Spartan polis.

Military practice and policy. The papers in this section consider the Spartan army in action and the external policies which directed its practice of war. Here too there are important connections with the nature of Sparta's internal society. NOREEN HUMBLE's paper takes as its starting-point an apparently difficult passage in Xenophon's *Polity of the Lakedaimonians* regarding the Spartiates' unique capacity for continuing to fight with whoever is next to them, even when their formation is in disorder. She interprets the passage as a development of Xenophon's critique of the Spartan *politeia* earlier in the work, especially his emphasis on how the Spartiate training and lifestyle developed unquestioning obedience to orders, and on how such obedience rested less on internalized self-discipline than on fear of the dishonour attendant upon cowardice which made death seem preferable. Xenophon's remarks evoke numerous incidents in which Spartiate commanders had fought to the death in losing causes; but they also remind the reader of certain recent battles (such as Lechaion in 390 BC) when the Spartans were in disorder but had fought neither well nor to the death. Furthermore, Xenophon's indication that other soldiers lacked this capacity highlights the weaknesses involved in the polis' increasing reliance on non-Spartiate troops in the context of citizen manpower shortage, again evoking recent occasions when such troops had fled, leaving their Spartiate commanders to meet their deaths. His commentary thus offers an interesting contemporary analysis of the underlying causes of the deficiencies of Spartan campaigning and the increasing number of her military defeats in the early fourth century.

ELLEN MILLENDER's essay on 'The politics of Spartan mercenary service' investigates one particular category of the non-Spartiate troops indirectly

signalled by Xenophon. As already noted, in the writings of Machiavelli and other Renaissance and early modern political theorists Sparta was frequently invoked alongside ancient Rome and certain contemporary republics as an example of a state whose freedom was grounded in its citizen militia, in contrast to other states, both ancient and modern, whose dependence upon mercenary leaders or troops had led to the loss of their liberty.⁸ From this perspective, it is understandable that what Ellen Millender calls Sparta's 'contribution to the development of mercenary warfare' has not previously received much attention; and her examination of the important role that mercenaries played in Spartan statecraft may come as some surprise. Although rank-and-file Spartiate citizens did not engage in mercenary service, during the late fifth and early fourth centuries the Spartans not only exploited the growing supply of professional soldiers (with leading Spartiates acting as commanders of and advisers to Peloponnesian mercenary forces sent abroad), but even turned the Peloponnese itself into a sizeable mercenary market. Sparta's creation of her overseas empire would have been impossible without these developments. However, they also played a critical role in undermining her position. The availability of mercenary forces distracted the Spartan authorities from dealing with their declining citizen numbers and loosened the bonds between Sparta and her allies in the Peloponnesian league, thus undermining the twin sources of hoplite manpower that had underpinned her position as a leading power over the previous century and more.

The article by FRANÇOISE RUZÉ explores another important feature of Spartan power-building: her exploitation of treachery on the part of dissident elements within hostile states as an adjunct to her military campaigns. As she notes, Aeneas Tacticus' work *How to Survive under Siege* shows that such treachery was the primary means by which Greek cities were captured by besieging armies. There were specifically military reasons why the Spartans had particular need of such tactics: their well-known lack of expertise at siege warfare, deriving from the character of their citizen hoplite armies, combined with the paucity of their financial resources. The campaign in the Chalkidike in the late 420s is a case in point. The Spartan forces lacked the military might to take any of the Chalkidian cities by force, but both Torone and Mende were secured by the action of a few fifth-columnists. The exploitation of internal treachery, however, was not always sufficient: despite the presence of pro-Spartan dissidents at Akanthos and Amphipolis, both cities were only acquired after decision by the majority of citizens following persuasive speeches by Brasidas. In other contexts the exploitation of ties with known dissidents can be seen to affect the course of military campaigns, as in the campaigns against Argos in 418. King Agis first concluded a truce with two leading Argives rather than engage in combat. Then, during the

subsequent battle of Mantinea, the 1000 select Argive troops were allowed to escape with minimal losses. It was probably the very same 1000 troops who subsequently assisted the Spartans to introduce oligarchies in Sikyon and in their own polis. However, the Spartans' overall military policy was not always dictated by such ties: they subsequently declined to give further military assistance to their oligarchic associates in Argos, acquiescing in the restoration of democratic rule when it became clear that the oligarchs were unable to establish an enduring regime.

In discussing the Spartans' decision in Argos, Ruzé compares it to their resolution regarding Athens in 403 to abandon support for the tyranny of the Thirty and permit the restoration of democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the volume concludes with ANTON POWELL's examination of the nexus of political, military and economic factors which led to that resolution, 'perhaps the most important decision that Sparta would ever make': in fact, a double decision, both on Athens' initial capture in 404 and during Sparta's subsequent interventions in 403, to allow her to survive in the face of powerful demands for her utter annihilation. The original contribution of Powell's essay is to locate the reasons for that decision less in terms of the foreign policy considerations frequently advanced in modern scholarship (the use of Athens as a counter-balance to the rising threat of Thebes) than in the potential impact on Spartan society of the spoils of war. The capture of the cities in Athens' empire had already given the Spartan polis and her leading commanders access to mobile wealth far beyond the resources of Lakonia and Messenia. Some prominent commanders had succumbed to the lure of private peculation. In their fright at the huge sums of coined money being sent back home by Lysander, the Spartans had debated whether they should ban it entirely and had eventually agreed to admit it only for public, not for private, possession. The prospect of what might happen to the dispersed distribution of power within the Spartan political system, should the immense private resources of the wealthiest city in Greece fall into the hands of individual Spartans (especially the ambitious Lysander, the commander on the spot in Athens both in 404 and 403), provides ample explanation for why Athens was allowed to survive with its wealth intact.

For Machiavelli and most other classical republican theorists, the one important difference between the citizen-militia republics of Sparta and Rome was that Rome was designed for expansion, but at the ultimate cost of her internal liberty at the hands of powerful military commanders; whereas Sparta, in contrast, was a republic designed not for expansion but for the preservation of its existing power and its internal freedom.⁹ On Powell's thesis, Sparta's policy towards Athens suggests that Machiavelli's perception of the connection between her external restraint and internal liberty contains

an essential element of truth. In 404 and 403 the Spartans eschewed taking full advantage of the potential for imperial power precisely because of its attendant threat to their liberty at home. Moreover, linking Powell's conclusions to Millender's study of mercenaries, we can suggest that Machiavelli's perception was correct (in principle, if not in detail) in another sense too. For him, as for other republican thinkers, the prime danger to the liberty of republics was the power of military leaders in command of mercenary troops with no loyalty to the republics they served. In the light of Millender's revelation of the scale of Sparta's dependence on foreign mercenaries – a phenomenon of which Machiavelli shows no awareness¹⁰ – the fear that Lysander or another military leader with personal access to the resources of Athens might gain overweening power through command of an unprecedented mercenary army may have been a most potent consideration for other Spartans. At all events, it is clear that the Spartans applied the lessons of the danger of booty in their subsequent military practices. As Powell notes, in their foreign campaigns in the 390s booty captured by the main army was taken out of the control of army commanders and put into the hands of official bootysellers, who conducted its sale and ensured that the receipts were used for public purposes. In this way Sparta successfully cut the Machiavellian knot which tied dependence on mercenaries to internal autocracy: indeed, her most frequent commander of mercenaries in the following generation was Agesilaos II, one of her legitimate kings.¹¹

It remains to thank our hosts at the Université de Rennes II for providing the excellent facilities and hospitable environment in which we were able to conduct our discussions: our conference organizer Pierre Brulé and the Centre de Recherche et d'Étude des Sociétés et Cultures antiques de la Méditerranée; and the conference secretariat from the Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, especially Sébastien Bruneau and Marie-France Monnerais. Particular thanks are due to P.-J. Shaw for her expeditious translation into English of the article by Jean Ducat.

Notes

¹ One project of the new Centre, in which I was also involved as member of the editorial board of the *European Review of History / Revue Européenne d'Histoire*, was a conference on the theme of 'War, Culture and Humanity' in Manchester in April 2004. Several of the papers from the conference have appeared in the *ERH/REH* from issue 12.1 (2005) onwards.

² Garland 1972; 1974; 1989.

³ Cartledge 1977; 2001.

⁴ Lazenby 1985; Sekunda 1998. The longstanding and vexed debate about the hierarchy of Spartan military units has continued unabated.

⁵ e.g. Loraux 1977; Ducat 1999.

⁶ Raaflaub and Rosenstein 1999, 1; though, oddly, they ignore the work of Garland.

⁷ e.g. Brun 1999; Corvisier 1999; Prost 1999; Amouretti et al. 2000; Van Wees 2000; Bekker-Nielsen 2001; Chaniotis and Ducrey 2002; Van Wees 2004; Chaniotis 2005. Some of the earliest works in this list were advanced textbooks for French students preparing for the *agrégation* (the competitive civil service entrance examination for those aiming to teach at the higher level of secondary education). The choice of nominated subject in ancient Greek history, 'Wars and societies in the ancient Greek worlds, 490 to 322 BC', testifies to the upsurge in French academic interest in the theme.

⁸ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* ch. 12; *Discourses on Livy* 1.5; 1.6; 2.10.

⁹ *Discourses* 1.5.

¹⁰ For Machiavelli, the failure of Spartan imperialism in the mid-fourth century was the outcome of her empire becoming too extensive for the limited size of her citizen militia (*Discourses* 2.3).

¹¹ Cartledge 1987, 314–30.

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THE SPARTAN ‘TREMBLERS’

Jean Ducat

In theory, the Spartans’ military conduct was governed by a single, simple principle, the strict application of which, so it was said, was what gave their army its strength. In Herodotus (7.104), this is how Demaratus explains it to Xerxes:

(the law) always requires the same thing of them: it forbids them to flee from battle however great the force confronting them; remaining at their post, they must overcome or perish.

An episode in Book 9 (53 and 55) provides an example of conformity with this principle that is so strict as to make it an absurdity: this is the story of a Spartan *lochagos*, Amompharetos, who, just before the battle of Plataea, stubbornly refuses, in the face of the enemy, to execute a manoeuvre ordered by his superiors, because it entails a slight withdrawal. Similarly, Thucydides comments thus (4.40.1) on the capitulation of 292 Lacedaemonian hoplites on Sphacteria (425):

In Greek eyes, this was the most unexpected event of the war; because the general view of the Lacedaemonians was that nothing, neither hunger nor any other extremity, would make them surrender their weapons, but that they would keep them to the end, fighting as best they could even to the death.

That the Spartans should, in this situation, have been unfaithful to their principles was a palpable shock to the rest of the Greeks (and, as it turns out, to the Spartans themselves); this shows how the image of itself that Sparta had aimed to project was accepted without question by everyone.

Those who did not honour these principles laid themselves open to a sanction. This sanction appears to be well known, as much for its different modes as for the question of the circumstances in which it might be applied. Those who were deemed to have shown cowardice in battle suffered a form of disgrace which is described in several texts; these texts, if taken as complementing each other, enable us to conjure a picture of this penalty that appears coherent and complete. They were called the ‘tremblers’, *tresantes*, and the

existence of this condition seems to be attested in texts ranging from the end of the seventh century (text 1) to 331 (the battle of Megalopolis; text 6). Amongst the Spartan institutions of the archaic and classical eras, that of the 'tremblers' would thus be one of the most permanent and best-known. After 331, we hear no more of it, which is hardly surprising: this is a period when – we can reasonably guess – many traditional Spartan practices fell into disuse; apparently, even the reformer kings did not attempt to revive it, unless it is to be subsumed within the vague and general expression 'Spartan discipline'.

It is doubtless because the 'tremblers' appear as a simple and unproblematic reality that there exists no actual monograph on the subject. The closest we have to such a thing is the article *Tresantes* in the *Real-Encyclopädie* by V. Ehrenberg (Ehrenberg 1937). It is, no doubt, the quality of this study that explains why no one has re-visited the subject. It is arranged chronologically: Ehrenberg conducts a successive study of all those historical episodes in which the 'tremblers' make an appearance, so the picture of this institution gradually develops of its own accord. Not once does he yield to the temptation of simplifying matters; he is plainly aware of the difficulties and uncertainties with regard to detail, and particularly of the fact that the sanction might be variable. But the genre of 'encyclopaedia article' has strict limits, if only from the point of view of dimension, and this did not allow Ehrenberg to examine the texts with as much detailed attention as would have been desirable.

Since this inaugural, and truly pioneering, study, there has to my knowledge been no overall treatment of this punishment other than that embarked upon by N. Loraux in her well-known article on the Spartan 'noble death' (Loraux 1977, 108–9 and 111–13); alongside the 'noble death' it was natural to evoke its complete opposite, the disgraced life, of which the coward's is the very image. Loraux offers an interesting critique of Ehrenberg's study. His principal fault, in her opinion, is that he aimed 'à une reconstitution de l'institution dominée par le présumé éminemment idéologique de la décadence continue de Sparte à partir des guerres médiques' (p. 111). As far as the subject of decadence is concerned, this criticism is too harsh: Ehrenberg does not make use of the concept; he wishes only to observe that the Spartans applied this sanction less and less and, therefore, that they showed less and less respect for the rules they had established. On the other hand, I would perhaps be more radical than Loraux in identifying Ehrenberg's weakness chiefly as that of having aspired to write a linear history of the institution, and perhaps even of having thought it possible to write a history of it at all.¹

Since the 'tremblers' are one of the most famous of Spartan realities, they are mentioned in all studies of any size devoted to Sparta, and are met with in many detailed enquiries. Even if some of these works offer interesting comments on matters of detail, there would be little advantage in searching

them out and compiling a complete list; such a bibliography would bring nothing to the study of the subject. I will make one exception, for the sake of two books on Spartan law (or on the problem of discerning whether one can speak of any such law), and which necessarily come up against one problem, to which I shall also return: that of knowing how far the rule regarding the 'tremblers' is a legal reality, and how far a purely social sanction. While D. MacDowell (MacDowell 1986, 42–6) thinks he detects in it certain legal features, S. Link (Link 1994, 22–3 and 84–5) maintains that it is exclusively a social sanction, and that the only thing relating to law in this affair is the taking of the decision itself.

I. THE PRINCIPAL TEXTS

1. Tyrtaeus, fr. 11 West (8 Prato), 14–16.

τρεσάντων δ' ἀνδρῶν πᾶσ' ἀπόλωλ' ἀρέτη.
οὐδείς ἄν ποτε ταῦτα λέγων ἀνύσειεν ἕκαστα
ἕσσ', ἣν αἰσχρὰ μάθη, γίνεται ἀνδρὶ κακά,

as for those who have trembled, they have lost all their worth.² No speech could enumerate all the evils that afflict the man who has formed this shameful thought.

V. 16, μάθη West, πάθη codd. The correction adopted by West seems to me to be demanded by the parallels he cites.

2. Herodotus 7.231–2.

231. ἀπονοστήσας δὲ ἐς Λακεδαίμονα ὁ Ἀριστόδημος ὄνειδός τε εἶχε καὶ ἀτιμίην· πάσχων δὲ τοιάδε ἠτίμωτο· οὔτε οἱ πῦρ οὐδείς ἔνανε Σπαρτιητέων οὔτε διελέγετο, ὄνειδός τε εἶχε ὁ τρέσας Ἀριστόδημος καλεόμενος. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἐν Πλαταιῆσι μάχῃ ἀνέλαβε πᾶσαν τὴν ἐπενειχθεῖσαν αἰτίην. 232. λέγεται δὲ καὶ ἄλλον ἀποπεμφθέντα ἄγγελον ἐς Θεσσαλίην τῶν τριηκοσίων τούτων περιγενέσθαι, τῷ οὐνόμα εἶναι Παντίτην· νοστήσαντα δὲ τοῦτον ἐς Σπάρτην, ὡς ἠτίμωτο, ἀπάγξασθαι.

231. When he returned to Lacedaemon, Aristodemus found he was disgraced and dishonoured. This dishonour consisted of the following things: no Spartan would kindle fire for him; no one addressed a word to him, and he had the mortification of being called Aristodemus the Trembler. But at the Battle of Plataea he completely wiped out the blame that hung over him. 232. They say another of the three hundred also survived, having been sent as a messenger to Thessaly; his name was Pantites. Because, on returning to Sparta, he was disgraced, he hanged himself.

Cf. 9.71 (Aristodemus at Plataea). On the fortunes of Aristodemus, see Ducat 2005.

3. Thucydides 5.34.2.

τοὺς δὲ ἐκ τῆς νήσου ληφθέντας σφῶν καὶ τὰ ὄπλα παραδόντας, δείσαντες μὴ τι διὰ τὴν ξυμφορὰν νομίσαντες ἐλασσωθήσονται καὶ ὄντες ἐπίτιμοι νεωτερίσωσιν, ἤδη καὶ ἀρχὰς τινὰς ἔχοντας ἀτίμους ἐποίησαν, ἀτιμίαν δὲ τοιάνδε ὥστε μῆτε ἄρχειν μῆτε πριαμένους τι ἢ πωλοῦντας κυρίουσ εἶναι. ὕστερον δὲ αὐθις χρόνῳ ἐπίτιμοι ἐγένοντο,

regarding those of them who had been taken prisoner on the island and who had laid down their weapons, it was feared that, impelled by the dread of being reduced to an inferior condition because of what had happened, they would, as long as they retained their full rights (or: although they still possessed full rights), start thinking up some plan of revolution. For this reason they were pronounced *atimoi*, even though some of them by now held magistracies. The effect of this *atimia* was such that they could not hold office, nor were they allowed to buy or sell. After a certain period, their full rights were restored to them.

4. Xenophon, *Lak. Pol.* 9.

4. ἐν μὲν γὰρ ταῖς ἄλλαις πόλεσιν, ὅπταν τις κακὸς γένηται, ἐπικλήσιν μόνον ἔχει κακὸς εἶναι, ἀγόραζει δὲ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ὁ κακὸς τὰγαθῷ καὶ κάθηται καὶ γυμνάζεται, ἐὰν βούληται· ἐν δὲ τῇ Λακεδαίμονι πᾶς μὲν ἂν τις αἰσχυνθεῖ τὸν κακὸν σύσκηνον παραλαβεῖν, πᾶς δ' ἂν ἐν παλαίσματι συγγυμναστήν. 5. πολλάκις δ' ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ διαιρουμένων τοὺς ἀντισφαιριοῦντας ἀχώριστος περιγίγνεται, καὶ ἐν χοροῖς δ' εἰς τὰς ἐπονειδίστους χώρας ἀπελαύνεται, καὶ μὴν ἐν ὁδοῖς παραχωρητέον αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν θάκοις καὶ τοῖς νεωτέροις ὑπαναστατέον, καὶ τὰς μὲν προσηκούσας κόρας οἴκοι θρεπτέον, καὶ ταύταις τῆς ἀνανδρίας αἰτίαν ὑφεκτέον, γυναικὸς δὲ κενὴν ἐστὶν οὖσαν περιοπτέον καὶ ἅμα τούτου ζημίαν ἀποτειστέον, λαπαρὸν δὲ οὐ πλανητέον οὐδὲ μιμητέον τοὺς ἀνεγκλήτους, ἢ πληγὰς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀμεινόνων ληπτέον. 6. ἐγὼ μὲν δὴ τοιαύτης τοῖς κακοῖς ἀτιμίας ἐπικειμένης οὐδὲν θαυμάζω τὸ προαιρεῖσθαι ἐκεῖ θάνατον ἀντὶ τοῦ οὕτως ἀτίμου τε καὶ ἐπονειδίστου βίου,

4. In other cities, when someone displays cowardice, the only thing he suffers is to be called a coward; he frequents the same *agora* as the brave man, if he wants to, he sits next to him, and trains with him in the gymnasium. In Lacedaemon, on the other hand, any man would be ashamed to receive him as a mess-mate, and would blush to exercise with him in the gymnasium. 5. Often, when teams are being picked for a ball game, you see him left out, not chosen for any of them; when there is dancing, he is relegated to the demeaning positions. In the streets he has to give way to everyone, and if he has a seat, he must surrender it even to his juniors; at home he has to support his young female relatives, and bear in front of them the responsibility for their unmarried state; he must endure the sight of his own home with no wife in it, while also having to pay the fine for being unmarried; he may not walk around looking cheerful, nor may he try to imitate honourable men, on pain of being struck by his betters.

6. When *atimia* like this is imposed on cowards, I am not surprised that, there, they prefer death to a life so filled with dishonour and disgrace.

5. Isocrates

a. 8 (*On Peace*), 143.

ὑπὲρ ἐκείνων δ' οἱ μὴ τολμώντες ἐν ταῖς μάχαις ἀποθνήσκειν ἀτιμότεροι γίνονται τῶν τὰς τάξεις λειπόντων καὶ τὰς ἀσπίδας ἀποβαλλόντων,

those who lack the courage to die for them (the kings) in battle are more *atimoi* than those who have abandoned their posts and thrown away their shields.

b. *Letter 2 (to Philip)*, 6.

ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ Λακεδαιμονίους περὶ τῆς τῶν βασιλέων σωτηρίας πολλὴν ἐπιμελείαν ποιουμένους καὶ τοὺς ἐνδοξοτάτους τῶν πολιτῶν φύλακας αὐτῶν καθιστάντας, οἷς αἴσχιόν ἐστι ἐκείνους τελευτήσαντας περιδεῖν ἢ τὰς ἀσπίδας ἀποβαλεῖν,

you can also see how the Lacedaemonians take great care to preserve the safety of their kings, and that they assign to them the most renowned of the citizens as their bodyguards, for whom the disgrace of allowing the king to be killed is worse even than that of having thrown away their shields.

6. Diodorus 19.70.

4. οἱ δὲ πεμφθέντες ὡς ποθ' ἦγον εἰς τὴν Λακωνικὴν, εὖρον Ἀκρότατον τὸν Κλεομένους τοῦ βασιλέως υἱὸν προσκεκοφῶτα πολλοῖς τῶν νέων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ξενικῶν πραγμάτων ὀρεγόμενον. 5. τῶν γὰρ Λακεδαιμονίων μετὰ τὴν πρὸς Ἀντίπατρον μάχην ἀπολούντων τῆς ἀτιμίας τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ἥττης διασωθέντας μόνος ἐνέστη τῷ δόγματι. διόπερ αὐτὸν συνέβη καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὐκ ὀλίγοις προσκόψαι, μάλιστα δ' οἷς ἦν τῶν νόμων τὰ πρόστιμα· οἷτοι γὰρ συστραφέντες πληγὰς τε ἐνεφόρησαν αὐτῷ καὶ διετέλουν ἐπιβουλεύοντες,

on their arrival in Laconia, the envoys learnt that Akrotatos, son of King Cleomenes, had angered many of the young citizens, and, for this reason, was anxious to offer his services to a foreign country. While the Spartans, after the battle with Antipater, declared the survivors of the defeat to be free of *atimia*, he was the only one to oppose this decision. That is how he came to anger people so deeply, particularly those who fell under this stroke of the law. They were in league against him and beat him up, and were forever plotting against him.

7. Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 21.2 (where he deals with the songs taught to children).

ἔπαινοι γὰρ ἦσαν ὡς τὰ πολλὰ τῶν τεθνηκότων ὑπὲρ τῆς Σπάρτης εὐδαιμονιζομένων, καὶ ψόγοι τῶν τρεσάντων, ὡς ἀλγεινὸν καὶ κακοδαίμονα βιούντων βίον,

for the most part they were eulogies applauding the happy state of those who had died for Sparta, and songs censuring the tremblers, in which the pain and misery of their lives were depicted.

Cf. *Inst. Lac.* 14, *Mor.* 238a (identical).

8. Plutarch, *Agesilaus* 30.

2. ...τοῖς ἐν τῇ μάχῃ καταδειλιάσασιν, οὓς αὐτοὶ τρέσαντας ὀνομάζουσιν, ὀκνοῦντες τὰς ἐκ τῶν νόμων ἀτιμίας προσαγεῖν, πολλοῖς οὖσιν καὶ δυνατοῖς, φοβούμενοι νεωτερισμὸν ἀπ' αὐτῶν. 3. οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἀρχῆς ἀπέργονται πάσης, ἀλλὰ καὶ δοῦναί τινα τούτων γυναῖκα καὶ λαβεῖν ἄδοξον ἔστι· παῖε δ' ὁ βουλόμενος αὐτοὺς τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων. 4. οἱ δὲ καρτεροῦσι περιουόντες αὐχμηροὶ καὶ ταπεινοί, τρίβωνάς τε προσεραμμένους χρώματος βαπτοῦ φοροῦσι καὶ ξυρώνται μέρος τῆς ὑπῆνης, μέρος δὲ τρέφουσι. 5. δεινὸν οὖν ἦν τοιοῦτους ἐν τῇ πόλει περιορᾶν πολλούς, οὐκ ὀλίγων δεομένη στρατιωτῶν. καὶ νομοθέτην αἰροῦνται τὸν Ἀγησίλαον. 6. ὁ δὲ μήτε προσθεῖς τι μήτ' ἀφέλων μήτε μεταγράψας, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων· καὶ φήσας ὅτι τοὺς νόμους δεῖ σήμερον ἔαν καθεῦδειν, ἐκ δὲ τῆς αὔριον ἡμέρας κυρίουσ εἶναι πρὸς τὸ λοιπόν, ἕμα τούς τε νόμους τῇ πόλει καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐπιτίμους ἐφύλαξε,

2. ...Thus, those who had shown themselves cowardly in battle, and whom they themselves call the tremblers, were both numerous and influential, and there was some hesitation about inflicting on them the *atimia* provided for by the laws, in case they should start a revolution. 3. In fact, not only are these people excluded from holding any office, but it is considered improper to give a spouse to one of them, or to receive one through him. Anyone who encounters them is free to strike them if he so chooses. 4. They have to resign themselves to going about in coarse and dirty clothing, to wearing patched and dull-coloured mantles, to shave only part of the beard, leaving the rest to grow. 5. It was dangerous, therefore, to allow so great a number of these characters into the city, and, moreover, there was a need for a large number of soldiers. Agesilaus was chosen as *nomothetēs*. 6. So he, without in any way adding to, or taking away from, or altering, the existing arrangements, presented himself to the Lacedaemonian people and told them that they must let the laws sleep today, so that, from tomorrow, they would be endowed with their full force for the rest of time. That is how, at a stroke, he preserved for the city its laws and citizens in full possession of their rights.

The anecdote is repeated in the *Comparison of Agesilaus and Pompey*; cf. *Reg. et Imp. Apophth.* 10, *Mor.* 191c, and *Apophth. Lac.* 73, *Mor.* 214a; Polyaeus 2.1.13.

These are the sources I propose to re-examine here. They fall into two categories: some recount specific episodes (texts 2, 3, 6, and 8 §§2 and 5–6); others give a general description of the punishment, presenting it in a particular perspective, namely a portrait of the ‘trembler’s’ social condition (texts

4, 5, 7, and 8 §§3–4). That these two categories should exist is quite natural; what is more unexpected is that there should be a contradiction between the two, in that none of the features reflected in the general portraits appears in the descriptions of cases where the sanction has been meted out. This contradiction leaves some uncertainty hanging over the whole analysis, which is all the more awkward since the instances where the sanction was actually applied are reduced to two, both of which are, in addition, extreme cases: extreme harshness towards Aristodemos, extreme leniency towards the prisoners of Sphacteria.

II. VOCABULARY

1. To the offence, or rather, to the offender, a term, ὁ τρέσας, οἱ τρέσαντες, is applied, which Plutarch (text 8 §2) presents as being typically Spartan, and of which he gives a definition, οἱ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ καταδειλιάσαντες, 'those who displayed cowardice in battle'. This term appears in Tyrtaeus (text 1), though whether it had already acquired its 'technical' meaning there, is something we shall have to ponder on; we find it next in Herodotus (text 2), as the vile name given to Aristodemos by the other Spartans. After that, it makes another appearance in Plutarch: in text 8, he is, in a way, putting it in inverted commas ('those whom they themselves call the tremblers'); in text 7 and in the apophthegm, *Mor.* 191c, he makes no comment on it. The fact that it is not found in Thucydides or Xenophon might cause surprise, but we know that these authors (with some qualifications in Xenophon's case) tend to avoid using local terminology. Thus, the only historical episodes in relation to which the term 'trembler' appears in a text are those of Thermopylae and Leuctra. The standard meaning of the word and its uses clearly demonstrate that it did not apply to the punishment, whatever that might have been, but to the man who had committed the offence of 'trembling' in battle.

To designate a person who is patently a 'trembler' (and even *the* 'trembler'), Xenophon (text 4 §§3, 4, 6) uses the most commonplace of terms, κακός, and, in the portrait (§ 5), he refers back to it by means of ὁ τοιοῦτος. As for δειλός, which one might expect, it only appears in the form of derivative verbs: Plutarch, text 8, τοῖς καταδειλιάσαι, and perhaps also Xenophon, *LP* 10.7, where the expression εἴ τις ἀποδειλιάσειε has, certainly, a more general application, but can and should include, and may even refer primarily to, the 'tremblers'.

2. There is no specific term that corresponds to the sanction itself; the authors use ἀτιμία. This term is not used by Tyrtaeus, but his phrase πᾶσ' ἀπόλωλ' ἀρετή carries the same meaning, if we read *atimia* in its strong sense. Herodotus, in each instance (text 2, and 9.71), pairs ὄνειδος and ἀτιμῆ;

could this be to signify that the sanction had two aspects, one of them social (ὄνειδος), the other, judicial (ἀτιμία)? The judicial aspect is absent, however, from his description. After this, the term appears commonly: in Thucydides, text 3, and in Diodorus' account echoing the same event, 12.76.1; in Xenophon, text 4 §6; in Diodorus, text 6; and lastly, in Plutarch, text 8 §2, and *Mor.* 214a, where the use of the plural, ἀτιμίας, would perhaps suggest that the sanction is in fact multiple.

3. As is logical, the man who suffers the punishment is called ἄτιμος. The term appears in Thucydides, text 3, where it is contrasted with ἐπίτιμος (which he employs twice), which emphasizes the judicial aspect of the sanction; in Isocrates, text 5 (a comparative; there are, in fact, degrees in the condition of *atimia*); in Plutarch, *Mor.* 191c; and in Polyaeus 2.1.13 (a passage about Leuctra). The act whereby the Spartans declare *atimia* is designated in Thucydides, text 3 (cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 191c), by the expression ἀτίμους ποιεῖν; the second apophthegm of Demaratus in Plutarch *Mor.* 222a expresses it as ἀτιμῶσι. The passive, ἠτίμωτο, occurs in Herodotus, text 2 (two instances).

This vocabulary is uniform. We may be tempted to conclude from this that, for other Greeks, it is the same sanction that has been taken or contemplated each time, whether after Thermopylae, Sphacteria, Leuctra, and Megalopolis. The notion that it proceeded from a fully fledged *nomos*, an actual rule, customary and invariable, does not emerge, however, before the time of Diodorus (text 6: τῶν νόμων τὰ πρόστιμα). We find it again more explicitly in Plutarch, who specifies that *atimia* resulted automatically from the application of the law (τὰς ἐκ τῶν νόμων ἀτιμίας, text 8 §2; cf. *Mor.* 191c, ἀτίμους εἶναι τοῦ νόμου κελεύοντος, and 214a, ἐκ τοῦ νόμου ἀτιμίας). The use of the term *atimia* to designate the sanction demonstrates that, in Greek eyes, the status of 'trembler' was not exclusively a Spartan entity; it could be thought of by reference to the same concept of 'deprivation of honour' as the penalty that was in use, under this name, in other Greek cities. This penalty, at least in Athens, could take widely varying forms. So it may be that, in the Spartan case, the word *atimia* could be employed, in certain cases, to designate a 'loss of rights' that stopped short of the extreme form described by Xenophon.

III. ORIGINS: TYRTAEUS

Since the time of Ehrenberg, verse 14 of Tyrtaeus fragment 11 W (text 1) has been generally regarded as attesting that the condition of 'tremblers' was already in existence towards the end of the seventh century. That is in fact possible, but it is equally possible that this status did not yet exist; that Tyrtaeus may have deployed the word in its ordinary, rather than institutional, sense, to depict cowards by means of a powerful but quite natural

image; and that it may be precisely this verse of Tyrtaeus' that is the origin of the Spartan usage for so describing them.³ We know the position which these poems rapidly gained in Spartan culture,⁴ and which they retained to the end of antiquity. This popularity would amply explain the term's having become the common usage. That is rather how I would see it. This interpretation seems to me to fit more closely with Tyrtaeus' mode of expression and the way his ideas are connected; one might also have doubts about whether the use of a technical term could be contemplated in the genre of poetry he was practising.

Does Plutarch's text (no. 7) associating the *tresantes* with poetry supply an argument one way or another? We should start by clarifying what this means: these poems that children were given to sing, were they in praise or censure of named people (as with the songs sung by young girls in *Lyc.* 14.6), or did the texts have a more general application? Our inclination would be to agree with the latter, because this corresponds with what is contained in the fragments of archaic lyric poetry that have come down to us.⁵ What Plutarch says is particularly well suited to Tyrtaeus' poetry, and chiefly to the 'major fragments' 10, 11 and 12 W, extracts which constitute the essentials of what survived of his work, amongst a wide public, until the end of antiquity. To put it more precisely, the structure conveyed by Plutarch (which polarizes praise and censure) corresponds to that of fragments 10 and 11, where the praise of the *kaloi* alternates with censure of the *kakoi*. When Plutarch writes that, there is not the slightest doubt that it is Tyrtaeus he has chiefly in mind: consequently, his use of the term *tresantes* should be taken almost as a citation, referring, unquestionably, to the τρεσάντων δ' ἀνδρῶν of fr. 11; it therefore teaches us nothing new, even if Plutarch's acquaintance with the technical meaning which the word eventually acquired has an influence on the way he uses it: for him, the 'tremblers' are the opposite of those who have 'died for Sparta', which is not the case in fr. 11.

From the comparison, which is, in fact, a pertinent one, between the evils which Tyrtaeus says (fr. 11, v. 16) afflict 'those who trembled', and the picture of the wretched exile in fr. 10 (vv. 3–10), some have thought they could infer⁶ that the coward, at this period, did not as yet suffer the sort of punishment described in the classical era, but, instead, suffered exile – an exile which, given that the person is reduced to begging, is combined with the confiscation or sequestration of his property – therefore, that there was as yet no such thing as a 'trembler' in the technical sense. However much I may like the conclusion, I could not approve the reasoning. The key to the interpretation is the participle προλιπόντα in verse 3: he has 'abandoned' his city and his lands. The Homeric uses of the verb (in the aorist participle, as in this case) demonstrate that it always applies to a *voluntary* departure, even

if this voluntary character is, in general, highly formal. The best example is *Od.* 23.118–20, where Odysseus recalls the sort of a killer who ‘abandons his parents and his native land’ in order to escape either vengeance or judgement. The coward in fr. 10 has certainly not been *condemned* to exile; he has left so as to escape a sanction or a condemnation – which could be anything, starting with death... As for knowing whether a Spartan of the classical era wished (and was able) to go into exile to escape life as a ‘trembler’, this is a point I shall leave on one side for the moment (cf. below, p. 46).

It seems to me, then, that the presence in Tyrtaeus’ verse of the word *tresantes* is no proof that this status existed at this period. When might it have appeared? It is possible that it was in the course of the sixth century, as a sort of conclusion drawn from reflections on the difficulties evident during the second Messenian war,⁷ or during the period of the war with Tegea. But the turn of phrase used by Herodotus regarding Aristodemos (text 2), ‘he suffered the disgrace of being called a trembler’, may also suggest (though we should not insist on this interpretation) that it was the first time this epithet, taken from Tyrtaeus, was applied to a Spartan.

IV. THE OFFENCE

Often this is barely characterized: the texts speak simply of ‘cowardice’, and in the vaguest terms. This is the case in Tyrtaeus, where it is only articulated through the use of the word ‘tremblers’, re-stated, further on, by means of ἦν αἰσχρὰ μάθη; these expressions are clarified a little by the fact that the ‘tremblers’ are contrasted (vv. 11–12) with ‘those who have the courage to come to close quarters with the enemy, fighting in the front line’. This conception, at once negative (lack of courage) and maximalist, about cowardice goes far beyond the usual image of fleeing the field. Xenophon pays no attention at all to the misdeed committed and expresses himself almost as though a person became *kakos* by nature. In his account of Leuctra, Plutarch ‘translates’ *tresantes* by οἱ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ καταδειλιάσαντες; it is possible that this expression, which quite clearly relates to only a part of the fighting force, is directed at those who, at the end of the battle, gave themselves up to the ‘save your own skin’ attitude evoked by Diodorus (15.56.2–3). This vagueness is self-explanatory: it is not easy to arrive at an abstract definition of cowardice; it is an entirely relative notion and one that depends very largely on circumstances. It is this that made the application of a possible *nomos tōn tresantōn* so difficult; that, in turn, accounts for attempts to define the particular forms of behaviour likely to serve as objective criteria of cowardice. This is why, in Athens, there existed specific *graphai*: ἀστρατείας (defaulting), λιποταξίας (abandoning one’s post), δειλίας (cowardice).

1. Flight is the most obvious of these criteria: it is easy enough, in principle, to distinguish from a tactical withdrawal, which is itself lawful if carried out under orders. The runaway stops fighting; he does not fall back, he turns his back; he does not remain in formation, it is every man for himself.

In the case of Leuctra, it is probably on account of the flight, which Diodorus (author of the fullest account of the battle) terms παντελής τροπή, 'an utter rout', 15.56.2,⁸ and which occurred at the end of the battle (τὸ τελευταῖον), that a large number of Spartans should have deserved the sanction promised to 'tremblers'. Plutarch states this, not in *Agesilaus* 30, but in the apophthegm *Mor.* 214a: 'many of the Lacedaemonians had fled'; this indication is repeated, and with more detail, by Polyaeus 2.1.13, who speaks of shields being thrown away and posts abandoned.

At Megalopolis, it is perhaps because he reckoned they had fled that Akrotatos (text 6) regarded numerous Spartans as genuine 'tremblers'; but it emerges from the account of the battle (Diodorus 17.63.4) that this was a case of withdrawal executed on the orders of the king himself. If Akrotatos' accusation was based only on these grounds, it should be regarded as unjustified.

It would seem *a priori* entirely normal that the Spartans who really had fled in the face of the enemy should automatically be deemed 'tremblers'. Nevertheless there was one battle where it is patently clear that the Spartans fled without, apparently, being sanctioned for it: this is the battle of Lechaion (390). Xenophon's account (*Hell.* 4.5.17) does not hide the fact (even if he goes no further than to use the verb ἐγκλίνειν) that, at the end of the battle, 350 survivors (out of 600) found safety in flight, and even, seemingly, headlong flight: some even threw themselves into the sea, and it may be doubted whether, when they did so, they kept hold of their shields (among other things). Is it perhaps the desire to preserve Sparta's honour that explains the success of a hypothesis put forward by Grote, and reiterated by Ehrenberg and others:⁹ Xenophon's remark concerning the wounded who, at the beginning of the battle, were evacuated to Lechaion, οὗτοι μόνοι τῆς μόρας τῇ ἀληθείᾳ ἐσώθησαν, 'they were the only ones of the *mora* actually to be saved', would be an allusion (a pretty obscure one!) to the fact that the other survivors were punished as 'tremblers'. Loraux quite rightly rejected this, saying that it was nothing more than an ethical judgement on Xenophon's part. On that last point, one might wonder: does an ethical notion of 'salvation' really have any place here? Is this really a judgement? I would see it rather as a strictly military observation, underlining the following paradox: only those who were wounded right at the beginning of the engagement, before it turned to tragedy for the Spartans, and who for that reason were carried to shelter, were out of the affair; the others, although apparently safe and sound, were not, if I may put it like that, out of the wood, and scarcely

had more than a one-in-two chance of survival. This would amply explain Xenophon's remark, and there is nothing whatever to support our thinking that the fugitives of Lechaion had even suffered being accused on that score; Xenophon refers to nothing of this kind when reporting (4.5.10) the reactions to the defeat.

2. Throwing away the shield. In every city, this act is severely sanctioned as the one that most indubitably characterizes cowardice; that is certainly due to the symbolic worth of the shield in hoplite armies, but also, in practical terms, to the fact that, in order to flee, it is a matter of urgent necessity to get rid of this supremely cumbersome object;¹⁰ that is what renders this action a reliable criterion of flight. So it is to be expected that, for the Spartans, jettisoning the shield qualifies the perpetrator, beyond discussion, as a 'trembler'. In fact this was certainly the case, but few texts say so, and not all of those are of the highest quality. First, there is the reference to this offence made by Isocrates (text 5 b), who treats it as a term comparable with the abandoning of the king. Then there is the apophthegm transmitted by Plutarch (Demaratus 2, *Mor.* 220a), who says that the Spartans 'inflict *atimia* (ἀτιμῶσι) on those who throw away their shield'. The offence is mentioned in the context of Leuctra, but only by Polyaeus (2.1.13), and one might ask whether, in that instance, it is not simply a commonplace expression for cowardice. Lastly, there are all the apophthegms, anecdotes and epigrams, which circulated in antiquity, on the theme of ἢ τὸν ἢ ἐπὶ τῶς, 'With it or on it',¹¹ but these texts never describe the punishment meted out to the offender. The information Diodorus provides is different: after narrating the experience of Brasidas related by Thucydides (4.11), an experience in the course of which Brasidas, most unwillingly, lost his shield, Diodorus concludes (12.62.5): 'He had so surpassed all the others by his courage that if, according to Spartan custom, the loss of one's shield was punished by death, the very same event would confer glory on him.' And why not death? Should not Sparta be more severe than other cities? But the elaboration with which the sentence concludes is so patently rhetorical that it casts doubt on the authenticity of this information. On the whole, then, we may assume that to abandon one's shield did indeed entail the sanction we are studying.

3. Capitulation. To capitulate in open country was obviously not something the Spartans were used to doing, and Thucydides, when he records that of the hoplites on Sphacteria (4.40.1; I cited the text at the beginning of this chapter), is not slow to emphasize it. They were punished for it, and the manner in which this was done is something to which we shall have to return, and which Thucydides terms *atimia*. It is obvious that to surrender,