

2019

A Merely Comic Conclusion: A Comparative Analysis of Xenophon's Spartan Constitution

Conor Hogan

Recommended Citation

Hogan, Conor, "A Merely Comic Conclusion: A Comparative Analysis of Xenophon's Spartan Constitution" (2019). *CMC Senior Theses*. 2162.

https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/2162

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Claremont McKenna College

A Merely Comic Conclusion:
A Comparative Analysis of Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution*

submitted to
Professor Christopher Nadon
and
Professor Benjamin Keim

by
Conor Hogan

for
Senior Thesis
Fall/Spring 2019
April 29, 2019

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Literature Review	ii
Introduction: Sparta and the Spartanologists	1
Chapter 1: Xenophon’s Sparta	8
Section 1: An Introduction to the Historicist Approach.....	8
Section 2: Know your Place: Spartan Societal Roles.....	9
Section 3: Scholarly Controversy; Spartan Education as Indoctrination	17
Section 4: Homogenous Competition	21
Section 5: The Virtues in Practice: Spartan Cooperation.....	25
Section 6: Conclusion: Xenophon as Praising the Ideal	34
Chapter 2: On Strauss’ Impact and Argument	38
Section 1: A (too) Brief Introduction to Strauss	38
Section 2: On The Education of Xenophon	40
Chapter 3: The Straussian Method: A Cynic’s Approach to Sparta	46
Section 1: An Introduction to the Straussian Approach.....	46
Section 2: Strauss, in His Own Words	49
Section 3: Strauss on Xenophon, Extended	53
Section 4: Strauss, reconsidered.....	68
Conclusion: The Future of Spartanology	68
Bibliography	76

Acknowledgements

To my readers, Professor Nadon and Professor Keim, for all the support, patience, and understanding you have shown me over the last 8 months, I am sincerely grateful. Without the help of both of you, I would have no more than a collection of loosely related thoughts.

To my parents, for teaching me to study what I love, and for reminding me that I do love what I study. For reminding me that sometimes, I don't have to be the very best and above all others. For showing me that a marathon is just made up of little steps.

To all those who have been a part of my journey over the last 4 years, and all those that I don't have the space to mention here: thank you. You mean more to me than you know.

Literature Review

Much has been written about the Spartan way of life; more specifically, much has been written concerning Spartan institutions as they appear in Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution*. One of the most direct reactions to Xenophon's work comes in Michael Lipka's introduction, translation, and commentary on the *Spartan Constitution*. The ideas raised in Lipka's commentary provide connection to several pieces of important secondary scholarship on Spartan education. Another author that discusses much of the existing scholarly thought surrounding Spartan life is Paul Cartledge in his works *Spartan Reflections*, *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians*, and "The Socratics' Sparta and Rousseau's," among others. Yet another work that provides excellent context to the historical world in which the Spartan educational system is located is *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta* by Nigel M. Kennell. Finally, Leo Strauss' "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon," provides the foundation for the scholarly interpretation of Xenophon's work that is at odds with that of Kennell and Cartledge.

Michael Lipka's commentary on Xenophon's *Lac. Pol.* begins with an introduction that gives an overview of the contextual information that could aid in a deep analysis of the text. Chief among this information is Lipka's discussion of the scholarly controversy surrounding Xenophon's work. Interestingly, most of the controversy around the *Lac. Pol.* that Lipka discusses in the introduction centers on questions around Xenophon's bibliographical information. Lipka highlights the controversy surrounding the dates of Xenophon's exile from Athens, the extent and timeframe of his involvement with the Spartans, and the publication and authorship of the *Lac. Pol.* itself. The

introduction also gives brief acquaintance to probable influences on Xenophon, to his use of language and writing style, and the history of manuscripts containing the text.

These elements of controversy serve to highlight the point made by Paul Cartledge in his work. That is, one can never be entirely certain about the authenticity of any work concerning Sparta. The job of any scholar investigating an aspect of Spartan society is to read broadly and attempt to separate the truth from fiction. In addition, Lipka's discussion of historicity, language, and style is important. His discussion of these topics allows easy access to the deeper scholarly conversations surrounding the context of the work without needing to focus upon it. While more in-depth discussions of these topics may become necessary in any case, Lipka's discussion of the subjects provides a good foundation for that exploration.

Within the commentary itself, Lipka discusses several key points of controversy among the scholarly corpus. Most notable to me is the comparandum that Lipka makes to Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*, which is further discussed in footnote 12 of the commentary, during a discussion of a very specific aspect of Spartan education: the age groups of the *ile*. Lipka is of the view that there were three *ilai*: *paides*, *paidisko*, and *hebontes*. The controversy that Lipka then discusses is the possible existence of another group, the *agele*, that Plutarch describes in *Lyc.* 16.13. It is troubling, however, that no authors other than Plutarch and those based on his work ever used the term *agele* to describe groups of boys in Sparta. Lipka argues that the *agele* may very well be a mistaken transference of a Cretan word that may not have any bearing as a legitimate descriptor of the age of the boys undergoing the education. The Spartan *agelai*, according to Plutarch, may well have been anywhere from seven to twenty years old.

Lipka finds no reason to believe that Plutarch's *agelai* ended at age 17. Instead, Lipka argues that Plutarch was very knowledgeable about the specifics of the Spartan education, but simply could not find a word to fully describe the Spartan's age classes, and he chose to instead adopt the Cretan terminology. This exemplifies the level of detail that Lipka has given to each aspect of the *Lac. Pol.*, highlighting points that are typically Xenophonic, doubtful in terms of veracity, and otherwise providing noteworthy information. On the first and second points, Paul Cartledge's work *Spartan Reflections* offers much help in uncovering the truth.

Paul Cartledge's *Spartan Reflections* contains 13 of the most impactful essays of all of Cartledge's work. For a lot of his work, Cartledge goes against the contemporary grain of Spartanology. As he says, there had been a recent trend in Spartan scholarship to draw similarities between Sparta and the rest of Greece. Instead of following this trend, Cartledge draws the conversation back to the idea of the "Spartan Mirage", outlining the key, distinct differences between Sparta and the rest of the Greek world. This is the most important connecting thread between all of Cartledge's essays included in this work. The importance of Sections 2 and 3 of *Spartan Reflections*, "Polity, Politics and Political Thought" and "Society, Economy, and Warfare", respectively, cannot be understated. In these two sections, Cartledge draws the reader's attention to that which made the Spartans unique and different. In the essay on Spartan Education in Section 3, Cartledge, like Xenophon in the *Spartan Constitution* starts by outlining education in Greek city-states outside of Laconia in order to highlight just how unique the Spartan system was. Cartledge makes use of a large amount of new archaeological evidence to motivate the controversial points contained in *Spartan Reflections*. This content is especially

important to my work because without scholarship such as Cartledge's that builds upon archaeological evidence, I would simply not have access to that source of edification about Spartan life.

The history and impact of the essays that comprise *Spartan Reflections* is almost as important as the content that it contains. One important avenue into the context of Cartledge's work is a review of the book written by Caroline Falkner, published in *Phoenix* in 2005. Falkner jumps right into the history of each individual essay, providing scholarly context, and discussing its impact on the discourse surrounding Sparta. For example, Falkner takes issue with the fact that many essays in sections 2 and 3 have had illustrations (such as maps) removed from them, which make the arguments contained therein more difficult to understand. She makes a point, also, to highlight those essays contained in *Spartan Reflections* that were previously almost inaccessible because they were originally written or published in foreign languages or in hard to access journals. The most important part of Falkner's book review comes in the last paragraph, where she discusses the overarching themes of Cartledge's work. Falkner makes the point that Cartledge is striving to draw attention to "the central and unavoidable influence of the Spartan mirage."¹ On this point, Falkner goes as far as stating that Cartledge has fallen short of his goal. As she says, Cartledge does not do enough to push back against more contemporary scholarly conclusions in Spartanology, even though Cartledge even acknowledges these works in his bibliography. Despite this issue and the fact that many illustrations have been omitted in this republication of essays, Falkner still concludes that Cartledge's work is a timely and important one for all those interested in a deeper study

¹ Caroline Falkner. *Phoenix* 59, no. 1/2 (2005): 176-77. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067758>. p. 176

of Spartan society. Thus, it seems that Cartledge has succeeded in his goal for this book. As he states in his introduction, “the following essays are presented to and for their readers’ reflection.”² Cartledge acknowledges that some of his conclusions may be controversial, but he hopes to convince at least some readers of their validity. As if in support of this exact statement, Falkner ends her review by calling *Spartan Reflections* “some of the most thought-provoking and elegantly argued examples of Cartledge’s work.”³ Judging the piece against his own goals, it is difficult to see the impact of Cartledge’s *Spartan Reflections* as anything other than a success.

Similarly, Cartledge’s other works on the Spartan state are equally successful. For example, in *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians*, Cartledge goes through much effort in order to highlight the basis of the Spartan Mirage. In this work Cartledge is investigating how the Athenians thought about the Spartans in relation to themselves. This is a scholarly investigation into how a wartime society, in this case Athens, looks at its enemy. Much like *Spartan Reflections*, this book is a collection of essays that all argue to the same end. Edited by both Paul Cartledge and Anton Powell, this book contains investigations done by some of the most widely cited and important historicist Spartanologists in the world. Unlike *Spartan Reflections*, however, this anthology contains much more recent work by the historicist scholars. The most important aspect of this book, therefore, is not the scholarly importance of the essays it contains, but rather as a source for what relations between Athens and Sparta looked like at the time of Xenophon’s writing.

² Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2001), 5.

³ Falkner, 2005.

A similarly successful book in the area of Spartanology is Nigel Kennel's work *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*. Within this book, Kennel offers a unique reaction to both Xenophon and Cartledge's works. In large part, Kennel tends to support the treatment of Sparta in Xenophon as accurate. The way he argues this thesis, however, is unique. Kennel begins his work by focusing on the later, Roman Spartan system of education. As he states, this version of the *agoge* is a purposeful attempt at recreating the legendary system expounded upon by Xenophon. Kennel first considers this Roman iteration of Spartan society in order to evaluate its reflections of the past. As Kennel puts it, this allows for a "cautious extrapolation backwards"⁴ towards the Xenophontic era of Sparta from the Roman *agoge*. One of the pillars that this argument rests upon is Kennel's parallelism between the Roman use of archaism as legend and the use of Lycurgus as legend by the Spartans of Xenophon's day. Here Kennel argues that the Romans had a prescribed manner of making language appear more archaic in inscriptions concerning the *agoge*. This echoes the well-known fact that ancient Sparta employed the myth of Lycurgus in order to manipulate the appearance of their institutions. Kennel makes similar arguments in order to motivate certain points of Xenophon's *Lac. Pol.*

Interestingly, Kennel disagrees with one point of Xenophon's *Lac. Pol.*, a point that Cartledge explicitly agrees with. Kennel makes the argument that a very specific aspect of Spartan education, namely the whipping of boys at Artemis Orthia's altar, was representative of a broader, deeply entrenched religiosity permeating the Spartan system.

⁴ Nigel M. Kennel, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta* (Univ of North Carolina Pr, 2007), 126.

For Xenophon, this event, and the broader education of Spartan youth was mainly secular. The whipping of boys for Xenophon was simply a preparation for the pains of battle, a point about which Cartledge explicitly agrees. They argue that the historic location of whipping at the altar of Orthia is an archaism reminiscent of the Spartan's use of Lycurgus, and of the future use of archaic language by the Romans. Kennel, on the other hand, argues from archeological evidence, namely an erotic vase depicting a boy being whipped which was found at the location of Orthia's shrine. Despite its erotic nature, this vase also clearly depicts a religious scene. From this standpoint, using the archeological evidence from the vase, Kennel argues that it was not until later that there was an erasing of the religious importance of the ceremony.

As an avenue into the discussion (or, more accurately, the lack of substantial discussion) between the historicist and Straussian interpretive camps, "The Socratics' Sparta and Rousseau's," by Paul Cartledge was supremely useful. In this short essay, Cartledge analyzes various methods of interpretation of Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution*. Among the interpretations that Cartledge expounds upon are those of Strauss. This is one of the few examples where the historicist camp even makes an attempt to engage with the Straussian argument. This attempt, however, is severely lacking. Citing Strauss' "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon" as *non vidi*, and claiming that its conclusion is "merely comic," is representative of the attitudes that the historicists had in regard to the Straussian claim. The lack of substantial discussion from the historicist camp is essential to the foundation of the over-arching argument of this paper. Without understanding the attitude both sides had in regard to the other, I would

be unable to address the gap between them. Therefore, this short essay by Cartledge is essential in building the argument of my thesis.

In much the same way, this paper could not have taken its current form without Leo Strauss' "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon." Probably the single most important source for this paper, Strauss' essay is the origin of the Straussian interpretation of the *Spartan Constitution*. Within this essay, Strauss begins with a close-reading of the first two chapters of Xenophon's work, offering excerpts of the Spartan Constitution as evidence for his argument. In essence, this argument claims that Xenophon is being ironic in his praise of the Spartan way of life, leading to the conclusion that Xenophon is actually critiquing Spartan institutions, rather than praising them. Strauss' argument is a strong one through the first few pages of his essay, but he then breaks away from a close-reading after the second chapter of Xenophon's work. Strauss' argument continues, but it ceases to be grounded in Xenophon's text in the same way it had been. The result of this step away from a close-reading is that the reader is forced to simply trust what Strauss claims about Xenophon's work, rather than being able to see the actual words Xenophon used that set up the irony Strauss wishes to show is there. Strauss moves on to a broader argument about Xenophon's work, seeking to show that the work is more a philosophic treatise than one of pure historical investigation. With the benefit of a continuation of a close-reading of Xenophon's text, one would be better able to test the veracity of Strauss' broader argument.

Essential to understanding Strauss' broader argument is knowledge of Strauss' scholarly thought-process outside of his opinions on the *Spartan Constitution*. To that end, *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*, edited by Steven Smith, is incredibly

important. Each chapter of this work tracks a certain thread of scholarly thought that was important to Leo Strauss. Each of these chapters is important to my understanding of the figure of Leo Strauss. Specifically, the fourth chapter of this work, “Strauss’s Recovery of Esotericism” is the most important to the work of this paper. In this chapter, Laurence Lampert gives an overview of the letters Strauss wrote to his friend Jacob Klein through the years of 1938-1940. Through these letters, Lampert is able to grant insight into the broader argument that Strauss begins with his essay “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon.” This broader argument is one claiming that much of the overall corpus of primary Classical sources is written esoterically. For Strauss, the *Spartan Constitution* is just the tip of the iceberg. By better understanding the context in which Strauss first saw the *Spartan Constitution* as esoteric, one is also better able to understand Strauss’ argument to that conclusion. Therefore, *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss* is essential to the work of this paper.

There were many other scholarly works that were consulted as a means to informing this paper, but these are the major works that are central to the understanding of my argument. By explaining the context of these scholarly works, I am hopeful that a reader will be better able to understand the premises of my argument. If one is better able to understand these works, they will be better able to understand my own.

Introduction: Sparta and the Spartanologists

Sparta is one of the most legendary societies ever formed. From popular culture in movies like *300* and *Troy* to serious academics like Paul Cartledge, Leo Strauss, and Vivienne Gray, Sparta has inspired and captivated the minds of many throughout history. Sparta, of course, is fascinating because of its incredible military strength. For the casual observer, picturing Sparta is impossible without picturing the strict, austere education system that forged Spartan soldiers and is represented in countless popular depictions of Sparta. For these people, Sparta's long-lasting military hegemony is logical; Sparta had one of the few professional, standing armies of the time, and it was therefore much better at military conflicts than those states that did not have professionally trained armies. This is, without a doubt, a main contributor to the story of Spartan military excellence. However, the professionalism of Sparta's armed forces does not form the whole picture.

One of the major frustrations for Spartanologists (those historians and classicists who focus on Spartan culture and society) is the distinct lack of primary evidence. Because Sparta was so focused on military excellence and for a variety of other reasons, practically no one in Sparta wrote about his own society. The result is that we no longer have any extant sources written by Spartans about Sparta. What Spartanologists are left with, then, are sources written by non-Spartan Greeks (usually Athenians) about Spartan society, a society they were not intimately familiar with.

Of the extant sources on Sparta, *The Spartan Constitution* by Xenophon is one of the most widely cited and discussed works. For anyone who has read the short work, the reason for this fact is immediately obvious. Xenophon, in his work, attempts to answer the same question that has been puzzling Spartanologists for centuries: "Sparta, though

among the most thinly populated of states, was evidently the most powerful and most celebrated city in Greece; and [he] fell to wondering how this could have happened” (1.1). Xenophon goes on to describe peculiarities in the Spartan model, things the Spartans do which are fundamentally different than typical practices found elsewhere in Greece. He then explains why these practices lead to some characteristic that was beneficial to the Spartans. In many ways, Xenophon of Athens was the world’s first Spartanologist. It seems that he took a systematic, scholarly approach to answering a question which he found fascinating. At the very least, that is the explicit reasoning that he puts forth in his work. The question put forward by Xenophon is a question that continues to fascinate modern Spartanologists, and in answering it, Xenophon exposes many facets of the Spartan system in a new light. So, it is easy to understand why Xenophon’s text is so widely cited by other Spartanologists.

A wrinkle to this line of thinking came about in the 20th century with the rise of a controversial scholar: Leo Strauss. Strauss, during the decade of the 1930s, was interested in the “distinction between exoteric and esoteric”⁵ writing, an ideology which would later be published in his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. In this work, Strauss attempted to explain that serious, highly-respected authors not only have reason to, but actively have engaged and do engage in esoteric writing. Through the use of irony, paradox, dense and layered meanings, and often outright contradiction, authors are able to hide the true meaning of their work behind their carefully chosen words. Strauss argues that writing esoterically not only serves the obvious purpose of (i) protecting an

⁵ "Exoteric Teaching" (Critical Edition by Hannes Kerber). In *Reorientation: Leo Strauss in the 1930s*. Edited by Martin D. Yaffe and Richard S. Ruderman. New York: Palgrave, 2014, p. 275.

author from persecution, but it also (ii) serves to protect the author's society from the corruption caused by his inquiries (just as Socrates was arguably trying to protect Athens from the corruption of his philosophy)⁶, (iii) weeds out the good reader from the bad, and (iv) is in and of itself an educational exercise.

On its own, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* was not a truly revolutionary text. We see examples of esoteric writing in modern days in all kinds of places. In order to perform a social critique, especially in states that do not protect freedom of speech, it is just common sense to write esoterically. All Strauss did, in his work, is advocate for motivations for esoteric writing beyond avoidance of persecution. What made Strauss an intellectual revolutionary was the fact that he began to apply his principles of esoteric writing to ancient sources.

The first major work by Strauss on this topic was an essay titled "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon," published in 1939. In this essay, Strauss undertakes a close-reading of the *Spartan Constitution*, trying to point out concrete examples to support his theory about Xenophon's esoteric writing. Strauss attempted to highlight points of Xenophonic irony, places where Xenophon left a paradigm unfulfilled, stated something we know to be factually incorrect, explicitly contradicted himself, or something of the sort. Strauss used these points of Xenophonic irony in order to build an idea of what Xenophon's esoteric message could have been. Strauss concludes that Xenophon is not, as had been the norm in interpreting the *Spartan Constitution*, writing an encomium of the Spartan way of life. Rather, Strauss argues that Xenophon is hiding a critique of the Spartan system behind what appears to be praise.

⁶ See e.g. *Mem.*

With this conclusion, Strauss started to completely undermine the traditional method of interpreting classical works. This line of thinking flew in the face of the 200 years of scholarship that came before it, but unfortunately, did not actively try to engage with the existing scholarship. Instead, Strauss appealed mainly to ancient sources, citing different passages as evidence for the cases of Xenophontic irony that he was highlighting. The historicist scholars, those interpreting the *Spartan Constitution* to be straightforward praise of Spartan society, were understandably upset. Not only was Strauss claiming that all historicist scholars were fundamentally wrong, he was doing so without actively arguing against them. For the historicist, Strauss was engaging in pointless work: trying to re-interpret a work that had been read, discussed, and written about for more than 2000 years. From their perspective, Strauss was trying to erase those 2000 years of scholarship and engage only with sources that supported his ideology. After all, why would someone attempt a straightforward close-reading of the text when it had been done thousands upon thousands of times?

For Strauss, on the other hand, a close-reading was the only way that he could prove the point he was trying to make. The question Strauss was seeking to answer, whether or not Xenophontic irony was indicative of an esoteric teaching in the *Spartan Constitution*, required that one find and analyze points of Xenophontic irony. However, Strauss did not do enough to engage with the pre-existing explanations of Xenophontic irony, seeking only to make his case, not to disprove others'. From Strauss' perspective, again, this makes sense. Why engage with such well-known interpretations when they serve only to weaken your argument? And if you truly believed, as Strauss did, that

scholars had been fundamentally misinterpreting major classical texts for centuries, why not try to just start over?

In the minds of both camps, the Straussian and the historicist, the other side is being unreasonable. From the perspective of a historicist, Strauss was an egotistical scholar who thought he was not only the smartest person alive to have read Xenophon, but the smartest person to have done so in centuries. This line of thinking on the historicists' part was actively encouraged by Strauss as well. The manner in which Strauss argued, using sarcasm and irony, made the historicist out to be actively obtuse, if not outright stupid. As he put it in a rhetorical question, "was Xenophon, who not only spoke ironically of the Spartan education in stealing in the *Anabasis* but who was, after all, a pupil of Socrates, incapable of irony?"⁷ In essence, Strauss is asking how no one has even considered if Xenophon could be ironic within this text when we have known about other cases of irony in Xenophon's other works, and when Socrates is well-known for his use of irony. In other words, Strauss is asking how the historicist camp could have been so stupid as to miss something this obvious.

On the opposite side, the historicist camp is equally derisive of Strauss' method of interpretation. One of the more prominent proponents of the historicist interpretation is Paul Cartledge, a professor of Greek History at Cambridge. Cartledge, and practically every other historicist of note, does not directly engage with Strauss' work, or respond substantially to his claims. As he puts it,

Leo Strauss, however, and his follower Higgins have read the Lac. Pol. otherwise, very much so. I merely mention without discussion Strauss's

⁷ Leo Strauss, "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon" 6, no. 4 (1939): pp. 502-536, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40981694>, p. 508.

judgement that the pamphlet is 'a higher type of comic speech than ... the classical comedy': that seems to me to be itself merely comic. To be taken more seriously is their claim - a standard sort of Straussian claim - that when read attentively the tract can be seen to mean the opposite of what it has usually been taken to mean...But I'm bound to say that I do not believe the Strauss-Higgins reading of the Lac. Pol. to be such a case. Although Xenophon can be quite gently subtle, he's never in my view - and almost everyone else's - THAT devilishly subtle. The Lac. Pol should therefore probably still be read on the WYSIWYG[historicist] basis.⁸

This passage appears in an essay published by Cartledge on the very subject of differing interpretations of the *Spartan Constitution*. This is not true engagement with the arguments that Strauss puts forward in his essay. Cartledge actually cites Strauss' "The Spirit of Sparta and the taste of Xenophon" as "*non vidi*," meaning he had not actually read it. This does not excuse the Straussian camp, however, as there is little debate of substance on either side. It seems that both sides are making points without consideration of what the other side has done in its own scholarship.

In truth, the reality of Xenophon's intentions, and the veracity of his claims in the *Spartan Constitution* are unknowable. Like all things, however, we are more likely to find the truth if we are able to truly consider the arguments that directly contradict our own beliefs. It could only be beneficial to both the historicist and Straussian camps to consider the arguments of the other side.

In this paper, I hope to do a small part to bridge the gap that has emerged in this scholarly debate between the historicist and Straussian views of Spartan society. To that end, this paper will analyze the *Spartan Constitution* according to the Straussian method.

⁸ Paul Cartledge, "The Socratics' Sparta And Rousseau's," *University of London - Institute of Historical Research*, 1998, pp. 1-8, https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4409/2/The_Socratics'_Sparta_And_Rousseau's_by_Paul_Cartledge___Institute_of_Historical_Research.pdf, p. 1.

That is, I will engage in a close reading of the text, only referencing outside, secondary sources directly when necessary and appropriate. In other cases, their views will simply color this analysis and be referenced as supporting evidence in footnotes. Strauss chose to have only a superficial interaction with the existing scholarship at the time of publishing his essay, and I therefore believe it will be more beneficial to see what this approach would look like from the historicist perspective. When the same approach is taken, the heart of both camps' arguments will be exposed, allowing them to be more easily compared.

The paper will begin with a reading exploring the themes of Xenophon's work according to a historicist perspective. After a brief aside explaining and motivating the Straussian esoteric argument to a greater extent, the paper will move on to a similar close-reading of the *Spartan Constitution*, following Strauss' essay where appropriate and extending his arguments where necessary. Through this process, the paper aims to show that the perceived separation between the historicist and Straussian interpretations appears to be much greater than it, in reality, is.

Chapter 1: Xenophon's Sparta

Section 1: An Introduction to the Historicist Approach

From times ancient to modern, Sparta has inspired wide-ranging scholarly curiosity in response to the question of how Sparta, with so small a population, could support an army so completely dominant for so long. Presumably written sometime between 387 and 385 BC⁹, Xenophon the Athenian wrote one of the only remaining extant sources responding to this question: his *Constitution of the Spartans*. Within this text, Xenophon spends a lot of time outlining the various broad societal institutions that built Spartan excellence, outlining the different societal peculiarities imposed by Sparta's founder Lycurgus.

Almost all of the secondary scholarship on this work of Xenophon's interprets his praise of Sparta as genuine. Many of the most celebrated Laconian scholars fall into this camp: Paul Cartledge, Vivienne Gray, and Nigel Kennel, among others. Within this camp, disagreements about Xenophon's work typically extend no further than minute details about dates of authorship, the veracity of certain chapters as being written by Xenophon himself, and small things of that nature. Typically, this approach is called the historicist interpretation of Xenophon, as it treats the text as historical evidence. Scholars like Cartledge, Gray, and Kennel are typically trying to build a broader image of what Sparta was like, and the *Spartan Constitution* is only one piece of evidence to their building of that image. I will undertake in this chapter to offer a reading and

⁹ Michael Lipka and Xenophon, *Xenophon's Spartan Constitution: Introduction, Text, Commentary* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002).

interpretation of the *Spartan Constitution* that reflects the sentiments of the historicist camp, in order to expose the framework of the historicist argument.

According to the historicist interpretation of Xenophon's work, the factors most responsible for the military excellence of Sparta are a strict, delineated stratification of society, total societal cooperation, constant and intense competition, and a deep feeling of comradeship. Under this interpretation of his work, Xenophon's praise of the Spartan institutions for their ability to instruct, encourage, and consistently exhibit high standards of public, military virtue is genuine, if not immediately apparent. Xenophon praises Spartan virtue by means of praising the different institutions he feels are most responsible for instilling that virtue.

As a result of the virtue that Sparta was able to so consistently instill in its citizens, Xenophon would argue, Sparta was able to win the Peloponnesian War and firmly establish itself as the hegemon in Greece. Sparta, after the Peloponnesian War, effectively had total control over the political life of Athens. As such, Sparta effectively controlled the entire Greek peninsula.¹⁰ The reasons Sparta is the hegemon is that it is the best at educating its citizens in virtue. As a city made up of the best of men, naturally the city itself is best. In order to consider the veracity of this historicist claim, we must first look at Xenophon's claims about Sparta's institutions.

¹⁰ See, e.g. *Hellenica* Book 2, Thuc. 6

Section 2: Know your place: Spartan Societal Roles

First, Xenophon praises the Spartan practice of separation of practically every aspect of society as a means of instilling obedience, and as the first step in promoting physical military virtue. Sparta was not, like modern day Western societies, interested in establishing an egalitarian society wherein anyone could perform any duty that they chose. Rather, the Spartan society was separated in practically every way imaginable. Everything from gender, age, and race, to physical fitness, virility, and performance is shown as fundamentally important to what is expected of you in Spartan society. Spartan society was broken down into three classes of people: helots at the bottom, *perioikoi* in the middle, and *homoioi* at the top. For the most part, Xenophon focuses on a description of the last of these groups, the *homoioi*, which contained the real Spartans. This group, despite being on top, was no more lacking for rules and stipulations than the enslaved helot population.

According to Xenophon, everything down to marriage, even in the class of *homoioi* was subject to the stratified society of Sparta. The reasoning for Lycurgus' peculiar marriage stipulations was two-fold in Xenophon's eye. First, there was a strong emphasis on eugenic procreation. As he states, "when [old men] happen to be married to a young woman, ... he [Lycurgus] made the old man bring in a younger man, whose body and soul he admired, to father a child for himself" (1.7). Vice versa, a younger man could also "choose a woman...and if he obtained her husband's consent, to make her the mother of his children" (1.8). The result of this kind of copulation was a successful eugenic program, at least according to Xenophon. As Lipka puts it, "he is exclusively concerned with the procreation of physically superior citizens, pointing to the increase of

power of those involved.”¹¹ Xenophon explicitly states this as the intended goal of Sparta’s rituals of copulation. By this method, Sparta is able to produce specimens of physical excellence, the first step toward its goal of promoting physical military virtue.

However, there is an implicit secondary reason toward which Xenophon motions. That is, “the advantage of wife-sharing in a partible inheritance system, as Sparta had.”¹² Sparta, as opposed to most feudal systems, did not give the entirety of the inheritance to the eldest son, but rather split inheritance amongst all legitimate sons. Therefore, from a familial economic perspective, it makes sense to increase the size of a family, in order to increase the “share in its influence” (1.9), while at the same time ensuring that the foster children can “claim no part of the money” (1.9).

This line of praise raises another benefit of Lycurgus’ marital practices, one which is never mentioned by Xenophon. As previously stated, Sparta had an abnormally small population of citizens as compared to non-citizens, especially in comparison with the typical Greek city-state. The encouraged practice of wife-sharing in Sparta had the simple effect of increasing the rate of procreation, thereby increasing the population of potential Spartiates. This was certainly a factor supporting the continuation of this practice of wife-sharing, as without it, Sparta would be much more vulnerable to conflict. Lipka, and many modern scholars like him, are sure to note “the shortage of full citizens as [a] reason for the existence of eugenic regulations.”¹³

The role of women, according to Lycurgus’ political philosophy, was procreation and property transfer. They contributed to Spartan excellence by producing successively

¹¹ Lipka, 109

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

stronger and more numerous generations of Spartan men. Adult men, on the other hand, were incentivized toward this behavior through the previously mentioned familial economic benefits. While we do not at this point in Xenophon's work know *why* the Spartans are so obedient, this practice, and its success, are evidence that they are in fact obedient to this degree. Xenophon, in praising the success of this institution, is praising the Spartan adherence to the virtue of obedience. Without it, Lycurgus' eugenics program would be far from successful. Were the Spartans not wholly obedient, this practice would not be nearly so wide-spread. Jealousy, rivalry, love, and a host of other emotions could very easily get in the way of this practice. It is only because of obedience that it is noteworthy or successful in any way. Although Xenophon only ever explicitly praises this institution of wife-sharing because it "succeeded in populating Sparta with a race of men remarkable for their size" (1.9), the manner in which he portrays that praise brings to light these further praises of Sparta's society as obedient.

Similarly, when read according to the historicist interpretation, Xenophon's praise and explanation of the stratification paradigm reveals a deeper understanding of its role in garnering Sparta's reputation as a military hegemon. As analyzed somewhat already, gender roles in the political life of Sparta were harshly delineated. Sparta, without a doubt, was a patriarchal society. Having said that, the women of Sparta, while not given total agency, were afforded certain privileges that were unheard of in the rest of Greece. As a first example, the sexual license given to women and men alike (shown by the practice of wife-sharing) was unheard of at the time. According to Aristotle, Plutarch,

and other ancient sources, the “wantonness” of Spartan women was widely known.¹⁴ Xenophon, however, does not criticize Spartan women on this point, instead praising them for their dedication to the betterment of Spartan society.

This is the point where it becomes important to remember that no Spartans wrote about their own society. Aristotle, for example, as an Athenian resident born in Stagira just 20 years after Sparta’s victory over Athens in the Peloponnesian War, may have had some desire to make Athens look better in comparison to Sparta. Contrastingly, because he was exiled from Athens about a decade before the *Spartan Constitution* is theorized to have been written, and sought shelter in Sparta, Xenophon had some desire to make Sparta look good, or at least to make himself look good to Sparta. At any rate, whether or not Xenophon’s praise of women’s dedication to Spartan society is warranted, the end result is the same. Either through wantonness or dedication to the regime, Spartan women were incredibly successful in fulfilling their societal duty: begetting as many physical specimens as possible.

As a result of the great success Spartan women had in their undertaking of this responsibility, Sparta allotted women many freedoms. For example, Lycurgus “established running and fighting competitions for the women just as for the men” (1.4). However, this, too, was motivated by eugenics. Lycurgus established this tradition purely in the interest of producing stronger women, who would in turn produce stronger children. The focus for Spartan women, as everywhere else in Greece, was child-production. The peculiar thing about Sparta is that women weren’t expected to perform the mundane, household tasks such as making clothes (after all, there is an entire

¹⁴ Plato, *Laws*, 637 c 1-2 and 780 d 9 ff.; *Republic* 548 a-b; Aristotle, *Politics* 1269 b 9-12 and 1270 a 7-9.

population of slaves that they have access to), but rather simply in ensuring that their offspring were as strong as possible. The “liberation” of Spartan women, then, directly reinforces their ability to achieve this goal. Xenophon’s praise of this practice again reveals his praise of the Spartan’s ability to produce virtue. In this case, dedication and physical virtues were encouraged to such a degree that they extended even to the women of Sparta.

Spartan men, on the other hand, were responsible for bettering the future of Spartan society by taking charge of the education of the youth; in large part, they were responsible for indoctrinating the next generation of Spartans. Those men “of the class from which the highest offices are filled” (2.2), which “refers to men over 30 as eligible,”¹⁵ were given charge of the youth under the title *paidanomos*. This role required that the men of this class be in charge of having the youths “submitted to the most laborious training in courage.”¹⁶ The pursuit of the goal of military excellence required that all children were educated and indoctrinated to perform the role that was required of them; it required Spartans to imbue youths with not only the physical prowess of combat, but also the courage that would be required of them to put their prowess into effect. The *paidanomos* was solely responsible for this aspect of Spartan education. However, his role also served another purpose.

The pursuit of the goal of military dominance required that everyone not only understand their role in society, but also pursue it to the utmost of their ability. This idea was imbued in the young men of Sparta from a very early age. They were taught to be

¹⁵ Lipka, 118

¹⁶ Thuc. 2.39.2 from Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2001), 80.

strictly obedient to anyone who was in a position of authority, and were subsequently never left without a figure of authority.

Unlike most other Greek societies of the time, this education and forced acceptance of societal customs did not end at adolescence. Rather, under Lycurgus' decrees, the young men of Sparta were put into the most demanding part of their education at that time of their lives. The adolescents were told that "if anyone shirked these duties, he no longer had a share in civic rights" (3.3). The punishment for non-conformity was delegation to the perioikoi. The youths would become non-Spartans. To hold their place in society, the adolescent boys would have to learn to become the ideal of respect, humility, and obedience. This was the requirement given to every Spartan, with the same threat of punishment.

Sparta was a society built on the singular goal of increasing military strength. Military prowess was one of the principal requirements for a Spartan's education, which included much having to do with physical strength, prowess, and endurance. Perhaps the most famous and long-lasting tradition of the Classical Spartan *agoge* is the endurance test, as it is commonly called. According to Pausanias and Plutarch, and as accepted by many modern scholars, this test looked quite different than that which Xenophon outlines in the *Lac. Pol.* First, the boys "completed a period of seclusion in the country, the 'fox time' (*phouaxir*)...the young Spartans had to live by their wits, sleeping rough by day and venturing out only at night to steal their food."¹⁷ Then, in heats of about fifteen, the *epebes* stood "side by side, with their hands on their heads...close enough to the altar

¹⁷ Nigel M. Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta* (Univ of North Carolina Pr, 2007), 71.

for their blood to drip onto its surface. That, after all, was the ostensible point of the exercise.”¹⁸

The Spartan ephebes were expected to withstand a flogging that lasted some predetermined amount of time in “Spartan silence.” This was not, however, the most peculiar part of the practice. Rather, to a modern reader, the strangest aspect of the flogging must be that the entire society came to watch and encourage the ephebes in their goal of standing strong, silent, and immobile while enduring the pain of a whipping. In many sources (though not the *Spartan Constitution*.), it is reported “that youths often died under the whips rather than fail this test in front of their parents.”¹⁹ While to a reader with non-Spartan sensibilities this seems the height of cruelty, it actually makes sense when put into the historical context of Ancient Sparta.

The floggings at the altar of Artemis Orthia are not only the culmination of the boys’ education in physical endurance and psychological courage, but also the culmination of Spartan society’s investment in their newest peers. Central to the Spartan ideology is the idea that one must do what is expected. Women must produce stronger successive generations of Spartans; men must educate the boys and fight in Sparta’s wars, and the youths must undertake their education with the same vigor and enthusiasm. Failing at the altar of Orthia, then, was tantamount to abandoning one’s comrades in battle. Just as Lycurgus established laws and customs so that to “the coward, death seems preferable to a life so dishonored” (9.6), so too had the boys been educated to view their societal role. Considering this, it is not surprising that the ephebes would go so far

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 73.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

as death before being subjected to the dishonorable life, reduced to a member of the *perioikoi*, and lose a life of citizenship. It is similarly understandable that the parents of the ephebes would encourage this thought process. Therefore, the boys, through a combined effort of all the *homoioi*, were shaped into the ideal Spartan from the time they entered the education system, culminating in the test of endurance at the altar of Artemis Orthia. Again, Xenophon is not just praising the practice itself, but also that Spartan society took to it with such vigor, as their vigor is representative of their adherence to the virtue of obedience.

Section 3: Scholarly Controversy; Spartan Education as Indoctrination

The flogging of the ephebes at the altar is an example that forces a reader to question why this should be the manner in which Spartans fully force their youths to conform. The answer to this question is one of only a few places where there is fundamental, meaningful disagreement in the historicist scholarship of Spartanology. Nigel Kennell outlines the flogging of ephebes as necessarily religious in its meaning and motivation; he states that the purpose of the exercise was for the youths to stand “close enough to the altar for their blood to drip onto its surface.”²⁰ This is, then, religious in its motivation according to Kennell, which is further supported by Pausanias’ work. Andrew Selkirk, the British archaeologist, gives further explication of this point by summarizing Pausanias:

the priestess stood by carrying the wooden statue of the goddess, and if the boys were not beaten hard enough... she would complain that the statue

²⁰ Kennel, 73.

was getting heavy and that the goddess demanded more blood, and they should be beaten harder until they bled.²¹

It is impossible to deny that the flogging was religiously motivated according to Pausanias. Xenophon, on the other hand, does describe a flogging of ephebes, but it looks nothing like this more famous example. Xenophon, in laying out the fact that Lycurgus consistently encouraged petty theft as a means to developing cunning, subterfuge, and (as always) courage in the youths, outlines the culmination of this philosophy as “a point of honour to steal as many cheeses as possible [from the altar of Artemis Orthia], but appointed others to scourge the thieves” (2.9). This is the only indication of a whipping at the altar of Orthia in the *Spartan Constitution*, and therefore one is forced to consider whether this is intended to be taken as the same practice that Pausanias and Plutarch outline, or something separate. In either case, the scene in the *Spartan Constitution* seems not to be religiously motivated, but rather an attempt to force conformity to certain Spartan social norms. It seems somewhat strange that there would be two separate whippings of the Spartan ephebes in the same location, if both rites did take place. E. C. Marchant and G. W. Bowersock, the translators of the Loeb Classical Library edition of the *Spartan Constitution*, make note of this point, stating that

“the annual scourging of Spartan boys and youths...seems to have no connexion [sic.] with that of punishing those who were caught thieving. It is not improbable that the whole of this sentence is an interpolation; if not, the text is corrupt beyond restoration.”²²

²¹ Andrew Selkirk, “Artemis Orthia,” *Barbarism and Civilization*, May 31, 2016, <http://www.civilization.org.uk/greece/greece-extra/sparta/the-shrine-of-artemis-orthia>.

²² Xenophon, “Constitution of the Lacedaemonians,” essay, in *Xenophon: Scripta Minora*, trans. Edgar Cardew Marchant and Glen Warren Bowersock (Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 135-189, p. 145 n. 2.

While not all scholars take such a dramatic approach in interpreting this difference in extant sources, it certainly is a challenge to reconcile the two views.

It is important to keep in mind that this section of the *Spartan Constitution* may just be factually incorrect, as Marchant and Bowersock think. There is, however, a different take on this section of text, one which believes that “the seizure of cheese was a Spartan initiation rite...it may well be connected with the whipping at the shrine of Orthia and thus represent an early stage of the rite.”²³ This line of thinking is interesting, as it is built upon a piece of evidence that Kennell uses to reach his conclusion of the rite being fundamentally religious. Kennell and Lipka both look at “a (homoerotic?) copulation scene on an archaic cup found at the shrine of Orthia [where] the penetrating partner possibly whips the penetrated,”²⁴ but take this to support differing conclusions. Kennell proposes that this scene is representative of the religious nature of the whippings, claiming that its being found at a cult location shows its importance to the cult. Lipka, on the other hand, takes the depiction to be a representation of the archaic form of the same rite, which had lost its religious significance by the time of Xenophon, and was “in one way or another the participation or even the integration of the young Spartan in the warrior community.”²⁵ By taking the two interpretations of the vase in tandem, it becomes clear that Xenophon’s inclusion of the cheese-stealing scene is not necessarily an interpolation, as it could also be representative of an archaic form of the rite that Pausanius outlined and Kennell interprets.

²³ Lipka, 127.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

Regardless of the motivation behind the ritual (whether religious or social), the end result is the same. In either case, the Spartan youth are being indoctrinated into a form of thinking and acting that is fundamentally Spartan. In truth, the contemporary Spartans would probably not have thought of the rite as solely representative of a religious or social custom, but rather recognize that they are one in the same. The cult of Orthia was apparently so central to Spartan life that it was used for what modern readers would see as the “graduation” ceremony of Sparta. Therefore, the importance of the rite is not its religious or social implications, but rather its educational one. This most important implication is the forced cohesion of Spartan youth to society.

This line of inquiry, and subsequently reached conclusion about the role of the floggings at the altar of Orthia, is directly prompted by Xenophon’s apparent contradiction with other extant sources on the ritual. Xenophon would have known the truth of the practice and known it to be important only as a method of indoctrination into Spartan norms. This is, in many ways, the final test of a Spartan’s adherence to the virtues of endurance, comradery, and strength. Should they pass it, they have proven that they are deserving members of Spartan society, as they have fully internalized the Spartan virtues, and now imitate them. Xenophon is trusting that a reader will be familiar with the practice, or at least with Pausanias and Plutarch’s depictions, and recognize the contradiction. Trusting that a reader will see the contradiction between the two stories, and realize that the importance of the practice is not *how* it was carried out, but *why*, Xenophon is not praising the practice of whipping young boys, but rather he extols the ability of the Spartans to indoctrinate the youths into their homogenous system of public virtue.

Section 4: Homogenous Competition

One of the main techniques used by the Spartans to this end of societal homogeneity was that of competition. Xenophon has a lot to say about forced, virtuous competition in Sparta. He posits it as the greatest reason for Sparta's excellence. The praise which Xenophon puts forth in this section of his encomium differentiates itself from other sections because it does not draw contrasts with practices of the Spartans and the practices of other Greeks. Competition, to Greeks both in and outside of Sparta, was fundamental to what it meant to lead a good life. In the *Iliad*, which ancient Greeks saw as foundational to their culture²⁶, the concept of *agon* is central to all that the Greeks talk about. In a famous line, Antenor praises Odysseus for his speaking style, claiming that "no other mortal man beside could stand up against Odysseus."²⁷ Everything to the Greeks was framed in this style, in which being good at something was only useful in comparison to others. It did not matter that you were fast, strong, or a good orator, all that mattered was that you were better than someone else, preferably everyone. This becomes explicit later in the *Iliad*, when Glaukon states that his father sent him to Troy with the explicit instructions to "always be the very best and far above others."²⁸ This is the utmost goal for all Greeks: to be the very best in a comparative way.

Sparta was a society built upon the belief that men could be shaped into that ideal. Competition, usually for the sole purpose of being seen as excellent, was implicit in a Spartan's education from the time that they were very young. Competition for thievery

²⁶ See, e.g. Xenophon *Memorabilia* 1.2, 1.4, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.6

²⁷ *Iliad*, 3.216-223.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 6.208.

of food, to be seen as excellent in the eyes of their masters, to earn a position of authority, and other small tasks all employed a sense of competition between the youths in order to motivate excellence. Just as athletic events have steadily improved since their inception to the modern day, so too did the Spartans think that their fighting men could steadily improve as they each strove to prove themselves better than one another. From the time that boys first entered the Spartan system of education, they were always competing with one another, whether explicitly or implicitly. From the start, we are told that the boys did not receive enough food to fully satisfy their hunger, and as a result were encouraged to steal. In stealing, however, Lycurgus would still “have the boy who was caught beaten with many stripes” (2.8). Though the boys here aren’t competing to be the best at something typically considered virtuous, they are nonetheless competing. There is physical punishment for failing to be good enough, and the shame which comes with that failure. Conversely, there was the reward of food for those that are the best. This is a classic motivational technique, incentivizing the youths to a certain kind of behavior. In this case, the incentives are used “in order to make the boys more resourceful in getting supplies, and better fighting men” (2.7), and other forms of competition were used in order to promote other specific tendencies that would also make them better fighting men. Through each of these individual competitions, there is constant evaluation of the boys to see where they stack up in comparison with one another, forming a sort of list in the heads of the *pedagagos* and the Ephors. This style of evaluation was constant, and came to the forefront in the last chapter of a Spartan education.

When the boys became young men, the Ephors would choose 3 from among the ranks of the youths to become officers called *hippagretai* (Commanders of the Guard).

These Commanders would then each select 100 other young men who they believed to be the best of them, having to specify their reasoning for each. Those who were not selected to this group of 300 were encouraged to challenge the decision of the Commanders, to vie in competition against those that were selected. As Xenophon says, each of “those who are not chosen to be part of this privileged group fight those who rejected them and those who were chosen instead of them, and they keep a careful watch on each other lest they should make less effort than is considered honorable” (4.4). This has the immediate and obvious effect of forcing each of the youths to be the best that they can be in society’s eyes. Each wish, of course, to be part of this group. For those that are not part of the group, the goal is to prove fault in those that are, either through physical combat or through asserting the vicious action of one who was chosen.

That which defines vicious action is societally constructed. Each society determines the specific actions deemed to be beneficial and strives to encourage them. These actions are called virtues in that society; their antitheses are called vices. Therefore, this spirit of competition serves to reinforce the homogeneity that Sparta had educated the boys to be. The not-chosen men sought to prove that some chosen man defied one of Sparta’s societal tendencies. Therefore, every boy had to strive to fully embody Sparta’s societal expectations. If they did not, they risked losing either their spot in the 300, or all hope of joining it.

The physical aspect of the competition for approval in the eyes of the *hippagretai*, as physical excellence was the highest honor in Sparta, extended so far that “on account of the rivalry they fight with their fists whenever they meet” (4.6). Those that were left out of the 300 sought to prove themselves better in any way than those who were

included. They kept an eye out for dishonorable behavior, and barring that tried to prove themselves physically superior. Each man not in the 300 was attempting to prove that he embodied the Spartan ideal to a greater extent than one who was chosen. The ideal against which each Spartan was judged is the image of a perfect hoplite soldier. The physical and psychological virtues Sparta instilled in its citizens were only those useful to the hoplite soldier. Sparta used this philosophy of competition in order to deploy the best possible team of soldiers to the field of battle. The selection of the *hippagretai* is one case of competition being used to breed a specific type of excellence in Sparta, though there are many other ways in which it was used to the same end.

The selection of the *hippagretai* and their 300 is perhaps the best, though by no means the only, example of competition used by the Spartans as a judge of their citizen's virtue. It is no accident that the selection of the Guard came immediately upon the boys becoming young men. It is similarly no accident that Xenophon details this period in a Spartan boy's life immediately after a chapter dedicated to moral education. Chapter two of the *Spartan Constitution* details the formal, physical education of Spartan youths in the *agoge*. Chapter three then opens with an explanation that upon completion of the *agoge*, while "other [Greek cities would] release him from his moral teacher and schoolmaster... Lycurgus introduced a wholly different system" (3.1), and details how virtue-instruction did not end at the end of the formal education system in Sparta. Chapter four then details the next stage of a Spartan man's life; it opens with the depiction of how Lycurgus and the ephors "instituted matches between the young men" (4.2). The fact that this chapter immediately follows the previous one is reflective of the reasoning behind the Spartans' decision to have such intense competition begin upon the boys' becoming young men.

That is to say, the high level of competition undertaken by Spartans in this period was meant as a type of test of their embodiment of the Spartan ideal. The Spartan ideal is that which the boys had been learning over the preceding two chapters. Obedience, endurance, strength, comradery; those are the virtues which a Spartan soldier is expected to embody. Having finished the *agoge* and the graduation-flogging, the boys proved themselves to have some minimum share in these virtues. Competition had the goal of honing this minimum share toward the maximum amount each individual could possess. Those boys who embodied them best were selected as *hippagretai*, or as a member of their Guard. These sorts of competition continued throughout a Spartan's life, explicitly being judged against the same ideal, meaning Spartans had to continue their full embodiment of virtue throughout their lives. This is why Xenophon praises Spartan competition, for its role in promoting Spartan virtue.

Section 5: The Virtues in Practice; Spartan Cooperation

The problem, of course, with undertaking intense, consistent competition is that one can grow to despise one's rivals. In a military society like Sparta, however, that result is antithetical to the goal of building a great military, it is in direct tension with the principle of Spartans being *homoioi*, the equals. Soldiers, after all, must share a sense of comradery. With that in mind, the next section of Xenophon's praise of Lycurgus makes perfect sense. Despite the constant competition that Spartans undertook with one another, Lycurgus strove to ensure that no member of the society would do harm to another. In what may appear vaguely socialist to a modern reader, Sparta made a habit of opposing the typical Greek notion that "every man has control of his own children, servants, and

goods” (6.1). Rather, in Sparta it was understood that if any man had need of another man’s goods, he could take them and replace them once his need was assuaged.

To a modern capitalist, the practice of good-sharing seems wholly untenable. However, one must remember that the Spartans were focused on the pursuit of military excellence, and they did not allow anything else to distract them. By using the helots, Spartans were able to avoid doing any of the day-to-day work that citizens of other Greek city-states had to do, like farming, making clothes, processing grain, etc. As Paul Cartledge explains in his work *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History, 1300-362 BC.*, “the sheer number of the helots in comparison to the surprisingly small, and shrinking master class”²⁹ allowed for that master class to be more or less leisurely, so long as “leisure” included intense military training necessary to keep the helots down. Because of this, there was no need to think of property, goods, or even one’s own children as purely “mine” or “yours.”

Instead, Sparta was radical in its approach to everything from resources and production to child rearing. As previously explained, youths in Sparta were expected to listen to any Spartan elder, meaning that any fully-grown Spartan could tell any Spartan youth what to do, and it was expected to be undertaken as if it were an order from the youth’s own parents. Punishment was also considered a communal activity, this going so far as to say that “if a boy tells his own father when he has been whipped by another father, it is a disgrace if the parent does not give his son another whipping. So completely do they trust one another not to give any improper orders” (6.2). This may again seem like a terrible custom to one with modern sensibilities, but one must keep in

²⁹ Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 Bc* (Routledge, 2016), 139.

mind that Spartan society was not set up to protect against misbehavior, it was instead set up with the assumption that there would be no misbehavior. A Spartan, having gone through the full indoctrination of a Spartan education, understands that there is no adult in Sparta who did not also go through the same education, and therefore no one who does not share the same values. Spartans share the same values, and it therefore makes sense that whatever one Spartan considers worthy of a beating, so too would the father of the boy in question. This is how deeply the comradery of Spartan soldiers goes. Again, it is the logic behind a practice that Xenophon praises, not necessarily the practice itself.

The reason that Spartans could afford to trust one another to such a great extent stemmed twofold from the large helot population. First, that the only requirement for maintaining “Spartan citizen-rights [was] tied strictly to the ability to contribute a certain amount of natural produce to a common mess.”³⁰ Spartans owned land that they did not work and owned “helots, who were bound, under pain of death, to hand it [natural produce] over to the individual Spartan whose land they worked.”³¹ Because of this fact, there is no real attachment to be had to any of the goods or property owned by the Spartans. After all, they did nothing to produce it, so it simply makes more economic sense to think of everything as communal goods. As such, each Spartan was able to suffer no harm as a result of his lacking some particular good; everyone shared in the riches of Lakonia, even if each individual was not prospering.

The second reason that the helot population gave the Spartans the ability to develop such deep comradery is exactly because of the huge population of helots. The

³⁰ Cartledge, *A Regional History*, 140.

³¹ *Ibid.*

Spartans, as a master class that was outnumbered by slaves in estimates as high as 14 to 1,³² were in constant fear of a slave rebellion that they would not be able to control. The Spartans needed a way of controlling the helot population. The fear of not preventing an uprising³³ drove the Spartans to recognize their constant common enemy, as “the helots were vastly more numerous than the Spartans and [] this very numerical disproportion was an important factor governing relations between the two.”³⁴

Due to this numeric disadvantage, the Spartans would regularly undertake “the ‘Krypteia’,...whereby youths who had passed through the *agoge* (the state educational system) completed their apprenticeship by going out into the country, lying low by day and killing helots by night.”³⁵ Once the formal education had been completed, as stated previously, Spartans undertook a more moral education, according to Xenophon. While he does not make mention of the Krypteia in his work, the fact that modern historians are aware of its existence means that Xenophon, and likely the broader Greek audience for which he was writing, were aware of the practice as well. As such, its absence is striking. We do know, however, that Lycurgus instructed a youth of Sparta in virtue by “impos[ing] on him a ceaseless round of work, and contrived a constant round of occupation” (3.2). Though we do not know exactly what these chores, for lack of a better word, might have been, it is a reasonable guess to assume that the Krypteia forms a part of them. After all, they reportedly occurred at the same stage of a Spartan’s life.

³² See Cartledge, *Histories* 148-151.

³³ See *Hellenica* 3.3.4-3.3.11

³⁴ *Ibid*, 151.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

Krypteia's role in ensuring the helots did not revolt shows us that the goal of the practice was building comradery.

The praise of the pseudo-socialist ideology prevalent in Sparta may still seem problematic, as they would likely argue that these deeply entrenched social benefits, such as guaranteeing "that even those who have but little receive a share of all that the country yields whenever they want anything" (6.4), would lead to a "free loader" problem that would slowly degrade society. However, we know this not to be the case in Sparta. First, the provision requirement for citizenship guaranteed that there were no true free loaders in the class of homoioi. Second, and much more importantly, Spartan society created and reinforced such a strong sense of comradery and unity in its citizens that to be seen as different (as needing to take from any surplus would inherently make you appear) was paramount to being non-Spartan. The reason this philosophy was so deeply entrenched in Spartans is because of certain practices that they undertook, like the Krypteia.

There is a twofold political reason for performing the Krypteia. First, it has the impact of frightening the helots into submission, making them truly understand and fear the power that the Spartans had over them. Second, and more importantly, it taught newly graduated youths a lesson that no Spartan ever forgot: they were never without a common enemy. The idea of a common enemy uniting men who otherwise would be rivals is a consistent theme in Xenophon's work. As he outlines in his *Memorabilia*,

in politics, where the gentlemen are the strongest, . . . it is a gain to make friends with the best, and to see in them partners and fellow-workers in a common cause, and not rivals. But, again, it is equally clear that anyone who goes to war will need allies, and more of them if he is to fight an

army of gentlemen. Moreover, those who are willing to fight at your side must be well treated that they may be willing to exert themselves³⁶

Xenophon again draws the parallel between politics and warfare, a connection that is even clearer in Sparta than in Athens. Yet, even in Athens, which is the subject of this excerpt from the *Memorabilia*, the rival aristocrats are united in their desire to maintain the status quo; to keep them as coworkers in the common cause of maintaining their power. So, Sparta uses the convenient, ever-present helot population as the common cause that unites them, in addition to the common causes which are not enemies.

We have already seen the ways in which the Spartan education system imbued its students with a sense of comradeship, and no less important was the manner in which fully grown Spartans were made to maintain this sense of comradeship throughout their lives. At the beginning of chapter 8, Xenophon explains that Sparta differed from other Greek city-states in that “the most powerful citizens do not even wish it to be thought that they fear the magistrates...but at Sparta the most important men show the utmost deference to the magistrates” (8.2). Xenophon also goes on to say that these noblemen, for lack of a better word, of Sparta “helped set up the office of Ephor, having come to the conclusion that obedience is a very great blessing whether in a state or an army” (8.3). This excerpt is the most important piece of literary evidence for the peculiarity of Sparta’s social order. For Spartans, the state and the army were very much one and the same. The political hierarchy was the military hierarchy, and vice versa. Therefore, the chain of command needed to be followed not only on the battlefield, but also in everyday life.

The wrinkle in this line of thought is the highly competitive nature of Spartan

³⁶ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.6.26ff

society; each person was competing with one another for positions of authority, for positions where they could give commands rather than simply obey them. The widespread success of the philosophy of leaders being most obedient is, however, indicative of the unity of Spartan citizens, rather than its cause. The cause of this obedience, as we have seen, was the ever-present reminder of a common enemy: the helots. This again is when one is reminded of the common philosophy of the noblemen of Sparta, that “if they lead, the rest will follow along the path of eager obedience” (8.2). In a perplexing way, Spartan men competed to be more obedient than their peers. Just as Spartan youths in the *agoge* strove to be obedient to societal expectations, so too do Spartan citizens strive to be obedient to the expectations of their superiors, the Ephors and other magistrates. Lipka poses the question of “how unanimity can exist in a society as competitive as the Spartan.”³⁷ Unanimity in Sparta, it seems, existed not in spite of this competitiveness, but because of it. It is also important to recognize that Sparta fully embodied the philosophy that “those who are willing to fight at your side must be well treated.”³⁸ This is the true motivation behind the socialist tendencies of Sparta; as they were united behind common enemies, they recognized that the strength of their fighting force rested upon the strength of its individual members. Those individual members were a Spartan’s fellow citizens, and it therefore made far more sense to ensure them well taken care of in Sparta than to risk their own well-being on the battlefield.

In this way, Sparta was a truly militaristic society. The things important on the battlefield were important to their everyday society. It makes sense that Xenophon has

³⁷ Lipka, *Commentary* 169

³⁸ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.6.32

left his praise of Spartan comradery until this section of his work. While impressive, the indoctrination of individualistic military virtues like bravery, strength, and endurance is straightforward. All societies instill certain positive virtues in their youth, and Sparta is certainly no different in this regard. More impressive than this is the Spartans' ability, at least in the way Xenophon outlines this ideal, to make each of their individual citizens actively collaborate with one another. This is the reason that Sparta is the hegemon of Greece at the time that Xenophon is writing. Yes, each individual Spartan soldier may have been marginally more capable than his opponent, but in the phalanx-based system of fighting undertaken by the Spartans, order, discipline, and comradery were far more important.³⁹ Instilling that sense of comradery is something that Spartans never stopped doing; it was an education that continued from the *agoge* to death. Xenophon's praise of the various Spartan institutions directed toward this end lasts up until the very end of his treatise, outlining how Spartans were continually expected to collaborate and contribute to society into their old age. Excluding the infamous chapter 14, Xenophon works his way through successive stages of a Spartan's life, and through the Spartan command structure, outlining at every stage some institution, custom, or expectation which guaranteed a Spartan's commitment to the state. This is the true genius of the Spartan system, the reason they remained successful for so long, and the final answer to Xenophon's question. Once he has outlined how elders and the King of Sparta himself are both expected to stay dedicated entirely to the state, Xenophon's treatise ends. This means that it is the virtue of comradery, and the institutions which indoctrinate a Spartan

³⁹ See Paul Cartledge, "Hoplites and Heroes: Sparta's Contribution to the Technique of Ancient Warfare," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977): pp. 11-27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/631018>.

to that end which answer the question of how “Sparta, though among the most thinly populated of states, was evidently the most powerful and most celebrated city in Greece”

(1.1).

Section 6: Conclusion: Xenophon as Praising the Ideal

The various themes present in Spartan society which made them such a dominant military force on the Greek peninsula were complimentary and self-reinforcing. A Spartan's education did not end with a successful graduation from the *agoge*. Instead, the lessons learned in a Spartan's youth were consistently reinforced throughout their lives. The deep feeling of comradeship imbued in Spartans from a young age was bolstered by the ever-present facet of competition, which was in turn supported by a firmly entrenched stratification of Spartan society into a hierarchy, which in turn caused all of Sparta to be motivated by a singular purpose. Inversely, Sparta's singular purpose of military dominance motivated and strengthened these tendencies in the society. The things which made Sparta so unique are the very things which made it so much more powerful than any other Greek polis; better even than that, the things which made Sparta so powerful reinforced a Spartan's tendencies to follow these peculiarities. Each of these peculiarities made victory in battle much more likely, and with victory in battle comes an increase in comradeship, while at the same time opening the avenue for competition to fill the roles which were vacated by deaths in the battle, and renewing a Spartan's sense of purpose as a military specimen. Once the ingenuity of this system is understood, as Xenophon understood it, the question that arises in one's mind is not how Sparta became such a dominant military force, but rather how it ever ceased to be one. As Xenophon says, once he "considered the institutions of the Spartans, [he] wondered no longer" (1.1).

Xenophon gives a preliminary answer to the question of how Sparta began to fail in his fourteenth chapter. Breaking from the previously established trend of praising comradeship and dedication to the State at various stages and levels of Spartan life,

Xenophon turns to what Sparta looks like not in the ideal of Lycurgus' original plan, but in the modern day. Its institutions have lost some of their former splendor, leading to Spartans who are less and less virtuous. Certainly, this was a factor in the fall of Spartan supremacy, as the ideology Xenophon had praised for the preceding 13 chapters had now changed. In the ideal that Xenophon praises, "they would fain be worthy of leadership; but now they strive far more earnestly to exercise rule than to be worthy of it" (14.5). The sense of comradeship necessary to Sparta's success, it seems, has disappeared by the time that Xenophon is writing. He is aware of the current problems in Spartan society, and chapter 14 shows that he knows the fickleness of such a system. He maintains his admiration for the system, as every other chapter makes clear, yet recognizes its fragility. In reality, we know that the people of Sparta did not just suddenly become morally corrupt, desiring only individual prosperity and power. However, the manner in which some of the finer details of Sparta's institutions were established lead to an inherently unsustainable society.

Sparta, like all its contemporary societies and every society that has existed before or after, was not perfect. The fatal flaw of Sparta, according to much modern scholarship, was the combination of a partitive inheritance system and a strict requirement of natural produce to maintain citizen rights. At the time of Lycurgus, it seems that a single Spartan's land-holdings could provide more than enough produce to meet the requirements of the *syssitia* without issue. However, that piece of land was not passed down through successive generations of Spartans in exactly the same form as it would have been under the control of primogeniture system of inheritance. Instead, the land would have to be divided in order to accommodate one's number of sons. Having

more than one legitimate son meant at most only half the original amount of production for each son. After a few generations of this division of land, very few Spartans would be able to meet the requirements of their *syssitia* and would therefore cease to be entitled to citizenship. Aristotle coined a term when observing this phenomenon in Sparta: *olyganthropia*, which literally means few men. Due to the fact of *olyganthropia*, it was impossible for the other institutions, customs, and laws of Sparta to support the same level of excellence that they had previously supported.

Xenophon had no way of recognizing this type of degradation that occurred over generations. In Xenophon's lifetime that problem had not yet truly manifested itself. Sparta's population of citizens was small, to be sure, but not yet so small as to be deemed a problem. Xenophon blames the ever-present disconnect between ideals and reality as the reason Sparta seemed to be slowly losing hold of its hegemony. This criticism of Sparta, by any means, is not meant as a true criticism of the Spartan way. Rather, it is a criticism of the individuals who were undertaking the Spartan way, and not living up to its full potential. Xenophon, in each of his other chapters, is praising that potential.

Recognizing that Xenophon is praising the ideal established by Lycurgus, rather than the reality that existed in his day, it is impossible to disagree with Xenophon when he says that Lycurgus "reached the utmost limit of wisdom. For it was not by imitating other states, but by devising [sic.] a system utterly different from that of most others, that he made his country pre-eminently prosperous" (1.2). This is truly what made Sparta special: its uniqueness, its otherness, and its ability to convince its entire population that their different way of life was the correct one. Xenophon recognizes this about Sparta, and praises each of their institutions for being different and strong. After all, how could

we question the genuineness or veracity of Xenophon's claims when he was a first-hand witness of the most compelling example of Spartan excellence: their victory over Athens in the Peloponnesian War.

Chapter 2: On Strauss' Impact and Argument

Section 1: A (too) Brief Introduction to Strauss

Before Strauss, there was no prominent scholarship published on the *Spartan Constitution* that didn't assume an interpretation of the text similar to the historicist one outlined in the previous chapter. Then Strauss, in the years that he spent looking for a job, between 1938 and 1943, wrote letters to his friend, Jacob Klein, detailing what Strauss considered "a whole series of philosophical supernovas"⁴⁰. These supernovas, to use the same dramatic terminology, occurred as Strauss read several famous Classical and Medieval philosophers and suddenly saw them in a new light. Starting with Maimonides and then followed to what Strauss considered its origins in Greek philosophy by way of Plato to Xenophon, Strauss followed a thread of esoteric thought that interpreted many of these widely studied texts to unique conclusions.

By the end of November 1938, Strauss had finished the essay which would come to form the main section of his seminal *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, and had effectively moved on to a new work, "'On the Study of Classical Political Philosophy.' He intends it to show that 'Herodot, Thucyd, and Xenophon are *no* historians – of course not – but authors of exoteric, protreptic writings.'"⁴¹ For Strauss, Xenophon was only the beginning of what he saw as a larger conversation the scholarly Classical community needed to have.

⁴⁰ Laurence Lampert, "Strauss's Recovery of Esotericism," Chapter 4 in Steven B. Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss* (Cambridge, 2009), p.63.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 68

The first major revelation Strauss had relating to Xenophon shortly followed. Strauss notes that in the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon is painting a portrait of the “true, hidden Socrates” in his caricature of Cyrus. In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, on the other hand, Strauss claims that Xenophon is describing the “manifest Socrates.” Taking these two views in tandem, Strauss claims that “His [Xenophon’s] Socrates-image is therefore *not fundamentally* different from that of Plato.”⁴² Starting from this revelation, Strauss began to take a close reading of Xenophon’s *Scripta Minora*, his minor works. Among these is the *Spartan Constitution*. Armed with his new perspective which sees much of Classical Greek political philosophy as being able to be interpreted as esoteric, Strauss read the *Spartan Constitution* with the same esoteric argument in mind. The result of that reading is found in “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon,” and will be discussed in the following chapter.

For anyone well-versed in Spartanology, or even those who may have previously come across the *Spartan Constitution* in some fashion, Strauss’ conclusions can be perplexing. However, if one looks at a few biographical facts about Xenophon, Strauss’ claims may start to make a bit more sense. In large part, Strauss’ claims about the *Spartan Constitution* rest on a few basic claims about Xenophon: first, that he was educated and intelligent enough to be aware of the obvious contradictions in his writing, and that those contradictions are therefore ironic, and second, that he had reason to hide his true opinions on the Spartan system. As such, it will serve us well to look in passing at the life of Xenophon as a means of giving some accessibility to Strauss’ core argument.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Section 2: On the Education of Xenophon

Strauss makes frequent claims to the effect that, as a result of Xenophon's "great literary gifts, any hypothesis is preferable to the assumption that he used a literary device awkwardly."⁴³ It is no great secret that Xenophon was a student of Socrates, and this suggests that he was a highly educated individual. It is also no secret that Xenophon was a member of the aristocracy, as this was a prerequisite to his education. Beyond these more well-known facts there is a minor detail of both Xenophon's formal education and the time he spent with Socrates that serve as support for the first premise of Strauss' argument. The scholarly context in which Xenophon was both educated and existed at the time of his writing the *Spartan Constitution*, and the well-documented existence of what Paul Cartledge and many other scholars have called the "Spartan Mirage," since Francois Ollier coined the term in 1934, all lend credence to Strauss' claims.

For a long time, Sparta and Athens had vied for hegemony over Greece, with the dispute eventually coming to a head in the Peloponnesian War. The result of this long rivalry was a fascination, to say the least, with Sparta. There is a long history of tension in Greece between the aristocrats and the commoners, which is referenced countless times in Greek philosophy, with the aristocrats consistently being in favor of an aristocracy over a democracy.⁴⁴ It should come as no surprise, then, that there were those in Athens for whom it was a disappointment to find themselves living in a democratic

⁴³ Strauss, "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon". p. 503.

⁴⁴ e.g. Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1261a-b.

society, and who supported a Spartan-esque style of government. Historically, when the Spartans eventually won the Peloponnesian War, they had no trouble finding enough aristocrats to fill out their 30 Tyrants.⁴⁵ Among these aristocrats were some with whom Xenophon had studied under Socrates.

Students of Socrates like Critias (who wrote his own *Spartan Constitution*), Alcibiades, and others eventually come to rule under Spartan leave. This shows that pro-Spartan sympathies extended even into the anti-establishment circle of Socrates; it shows that one can be an aristocratic student of Socrates and still be foolish. Strauss kept this close in mind when performing his analysis. As he points out, “one of the most famous admirers of Sparta was Critias, ... an enemy of Socrates and an oligarch. Critias was the author of two works...both entitled *Constitution of the Lacedemonians* (sic.)”⁴⁶ Strauss proposes these works as the source of some inspiration that Xenophon may have had in writing his own treatise. Regardless of whether that particular aspect of Strauss’ argument is true, Xenophon was surrounded by those who admired the results Sparta managed to achieve. Therefore, Xenophon could have been incentivized not to openly, explicitly criticize the Spartan system of government.

This hesitancy to criticize is supported not only by the Straussian interpretation, but also finds backing in the historicist camp. To explain the phenomenon of the “Spartan Mirage” to a contemporary audience, Cartledge compared the Spartan Mirage to the Cold War from the perspective of the United States. Essentially, Cartledge shows that just as the U.S. produced a lot of content depicting the USSR in a certain light (*The*

⁴⁵ Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.4.39ff

⁴⁶ Leo Strauss, “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon” 6, no. 4 (1939): pp. 502-536, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40981694>, p. 528.

Manchurian Candidate, *Red Dawn*, etc.), so too did Athens produce a lot of content depicting Sparta in a similar light. Yes, the Americans inevitably win in the Cold War-era movies, and yes, the Athenians are eventually depicted as superior to the Spartans for some reason. However, the USSR is consistently shown as a worthy competitor; they produce super-soldiers, have intimidating technology, and cooperate entirely. This is exactly what the Athenians did in their depictions of Sparta during the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁷

Cartledge outlines this principle well. The most well-known Athenian depiction of Sparta comes in Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides. An analysis of this funeral oration forms the first chapter of Cartledge and Anton Powell's anthology *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians*. As the author of this chapter, Paula Debnar, explains, "[o]ne of the means by which Pericles highlights Athens' strengths is to paint his ideal picture of the city... against a backdrop of their enemy's alleged flaws."⁴⁸ In many ways, then, this speech could be seen as having the opposite intent as Xenophon appears to have in the *Spartan Constitution*. There, Xenophon seems to highlight the strengths of Spartan society by contrasting them with the typical practices of Greece.

Pericles' funeral oration shows striking similarities between his praises of Athens and Xenophon's praises of Sparta. For example, Debnar makes note of Pericles' praise of Athens for the fact that

⁴⁷ Paul Cartledge and Anton Powell, eds., *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians* (The Classical Press of Wales, 2018).

⁴⁸ Debnar, Paula in *Ibid.* p. 1.

“regarding [men’s] authority, as each is distinguished in something, he is preferred (for office) more from merit”... it remained true that some positions [in government] were rotated and entailed selection by lot...Sparta, of course, enjoyed the rule of the ‘best’, with strict criteria for citizenship and fierce competition for honor. Pericles, in other words, offers a picture of the Athenian *politeia* that is in at least one respect like the Spartans’⁴⁹

These types of similarities cause one to wonder why, when they are supposedly reaching opposing conclusions, Pericles and Xenophon make the same point.

Strauss’ interpretation of the *Spartan Constitution* provides one possible answer to this question. Strauss says that Xenophon’s praise of Sparta is false, and perhaps this is evidence in support of that stance.

This is the type of depiction that Cartledge refers to when he makes reference to the Spartan Mirage. Sparta here is not an outright inferior to Athens. In fact, it is good enough, and perceived to be good enough, to merit being a comparison for Pericles to paint Athens against, in distinction. The goodness of Athens, in Pericles’ speech, is only good in that it is better than Sparta. What makes Athens the best is that Sparta is second best. The same was true in American depictions of the USSR during the Cold War-era. Still, it was second-best.

By virtue of Cartledge’s understanding of the Spartan Mirage and the biographical fact that Xenophon was surrounded by people with pro-Spartan tendencies, the idea that Xenophon may have attempted to hide a critique of Sparta behind his praises begins to make a bit more sense. Even without

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

considering the possible personal political woes Xenophon could have been facing at the time of writing the *Spartan Constitution* (his exile from Athens and the fact that he came to live in Lakonia for the intervening 30 years), it is easy to see why Xenophon might have felt the need to at least feign praise of Sparta as a means of avoiding persecution first and foremost. It is then not a much larger stretch to believe that Xenophon could have hidden critiques of Sparta, especially if one accepts that Xenophon did in fact hold such a belief.

At this point, one who is newly exposed to Strauss may find himself asking why Xenophon wrote at all, if it was so risky for him to do so. Strauss' answer to this question comes in the title of his work, "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon." Xenophon is criticizing not Sparta, but the spirit of the Spartan institutions. As we will come to see in the next chapter, this critique finds the virtues of Spartan society to be false. However, the basis on which Xenophon finds these virtues to be false extends far beyond Sparta; it criticizes all public virtue. Athens, and similarly all states, are guilty of seeking to instill public virtue. Therefore, in criticizing the spirit of Sparta, Xenophon is also criticizing the spirit of Athens, and the spirit of all political states. Strauss argues that this was of paramount importance to the Socratic school,⁵⁰ to show that philosophic virtue and political virtue cannot coexist. The result of this belief is a necessarily esoteric piece of writing, as Strauss would say. Not only because of his fear of persecution, but also to protect the political sphere from the corruption that his opinion on public virtue would cause, and to ensure that only certain, like-minded

⁵⁰ See *Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*, ch. 4.

individuals could understand it, Xenophon was pushed to write esoterically.

Under this light, Xenophon's work becomes much less a historical encomium, and much more a philosophic treatise.

Of course, there are many more reasons Strauss uses to support his belief that Xenophon had reason to write esoterically. He also provides much more concrete evidence as to how this esoteric writing might be interpreted, all of which only serves to strengthen this line of thought. With these facts in mind, Strauss' first premise, that Xenophon had cause to write esoterically, becomes much more believable.

Chapter 3: The Straussian Method: A Cynic's Approach to Sparta

Section 1: An Introduction to the Straussian Approach

Built upon the work of Leo Strauss, there is a rather different approach to interpreting Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution* than the historicist approach examined in Chapter 1. Leo Strauss was a political philosopher who lived and worked in the early to mid-20th century. Strauss specialized in classical political philosophy, particularly the political thought of the Socratics. Strauss was interested in a literary tract of thought known as esotericism. Strauss believed that esotericism was prevalent in the writings of practically every Greek philosopher of note. In essence, esotericism is the art of writing ironically; the art of occluding what you are saying so that it can only be understood in full by those with the requisite knowledge, understanding, or context. It is exactly this that Strauss argued was the manner in which Xenophon wrote all of his works, the *Spartan Constitution* being no exception. In writing his first essay on esoteric thought, "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon," Strauss outlines his analysis which he hopes proves that Xenophon's "apparent praise of Sparta is in truth a satire on Sparta and on Athenian Laconism."⁵¹ The result of such an analysis of Xenophon's text is a conclusion that Xenophon did not, in fact, truly believe the praises of Spartan culture which are found within his own treatise, or at least that the praises themselves contain critiques of the culture.

This process of analysis for Strauss was prompted by that which remains a concerning problem for all scholars of the *Spartan Constitution*: chapter 14. Whereas, at

⁵¹ Lampert, in Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*, 69.

least on a surface level, all other chapters of the work praise Spartan society, chapter XIV shows Xenophon expounding “quite abruptly, toward the end of the treatise, that contemporary Sparta suffers from very grave defects.”⁵² Non-Straussian scholars typically claim that this chapter was added at a different time or written by an entirely different author. Strauss, and those who follow his school of thought, offer chapter XIV of the *Spartan Constitution* as evidence of the fact that “by hiding his censure of contemporary Sparta clumsily, Xenophon gives us to understand that he hides certain much more important views of his in an extremely able manner.”⁵³

This is the sort of argumentation one can expect from a Straussian approach. Esotericism is necessarily difficult to understand, as it is written for the express purpose of limiting the number of people who can understand it. Therefore, arguing that a work is definitively esoteric requires one to accept certain assumptions that may help to explain other problems. If we accept the assumption that Xenophon wrote chapter 14, for example, we are forced to question why it seems so out of place and different. The obvious solution to that question is that the chapter is not out of place, which in turn makes us question the initial reading of the *Spartan Constitution* as an encomium. With that thought in mind, an analysis of the other sections of the *Spartan Constitution* reveals them to be not so necessarily laudatory of the Spartan culture.

In his essay “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon,” Strauss offers an interpretation of the *Spartan Constitution* which argues in favor of exactly this line of thinking, namely that Xenophon hides certain critiques of the Spartan way of life through

⁵² Strauss, 502.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 503.

literary esotericism. Strauss argues that there are several tools employed by Xenophon to achieve this literary esotericism: careful contradictions, elided implications, and general irony. In order to argue for an esoteric authorial intent, one must undertake a close reading of the work, not only identifying points of contradiction, implication, or irony, but also finding evidence which supports the esoteric conclusions of these close-readings. By both analyzing the argument presented by Strauss in “The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon” and using his style of analysis on themes present within Xenophon’s work that were not covered by Strauss, I argue that we are able to better understand the Straussian, esoteric argument, and consider its distinct differences from the historicist’s approach.

Section 2: Strauss, in His Own Words

Strauss begins his analysis of the *Spartan Constitution* chronologically.

Beginning with the first chapter, Strauss carefully lays out an argument seeking to show that while “the first chapter of the treatise appears to be devoted to praise of Lycurgus’ laws concerning procreation of children,”⁵⁴ in reality it contains subverted, but important, critiques of Spartan family-life, in particular the lives of Spartan women. The subsequent argument presented by Strauss rests as heavily on what is unsaid, implied, by Xenophon as it does on what is said. As Strauss points out, Xenophon opens the majority of chapters in the *Spartan Constitution* by opposing the practices of the Lacedaemonians to those of the typical Greeks. In that vein, Xenophon begins his analysis of the Spartan family by stating that other Greeks identify

the girls who are destined to become mothers and are brought up in the approved fashion, live on the very plainest fare, with a most meagre allowance of delicacies. Wine is either withheld altogether, or, if allowed them, is diluted with water. The rest of the Greeks expect their girls to imitate the sedentary life that is typical of handicraftsmen -- to keep quiet and do wool-work. (1.3)

Xenophon’s claims about Greek women can be summed up in two points. The first is that Greek women are expected to be extremely moderate with regards to their consumption of food and drink. Second is that Greek women are also expected to perform mundane tasks around the house: cooking, cleaning, clothes-making, etc.

It is only on the second of these claims that Xenophon makes explicit the contradictory nature of Spartan practices. Just after establishing the proto-typical Greek

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 503-4

practices, Xenophon states that “Lycurgus thought the labour of slave women sufficient to supply clothing” (1.4). There is no mention in the treatise, however, of the Spartan attitudes toward restricting the intake of food and drink by women. We know that “he [Lycurgus] insisted on physical training for the female no less than for the male sex” (1.4), and Strauss makes the fairly persuasive claim that “allowing them ample food appears to be a method most conducive to the procreation of strong offspring.”⁵⁵ It also bears mentioning that physical training for the female members of Lycurgus’ society would be strictly hampered by the lack of nutrition that was commonplace elsewhere in Greece. If, then, Spartan women are opposed to their typical Greek counterparts in their freedom from housework and in their ability to have ample food, Strauss finds it safe to assume that Xenophon is implying they too would oppose their counterparts in their ability to drink unrestrictedly.

Having established that Xenophon sought to imply a certain level of drunkenness in Spartan women, Strauss turns to answering why such a criticism would not be made explicit. The answer Strauss provides is two-fold: first, intent, and second, reputation. It was Xenophon’s intent, Strauss argues, to produce “a treatise devoted to the praise of Sparta.”⁵⁶ As such, Xenophon omits those aspects of Spartan society he does not deem praiseworthy. However, given that the licentiousness of Spartan women was famous in the ancient world, Xenophon sought to also preserve his reputation as a scholar by, albeit with some hand-waving, acknowledging this widely cited problem in Spartan culture.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 504.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 505.

Strauss, knowing that Xenophon was aware of the implications of his initial juxtaposition of Spartan and Greek women, argues that

if we are not to assume that he [Xenophon] was a fool who was unable to realize an obvious implication of his own statements, or that he was a worse writer than the most hurried reporter could possibly be, we must believe that he did it as a faint indication of the laxity of Spartan women.⁵⁷

After this primary conclusion, Strauss takes the rest of what Xenophon wrote in chapter one as a further implied juxtaposition between the modesty of men and women in Sparta. Xenophon makes it explicit that moderation in almost all things is expected of Spartan men in the public sphere, going so far as to show that “he [Lycurgus] laid it down that the husband should be ashamed to be seen entering his wife’s room or leaving it” (1.6). Xenophon makes no comment on what Lycurgus, or typical Spartans, thought of the necessity for female modesty. When one keeps in mind the earlier hand-waving done by Xenophon toward the wantonness of Spartan women, “We must, therefore, say that the satire on Spartan women is also a satire on Sparta in general and on Lycurgus’ legislation.”⁵⁸ This is the manner of argumentation that Strauss uses to show what he believes to be the hidden meanings beneath Xenophon’s surface-level arguments.

Strauss begins the second section of his essay by expounding on the second chapter of Xenophon’s work. Strauss opens this section paralleling his first, by pointing out the paradigm which Xenophon has yet again established in the opening lines of his chapter. By means of praising it,

Xenophon contrasts the public education of Sparta, which leads to virtue, with private education as practiced in other Greek cities, which leads to

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 505.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 507.

effeminacy. Here he uses the same device...indicates two major differences...he says nothing about a salient feature of the first and more important difference.⁵⁹

Strauss goes on to explain that the more important difference which Xenophon leaves implied is that Sparta had only a physical education, not one in letters or music. This type of education, Strauss then argues, was chiefly composed of activities like instruction in stealing. Xenophon defends these practices, especially the punishment of those caught stealing despite the fact that “[Lycurgus] judged stealing to be good” (2.6), by explaining that all men “punish him who does not execute the instruction properly” (2.8). This is the point where Strauss begins to stray away from a grounded close-reading of the text. Instead Strauss takes the implications of these first two excerpts and uses them as the cornerstones of a broader argument.

The broader argument Strauss begins to undertake mid-way through the second chapter is one centered on Spartan education, specifically how the Spartan education used coercion as a means to promoting virtue. As Strauss says, “another feature characteristic of Spartan education and of Spartan life in general was arbitrary commands, with severe punishments, especially heavy whippings, for one caught disobeying the commands.”⁶⁰ Strauss does not immediately provide excerpts from the *Spartan Constitution* that would support such a claim about Xenophon’s description of Spartan education; he simply presents this facet of the education system as fact, along with Xenophon’s apparent “praise of that

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 508.

method of education.”⁶¹ The surface-level praise of the Spartan system of education, Strauss claims, “is contradicted by what he says elsewhere about the superiority of education by persuasion and speech over education by compulsion.”⁶² Strauss is judging Xenophon’s praise of the Spartan system in the light of a genuine Socratic education that he shows us in other works. However, once again, any excerpts from other Xenophon texts that would support this premise are not present. Without these examples of concrete evidence, Strauss’ argument loses much of its earlier conviction.

By careful analysis of Xenophon’s work as a literary text, of the exact type that Strauss undertook in his first two chapters, one is better able to identify the concrete discrepancies which Strauss argues are indicative of broader meanings. Once the concrete examples are in mind, one is also better able to understand the broader meanings Strauss uses as premises. By taking these broader meanings, which are supposedly implied by Xenophon, as premises to a hidden argument, Strauss is able to argue that the *Spartan Constitution* is a critique of Sparta, rather than being a straight-forward encomium of their society.

Section 3: Strauss on Xenophon, Extended

In taking the same argumentative approach as Strauss in further chapters of Xenophon’s *Spartan Constitution*, one is better able to understand the broader implications of a Straussian argument. Upon reading Strauss’ original work on

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

Xenophon's treatise, one is struck that Strauss only offers a close-reading of the first two chapters of the *Spartan Constitution*. This seems in conflict with Strauss' claim that it is exactly this in-depth reading which allows one to understand the satire of Spartan institutions hidden in Xenophon's work. Strauss uses the conclusions from his analysis of the first two chapters to motivate this broader claim, bolstering the premises which build his argument with only referential examples to those things which Xenophon failed to mention in his treatise. For example, in Strauss' discussion of Xenophon's explanation of the Spartan constitution, Strauss simply states that "Xenophon conceals the true nature of that constitution by not even mentioning the apparently very powerful 'Little Assembly,' of which he speaks elsewhere."⁶³ Strauss then continues his argument in much the same manner, simply stating that

in a chapter which is explicitly devoted...to a certain virtue...obedience; and since he does not even mention the kings when speaking of Spartan obedience, but does emphasize the power of the ephors in that context, he leaves no serious doubt that the actual rulers of Sparta were the ephors.⁶⁴

This strange manner of argumentation, where Strauss breaks away from the close-reading which is necessary to motivate his broader argument, contains the expectation that the reader trust in implications of Xenophon's writing (which Strauss claims are apparent), without ever reading the original words that provide this implication. This is, without a doubt, a problem for Strauss. The underlying reasoning behind Strauss' claims are two-fold: first, that the words chosen by Xenophon establish a paradigm which is either left

⁶³ *Ibid*, 526.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

unfulfilled or contradicted in implication, and second, that Xenophon was aware of this, using it as part of his argumentation.

It is practically impossible to prove or disprove whether or not Xenophon penned his words intending for them to be interpreted as Strauss has, though it seems reasonable to believe that as a prolific writer and student of Socrates, Xenophon would be practiced enough in rhetoric to understand the implications of his own words. The first Straussian assumption, of implied argumentation, can only be supported through a careful reading of the text, through a kind of literary analysis. Strauss' argument in his article on the *Spartan Constitution* falls short of its goal because it moves away from this style of analysis, toward implied implications which serve more as evidence of Strauss' method of interpretation rather than Xenophon's method of authorship. This does not, however, outright disprove Strauss' conclusions. In order to better be able to judge Strauss' conclusions on the *Spartan Constitution*, we will have to look more closely at chapters to which Strauss only alludes or completely elides in his analysis.

To that end, let us begin where Strauss lets off, the end of the second chapter of the *Spartan Constitution*. In chapter three of his work, Xenophon continues his discussion of Spartan education, separating it from the typical Greek education, where “[w]hen a boy ceases to be a child, and begins to be a lad, others release him from his moral tutor and his schoolmaster: he is then no longer under a ruler and is allowed to go his own way” (3.1). Around the age of adolescence, it was normal for boys in Greece to stop having a formal education. Xenophon again takes part in the same paradigm established in the first two chapters of the *Spartan Constitution*, setting up a juxtaposition between the typical practices of Greek city-states and those of Sparta. Whereas

Athenian, Corinthian, and Boeotian adolescent boys were being allowed to pursue whatever they wished, Spartan boys were given “a ceaseless round of work, and [were] contrived a constant round of occupation” (3.2). As Strauss would argue, this does not seem to be a direct antithesis with the practices of other Greeks. Spartans were given, for lack of a better word, chores to do in order that they might be constantly kept busy, which Xenophon sees as opposing the typical Greek release from “his moral tutor and school master” (3.2). There seem to be a number of reasons that Xenophon might think of these chores as a sort of education for the Spartan youths, but chief among these is the fact that for Spartan youths, this period marked a transition from a chiefly physical education to a chiefly moral one. The reason they are juxtaposed by Xenophon, then, is to emphasize that Spartan lads still find themselves under the control of their moral tutor.

The lack of an outright juxtaposition between Spartan and Greek practices is made clearer in the second and last paragraph of the chapter, wherein Xenophon outlines the importance placed upon modesty for the boys of Sparta. Lycurgus, “wishing modesty to be firmly rooted in them required them to” (3.4) essentially communicate with no one, to “walk in silence, not to look about them, but to fix their eyes on the ground” (3.4). Although there is no mention of what punishment would be suffered by those who broke the custom of modesty, the punishment “for shirking the duties [chores] was exclusion from all future honors” (3.3) – the exclusion from being allowed to become a full Spartan citizen. It is not too far-fetched, then, to assume that the punishment for not participating in their education in modesty would be equally severe.

At any rate, according to Xenophon, “this effect of this rule has been to prove that even in the matter of decorum the male is stronger than the female sex” (3.4). It does

seem strange that in a chapter dedicated to the instruction and preservation of moderation, which is typically seen as a feminine virtue in classical works, that women would only be mentioned as being inferior to the men. As noted by Strauss, the wantonness of Spartan women is widely known and spoken of in Classical literature. Especially after women were mentioned in the preceding chapter, a chapter dedicated to physical education of Spartans, the reader is left wondering why the women seem to be excluded from such an education. The apparent lack of Spartan women being instructed in the virtue of moderation lends credence to Strauss' claim that Xenophon is occulting a critique of the virtue of Spartan women, and through them, of Sparta in general. Women were not educated in moderation, and grew up to be essentially famous for their lack of it. Men, on the other hand, were given instruction in moderation and grew up to be famous for their obedience and dedication to the military. Further, Xenophon has elsewhere stated that moderation is the basement of all virtue. Without it, no further virtues can be learned.

The lack, then, of mentioning Spartan women in connection with modesty serves as a reminder of the importance of education in regards to outcome. If you want someone to behave modestly, you must instruct them in modesty. As virtue is the highest objective good for mankind, the Spartan women's lack of virtue seems to be an indictment on their way of life. It is precisely for this reason, Strauss would argue, that Xenophon chooses not to make any mention of Spartan women in connection with moderation. Their not being mentioned, however, prompts the reader to consider why they were excluded. Upon reflection, one realizes that Sparta is not concerned with virtue, except where it concerns the military. Therefore, Xenophon pushes the reader to

critique the Spartan state on this basis. First, the criticism comes from seeing a women's lack of virtue, which leads one to then question and criticize the Spartan conception of virtue. Realizing the disparity in result between men and women with regards to moderation, one would then also have to criticize Sparta's system of education for neglecting to educate women properly in the virtue of moderation. A chapter, then, which seems to be dedicated to the praise of the Spartan system of education leads us to a critique on the same basis that Xenophon is supposedly praising it.

It is also interesting to note that in this, the last chapter fully devoted to a Spartan education, there is still no mention of an education in the letters, as Xenophon has twice explicitly stated would be found in other Greek city-states. Strauss proposes that Xenophon "does not say a single explicit word about education, other than physical"⁶⁵ in order to "inform ... us between the lines that in Sparta there was no education in letters and music."⁶⁶ What, then, did Sparta offer in its place? As Xenophon puts it, "a wholly different system" (3.1).

The difference implied by this quote, is not solely, as its context would suggest, about the length of time for which youths are educated inside and outside of Sparta. Rather, it is also implicative of the lack of what modern readers would consider a formal education. When keeping certain biographical facts about Xenophon in mind, namely his pursuit of education that lead him to studying under Socrates, his praise of Sparta's educational system seems especially strange. Strauss analyzes chapter two in his article, and builds his argument by concluding "that the argument of the second chapter of the

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 507.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

Constitution of the Lacedemonians is designed to let us glimpse the fact that in Sparta instruction in letters and music was replaced by instruction in stealing and by severe whipping.”⁶⁷ Strauss then supplements this point by noting that Xenophon, in chapter 10, notes that the Spartans “were compelled to practice all virtues publicly,” and were “inflicted penalties no less severe on any who openly neglected to live as good a life as possible” (10.5). Taking these points in tandem, it seems that the goal of a Spartan education was to instill virtues in all citizens, and to ensure their practice by punishing those who did not live up to Spartan ideals. The obvious problem with such a system is the distinction between private and public life.

Under the Spartan system, citizens are compelled to practice virtue when in public, where their lack of virtue could result in their being punished severely. In private, however, with no fear of consequence, Spartans were at least in theory allowed to neglect the same virtues they upheld in public. This system of instructing virtue is again contrasted with the typical Greek city-state where an education in virtue followed a more Aristotelian path; youths were taught logically that virtue is preferable to vice, and having been convinced of that fact, were expected to practice the virtues at all times. In many ways, the instillation of certain desirable virtues, from a State-perspective, is the goal of any system of education. In other words, education serves the role of indoctrinating the youth in societal virtues, making them a “good” citizen according to the expectations and norms of that society. It is precisely this difference which Xenophon is implying in his broader explanation of Spartan education, the difference between what virtues are expected of an Athenian, for example, and those expected of a Spartan.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 508-9.

To that end, immediately after finishing an explanation on the *process* of Spartan education in chapter two, Xenophon begins an explanation of the *content* in chapter 3. As a means of explaining the thought-process behind the system of Spartan education at the stage of adolescence, Xenophon notes that Spartans “observed that at this time of life self-will makes strong root in a boy's mind, a tendency to insolence manifests itself, and a keen appetite for pleasure in different forms takes possession of him” (3.2). Lycurgus, and therefore Sparta more broadly, had an interest in curbing a boy’s proclivity to certain vices, namely “self-will,” “insolence,” and “pleasure.”

The natural inference, therefore, is to assume the Spartans also wanted to encourage the boys to practice the virtues opposed to these vices, namely continence, obedience, and subservience. Continence, for the Spartans, was chiefly concerned with limiting one’s likelihood of engaging in basic physical pleasures. To this end, chapter two explains all the steps Lycurgus went through to “harden” the boys, by requiring them

to harden their feet by going without shoes...[to] wear[] one garment throughout the year, believing that thus they would be better prepared to face changes of heat and cold...to bring [] such a moderate amount of [food] that the boys would never suffer from repletion, and would know what it was to go with their hunger unsatisfied (2.3-5).

In this way, the Spartans were better prepared “of carrying on longer without” (2.5) when there was occasion for it to be necessary.

The virtues of obedience and subservience are more or less identical in a Spartan understanding, and were taught via the same mechanism. Obedience and subservience to the state was an easy thing for a Spartan. Menial manual labor was managed by the overabundant population of helots, and a Spartan was therefore free to pursue the utmost good: military excellence. For the Spartans, there is no true “peace-time” so much as a

period of preparation and training for the next conflict, and a continuation of conflict with the helot population. It makes sense, then, that the three key virtues of Spartan society would be the three chief military virtues: obedience, subservience, and continence. We have already seen why continence, or the Spartan idea of continence, could be helpful in war, and obedience/subservience is essential in soldiers of any epoch. Therefore, an individual Spartan's desire to strive for physical excellence naturally lead them to the development of these virtues, and the embodiment of these virtues would similarly lead to military excellence. Rather than allowing their soldiers to figure out the benefit of these virtues for themselves, Sparta opted for the opposite approach; they forced their youths to practice these virtues through a regiment of strictly delineated expectations and established punishments for those who break the expectation, expecting military excellence to arise as a result.

As previously stated, severe punishments were put in place for those who shirked their duties as adolescents. However, these harsh punishments were not restricted to any particular age group of Spartans, but rather were continued over the course of their whole lives. As Xenophon notes, "in all cases men punish a learner for not carrying out properly whatever he is taught to do" (2.8). The caveat to this is the fact that Sparta allowed for a broader portion of their society to determine what the learner might be taught to do. Every Spartan citizen

who chanced to be present [among the youths had the right] to require them to do anything that he thought right, and to punish them for any misconduct. This had the effect of making the boys more respectful; in fact boys and men alike respect their rulers above everything (2.10).

From an early age, the boys are taught to practice the virtues of Sparta through a regimented approach to expectation and punishment. The problem again arises in the reader's mind that Sparta is encouraging the practice of virtue only where it is expected (in the public sphere), as there is no possibility of punishment if one does not practice virtues in private.

Strauss would argue that this approach to virtue education is being critiqued by Xenophon, as it is shown to be lacking in its ability to educate true virtue, as it only encourages their practice in the public sphere. Athenians, like Xenophon, largely believed virtue to only be true if it were not coerced. In a certain sense, then, the "virtues" which the Spartans practice are not truly virtues for Xenophon, only coerced practices the citizens are shamed into performing.

This line of inquiry is given further credence when thought of in conjunction with the argument Xenophon puts forward in chapters 4 and 10 of his work. In those chapters, Xenophon explains how the instillation of virtue in Sparta did not end with its formal education. Rather, it extended throughout the lives of citizens, and the society "encouraged the practice of virtue up to old age" (10.1). The manner by which Spartan society achieved this goal of encouraging virtue into old age is in principle the same method which was used in adolescence. That is to say, through extreme negative and positive reinforcement. In adolescence, the goal was simple: "while not giving them the opportunity of taking what they wanted without trouble he allowed them to alleviate their hunger by stealing something" (2.6). Specifically, the youths of Sparta were made to consider "it a point of honour to steal as many cheeses as possible [from the altar of Artemis Orthia], but appointed others to scourge the thieves" (2.9). This exercise served

a clear purpose: incentivize a few of the lesser Spartan virtues by rewarding the hungry boys who exhibited them a nutrient-rich snack, and punishing those that didn't with a flogging. If you wanted to go to bed full, you had to steal well. Over the course of a Spartan's formal education, similar techniques were used to encourage the main Spartan virtues of obedience and continence which have been previously discussed.

At the end of a Spartan's formal education began the continuation of this reinforcement through more subtle manipulation. Beginning with the selection of the Commanders of the Guard or *hippagretai*, and their individual selections of 100 men each, one's station in Sparta depended solely on one's publically recognized cohesion to the Spartan ideals of physical excellence and virtue. Lycurgus, Xenophon explains, firmly believed that in "a strife of valour, they [the Spartans] too would reach a high level of manly excellence" (4.2). For the young men of Sparta, appointment to the *hippagretai* was the highest honor; those who did not achieve the honor suffered great punishment in the form of social repudiation. Naturally, "the result is that those who fail to win the honour are at war both with those who sent them away and with their successful rivals; and they are on the watch for any lapse from the code of honour." (4.4). Each young man in Sparta, then, whether having been selected or not, continues to strive to prove their worthiness to belong in this elite group.

As the last sentence of the previous quote implies, the desire to prove one's own strong adherence to Spartan ideals pushed the citizens to spying on each other. One had to prove himself objectively better than someone else in order to replace the other person on the *hippagretai* or in any Spartan institution. Often, the way one went about doing that, it seems, is by keeping an eye out for one's rivals' shortcomings. This style of cut-

throat competition used as a method of ensuring that citizens continued to toe the line did not end even in old-age for Spartans. They continued to spy upon each other, attempting to prove themselves more worthy than those around them.

To that end, the Spartans had a habit of “requiring men to face the ordeal of election to the Council of Elders near the end of life, ... prevent[ing] neglect of high principles even in old age” (10.1). The ordeal of election must have been quite similar to the selection of the *hippagretai* for the adolescents, as “the contest for the Council judges souls whether they be good” (10.3). The criteria for judging whether potential Council-members possessed good souls is not exactly specified. However, we can assume that they would have had to exhibit the same style of virtue that Spartans had been expected to exhibit their whole lives. Appointment to the Council of Elders was one of the highest positions one could hold in Sparta, making one “judge ... in trials on the capital charge” (10.2), and as such was incredibly desirable. An end-of-life honor such as this forms the final positive reinforcer of Lycurgus’ system of indoctrination. This style of indoctrination is wrapped up quite succinctly by Xenophon, explaining that “either party exerts itself to the end that it may never fall below its best, and that, when the time comes, every member of it may support the state with all his might” (4.5). The incentive for the state of Sparta is not to make its citizens objectively better people, but rather to ensure that, when the time comes, each individual citizen is capable of defending the state to the utmost of his abilities.

Again, Sparta is not overly concerned with any sort of “peace time” progress like other Greek city-states, but rather gave importance to a single-minded concern with the pursuit of military capability and readiness. In our modern, capitalistic society, the

measure of esteem and social status is wealth. So, we reward people for doing work. In Sparta, the measure of esteem and social status followed the hierarchy of positions of power. So, the Spartans gave positions of power to those who proved themselves capable of doing the “work” (read: soldiering) that the State wanted them to. The very way by which Spartans proved their capacity for this work was by adherence to the Spartan ideal, which just so happens to coincide with the ideal soldier. From the perspective of Xenophon, this seems like exactly the kind of answer he was searching for when he began his work on the *Spartan Constitution*; he started by wondering how “Sparta, though among the most thinly populated of states, was evidently the most powerful and most celebrated city in Greece” (1.1). After all, it seems logical to assume that if you push each and every citizen towards becoming a super-soldier, you will end up with a better army than those part-time soldiers found elsewhere in Greece. Yet, the treatise continues for another 10 chapters. The answer as to why this explanation was not sufficient in Xenophon’s mind comes at the end of chapter 10.

In that chapter, Xenophon elaborates on Sparta’s ability to continue encouraging its citizens to practice virtue at all times in public life from the time of youth through old-age. After discussing these methods in some detail, Xenophon expresses his shock at the fact that “all men praise such institutions, but no state chooses to imitate them” (10.8). If the institutions of Sparta encouraging virtue are so widely praised, and seemingly answer the very question Xenophon set out to answer, why did he “[a]ll to wondering” (1.1) in the first place, and why did no other Greek city-state choose to imitate them? The answer to such a question, for a Straussian by any means, is explained here in the tenth chapter. Xenophon, in crafting an allegory between the differences in virtue that exist across

individuals and those across societies, explains that “Sparta, as a matter of course, surpasses all other states in virtue, because she alone makes a public duty of gentlemanly conduct” (10.4). Acting righteously, for the Spartans, is a *public* duty, not simply a duty.

However, the first part of Xenophon’s allegory here makes it explicit that individual people “differ from one another in virtue according as they practice and neglect it” (10.4). The thing that makes a person virtuous is not the same thing that makes a society virtuous for Xenophon. Rather, a person is virtuous only according to the amount that they practice it, regardless of the context. A society, on the other hand, is virtuous according to the *public* displays of virtue. This, while similar, is an important distinction to draw. A public duty to virtue makes the public virtuous, true. However, it does not make each individual virtuous, as they will “differ according as they practice and neglect it.” Public virtue, then, is not identical to private virtue, and by creating this allegory comparing the two, Xenophon seems aware of this fact. Knowing the separation between public and private virtue, it seems logical that Xenophon would have thought one superior to the other. While he makes no direct contrast between public and private virtues in this text, Xenophon has elsewhere explained his preference for private virtue over public, by stating that “he who knows the beautiful and good will never choose anything else, he who is ignorant of them cannot do them, and even if he tries, will fail.”⁶⁸ What it means to be virtuous, for Xenophon, is to have knowledge of the beautiful and good action, and to choose it because it is beautiful and good. For the Spartans, virtue was a submission to the commands of one’s superiors, an acquiescence to the status quo, and an acceptance of one’s place in society. Spartan virtue is not true

⁶⁸ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.5.

virtue, according to the definition presented by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*, as it is not the necessary expression of a private preference for virtuous action. As a matter of fact, because Spartans are never formally taught virtue, they are exactly the “he” who is ignorant of the beautiful of the good, and therefore is incapable of doing them. The “virtue” of the Spartans, when seen under this light, seems much more like a child who behaves under supervision, but only because of fear of the repercussions.

Therefore, if public virtue is actually false virtue for Xenophon, and Sparta only surpasses all other states in public virtue, why should it be praised by others for its installation of false virtue? According to a certain point of view in political philosophy, the goal of any state is to instill virtues in the populace which are beneficial to the greater good. Laws, customs, and morals are built up around those things which are actively hurtful to society, such as things which threaten personal security or the status quo. From that perspective, the perspective of state governments, public virtue is indistinguishable from true virtue as the state can necessarily only ever be aware of public acts. Because Sparta was such a public society, where meals are eaten in public messes, any person can share another’s goods, and raise another’s children, public virtue extends farther than it may have in other societies.

In other societies, however, public virtue indoctrination is still prevalent, and Athens is no exception. As a treatise that now seems to be an exposé of the falsehood of public virtue rather than a praise of it, the *Spartan Constitution* can be seen as not only a critique of Spartan virtue, but of all political virtue. In Strauss’ mind, Xenophon is continuing a conversation started by Socrates. As seen in the *Memorabilia* by Xenophon, Socrates’ mere act of questioning accepted tenants about virtue was enough to earn him

an accusation of corrupting the youth.⁶⁹ Each society instills public virtue in different ways, and philosophy is meant to discover the truth of virtue. But at least some societies must have it wrong. In the pursuit of truth, questioning the veracity of public virtue is a dangerous thing to do. In Strauss' opinion, this is why Xenophon wrote esoterically: he believed this message to be so important to philosophy that he had to share it, but it was at the same time very dangerous to both himself and to the politics of all states.⁷⁰

That is exactly why all men praise these institutions but do not copy them, because they instill virtue in their own ways in their own societies. As Strauss would say, Xenophon is forcing the reader to consider the possible answers to the question with which he ends his chapter. The only satisfactory answer most readers will find is the one explained above. In that explanation is the understanding that Spartan virtue is false virtue, and further that all public virtue is false. Chapter 10, especially when taken in conjunction with the arguments of chapters 3 and 4, appears to be praising the manner by which Sparta guarantees virtue in its citizens. Upon closer analysis, however, one finds a hidden critique of virtue-indoctrination. Because virtue-indoctrination seems to be the main focus of Xenophon's treatise, one is forced to question if Xenophon wrote his treatise as a means of simply criticizing the mere idea of education in virtue, or if there is some genuine desire to explore how Sparta became a military hegemon.

⁶⁹ See *Memorabilia*, 1.2, 3.9, 4.3, 4.4

⁷⁰ See *Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*, ch. 4, and Strauss, section 5.

Section 4: Strauss, reconsidered

Strauss, as usual, has an answer to the question of Xenophon's authorial intent. For him, Xenophon hides his critique of the Spartan education and way of life behind an encomium of their virtues because

Critias was the author of two works, one in prose but one in verse, both entitled *Constitution of the Lacedemonians*. These were used by Xenophon and may be said to have been the model of his treatise on the Spartan Constitution.⁷¹

Regardless of the veracity of Strauss' claim, the truth is that Xenophon was writing in part for a very pro-Spartan audience.⁷² Having just won the Peloponnesian War, Spartans had firmly established themselves as the hegemon in Greece. During that post-war time, Xenophon was writing his treatise when everyone was some shade of laconophile. Writing in this environment, one can imagine the cynical, Straussian Xenophon poking fun at those who found Sparta praise-worthy in this manner. More than the believability of Strauss' conclusion, however, it is important to consider the potential veracity of his premises.

Many modern Classicists, such as Paul Cartledge, respond to Strauss by "merely mention[ing] without discussion Strauss's judgement that the pamphlet is 'a higher type of comic speech than ... the classical comedy': that seems to me to be itself merely comic."⁷³ It is true, however, that the *Spartan Constitution*

⁷¹ Strauss, 529

⁷² See 1.1, 10.8, etc.

⁷³ Paul Cartledge, "The Socratics' Sparta And Rousseau's," *University of London - Institute of Historical Research*, 1998, pp. 1-8, https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4409/2/The_Socratics'_Sparta_And_Rousseau's_by_Paul_Cartledge___Institute_of_Historical_Research.pdf, 3.

contains various examples of unfulfilled implications, outright contradictions, and forced considerations. In fewer words, this is what Strauss would call Xenophontic irony or esotericism. Whether the tone behind these inconsistencies is one of comedic critique, of laughable ignorance, or something in between is hard to discern. It is important, however, to engage seriously with the possibility that Xenophon may have been attempting a certain style of esotericism, to disprove Strauss with factual interpretations rather than comedic wit. Analyzing even those chapters which are conspicuously missing from Strauss' original analysis of the *Spartan Constitution*, one is able to use Straussian logic to motivate the same claims. Strauss' argument, then, is not one built from the "silence" of Xenophon or from the exclusion of points which would disprove him. Rather, Strauss uses a keen literary analysis in order to get at authorial intent, to build an argument on *what* Xenophon means, informed purely by *how* he is saying it. In undertaking this approach, or a similarly logical approach, scholars would be better able to first understand, and then to accept or deny the conclusion of the Straussian argument. Having undertaken Strauss' approach, we now are prompted to consider the possible implications of this line of thinking, and to look for commonalities and differences between it and the historicist analysis of the *Spartan Constitution*.

Conclusion: The Future of Spartanology

Having now analyzed the *Spartan Constitution* according to both the historicist and Straussian interpretation, we are in the best possible position to judge the opposing arguments. In both cases, it is good to acknowledge that the respective argument as explained in this essay is by no means exhaustive, but serves as a good outline of the core tenants of both camps. We have seen that both the historicist and Straussian camps agree that the *Spartan Constitution* is largely about Spartan virtue. Where the two camps fundamentally disagree is actually much farther into the Straussian argument than many historicists seem to realize. That is to say, in large part Strauss seems to simply add one more premise to the core historicist argument, and resultingly says that Xenophon is critiquing Spartan virtue, rather than praising it.

The historicist camp's argument essentially claims Xenophon is indirectly praising Spartan virtue by means of his direct praise of the institutions that instill this virtue. Strauss would agree that Xenophon is more concerned with the institutions of Sparta as a means to public virtue. To this conclusion, Strauss adds a premise built from evidence from other works by Xenophon. As Strauss presents them, these excerpts build an image of Xenophon and Xenophon's image of Socrates as deeply opposed to the type of virtue that Xenophon seems to be praising in Sparta. Public virtue, as Strauss points out, is not true virtue for Xenophon. Virtuous action is only virtuous in that it is actively chosen by the actor.

Strauss' argument is built mainly upon excerpts from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and Plato's *Apology*. As stated earlier, Strauss believed Xenophon and Plato's images of

Socrates as *not* fundamentally different. Therefore, taking the image presented in Book 4 of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and section 23d of Plato's *Apology*, Strauss builds a characterization of Socrates (and therefore of his student, Xenophon) that sees philosophy and obedience to the State as wholly incompatible.

Plato presents an image of Socrates as a man that the entire population of Athens is accusing of teaching the youth “‘not to believe in gods’ and ‘to make the weaker argument the stronger.’ For they would not, I fancy, care to say the truth, that it is being made very clear that they pretend to know, but know nothing.”⁷⁴ Strauss implicitly makes the case that Socrates, in not directly defending himself against the charges against him, is showing the truth of his feelings toward the status quo. Socrates did not openly preach impiety and disobedience to the State. If he had done so, he would have been executed far earlier in life. What he admits to doing is questioning, and inspiring others to question, people's personally held beliefs on virtues, the good-life, and a host of other questions that have religious undertones.

As a result of prodding at people's beliefs, they were forced to question them, and to really think about the reasons that they believed what they believed. Socrates took advantage of the fact that beliefs imposed by the State are not deeply held, they are merely accepted. That is why those who are angry at Socrates were said to have “made very clear that they pretend to know, but know nothing.”⁷⁵ The people who suffered a Socratic questioning pretended to *know* something about virtue, for example. The result of the questioning was to reveal that these people had not fully considered the

⁷⁴ Plato, *Apology* 23d

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

implications of their belief(s), and ended in their auto-contradiction. As a result it was revealed that they did not actually know anything.

This is the attitude that Socrates brings to the whole of his philosophy. To truly know something, one has to have actively made the decision to know it. One must consider the positions, opinions, and beliefs that one holds, and know them to be compatible or not. For Socrates, the essence of knowledge is critical thought. One cannot just accept something as true; he must truly weigh the veracity of the claim for himself, then make a decision on whether or not to accept it. This assumption has been the core of practically all Western, post-Socratic philosophy. For Aristotle, for example, the highest function of man was contemplation.⁷⁶ For Plato, one must consider the forms in order to access and understand them more deeply. For all of Socrates' students, including Xenophon, one had to think about and discover a personal set of beliefs about the world. Because practically no Athenian could live up to this expectation, Socrates exposed the fact that they knew nothing, especially according to Socrates' definition of knowledge.

As we looked at in the Straussian chapter, the Socratic school of philosophy shared a similar belief with regard to virtue, as is exposed by Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Virtue, much like knowledge, had to be actively chosen in order to be true virtue. This attitude, especially when taken in tandem with Socrates' opinion on knowledge, makes it easy to understand Strauss' opinion that philosophy and politics are wholly incompatible. And yet, philosophy depends upon the political state—it could not exist without it. Philosophy, at least how Socrates and his students seem to understand it, pushes people to

⁷⁶ See Aristotle *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*

more deeply consider the things that they are simply expected to believe. Impiety was criminal in Athens' day; people were expected to be more or less homogenous, and Socrates was actively pushing individuals to question that homogeneity. It was a result of this line of thinking that Socrates was executed, and also pushes one to more fully consider whether Xenophon could have been ironic in his praise of a society which accepted no less than complete homogeneity.

For both the historicist and Straussian interpretations, the *Spartan Constitution* comes down to a praise of Sparta as excellent in its instillation of virtue in its citizens. Strauss claims that this praise is a false one, because the type of virtue and "knowledge" instilled in Spartan citizens seems to directly contradict what Socrates' students have elsewhere outlined as true virtue and true knowledge. The point of disagreement, then, is one without such a straightforward solution as has been implied by both sides of the argument. The Straussian camp believes that Xenophon is purposefully describing a type of virtue that he would personally judge to be false, the historicist camp disagrees.

Since Strauss published the first of his "philosophical supernovas" in the form of his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, many well-respected scholars of the fields that he has (either directly or indirectly) criticized have implied a wide berth between their arguments and Strauss' own. In the case of Xenophon's *Spartan Constitution*, we have now seen that this berth is, in fact, much narrower than it is made to seem. In truth, there is one point of contention between the Straussian and historicist interpretations of Xenophon's work. If we are to come closer to discovering the truth of what Sparta was like, and the truth of how Xenophon chose to portray it, we must truly consider all the options. In the way that the historicist community has written off the arguments of

Strauss, and the way in which the Straussian community has written off the criticism of the historicists, both groups are guilty of committing that offense which both Plato and Xenophon's depictions of Socrates warn us against. If we continue down that path, we will become that person who Socrates shows to "pretend to know, but know nothing," as well as being one who "cannot do [the beautiful and good things], and even if he tries, will fail."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.5.

Bibliography

- Badian, E. "The Life of Xenophon: Xenophon the Athenian." Essay. In *Xenophon and His World: Papers from a Conference Held in Liverpool in July 1999*, edited by Christopher Tuplin, 33–53. Steiner, 2004.
- Cartledge, Paul, and Anton Powell, eds. *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians*. The Classical Press of Wales, 2018.
- Cartledge, Paul. "Hoplites and Heroes: Sparta's Contribution to the Technique of Ancient Warfare." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977): 11–27.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/631018>.
- Cartledge, Paul. *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 Bc*. Routledge, 2016.
- Cartledge, Paul. *Spartan Reflections*. Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2001.
- Cartledge, Paul. "The Socratics' Sparta And Rousseau's." *University of London - Institute of Historical Research*, 1998, 1–8. https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4409/2/The_Socratics'_Sparta_And_Rousseau's_by_Paul_Cartledge___Institute_of_Historical_Research.pdf.
- Falkner, Caroline. *Phoenix* 59, no. 1/2 (2005): 176-77.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067758>.
- Flower, Michael Attyah. *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Gray, Vivienne. *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes Reading the Reflections*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Humble, Noreen. "The Renaissance Reception of Xenophon's Spartan Constitution: Preliminary Observations." Essay. In *Xenophon Ethical Principles and Historical*

Enquiry ; Conference Held at the University of Liverpool on 8-11 July 2009 ...,
edited by Fiona Hobden and Christopher Tuplin, 63–88. Brill, 2012.

Kennell, Nigel M. *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*.
Univ of North Carolina Pr, 2007.

Lendon, J E. "Spartan Honor." Essay. In *Polis and Polemos: Essays on Politics, War and
History in Ancient Greece, in Honor of Donald Kagan*, edited by Charles D.
Hamilton and Peter Krentz, 105–26. Regina Books, 1997.

Lipka, Michael, and Xenophon. *Xenophon's Spartan Constitution: Introduction, Text,
Commentary*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002.

Millender, Ellen. "Spartan 'Friendship' and Xenophon's Crafting of the Anabasis." Essay.
In *Xenophon Ethical Principles and Historical Enquiry ; Conference Held at the
University of Liverpool on 8-11 July 2009 ...*, edited by Fiona Hobden and
Christopher Tuplin, 377–425. Brill, 2012.

Picard, Barbara Leonie., Joan Kiddell-Monroe, and Homer. *The Iliad*. Oxford University
Press, 2000.

Plutarch. "Lycurgus and Numa." Essay. In *Lives*, translated by Bernadotte Perrin, 1:203–
303. Harvard University Press, 1998.

Plutarchus. *Moralia*. Translated by Frank Cole Babbitt. Vol. 3. Harvard University Press,
2006.

Pomeroy, Sarah B. "Sparta: Xenophon's Spartan Women." Essay. In *Xenophon and His
World: Papers from a Conference Held in Liverpool in July 1999*, edited by
Christopher Tuplin, 201–13. Steiner, 2004.

Selkirk, Andrew. "Artemis Orthia." *Barbarism and Civilization*, May 31, 2016.
<http://www.civilization.org.uk/greece/greece-extra/sparta/the-shrine-of-artemis-orthia>.

Smith, Steven B. *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*. Cambridge, 2009.

Strauss, Leo. "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon" 6, no. 4 (1939): 502–36.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40981694>.

Thucydides. *Histories*. Translated by Herbert F. Fox. Clarendon Press, 1901.

Tuplin, Christopher. "Xenophon and His World: An Introductory Review." Essay. In *Xenophon and His World: Papers from a Conference Held in Liverpool in July 1999*, edited by Christopher Tuplin, 13–31. Steiner, 2004.

Xenophon, and G. M. Edwards. *The Memorabilia*. University Press, 1912.

Xenophon. "Constitution of the Lacedaemonians." Essay. In *Xenophon: Scripta Minora*, translated by Edgar Cardew Marchant and Glen Warren Bowersock, 135–89.
Harvard Univ. Press, 1968.

Xenophon. *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*. Translated by Carleton L Brownson. Vol. 1-2.
Harvard University Press, 1921.