

LYKOURGOS 'THE LAW-GIVER'

Plut. *Lyk.* 1 records the opinions of ancient writers: that Lykourgos was contemporary with the establishment of the Olympic festival in 776 or earlier, that there were in fact two reformers called Lykourgos at different times, or that he was contemporary with the first kings. Herodotos (doc. 6.2) has him as the guardian of Leobotas which gives an approximately ninth-century date; cf. Thuc. I.18.1 (doc. 2.41). However, the military system, ascribed to Lykourgos, makes best historical sense in the aftermath of the Second Messenian War, dating to about the mid-seventh century, after which the Spartans had a subject population, the helots, to keep under control; for this date, see Wade-Gery (1958) 59, 66–69; Toynbee (1969) 221–26, 413–16; de Ste Croix (1972) 91n.4; cf. Andrewes (1956) 73; Hooker (1988) 344; Hornblower (1991) 51–54; *contra*, opting for earlier dates, Forrest (1963), (1980) 55–58; Hammond (1950) 62–64; Chrimes (1949) 305–47; while Finley (1975) 161–62 prefers c. 600 and Parker (1991) c. 635/625–610/600. See also, for the date and hoplite armour and techniques, Snodgrass (1964) esp. 197–99, (1965); Cartledge (1977); and, more general accounts, Snodgrass (1967) 48–88; Ducrey (1986) 47–78; cf. Toynbee (1969) 250–60.

6.1 Lykourgos: Man or Myth?

Plutarch *Lykourgos* 1.1

1.1 In general nothing can be said concerning Lykourgos the law-giver that is not disputed, since there are different versions of his birth, travels abroad, death and above all his work on the laws and constitution, and least of all is there agreement about the times in which the man lived.

6.3 The Great Rhetra

Plutarch *Lykourgos* 6.1–9

There were originally three tribes, phylai, at Sparta (as was normal for Dorian states): Hylleis, Pamphyloi, and Dymanes (cf. Tyrtaeus F19.8). The obai, villages, have been identified by some scholars as the four villages of the 'polis' Sparta itself, plus nearby Amyklai. 6.2: 'from season to season to apellaze' means to celebrate the festival of Apollo, the Apellai, and, according to Plutarch, to summon the assembly; these meetings were presumably once a month, but in the classical period were probably called as often as required (Forrest (1980) 47; cf. Jones (1967) 20–25; Staveley (1972) 73–76). 6.4: Plutarch gives the places where meetings of the assembly would take place; the term 'apella' is used by some scholars in referring to the Spartan assembly, but this term was never actually used in the sources; Thucydides and Xenophon both use the word ekklesia (Thuc. I. 87.1, VI.88.10, esp. V.77.1, a quotation, in Doric dialect; Xen. *Hell.* III.2.23, IV.6.3, V.2.11); see Wade-Gery (1958) 38, 44; esp. de Ste Croix (1972) 346–48. Plutarch continues by quoting the lines of Tyrtaeus (doc. 6.4, ll. 1–6). For the Great Rhetra, see Hammond (1950); Andrewes (1956) 73–74; Oliva (1971) 71–102; Boring (1979) 20–23; Forrest (1980) 40–50; Parker (1991) 41; detailed discussions: den Boer (1954) 153–96; Wade-Gery (1958) 37–85; Butler (1962); Toynbee (1969) 269–274; Parker (1993) 48–54, 59–60.

6.1 Lykourgos was so eager for this form of government (the elders) that he brought an oracle from Delphi about it, which they call a 'rhetra'. 6.2 It runs as follows: 'After dedicating a temple to Zeus Skyllanios and Athena Skyllania, forming tribes (phylai) and creating obai, and setting up a gerousia of thirty including the archagetai (founder-leaders), then from season to season apellaze between Babyka and Knakion so as to introduce and rescind (measures); †to the people should belong the agora† and the power.' 6.3 In this, 'forming phylai' and 'creating obai' refer to the division and allocation of the populace into groups, of which the former he named phylai, the latter obai. The kings are meant by archagetai, and to 'apellaze' is to hold an assembly, because he referred the origin and cause of his constitution to Pythian Apollo. 6.4 They now call Babyka and Knakion Oinous; and Aristotle says that Knakion is a river and Babyka a bridge 6.6 When the populace was assembled, Lykourgos allowed no one except the elders and the kings to put forward a proposal, but the people had the supreme authority to decide upon one which these laid before them. 6.7 Later on, however, when the people distorted and did violence to the motions by taking bits away and adding to them, the kings Polydoros and Theopompos added this to the rhetra: 6.8 'If the people should choose a crooked ordinance (rhetra), the older-born and leaders are to set it aside,' that is they should not ratify it, but withdraw it entirely and dismiss the assembly, since they were altering and remodelling the proposal contrary to what was best. 6.9 And they persuaded the city that the god had commanded this addition, as Tyrtaeus perhaps recalls in these lines.

6.4 Apollo Proclaims the 'Rhetra'

Tyrtaeus 4

Lykourgos is not mentioned by Tyrtaeus, and Toynbee (1969) 276–83 argues that the 'Great Rhetra' was enacted in the mid-seventh century and that some time between Tyrtaeus and Herodotos, the Spartans credited these reforms to a figure they called Lykourgos. Diod. VII.12.6 gives 2 extra lines (following line 2 of this document: 'For thus the Lord of the Silver Bow, Far-shooting Apollo, / The Golden Haired spoke from his rich shrine'); cf. Xen. *Const. Spart.* 8.5.

- They listened to Apollo and brought home from Delphi
The oracles of the god and his words of sure fulfilment:
The god-honoured kings shall begin the counsel,
For in their care is the lovely city of Sparta,
5 And the first-born old men; then the common men
Answering them with straightforward ordinances
Shall both speak what is good and do all things right,
Nor give this city any crooked counsel;
And victory and might shall attend the people.
10 For concerning this Apollo proclaimed thus to the city.

THE SPARTAN ETHOS

6.5 Eunomia: 'Good Order'

Tyrtaeus 2, lines 12–15

According to Strab. VIII.4.10 (362), this is part of an elegy entitled *Eunomia*; cf. *Ar. Pol.* 1306b37–1307a2. Tyrtaeus here clearly identifies himself as a Spartan, though according to later tradition like many other poets he was 'imported' to Sparta (see doc. 6.51).

For the son of Kronos himself, the husband of beautifully-crowned Hera,
Zeus, has given this city to the Herakleidai (descendants of Herakles),
With whom, leaving windy Erineos,
15 We arrived at this broad island of Pelops (the Peloponnese).

6.6 Victory over Messenia

Tyrtaeus 5

In the second half of the eighth century BC Sparta began a series of wars to extend its territory. The last Messenian victory in the Olympic games took place in 736; this, and the first Spartan victory in 716 at the Olympic games, as well as the approximate dates of Theopompos' reign in the eighth century, gives a rough date for the First Messenian War, perhaps c. 740–20, or slightly later (see Parker (1991) 25–43 for the dating c. 690–670). Following this, Messenia was divided up amongst the Spartans. See Huxley (1962) 33–35; de Ste Croix (1972) 89–90 with n.2; Jeffery (1976) 114–15; Hooker (1980) 99–101. The first two lines here are quoted by Paus. IV.6.5; lines 4–8 are given by Strab. VI.3.3 (279) in his account of the partheniai (see doc. 1.18).

.... To our king, Theopompos, friend of the gods,
Because of whom we took spacious Messene,
Messene good to plough, good to plant;
They fought for it for fully nineteen years
5 Unceasingly and always stout of heart
The spearmen fathers of our fathers;
And in the twentieth, leaving their rich fields,
The Messenians fled from the great mountains of Ithome.

6.7 An Exhortation to Fight for your Country

Tyrtaeus 10

The Second Messenian War broke out in the mid-seventh century, when either the Messenians revolted, or still unconquered Messenians decided to wage war on Sparta, perhaps as a result of the Argive victory at Hysiai (see doc. 2.2). Tyrtaeus, a contemporary of this conflict, exhorts the Spartans to victory, making clear the consequences of defeat; for the image of the 'archaic refugee', see Roisman (1984–86) 23–24; see also Adkins (1960) 73, (1972) 35–37. The Spartan army was organized in age-groups and the ephors proclaimed the age limit fixed for the campaign in question (Xen. *Const. Spart.* 11.2, *Hell.* VI.4.17; Anderson (1970) 243). For Tyrtaeus, see Hooker (1980) 71–73; Fitzhardinge (1980) 124–29; Hammond (1982) 351–52; Gerber (1997) 102–07; for the Second Messenian War, see de Ste Croix (1972) 89–90 with n.2; Jeffery (1976) 117–18; Forrest (1980) 69–71; Hammond 351–52.

To die after falling in the vanguard is a good thing
For a brave man doing battle on behalf of his native land.
But to leave his city and rich fields
To go begging is of all things the most painful,
5 Wandering with a dear mother and aged father
And with small children and a wedded wife.
Hateful shall he be amongst those, to whom he comes
Giving way to poverty and hateful penury,
And he shames his family, and belies his noble form,
10 And every dishonour and misery follow.
Thus there is no concern for a wanderer
Nor respect nor posterity hereafter.
Let us fight with courage for our country, and for our children
Let us die and never spare our lives.
15 Young men, remain beside each other and fight,
And do not begin shameful flight or fear,
But make your spirit great and brave in your heart,
And do not be faint-hearted when you fight with men;
Your elders, whose knees are no longer nimble,
20 Do not flee and leave them, those who are old.
For this is shameful, that fallen in the vanguard
An older man should lie before the youngsters,
His head already white and his beard grizzled,
Breathing out his brave spirit in the dust,
25 Holding his bloody genitals in his own hands —
Things shameful for the eyes and a sight to inspire wrath,
His flesh naked; but all things are seemly for a young man,
While he has the splendid flower of lovely youth,
Wondrous for men to behold, and desirable to women
30 While he is alive, and handsome when he has fallen in the vanguard.
But let each man plant himself stoutly and stay with both feet
Firmly stood upon the ground, biting his lip with his teeth.

6.8 The Spartan Phalanx

Tyrtaeus 11, lines 21–38

Tyrtaeus stresses that cowardice brings disgrace, and that bravery is shown in hand-to-hand combat in the front line. Note the use of hoplite tactics and armour; the final sentence addressing light-armed troops seems an addition to encourage *belot* or *perioikoi* troops fighting alongside the Spartans. The actual nature of hoplite warfare is debated: the 'push and shove' theory, for which see Holladay (1982) 94–97, is challenged by Cawkwell (1989) (with bibliography), who envisages hand-to-hand combat; for hoplite warfare, see Hanson (1995) 221–89, esp. 275–76 for Sparta.

Let each man plant himself stoutly and stay with both feet
Firmly stood upon the ground, biting his lip with his teeth,
His thighs and calves below and breast and shoulders

- Covered with the belly of his broad shield;
 25 In his right hand let him shake his mighty spear,
 And let him wave the dreadful crest above his head;
 In the doing of mighty deeds let him learn to do battle,
 And not stand beyond the missiles holding his shield,
 But let each man go close hand-to-hand and with his long spear
 30 Or his sword let him wound and take his foe.
 Let him set foot beside foot, rest shield against shield,
 Crest on crest, and helmet on helmet
 And let him fight his man with breast approached to breast,
 Holding either his sword hilt or his long spear.
 35 And you, light-armed soldiers, crouching beneath the shield
 One from one side, one from another, cast your great sling-stones
 And hurl your smooth spears at them,
 Standing beside the men in heavy armour.

6.9 The Rewards of Courage

Tyrtaeus 12, lines 23–44

- He who falls in the vanguard and loses his dear life
 Has brought honour to his city and his people and his father,
 25 Many times through his breast and bossed shield
 And breastplate pierced through from the front.
 Young and old together lament him,
 And all the city mourns with deep regret;
 His tomb and children are notable amongst men
 30 And his children's children and all his family after;
 His great glory and his name will never perish,
 But even though underground he becomes immortal,
 For it was while he nobly stood and fought
 For country and children that raging Ares took him.
 35 But if he escape the fate of death that brings long woe,
 And victorious wins the glorious boast of his spear,
 All honour him, young and old alike,
 And he after much contentment goes to Hades;
 As he ages he has distinction amongst the citizens, nor does any
 40 Wish to harm either his reputation or his right.
 All alike in the seats of council, both the young, his age group,
 And his elders, give way to him.
 Now let every man strive to reach the peak of this prowess
 And in his heart let him never relax from war.

6.10 The Songs of Tyrtaeus Instruct Spartan Warriors

Philochoros *FGH* 328 F216 (Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 630f)

Tyrtaeus was not only a poet but also the general responsible for the defeat of the Messenians in the Second Messenian War; cf. Plut. *Lyk.* 21, esp. 21.1–2 for Spartan music and songs, which were simple and character-building.

The warlike nature of the (pyrrhic) dance shows it to be a Spartan invention. The Spartans are warlike, and their sons learn by heart the marching songs (*embateria*), which are also called martial songs (*enoplia*). In addition, the Lakonians themselves in their wars sing the songs of Tyrtaeus from memory and move in time to them. Philochoros says that when the Spartans defeated the Messenians through Tyrtaeus' generalship they made it a custom in their expeditions, whenever they were dining and singing paens, that one at a time they should sing the songs of Tyrtaeus; and the polemarch was to judge and give a prize of meat to the victor.

6.11 The Penalties for Cowardice

Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 9.3–6

In Sparta the coward was the object of social ostracism; see Redfield (1977–78) 156; doc. 1.21 (Archilochos). The Spartans who had surrendered at Sphacteria (doc. 9.10) were disenfranchised, though this was later reversed. Cowards could not hold office (Thuc. V.34.2). Xenophon implies that membership of a mess would cease; they had to wear a cloak with coloured patches and have their beard partially shaven, and were forbidden to marry: Plut. *Ages.* 30.2–4; David (1989a) 9. For penalties for bachelors, see Plut. *Lyk.* 15.1–3, *Lys.* 30.7; Cartledge (1981) 95. See for cowardice and bravery, Hdt. VII.229–232, IX.71.2–4; Lewis (1977) 30–31; MacDowell (1986) 44–46; Lendon (1997) 112–17, and *passim* on Spartan honour.

9.3 Lykourgos clearly arranged that the brave should have prosperity, and cowards misery. 9.4 For in other cities whenever anyone shows himself to be a coward, he is only called a coward, and the coward goes to the agora in the same way as the brave man, and sits beside him, and exercises at the gymnasium with him, if he wants to; but in Sparta everyone would be ashamed to have a coward associated with him as a mess-mate, or as an opponent in a wrestling-bout. 9.5 Often such a person is left out unassigned when sides are picked for opposing teams in a ball game, and in choruses he is banished to the disgraceful positions, and even in the streets he has to make way, and on the benches give his place even to younger men. He has to maintain the girls of his family at home and give them the reason for their unmarried condition, while he has to suffer a hearth without a wife and pay a fine for that as well 9.6 When such dishonour is imposed upon cowards I do not wonder at their preferring death to such an ignominious and shameful life.

6.12 Spartan Battle Dress

Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 11.3, 13.8–9

For the red uniform worn in battle, see David (1989a) 6; Xen. *Ages.* 2.7: Agesilaos' army appeared all bronze and crimson. For Spartan attention to their hair, see the references at David 6n.29, (1992); doc. 7.25 (Thermopylai). Cartledge (1993) 172 notes that according to Arist. *Rhet.* 1367a28–32 long hair among the Spartans was the sign of a free man, since it is not easy for a long-haired man to perform any manual task. For Spartan weaponry, comprising shield (marked by the letter 'A', 'L' for Lakedaimon), spear, sword and body armour, see Anderson (1970) 16–19, 31–32, 38–39, 78–79; Lazenby (1985) 30–32. See Anderson 225–51; Lazenby 3–62 for detailed discussions of the organization of the army.

11.3 Regarding their equipment for battle, Lykourgos devised that they should have a crimson cloak and a bronze shield, thinking that the former has least in common with women's dress, and is most warlike; the latter can be very quickly polished and tarnishes very slowly. He also allowed those who had reached adulthood to wear their hair long, considering that they would thus appear taller, more noble, and more terrifying 13.8 When the enemy are close enough to see, a she-goat is sacrificed, and the law is that all flautists present are to play their flutes and no Spartan is to be without a garland; an order is also given to polish weapons. 13.9 Young men are permitted to enter battle with their hair groomed¹ and with a cheerful and glorious appearance.

¹ Taking the reading κεκτενισμένω 'combed' rather than Marchant's OCT emendation κεχρυσμένω (sc. ἐλαίω) 'anointed with oil'; some words may have dropped out of the text.

6.13 'With Your Shield or On It'

Plutarch *Sayings of Spartan Women* 16, 20 (*Moralia* 241f–242a)

Saying 16 (one of the most quoted — and mis-quoted — sayings from Greek history) overlooks the fact that most Spartans who were killed in battle were buried where they fell (Plut. *Ages.* 40.4). Both of the following *Sayings* stress the role expected of Spartan mothers (cf. docs 13.19–20; Walcott (1987) 14) and serve as good examples of Spartan unwillingness to waste words; Cartledge (1978), (1981) 92.

16. Another woman, handing her son his shield and encouraging him, said, 'Son, either with this or on this.' 20. Another woman, hearing that her son had died in battle, on the spot where he had been positioned, said, 'Bury him and let his brother fill his place.'

6.16 The Election of the Gerousia

Plutarch *Lykourgos* 26.1–5

The powers of the gerousia were wide and they judged cases involving capital punishment, loss of citizen rights or exile: cf. Xen. *Const. Spart.* 10.2; David (1991) 15–36.

26.1 Lykourgos, as has already been said, himself appointed the elders at first from those who had been involved in his plan; later on he arranged that, when an elder died, the man whose merits were judged to be best of all those over the age of sixty should be appointed in his place. 26.2 And of all contests amongst mankind this seemed to be the most important and the one most worth fighting for; in it a man was judged not as the swiftest of the swift, nor as the strongest of the strong, but as the best and most prudent of the good and wise, and would have as a lifelong prize for his merits, so to speak, total authority in the state, with supreme powers over death and loss of citizen rights and the most important issues generally. 26.3 The selection took place in this way: when the assembly had gathered, chosen men were shut up in a building nearby, where they could neither see out nor be seen, but could only hear the shouts of those in the assembly. 26.4 For as in other matters they

judged the competitors by shouting, not all together but each man being brought forward as decided by lot and walking through the assembly in silence. 26.5 The men who were shut up had tablets, and so in each case they noted the volume of the shouts not knowing whom it was for, except that he was the first or the second or the third or whatever of those brought forward. And whoever received the most shouting and the loudest they proclaimed to be elected.

6.18 The Powers of the Ephors

Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 8.2–4

The five ephors were elected annually, and there was no restriction on who could stand; see Chrimes (1949) 402–12; Michell (1952) 118–23; Huxley (1962) 38–39, 116n.239; Jones (1967) 26–30; de Ste Croix (1972) 130–31, 148–49, 327–28, 351–52; Forrest (1980) 76–77.

8.2 Even the most important people in Sparta are very deferential to the magistrates and take pride in being humble and in running and not walking to answer whenever they are summoned, thinking that if they lead the way in strict obedience others also will follow; and this is what has happened. 8.3 It is also likely that these same men helped to establish the power of the ephorate too, since they realized that obedience is the greatest good, whether in a city, an army or a household; for the greater the power held by the magistrates, the more they considered that this would also impress the citizens with the need for obedience. 8.4 So the ephors have the power to fine whomever they wish, and have the authority to exact immediate payment, as well as the authority to put an end to magistrates' terms of office and even to imprison and put them on trial for their lives.

6.19 Sparta: Democracy or Oligarchy?

Aristotle *Politics* 1294b19–34 (IV, ix)

Aristotle here points out the democratic and oligarchic features of the Spartan constitution. His judgement in this passage is less unfavourable than docs 6.27–30, where he specifically criticizes Sparta's constitution and social system. He views Spartan kingship as having lasted so long because of its restricted powers: *Pol.* 1313a18–33; for his criticisms, see *Pol.* 1271a18–26.

Many people try to describe it as a democracy because its system has many democratic elements, for example, to begin with, the education of children (for the sons of the rich are brought up in the same way as those of the poor, and are educated in a manner which is also possible for the sons of the poor), and the same is the case in the next age-group, and when they become men (for thus there is no distinctive mark of being rich or poor) the arrangements for eating in the common messes (syssitia) are the same for everybody, and the rich wear such clothing as any of the poor could afford. Additionally, of the two most important offices the people choose the members of one and share in the other (for they elect the elders and share in the ephorate). Those who call it an oligarchy do so because of its many oligarchic features, for example that everyone is elected and no one chosen by lot, and that a few people have supreme authority to give sentences of death or exile, and many other similar points.

6.35 The Incredible Incident of the Boy and the Fox

Plutarch *Lykourgos* 18.1

In this incident, an exemplum of Spartan toughness, the virtue of stealing without being detected is emphasized. The reasons for stealing a fox are not exactly clear. For a longer version of this story, see Plut. *Mor.* 234a (*Sayings of the Spartans* 35); see also Plut. *Lyk.* 17.5–6; Michell (1952) 177–80; MacDowell (1986) 59–61; Proietti (1987) 49.

18.1 The boys take great care over their stealing, as is shown in the story of one who had stolen a fox cub and had it hidden under his cloak, for he endured having his stomach lacerated by the beast's claws and teeth, and died rather than be detected.

6.41 Lykourgos' 'Redistribution of Land'

Plutarch *Lykourgos* 8.1–8

There are several reasons for rejecting the notion that 'Lykourgos' distributed the land into 9,000 lots. Lykourgos' redistribution of land is not found in early writers (such as Herodotos, Xenophon, or Aristotle) and may well have been invented in the third century when such redistribution was proposed to help solve Sparta's decline as a military power (esp. Plut. *Agis* 7). There was certainly inequality in the distribution of land in the fourth century; cf. docs 6.27, 30; 13.18. For Spartan inheritance laws, see Hodkinson (1986). 8.7: liquid produce means wine and oil (as opposed to grain).

8.1 A second and very revolutionary reform of Lykourgos was his redistribution of the land. 8.2 For there was dreadful inequality and many people who were penniless and without property were pouring into the city, and wealth was completely concentrated in the hands of a few. 8.3 So to drive out arrogance, envy, wrong-doing and luxury and those even older and greater political diseases, wealth and poverty, he persuaded them to pool the whole country and divide it up afresh, and to live with each other all as equals with the same amount of property for their subsistence, giving the first place by merit, 8.4 since there would be no difference or inequality between people, except what censure for base deeds and praise for good ones would determine. 8.5 Following his words by action, he allotted the rest of Lakonia to the perioikoi in 30,000 lots, and that tributary to the city of Sparta into 9,000; this was the number of lots for Spartiates. 8.6 But some say that Lykourgos allotted 6,000, and Polydoros added 3,000 afterwards; and some that Polydoros allotted half the 9,000 and Lykourgos the other half. 8.7 Each man's lot was enough to produce a return of 70 medimnoi of barley for a man, and 12 for his wife, and proportionate amounts of liquid produce. 8.8 He thought this would suffice for them, and that they needed sufficient food for vigour and health, and nothing more.

Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 2.1–8, 5.1–5, 6.1–5, 13.1–5, 15
from M. Lipka (ed. and trans.), *Xenophon's Spartan Constitution*
(Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002): pp. 67–69, 75, 77–79, 91, 95

Having discussed the topic of procreation, I wish to elucidate the educational systems of both [Sparta and other cities]. Those of the other Greeks who claim that they bring up their sons best, place them in the care of pedagogues (*paidagogoi*) from the moment they understand what is said to them; they immediately send them to teachers to learn their letters, music, and the sports practised in the palaestra. And besides they soften their children's feet with sandals, and spoil their bodies with changes of cloaks; they reckon the amount of their food by their appetite. On the other hand Lykurgus, rather than permitting the private appointment of slave-pedagogues, chose a man to be in charge of them from those eligible for election to the highest offices of state; he was called the supervisor (*paidonomos*). He was empowered to convene the boys and to punish severely anyone whom he noticed was negligent. He also provided him with youths (*hebontes*) carrying whips so that they could mete out punishment when it was necessary. Consequently the children are both respectful and obedient. Instead of softening their feet with sandals he ordered that they should harden them by going barefoot, because he thought that if they practised this it would be easier for them to climb uphill and much safer for them clambering downhill. He was also of the view that the barefooted would leap, jump, and run more quickly than those wearing footwear, provided their feet had been trained to it. Instead of spoiling them with changes of cloaks, he ordained that they should become used to wearing the same cloak throughout the year, because he thought that they would thus better endure both cold and heat. He decided that each young man (*eiren*) should contribute to the common meal such an amount of food that he was never weighed down by repletion, nor, conversely, without experience of the pangs of hunger. For he thought that those who were trained in this way, would be better able, if the need arose, to carry on without food supplies, and, if ordered, to live on the same ration for a longer period; they would need less meat, would be able to eat all kinds of food with indifference, and would lead a healthier life. And he believed that a diet which kept bodies slim would contribute to an increase in height rather than one that turned food to fat. On the other hand, he did not want them to suffer too much from hunger: so, although he did not permit them to take what they needed without going to some trouble, he allowed them to steal food to alleviate hunger. No one can fail to see, I think, that he did not lack the resources to feed them in permitting them to procure their food by guile; for it is obvious that anyone intending to steal must stay awake at night and practise deception and lie in wait by day, and anyone intent on thieving must set his spies. Hence, generally speaking, it is obvious that he wanted to make the boys more resourceful in their efforts to procure food, and at the same time he managed to fit them better for war. One could ask, "So why if he considered stealing a virtue, did he inflict many lashes on those who were caught?" Because, I answer, teachers always punish those who carry out their instructions badly; accordingly, they chastise those who are caught for stealing badly.

I have more or less described the educational practices which Lycurgus 1 V
laid down for each age group. Now I shall try to describe the common
regimen which he established for them all. Before Lycurgus' day the 2
Spartans used to mess at home like the other Greeks. Realizing that under
these conditions they became extremely negligent, he brought the messes
into the public domain in the belief that in this way the laws given [sc.
by him] would be infringed the least. And he specified the rations for the 3
messmates, so that they should neither have too much food nor too little.
In addition many extra portions are to be had from game caught by
hunting; occasionally, the rich contribute wheat bread instead. In short,
during the mess the table is never without food nor is the fare
extravagant. And at the drinking sessions he banned forced drinking, 4
which unbalances the body and unbalances the mind, and he allowed them
to drink whenever they were thirsty. For he thought that in this way the
symposium would do least harm and give most pleasure. Yet, since they
mess together as I have described, how could anyone ruin either
themselves or their house by gluttony or drunkenness [sc. as in the rest of
Greece]? For in other cities for the most part men of the same age 5
associate with each other, and not the least sense of respect is to be found.
Lycurgus, by contrast, in Sparta mixed <...> so that the young men
learn from the experience of their elders.

Furthermore, his decrees were quite different from most with regard 1 VI
to the following matters. For in other cities everybody exercises control
over his own children, servants, and property. But Lycurgus wanted to
bring it about that the citizens should somehow benefit from each other,
without doing [sc. each other] harm. He laid down that everybody was
in charge equally of his own and other people's children. If someone 2
knows that these are the fathers of the children who are under his
control, he is forced to control them as he would wish his own children
to be controlled. And if a boy is ever beaten by someone else and tells
his father, it is considered disgraceful for the father not to inflict another
beating on his son. To this extent they trust each other not to order
their children to do anything that would incur disgrace. He also allowed 3
them to make use of each others' slaves, if need be. And he created a
system of sharing hounds. As a result, when men need to call together
the hunt, those who lack [hounds] invite [others] to the hunt. And they
make common use of horses in the same way. For if someone is taken
ill or needs a carriage or wants to get somewhere quickly, he takes any
horse available, uses it, and thereafter restores it properly to its place.
Besides he also instituted the following practice which is not found 4
among others. For when they are delayed whilst out hunting and need
provisions (if they have not prepared something for themselves), he
laid down that those who had finished should leave what had been
prepared, and those in need should open the seals [sc. of these
provisions], take what they needed, and then re-sealing it leave it
behind. Accordingly, by sharing with each other in this way even the 5
poor have a share in the produce of the land, whenever they are in
want.

I shall also expound what power and honour Lycurgus gave to the 1 XIII
king on campaign. First, the city maintains the king and his retinue
in the field. The polemarchs camp with him, so that they may always
be at hand and hold counsel more readily, if need be. Besides three
other men from the full citizens (*homoioi*) share a tent with them:
these take care of all the needs of the others, so that they have no
other occupation than to take care of the affairs of war. I shall repeat 2
how the king sets out with the army. First, while he is still at home,
he sacrifices to Zeus Agetor and those associated with him. If he
sacrifices there with good omens, the fire-bearer takes fire from the
altar and leads the way to the borders of the country. There again the
king sacrifices to Zeus and Athena. When he has sacrificed to both 3
these gods with good omens, he crosses the borders of the country.
And the fire from these sacrifices leads the way and is never
extinguished, and sacrificial animals of all kinds follow. Whenever he
sacrifices, he starts this duty while it is still dark, because he wants to
attract the favour of the god in advance. Also present at the sacrifices 4
are the generals (*polemarchoi*), colonels (*lochagoi*), majors
(*pentekosteres*), the leaders of mercenaries, commanders of the
baggage-train and any commanders (*stratego*) from the cities who
want to be there. In addition two ephors are present who do not 5
interfere unless they are summoned by the king. By observing what
everyone does, they restrain them all, as might be expected. When the
sacrifice is over, the king summons everyone and orders what has to
be done. Consequently, if you were to see this you might consider
others amateurs in military matters, and think the Lakedaimonians
alone the real experts in warfare.

I also want to explain the contract Lycurgus made between the king 1 XV
and the city. For this is the only office which continues just as it was
originally established; whereas one would find the constitutions of
others to have changed and still to be changing even now. He made the 2
king perform all public sacrifices on behalf of the city because of his
divine descent, and lead the army wherever the city sent it. He granted 3
them the choice parts of the sacrificed animals and in many perioikic
cities assigned them so much of the selected (i.e., best) land that they
would neither lack modest resources nor stand out on account of their
wealth. In order that the kings also should mess away from their home, 4
he established a public tent for them, and honoured them with a double
portion at dinner, not so that they might dine twice, but so that they
might have something with which to honour someone if they so
wished. Furthermore, they exchange 7
oaths monthly: the ephors on behalf of the city, the kings on their own
behalf. The king swears to abide by the established laws of the city, the
city to maintain the kingship unshaken as long as the king keeps his
oath. These are the honours granted to the king in his own country 8
during his lifetime. They do not exceed by much those of private
citizens. For he did not want to foster a tyrannical attitude in the kings,
nor arouse envy of their power in the citizens. But, it is by the honours 9
granted to the king at his death, that the Lycurgan laws demonstrate
their intention to honour the kings of the Lakedaimonians not as men,
but as heroes.