



COLUMBIA
JOURNAL *of*
HISTORY

VOLUME IV | ISSUE II
SUMMER 2020

SPARTAN AUSTERITY AND BRIBERY

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Abstract: Popular perception of ancient Sparta is that of a belligerent polis with austere men and an invincible army. But according to Xenophon, Spartan ideals of austerity, equality, and honor declined especially during the Peloponnesian War. This paper confirms Xenophon's theory of decline using relevant primary sources—Herodotus, Thucydides and more—that document Spartan corruption and bribery. Although there is evidence of corruption from our earliest sources on Spartan history, it became more widespread, both on campaign and within Sparta, during the fifth century. This paper begins by introducing the concepts of the Spartan mirage and Xenophon's decline theory. The Spartan mirage describes the idealized version of Spartans, while Xenophon's decline theory proposes that the mirage was shattered circa 400 BCE. Although some scholars, such as Hodkinson and Cartledge, discussed financial causes to this decline, past analyses overlook bribery cases. This paper analyzes several case studies split into four distinct categories: bribery and financial upkeep of the spartan military, bribery to alter military plans, bribery of oracles, and outlier cases. These case studies work together to reveal the deep history of corruption and bribery that dispels the Spartan mirage.

Key words: Spartan mirage, Ancient Sparta, Spartan Ideals, Bribery, Corruption, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides

Introduction

The Spartan mirage, a popular narrative of fifth century Sparta that rhapsodizes and mythologizes the polis, shrouds the reality of the ancient city state.¹ As one of the leading scholars of ancient Sparta, Paul Cartledge, argues, it represents “the idealization of Sparta in Greek antiquity, the distorted or imaginary literary tradition about ancient Sparta.”² Ancient historians like Herodotus and Xenophon, described the three principles of Spartan society as austerity, equality, and honor.

Herodotus tells us Spartans scorned personal pride and property. Money, according to the Spartan mirage, was not a motivating factor in Spartan society; honor was supposedly

worth more than wealth. Herodotus states in *Lycurgus*, which describes the creation of the Spartan ideal by the ancient, semi-mythical, Spartan King Lycurgus,

“he [Lycurgus] undertook to divide up their movable property also, in order that every vestige of unevenness and inequality might be removed . . . In the first place, he withdrew all gold and silver money from currency, and ordained the use of iron money only . . . For who would steal, or receive as a bribe, or rob, or plunder that which could neither be concealed, nor possessed, nay, nor even cut to pieces with any profit?”³

The creation of iron currency decreased money’s liquidity and inconvenienced its possession, while government policy was undertaken to physically redistribute wealth. Herodotus utilizes the formal element of a rhetorical question to demonstrate Lycurgus’ motivation, asking the reader “who would steal, or receive as a bribe, or plunder,” as if those otherwise advantageous actions now seemed so obviously senseless and antithetical under the Spartan ideal that he did not have to explain and answer. Therefore, the reforms of Lycurgus sought to remove money as a motivation for Spartan action.

Herodotus further states the goal of Lycurgus’ reforms as creating an ideal society of equals: “to live with one another on a basis of entire uniformity and equality in the means of subsistence, seeking preeminence through virtue alone, assured that there was no other difference or inequality between man and man than that which was established by blame for base actions and praise for good ones.” The ideal that the only “difference or inequality” in Sparta was not through wealth but “virtue” and “blame and praise”, led to the assumption that Spartans were incorruptible to wealth, and purely driven by their honor.

From a historiographical standpoint, when evaluating Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, it is clear that they perpetuate and emphasize aspects of the Spartan mirage.⁴ But it is equally clear that they also put forth doubts about the Spartan mirage. Through close reading, this article reveals aspects of the Spartan reality compared to those depicted in the Spartan mirage.⁵ Most of the primary source writers were unaffiliated with Sparta—only Xenophon lived in Sparta briefly. While they might have interacted with Spartans to a minor degree, it is likely that they did not have a full view of Sparta and its culture.⁶ They wrote primarily for audiences in Athens and other Greek (non-Spartan) *poleis* and would not have expected Spartans to be among their audience. In fact, the Athenian background of historians describing Sparta, factoring in Athens’ animosity for Sparta for much of its history alongside the recent trauma of the Peloponnesian War, would alter their perceptions of the rival polis, especially in depicting Sparta’s treacherous interactions with Persian wealth and their actions against Athens on campaign. As such, many of their histories are written through a perspective of someone outside the Spartan polis.

However, even primary sources put doubt into the Spartan ideal; throughout the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, Xenophon states he has little certainty as to whether the Spartan mirage was the reality of the situation. Xenophon says: “Whether the laws of Lycurgus still remain unchanged at this day, I certainly could not say that with any

confidence whatever.”⁷ He explained that the characteristics of Sparta displayed to him differed from the Spartan mirage. He continued by countering the famous austerity of early Sparta, and further emphasizes the differences between the Spartan ideal and the reality he perceived: “And I know too that in former days they were afraid to be found in possession of gold; whereas nowadays there are some who even boast of their possessions.”⁸

Xenophon theorizes that, after the Greco-Persian War, Sparta continuously declined until its eventual subjugation by Phillip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great.⁹ The Peloponnesian War was thought to have hastened the Spartan decline.¹⁰ He evaluates contemporary Sparta and how it compares with Sparta a generation prior. He illustrates that several specific aspects of Spartan culture had changed while acknowledging that he cannot say conclusively that it has changed one way or another because he had limited knowledge of the Sparta of his time and only stories of the Sparta in the generations prior. These differences between Xenophon’s contemporary Spartans and their austere forefathers, alongside the ravages of natural disasters and wars, in Xenophon’s view contributed to Spartan decline.¹¹

Prior historians have looked into Sparta and the validity of Xenophon’s decline theory.¹² Stephen Hodkinson in *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* focuses on the financial aspects of private Spartans and accuracy of the Spartan mirage’s austerity. These analyses of Sparta often overlook cases of bribery and how they impact the Spartan mirage of austerity.¹³ This article aims to differentiate the Spartan mirage on private wealth and bribery using the reality seen through key primary sources.¹⁴ The case studies depicting bribery and corruption despite the Spartan ideal provide authentication to Xenophon’s decline theory, leading to a continuous breakdown of Spartan might and institutions after the Greco-Persian War until its eventual subjugation by Phillip of Macedon. This decline in the Spartan mirage manifested itself in an elevated dependence on money, especially foreign money that resulted in political turmoil.¹⁵

I. Bribery and Financial Upkeep of Spartan Military

During military campaigns, money and wealth played a prominent role in allowing the Spartans to function to their maximum potential. This wealth can be classified in three different forms: money in exchange for mercenaries, pay for military upkeep, and financial incentivization.¹⁶ Throughout the fifth century, there were many instances of Spartans employing mercenaries or serving as them.

Money exchanged for mercenary labor in Sparta first appears in Herodotus’ writing in the case of Gorgo and King Kleomenes in the early fifth century. In *Histories*, Herodotus reports that when Aristagoras, a leader of the Ionian Greeks in Asia Minor, came to persuade Sparta in 491 BCE to aid the Ionian cities revolting against Persia, Aristagoras attempted to negotiate with Kleomenes, one of two Spartan kings. He had discussed the vast wealth the Persian Empire offered; as Aristagoras states: “Once you have taken this city [Susa, a strategic center of the Persian Empire], you can be confident that you will rival Zeus

in wealth. . . cease fighting against the Arcadians and the Argives, who have no gold or silver.”¹⁷ Kleomenes only lost interest and stopped him when he heard of the journey’s distance.¹⁸ The following day, Aristagoras attempted to bribe Kleomenes:

So Aristagoras began by promising him ten talents if he would fulfill his request. Kleomenes refused, and Aristagoras increased the sum step by step, until he had raised the offer to fifty talents. At this point the child blurted out, “Father, your guest-friend is going to corrupt you unless you leave and stay away from him.”¹⁹

This passage demonstrates that the desire for wealth was a still motivating factor for Spartan kings despite the laws that upheld the Spartan ideal. Gorgo, Kleomenes’ daughter, embodies the Spartan ideal of austerity.²⁰ Though, as this passage indicates, Kleomenes refused the bribe, he allowed Aristagoras to increase the offer several times without stopping him. At last, Gorgo forced an end to the conversation. However, Kleomenes’ continuation of the conversation, along with his reluctance to shift its topic, indicates that he, at the very least, considered using Spartans as mercenaries, was tempted by the bribe, and may have had a price at which he would have agreed to take part in the Ionian cities revolt against Persia. The simple fact that Kleomenes was tempted to accept Aristagoras’ offers before his daughter’s intervention presents Sparta’s reality outside of the ideal.²¹ This is surprising and important for two key reasons. First, these conversations transpired within the Spartan polis itself and not on campaign elsewhere in Greece. While it is one thing to be susceptible to bribery on campaign away from Sparta with less public oversight, it is another for a Spartan king to be susceptible to bribery within the Spartan polis. Having king Kleomenes entertain the prospect of bribery in the heart of his city state makes it equally, if not more likely that such bribery often took place outside of the city. Second, this occurred within the highest level of Spartan society, as Kleomenes was one of its kings.

Another reason this case is important lies in the presentation of using Spartans as mercenaries in the first place. There must have been a precedent or prior consideration for mercenary use by the Spartans, or else such an idea proposed by a foreigner would have been dismissed outright given the alleged nature of Spartan culture that focused on honor, austerity and the good of the Spartan state. Had this culture been the norm, Kleomenes would not have entertained, nor would Aristagoras suggested, the concept of using their soldiers as mercenaries in a foreign war for money. This line of reasoning suggests that the concept of bribery was not completely foreign to Spartans, reinforcing that there were cracks within the Spartan mirage of austerity.

Another prime example of bribery for Spartan military action, as told by Thucydides, was an attempt to hire Spartans as mercenaries in 457 BCE. Megabazus, a Persian satrap under the direction of the Persian king, attempted to bribe Sparta into fighting Athens to draw the Athenians out of Egypt.²²

First the Athenians were masters of Egypt, and the King sent Megabazus, a Persian, to Sparta with money to bribe the Peloponnesians to invade Attica and so

draw off the Athenians from Egypt. Finding that the matter made no progress, and that the money was only being wasted, he recalled Megabazus with the remainder of the money.²³

This case illustrates a clear instance of bribery within the Spartan polis itself. The bribery was not ultimately successful in accomplishing the Persian goal of a Spartan invasion of Athens likely due to the lack of overall support for the invasion of Attica at this time. That being said, it is important to note that bribery did take place. Megabazus believed that his money “was only being wasted,” thus implying money was being used. It appears that Megabazus bribed Spartans to lobby for a particular course of action. Similar to the aforementioned case of Kleomenes, this was not a case of a king on campaign miles away from Sparta, but rather, it shows an instance of bribery within the heart of Sparta itself. Temptation by bribery within the polis exemplifies the cracks within the Spartan mirage as these same Spartans would be equally, if not more, susceptible on campaign outside of the polis. Furthermore, this case illustrates that Spartan citizens, not just a Spartan king as in the case of Kleomenes, could be bribed in the Spartan polis, in the heart of a society that supposedly emphasized austerity and honor.

The aforementioned examples presented by Herodotus and Thucydides reveal that the Spartan people were susceptible to bribery and lacked austerity within the Spartan polis itself. They represent cases of initial ideations towards the use of the Spartan military in cases that are not directly tied to Sparta’s success; rather, the military is used in exchange for money or other benefits. One of the best examples of this ideation in Sparta occurred in the early fourth century when Spartans and other allies fought in Persia for Cyrus following the end of the Peloponnesian War. In the disastrous 10,000 Campaign, vast numbers of Spartans died aiding Cyrus in a Persian civil war that was not directly related to Sparta. This example illustrates that *some* Spartans were willing to use hoplites as mercenaries to fight for non-Spartan objectives; however, given that this partial willingness did not manifest itself completely, one can assume that such a practice had not yet become pervasive throughout the whole of Sparta.

Among the best documented use of mercenaries by Sparta as reported by Thucydides occurred with Brasidas, a Spartan leader, prior to campaigning in Northern Greece. In this campaign, Spartan hoplites, the Spartan citizen-soldiers who trained in the *agogē*, were not deployed to fight. Rather, a combination of Spartan helots and mercenaries were to fight under Brasidas’ leadership. In 424 BCE, Brasidas, upon being sent to campaign in Thrace with a meager force of helots, recruited Peloponnesian mercenaries to supplement his army: “The Spartans now therefore gladly sent seven hundred Helots as hoplites with Brasidas, who recruited the rest of his force by means of money in the Peloponnesus.”²⁴ This change in Spartan military campaigning from a force reliant on Spartan hoplites to a force reliant on mercenaries and money illustrates the changing role of money in Sparta culture. The role of money in military campaigns was growing, indicating that the culture of Spartan austerities and its distrust and neglect of money was evolving. It is important to note that during

Brasidas' campaign his Athenian adversary was Thucydides himself, the author of our primary source. Taking this into account, it is likely that Thucydides' representation of Brasidas could harbor bias given their adversarial relationship. Thucydides could have embellished Brasidas to minimize his own failures, depicted him negatively due to their adversarial history or depicted him accurately, having first-hand knowledge of his tactics and the campaign.

Thucydides' quote reveals that part of Brasidas force consisted of Peloponnesian mercenaries. While it is unclear if he hired the mercenaries himself or with public funds, Brasidas' campaign required financing from both Spartan and foreign sources.²⁵ This was in direct contrast to the traditional Spartan style of campaigning of using Spartan hoplites that Sparta had relied upon for prior wars in the fifth century BCE, such as the Greco-Persian war. This change in the Spartan style of campaigning and the role money played within it was an initial step in the Spartan cultural change around money and austerity.

The evolving role of money and austerity on Brasidas' campaign continued when Brasidas proceeded through Northern Greece on the same campaign in 424 BCE with a force of helots and mercenaries. Thucydides explains that upon arriving in Thrace one of the Thracian kings, Perdiccas, helped to pay for Brasidas' mercenaries: "While he, Perdiccas, was paying for half of his army it was a breach of faith for Brasidas to parley with Arrhabaeus."²⁶ In this case, a foreign king paid for the military upkeep of Spartan forces led by Brasidas, an officer who was educated and trained through the *agogē*, and had the Spartan ideals of honor and austerity drilled into him. Perdiccas helped fund the campaign, and, in doing so, it is conceivable that he attempted to affect Brasidas' strategy altering the Spartan focus and goals through his financial means. This represents an additional change in the Spartan use of money on campaigns from Spartan funded mercenaries to foreign funded mercenaries on the side of Sparta. Perdiccas argued against Brasidas' meeting with Arrhabaeus, the other Thracian king, based on the premise that the financial ties between Perdiccas and Brasidas allowed him to alter the focus or strategy of the Spartan campaign. In theory, if Brasidas secured alternative funding for his army, he would not have to heed to Perdiccas' direction. Despite Perdiccas' objection, Brasidas' decision making remained unaffected; he ignored Perdiccas and parleyed a meeting with Arrhabaeus. Although Perdiccas failed to affect Brasidas' strategy in this instance, this trend of a foreigner paying for the military upkeep of Spartans and attempting to sway Spartan decision-making foretells a similar relationship between the Spartan Lysander and the Persian prince Cyrus. This latter relationship will be discussed later in this article.

The next set of examples pertaining to money and wealth used in unique circumstances appear in Thucydides' description of Brasidas' campaign in northern Greece and Thrace in 424 BCE: "If Brasidas, instead of stopping to pillage, had advanced straight against the city, he would probably have taken it."²⁷ Although Brasidas' forces had not been trained in the *agogē*, the fact that Brasidas himself, who trained in the *agogē*, allowed pillaging or plundering cannot be overstated for its clear lack of austerity. Brasidas, motivated by financial gains through his plundering, represents a key shift in the driving

force of this campaign; for him, money, not upholding the ideals of Spartan austerity, became the priority. Brasidas' decision making during the campaign is, perhaps, indicative of the larger change of culture at play in Sparta. That is, it seems that the importance placed on upholding austerity was lessening, while the focus on money seemed to be increasing in Spartan society.

The next case can also be traced back to Brasidas' campaigns in Thrace in 424 BCE. This particular instance represents an additional aspect to the Spartan lack of austerity by illustrating a specific example of financial incentivization: "Brasidas had proclaimed in the moment of making the assault that he would give thirty silver minae to the man first on the wall."²⁸ Through this quote, the reader is able to see Brasidas' incentivize his men to fight by offering his private wealth as a reward. However, this action clashes with Spartan ideals. That is, soldiers should not fight for the acquisition of money or wealth, but for honor. The usage of private wealth as an incentive, as can be seen through this particular scenario, and the way wealth affected Brasidas' decision making throughout the campaign, in the aforementioned instance, presents for a case illustrating the lack of austerity from Brasidas and his men.

Using money and offering incentives to mercenaries is surprising because it emphasizes the role that wealth has on campaigns. That is, the well-off Spartans or foreign benefactors funding the campaigns inherently have sway and influence because of their financial contribution. Traditionally, the Spartan culture of austerity aimed to minimize these contributions, as they potentially threatened the integrity of these military operations. The then newly established trend of using mercenaries in conjunction with Spartan hoplites was in response to dwindling numbers of Spartans during the second half of the fifth century BCE, as prior scholars have noted.²⁹ This trend of finding military men other than Spartans for Spartan military use is highlighted with the growing trend of *mothakes*, or non-Spartans who were trained in the *agogē*. *Mothakes* were deployed more and more frequently as the Peloponnesian War went on.³⁰ As Sparta began to rely on forces other than Spartan hoplites, military matters became codependent with foreign money in warfare instead of relying on Spartan hoplites and Peloponnesian allies.³¹ Using mercenaries as a Spartan force goes against the Spartan mirage culture of military as it makes Sparta more dependent on money and wealth for campaigns than it had been previously.³² This increasing reliance on wealth rendered Spartans more and more vulnerable to the potentially corrupting influence of those providing them with these funds.

Similar to Brasidas, Lysander was also a Spartan general who plundered in the eastern Aegean during the third phase of the Peloponnesian War in 405 BCE. That being said, one notable difference between the two scenarios is that while Brasidas did so with a force composed of helots and mercenaries, Lysander plundered with a force of Spartan hoplites.³³ Lysander's men "attacked Lampsacus and captured it by force, and the soldiers plundered the city, which was rich with wine and grain and full of all the other necessities."³⁴ While one could have presented the argument that the decline in Spartan austerity was solely due to a presence of mercenaries and helots (who were not familiar with the principles taught in

the *agogē*), Lysander's campaign indicates otherwise. That is, given that Spartan hoplites took part in the plundering, this incident illustrates a key example in which Spartan actions violated their own culture and ideals of austerity instilled in the *agogē*.

One aspect Xenophon focuses on is the plundering of wine, which is notable because compulsory drinking was not allowed in Sparta and drunkenness was heavily frowned upon.³⁵ While many of the plundered goods might have been campaign necessities, such as food, wine was not among them. This reveals that a portion of the focus in plundering is not just on campaign necessities but also wealth and luxury.³⁶ This case, along with the prior case of Brasidas plundering, are both instances where Spartan leaders focused on distinctly non-Spartan ideals (luxury and wealth) while on campaign, illustrating just how far the Spartan mirage ideal of austerity had deteriorated.

During the campaign in the eastern Aegean, Lysander asked Cyrus, a Persian prince and Spartan ally, for financial assistance for Spartan military upkeep during the Peloponnesian War:

He went to Cyrus to ask for money, but Cyrus told him that all the money from the King had been spent - indeed much more than the King had given; he also indicated to him what had been provided to each of the previous Spartan admirals. In spite of this, Cyrus gave the money to Lysander.³⁷

Xenophon reports that Cyrus gave the money even though he was hesitant, and this is just one of several mentions of the close, personal relationship between Cyrus and Lysander. This incident further illustrates that Cyrus was already paying for a large portion of the Spartan upkeep to allow the Spartans a greater chance at victory in the Peloponnesian War after decades of limited progress, "He assigned to Lysander all the tribute from the cities which was considered his personal property, and he gave him in addition surplus money from his treasury. Reminding him that he was a friend of both the city of Sparta and Lysander personally."³⁸ These quotes, in demonstrating Lysander's repeated asks for money, demonstrate a complete lack of Spartan austerity by reinforcing the changing role of money in Spartan military campaigns, as will be seen in the coming paragraphs. In particular, the emphasis Cyrus puts on the friendship granted by this financial assistance hints towards a similar relationship between Lysander and Cyrus as the one described earlier with Brasidas and Perdiccas.

As in the case of Brasidas and Perdiccas, the supply of money affected the decision-making of Lysander, as Xenophon indicates, "When Lysander arrived, Cyrus forbade him to fight a battle against the Athenians until he had many more ships at his disposal."³⁹ While he did not directly obey Cyrus, Lysander did alter his strategy by refraining from attacking Athenian troops as he had originally wanted and opting to attack the Athenian ally instead.⁴⁰ However, Cyrus affected Lysander's strategy through his financial influence.⁴¹ While this shift in strategy was likely in the best interest of Sparta, this is another example of military strategy being affected by non-traditional Spartan methods, which could lead to trouble in

the future if the goals of Persia and Sparta do not align. This is best exemplified in the previously mentioned disastrous 10,000 campaign into Persia.

Whether Sparta hired mercenaries for campaigning, financial incentivization, or attempted usage of Spartans as mercenaries it is clear that money played a major part in various stages of Spartan campaigns, within the fifth century BCE, especially during the Peloponnesian War.

II. Bribery to Alter Military Plans

Bribery of Spartan leaders while they were on campaign was an additional tactic employed as a means of influencing their actions. The previous section showcased the Spartan reality through emphasizing the potentially corrupting influence of those who paid for military upkeep, provided financial incentives, and gave bribes in hopes of stimulating Spartan military action or giving rise to the use of mercenaries. On the other hand, this section deals with cases of bribery that specifically cause an end to the military campaign and facilitate a return to Sparta. As such, these instances of bribery explain altered military plans and campaigns that *further* divert from the Spartan ideal of austerity. These cases often follow a linear trend whereupon a Spartan military campaign would be on track to succeeding before a Spartan leader would choose to avoid capturing a city-state or further subjugating the enemy and, when the army would return home to Sparta, the leader would be put on trial for bribery.

The first instance of bribery to alter military plans occurred when Kleomenes campaigned against Argos in 494 BCE. Argos, a city, was the main Spartan rival within the Peloponnese; defeating it would be a major victory for Sparta. Specifically, Kleomenes was tasked with defeating Argos and imposing a thirty year peace upon them, but refrained from doing so.⁴² Herodotus states, "After [Kleomenes'] return, his enemies brought him to trial before the ephors, claiming that he had accepted bribes to refrain from taking Argos when he could easily have captured it."⁴³ The ephors, who were five Spartans chosen yearly to protect the Spartan polis and acted as a magistrate, collectively arrived at a likely conclusion. They believed that Kleomenes was bribed into returning home with a victory that weakened, but did not fully destroy Argos.⁴⁴ This accusation, mentioned in the quote, is of utmost importance as it took place within the first decade of the fifth century BCE, when the Spartan mirage was at its strongest. Given the prevalence of the Spartan mirage, all Spartans were thought to be uniquely austere and incorruptible. Being susceptible to this kind of bribery would indicate that Kleomenes put his needs above those of Sparta.⁴⁵ This is evidence of a departure from the ultimate Spartan ideal of putting Sparta and her needs above any individual, even a king. Since this happened during campaign against Sparta's key Peloponnesian rival, this would appear to be a far more severe crime than if done on campaign against a minor power. However, later on in the passage, Herodotus muddled the bribery charges, stating, "Which I cannot judge if it was a lie or the truth."⁴⁶ This is the beginning of a trend within Sparta where military leaders who did not follow their orders to the letter would be charged with bribery by the ephors and put on trial. Herodotus later

states that the charges against Kleomenes were dismissed; Kleomenes delivered a convincing defense, claiming he read an omen that prompted him to return home.

Herodotus illustrates another charge of bribery against Kleomenes which took place during the first Greco-Persian War. After Athens claimed that the Aeginetans, the people of a strategically vital island near Attica, had submitted to Persia after Darius, a Persian king, demanded submission of Hellas in 491 BCE, Kleomenes went to arrest the accused Aeginetans:

But when he tried to arrest them, other Aeginetans showed up to oppose him, foremost among them one Krios son of Polykritos, who said that Kleomenes would not get away with seizing even one Aeginetan, he had no authority from the Spartan government for doing this, but had been swayed by Athenian money; otherwise, his fellow king of the Spartans would have accompanied him to make the arrests.⁴⁷

During the Greco-Persian wars, many poleis chose to side with Persia, yet Kleomenes personally went to oversee the arrest of individuals in Aegina. Kleomenes's involvement is unusual because Aegina was an island; Sparta, unlike Athens, was not known for exerting its power through naval coercion. It is also important to note that the Spartans, at this stage in the Greco-Persian Wars, had played a very limited role in fighting the Persians. In fact, they refused to aid the Athenians in the pivotal battle of Marathon that occurred shortly after. Despite this precedent of unwillingness to aid Athens, the Spartan king Kleomenes had made the seemingly illogical decision to help Athens in this particular mission.⁴⁸ These factors, in combination with Athens leading the call for the persecution of Aeginetans for aligning with Persia, lead to the conclusion that an agreement or collaboration between Athens and Kleomenes had been made; that Kleomenes, as the quote indicates, "had been swayed by Athenian money."⁴⁹

Another example of this can be seen with Kleomenes' co-king, Leotychidas, who was arrested while on campaign in Thessaly. Herodotus summarizes this event:

Leotychidas did not grow old in Sparta but paid the penalty for what he had done to Demaratos in the following way. He had led the army of the Lacedaemonians into Thessaly, and although it would have been possible for him to subjugate all of that land, he accepted a large bribe instead and was caught in the act, sitting in camp on a glove full of money.⁵⁰

Leotychidas was caught red-handed with money, put on trial, and then sent into exile after he was found guilty of bribery.⁵¹ This case follows the same three-part storyline as Kleomenes, but unlike in Kleomenes' situation there is clear evidence in the form of money found in campsite. Leotychidas represents one of the first concrete examples of the Spartan lack of austerity; his ability to be bribed during his campaign illustrates a fundamental break from the ideals taught in Spartan culture and proves that Spartans could be bribed for their

own personal benefit. This case occurred prior to the battle of Thermopylae as emblematic of the height of the Spartan mirage, demonstrating a key point against the mythos of the Spartan mirage of austerity and honor. The bribery charges concluded when Sparta demolished Leotychidas' house and exiled him.

A key case of bribery to alter military plans involves Pleistoanax while he campaigned against Athens in 431 BCE. He led Spartan hoplites into Attica during the first year of the Archidamian phase of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides explains:

It was remembered that Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of Sparta, had invaded Attica with a Peloponnesian army fourteen years before, but had retreated without advancing farther than Eleusis and Thria, which indeed proved the cause of his exile from Sparta, as it was thought he had been bribed to retreat.⁵²

This case parallels Kleomenes' first case; it was a campaign against the key Spartan rival, Athens, a rival for hegemony over Greece. As such, Sparta likely encouraged Pleistoanax to defeat Athens as thoroughly as possible.⁵³ Since Pleistoanax left prior to a decisive engagement, the Spartan ephors and assembly members concluded that he had been bribed. Specifically, Pleistoanax had left Attica willingly, without losing a battle or facing the main Athenian army which Pericles kept behind the long walls.⁵⁴ Pericles, the leading Athenian statesman, likely bribed Pleistoanax with a payment of money or political favor; Plutarch, a Greek philosopher, believed it to be a combination of the two: "Pericles entered into secret negotiations with this person [Pleistonax]. In a very short time, he had succeeded, by bribery and corruption, in inducing him to withdraw the Peloponnesian army from the soil of Attica."⁵⁵ This is important to acknowledge, as with no clear justification for Pleistoanax's return to Sparta, the conclusion of bribery made by the Spartan ephors proceeds logically. Pleistoanax was sent into exile shortly thereafter, based on bribery charges.

This trend suggests a culture where leading Spartan generals were susceptible to bribery and altered their military campaign plans due to bribery. At the very least, this proves that not all Spartans were pristine and austere; rather, some Spartans failed in honoring the ideals put forth by the Spartan mirage. All instances of bribery on campaign described in this article took place far from Sparta and were subject to less oversight than they would have been within Sparta; based on this evidence, it seems Spartan leaders took greater liberties away on campaign. Overall, the trend of military leaders, specifically Spartan kings, accepting bribes while on campaigns is reflective of the prioritization of the individual over the state. In other words, it is a blatant violation against Spartan ideals.⁵⁶

III. Bribing Oracles

One bribery trend that also played a role in shaping Sparta was bribery of oracles. Oracles often took part in deciding cases that were controversial or had no clear solution.⁵⁷ Lycurgus, by creating new laws, set the precedent for the Spartan use of oracles in helping decide important cases.⁵⁸ Bribery, on a number of occasions, was used to sway oracles in

their decision-making on matters that were of particular importance to Sparta. Those who accepted the bribes, as well as those who proposed them, defied the Spartan ideals of austerity by putting their own needs above those of Sparta.⁵⁹

The first case involves Kleomenes. Herodotus explains that the question of whether or not Demaratos was the son of Ariston, a king of Sparta, was very contentious within Sparta. In fact, it seemed that the question could only be answered by referring it to an oracle. Herodotus tells us:

It was Kleomenes who had come up with the idea to refer this question to the Pythia, and he next gained the support of Kobon son of Aristophantos, who wielded the greatest influence at Delphi and who then persuaded Perisallos the Pythia to proclaim what Kleomenes wanted her to say.⁶⁰

Though Kleomenes did not bribe Perisallos the Pythia directly, he indirectly influenced the decision to proclaim in his favor through bribing Kobon. The fact that Herodotus does not question the truth of this episode, as he does in the prior case of bribery involving Kleomenes, further validates this case.⁶¹ The ability to influence a decision that was considered so important is groundbreaking. As can be seen from this example, Kleomenes directly influenced the identity of the second king within Sparta, and the audacity of Kleomenes in distorting the highest levels of the Spartan polis through bribery cannot be overstated. Here, as in other cases mentioned in this article, Kleomenes does not act in the Spartan mirage manner of austerity. Rather, he used bribery to mold Sparta for his *own* good, not the good of Sparta. Later, when Kleomenes' actions were discovered by the Spartans, both Kobon and Perisallos, Kleomenes' agents in Delphi, lost their positions and Kleomenes had to flee into exile in Thessaly from fear of arrest.

Thucydides explains that a similar case of bribery occurred when Pleistoanax, the Spartan king who was bribed to retreat from Attica years earlier, successfully instigated his return home by influencing an oracle at Delphi in his nineteenth year of his exile:

Pleistoanax, on the other hand, was assailed by his enemies for his restoration, and regularly criticized by them in front of his countrymen for every reverse that befell them, as though his unjust restoration were the cause. They accused him and his brother Aristocles of having bribed the prophetess of Delphi to tell the Spartan deputations which successively arrived at the temple to bring home the seed of the demigod son of Zeus from abroad, else they would have to plough with a solver share.⁶²

This case, allegedly involving Pleistoanax, is less transparent than that of Kleomenes, as it is conveyed through whispers and rumor. No formal legal action was taken against Pleistoanax, as it is not explicitly verified that he was the one doing the bribing. Because the accusations come directly from Pleistoanax's enemies, it is possible to examine this accusation as pure factionalism and rivalry. That being said, the word choice of the prophecy

lends credibility to the idea that Pleistoanax *did* bribe the oracle. Specifically, the words “the demigod son of Zeus from abroad,” could only refer to a former king of Sparta, as the two Spartan dynasties were descendants of Heracles; given Pleistoanax’s title and location abroad, taken alongside Thucydides’ identification, one can reasonably assume that the prophecy likely is in reference to him.⁶³ The method by which both Kleomenes and Pleistoanax bribed oracles, with neither bribing the prophetess *directly*, is an important trend to note. While Kleomenes used a contact within the oracle community to bribe the prophetess, it appears the Pleistoanax used his brother to bribe the prophetess. Both instances indicate a carefully orchestrated bribe, intended to bring about a specific personal goal. This method of bribery exhibits a clear break from the Spartan ideals of austerity, honor, and Sparta first as they act for their own benefit and use money to achieve their goals.

The most surprising case of bribing an oracle comes from Diodorus’ account of Lysander. When Lysander was at the peak of his power, just after the Peloponnesian War, he attempted to reform the Spartan government by transforming kingship from a hereditary office to an elected one: “Knowing that the Lacedaemonians gave very great heed to the responses of oracles, he attempted to bribe the prophetess in Delphi, since he believed that, if he should receive an oracular response favorable to the designs he entertained, he should easily carry his project to a successful end.”⁶⁴ Lysander understood the crucial role that the oracles and their prophecies played in affecting Spartan reform, dating all the way back to the time of Lycurgus.⁶⁵ He not only attempted to bribe the oracle at Delphi, but also the oracles at Dodone and Cyrene.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Lysander attempted to bribe the prophetess directly, and then, like Kleomenes and Pleistoanax, indirectly through a middleman.⁶⁷ It was likely that bribery was the intention with the oracles as Diodorus communicates, “When he could not win over the attendants of the oracle, despite the large sum he promised them... the overseers of the oracle sent ambassadors to lay charges against Lysander for his effort to bribe the oracle.”⁶⁸ The labelling of Lysander’s attempts to garner the support of the oracle as ‘bribery,’ along with the resulting charges brought against him, confirms that Lysander failed to gain the support of any of the oracles to prophesize in his favor. Similar to Kleomenes, Lysander represents the antithesis of the Spartan ideal because he put his own goals ahead of Sparta’s goals. Diodorus explains that Lysander aspired to become the king of Sparta: “For he hoped that the kingship would very soon come to him because of his achievements.”⁶⁹ As shown in this scenario, Lysander did not embody the austere Spartan that he is often idealized to be. He went on to lose his power and fade from relevance within Sparta just a few seasons later.

Although these cases of bribery involving oracles varied, they all are centered around leading Spartans who put their own needs above those of Sparta. The oracle represented the highest power of decision making for the Spartan polis, especially on contentious issues of the utmost importance. Because of the influence held by the oracles within Spartan society, it is extremely important to identify when there are attempts (successful or otherwise) to corrupt their integrity. Furthermore, while bribing oracles started with kings, as the fifth

century BCE progressed it expanded to other leading Spartans, including Lysander, a former *mothax*. This indicates that Spartans of many origins were acting in austerere and lacked the Spartan mirages ideals. The break in the Spartan mirage extended to multiple levels of Spartan society, not just the pinnacle with the kings.

IV. Outliers

The final cases are outliers that do not categorically fit into the prior sections of this article, but they still conform to the theory of decline; that is, they still represent key cases of Spartan bribery or lack of austerity by Spartan leaders. In particular, this section focuses on several cases involving the cases of King Pausanias and Brasidas.

In the first case, Pausanias returned to Sparta after being accused of taking a bribe while on campaign in Northern Greece in the years following the Greco-Persian War: “Anxious above everything to avoid suspicion, and confident that he could quash the charge by means of money, returned a second time to Sparta...he soon compromised the matter.”⁷⁰ The quote, in other words, describes Pausanias’ return to Sparta, in which he successfully bribed individuals within Sparta to drop prior accusations of bribery. This case is important as it took place within the Spartan polis, under the watchful eye of all five ephors. Due to the specific wording provided in the primary source, “*χρήμασι*,” it is clear when translating that he intended to bribe officials to quash the charges. This fundamentally changes our understanding of the issue of bribery in Sparta; that is, if Spartans were susceptible to being bribed in order to quash as serious a charge as a king taking a bribe on campaign, then it is conceivable that cases of lesser importance could be acquitted through bribery.⁷¹

While on the same campaign, Pausanias corresponded with the Persian ruler, Xerxes. Thucydides recalls Pausanias’ Offering: “Pausanias, the general of Sparta, anxious to do you a favor, sends you these his prisoners of war. I propose also, with your approval, to marry your daughter, and to make Sparta and the rest of Hellas subject to you.”⁷² In his attempt to gain marriage with Persian royalty, the letters, and specifically, Pausanias’ efforts to placate Xerxes, indicate that he acted in his own interest, not in Sparta’s. In particular, he offered Xerxes prisoners of war and the whole of Greece⁷³. Making “Sparta and the rest of Hellas” subject to a foreign ruler is, surely, not in the best interest of Sparta. Concurrently, he attempted to join with Persian royalty both as a literal path to luxury and wealth but also as an expression of his ties with the East.

One specific instance of the corruption of Pausanias, as Thucydides explains, occurred on campaign in Northern Greece in the early fifth century BCE. This example depicts how corrupted and extravagant Pausanias became and how Pausanias likened himself to Xerxes:

Went out to Byzantium in a Median dress, was attended on his march through Thrace by a bodyguard of Medes and Egyptians, kept a Persian table, and was quite unable to contain his intentions, but he betrayed by his conduct in trifles what his ambition looked one day to enact on a grander scale.⁷⁴

This section of Thucydides highlights that Pausanias lacked austerity, specifically through highlighting the grandiose way in which he lived on this campaign. Specifically, this extravagance is represented by Median dress, a luxury that broke from the Spartan traditional clothing, and a Persian table. Through emphasizing Pausanias' focus on wealth, it seems that Thucydides is illustrating Pausanias as susceptible to this luxury, and therefore, also as someone who is drifting from traditional Spartan ideals of austerity.

A similar corruption of Brasidas occurred while he was on his Thracian campaign and met with the Scionaeans. During his interactions with the Scionaeans, Thucydides depicts a bedecked Brasidas: "They welcomed Brasidas with all possible honors, publicly crowning him with a wreath of gold as the liberator of Hellas; private persons crowded round him and decked him with garlands as though he had been an athlete."⁷⁵ The Scionaeans treated Brasidas like royalty, similarly to Pausanias in the prior case; however, in this case, Brasidas did not ask for it or require it as Pausanias did. While Brasidas did not initially ask for or expect the Scionaeans' extravagant welcome, the decadence that they showered upon him possibly affected his mindset and actions. For example, when news of a key Spartan-Athenian truce arrived, Brasidas lied and broke the truce with the Athenians in order to defend the Scionaeans.⁷⁶ This truce would be reconstituted immediately after the death of Brasidas.

As the fifth century BCE progressed, this behavior became characteristic of leading Spartans such as Brasidas and Lysander, who were not kings. Specifically, Lysander trained in the *agogē* as a *mothax* and, as such, his corruption proves that even Spartans of non-royal origins were at risk of going down a similar path, riddled with bribery and profiteering after they achieved a leading role within Sparta.⁷⁷ This illustrates that a lack of austerity was not limited to one class of people; rather, it was transcended to the larger Spartan system and society. All this being said, it is clear that luxury and wealth played a far greater role in Spartan campaigning than depicted in the Spartan mirage.

While the cases in this section of the article differ from those outlined in sections I and II of this paper, they, ultimately, do support Xenophon's theory of decline as analyzed through the lens of corruption and bribery. The case of Pausanias and his bribery of Spartan leaders is representative of a unique case of corruption. The other cases illustrate the further in austerity of Pausanias and the lack of integrity shown by Brasidas, where they are both influenced by wealth or foreigners. These cases are all indicative of the divergence between the Spartan mirage and reality.

V. Conclusion

There are a number of nuances in the argument that provide starting points for additional research.⁷⁸ One important nuance in this argument is that many of the charges against the kings and leading Spartans came from the ephors, who gained increasing power throughout the fifth century BCE: "The Ephors are competent to fine whom they choose, and have authority to enact immediate payment."⁷⁹ It is possible that they put kings on trial, and prosecuted them for bribery as a way of diminishing the king and curbing their power

(rather than for the sole reason that the kings had actually committed bribery).⁸⁰ Sometimes this resulted in the exile of kings, while in other cases it appeared that the ephors might have taken wealth in exchange for allowing the accused to be acquitted. This tactic, in which the ephors curbed the power of leading Spartans, originally just included Spartan kings. However, as the fifth century progressed other non-kings who amassed great power were pushed out by the ephors as well.⁸¹ This point suggests that the corruption in Spartan society was not solely limited to royalty and other men who accumulated power; rather, the ephors were also hungry for power and wealth, and susceptible to this same bribery. Further exploration can be done on corruption related to the ephors; however, exploring this topic in depth is beyond the scope of this specific article, which has specifically focused on the corruption of Spartan kings and other leading Spartans.

Spartans illustrated greater susceptibility to the influence of bribery and corruption than is commonly associated with Sparta, as shown by the primary sources cited in this paper. This common association of austerity, equality, and honor can be traced back to the Spartan mirage and orthodox historical accounts. This greater susceptibility to the influence of bribery and corruption, as described in events presented by Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon supports the latter's decline theory, revealing the moral fiber of leading Spartans in the late fifth century BCE to be questionable at best. While the cases have been split into multiple categories: bribery and financial upkeep of Spartan military, bribery to alter military plans, bribing oracles, and outliers, all the cases depict Spartans as willing to be bribed and bribing others for their personal benefit. Though kings, originally, were the only ones shown to be subject to corruption, towards the end of the fifth century BCE, this corruption had extended its reach to many leading Spartans. As the Peloponnesian War came to an end, it became clear that wealth and money played a significant role in Sparta's military strategy.

REFERENCES

Tap to jump to the Bibliography

- ¹ J. Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," in *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind Her Success*, (New York: Routledge Revival, 2014), 122-141, 136. "For many years, even when the current behavior of the Spartans flagrantly contradicted the 'Lycurgan' ideal."
- ² Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*. (London: Duckworth, 2001), 163.
- ³ Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, Chapter 9, Section 1, Page 231.
- ⁴ Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," 130-135. Hooker discusses when the Spartan mirage started and aspects of it.
- ⁵ Robert B. Strassler ed. *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*. Translated by John Marincola. (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009). This quote shows the dual sided view the Spartan mirage shows about Spartan life. As Kleomenes proved to be the austere but deeply feared that many within Sparta would not be so austere if tempted in the same way. Xenophon Constitution of the Lacedaemon's 185 illustrates a clear instance of the unknown nature of the Spartan mirage and how unclear it was seeing the reality of Sparta from the mirage.
- ⁶ Charleton L. Brownson, *Xenophon: Anabasis*. (London: Heinemann, 1968), 5.3.7. Xenophon had interactions with the Lacedaemonians during his time in Scillus in the Peloponese. "He was living at Scillus, near Olympia, where he had been established as a colonist by the Lacedaemonians."
- ⁷ Xenophon, and Donald F. Jackson. *The constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. (Lewiston.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).
- ⁸ Ibid, 185. This may also be an indicator of Xenophon's decline theory with more publicized grandeur and connection with wealth.
- ⁹ Hooker, "Spartan Propaganda," 136. Hooker relates Xenophon's decline theory with Plato's view of Sparta.
- ¹⁰ G. L. Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," *The Classical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1983): 385. Cawkwell focuses on one aspect of the decline of Sparta, especially the decline in Spartan hoplites or Spartiates from several thousand to little over a thousand by the end of the fifth century. He further discusses the concept of Neodamodeis and Inferiors and how they supplemented the loss of Spartan manpower, 392-394.
- ¹¹ S. Hodkinson, "The imaginary Spartan Politeia" in *The Imaginary Polis* (Copenhagen: Historisk Filosofiske Meddelelser, 2005), 91. Hodkinson addresses Xenophon's theory of decline through the view of several ancient Greek historians.
- ¹² Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 BC*. (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- ¹³ Stephen Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*. (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009).
- ¹⁴ Claire Taylor, "Bribery in Athenian Politics Part I: Accusations, Allegations, and Slander," *Greece & Rome* 48, no. 1 (2001): 53-66. This study investigates common forms of Athenian bribery, including Greek terminology used to describe specific types of bribery.
- ¹⁵ Michael A. Flower, "Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 37, no. S58 (1991): 93. Flower discusses the decline of Spartan morals, especially the role wealth and luxury played in this decline. He further explains the Greek outlook on the negative moral aspects of prosperity and wealth.
- ¹⁶ Mercenaries being defined as any group who fought with the Spartans, who weren't a part of the Peloponnesian League or allied to Sparta, in exchange for wealth and thus bound to go to war with the Spartans.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 5.49.4.
- ¹⁸ It was uncommon for the Spartan military to venture far from their homelands on long campaigns due to the constant of a Helot revolt.
- ¹⁹ Robert B. Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, trans. Andrea L Purvis, (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 5.51.2.
- ²⁰ Hansen, Mogens Herman, and Stephen Hodkinson, "The Imaginary Spartan Politeia," In *The Imaginary Polis: Symposium*, (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske videnskabernes selskab, 2005), 224-225. Hodkinson addresses the dualities involved in the primary sources on Sparta, especially how they depict the Spartan mirage and reality.
- ²¹ F.D. Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," *History of Political Thought* 6, no. 1/2 (1985): 108. Harvey references the Hypereides Principle, which mentions that Athenians would be tolerant of bribery so long as it was in Athens best interest. This principle is interesting to further put our focus of Spartan bribery in proper context, especially whether bribes taken were in the best interest of Sparta or not.
- ²² Not exactly Spartan hoplites as mercenaries but bribery to cause Spartan military action as they would still be under Spartan command and with Spartan goals in mind (as long as they were fighting Athens in Attica).
- ²³ Robert B. Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley, (New York: Free Press, 1996), 1.109.2-3.
- ²⁴ Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 4.80.5. elots were Spartan slaves that worked in the polis and fields around Sparta. While they usually did not train in the Spartan *agogē*, some did train in the *agogē*. As such, the majority of Spartan helots were untrained in the arts of war.
- ²⁵ This assumption being that Sparta likely provided limited funds for this purpose. The reason he likely received limited funding was due to the lack of broad support for his northern campaign.
- ²⁶ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 4.83.5.

²⁷ Ibid, 4.104.2.

²⁸ Ibid, 4.116.2.

²⁹ G. L. Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta." *The Classical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1983): 385-400.

³⁰ Cartledge, Paul and Massimo Nafissi, "Sparta," In *Sparta: New Perspectives*, edited by Hodkinson Stephen and Powell Anton, (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 129; Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," 393-394. It was possible for non-Spartiates to be trained in the *agogē*, these fall into two categories: *mothakes* or Inferiors and *neodamodeis* (freed helots of military service). While much is still unknown about the exact nature and origin of these individuals it is clear that they were non-Spartiates trained in the *agogē* who were then used in Sparta's military. This started in the middle of the Peloponnesian War. Nafissi addresses other reasons why the number of Spartiates declined, especially the inability to pay the tax necessary to remain a full Spartiate.

³¹ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*: 2.9.1. The Peloponnesians alliance to the Spartans in the Peloponnesian League led nearly all the Peloponnesians to ally and aid Sparta during times of war.

³² Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta," 385. Cawkwell explains that the Spartans relied upon hoplites during the majority of the fifth century until the number of hoplites declined significantly.

³³ Robert B Strassler, ed, *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*, trans. John Marincola (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009), 2.1.18. Xenophon explains that Lysander sailed down the coast with his men before meeting up with another contingent of Spartan-led troops before attacking Lampsacus. Some of the troops were not Spartan hoplites.

³⁴ Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 2.1.19.

³⁵ Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 155; Kathleen M. Lynch, *The Symposium in Context: Pottery From a Late Archaic House Near the Athenian Agora*, (*Princeton: Hesperia Supplements*, 2007). While Strassler writes that "Another of [Xenophon's] reforms was the abolition of compulsory drinking," symposia, or drinking parties, which included compulsory drinking, were a social aspect of ancient Greek culture.

³⁶ While they could have sold these other forms of wealth to help supply their campaign further, no mention of this is given in Xenophon's *Hellenika*.

³⁷ Strassler, *Xenophon's Hellenika*, 2.1.11.

³⁸ Ibid, 2.1.14.

³⁹ Ibid, 2.1.14.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 2.1.15.

⁴¹ Flower, *Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta*, 92. Flower goes into detail about the question of what to do with wealth after the Peloponnesian War ended. This highlighted the change in culture the Spartans had experienced during the fifth century BCE.

⁴² Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 5.14.4. Thucydides mentions the thirty years peace Sparta had enforced on Argos after Sparta's dominant victory in 451; Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," 99-100. Harvey gives several examples of why a retreat might be tactical and not necessarily resulting from a bribe.

⁴³ Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.82.1.

⁴⁴ Argos was forced into a significant peace by Sparta in another campaign later in the fifth century BCE.

⁴⁵ Hodkinson, *Properties and Wealth in Classical Sparta*. Hodkinson discusses at length how individuals within Sparta were never put above other Spartans—even Olympic winners only received minor honors.

⁴⁶ Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.82.1

⁴⁷ Ibid, 6.50.2.

⁴⁸ Herodotus states, "The source of Krios' assertion was a letter from Demaratos." Demaratos was the other King of Sparta. The source claiming Kleomenes' mission lacked authority and backing of the Spartan government comes from the other king of Sparta, a legitimate source. Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.50.3.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 6.49.2

⁵⁰ Ibid, 6.72.1-2.

⁵¹ Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: Some Aspects of Bribery in Greek Politics," 94-95. Harvey references this accusation, but does not agree that the case is definitive and that the Spartans were capable of rigging a trial.

⁵² Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 2.21.1.

⁵³ Ibid., 1.114.1-2. Thucydides explains that Pleistoanax led an army into Attica after the revolt of Euboea and Megara, probably thinking the revolts had weakened Athens during this early stage of the Peloponnesian War.

- ⁵⁴ Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 2.21.3-2.22.1. Thucydides explains that Pericles kept the Athenians from going out to meet the Spartans in open battle.
- ⁵⁵ Plutarch and W. R. Frazer, *Plutarch's Lives. Alexander. Pericles. Caius Caesar. Aemilius Paulus*. (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906), 119. Whether that be favorable terms in a treaty outright or a silent agreement with Pericles, the man theorized to have bribed him. It is possible that a xenia relationship would have played a factor in this interaction. Malkin, Irad, "Lysander and Libys," *The Classical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1990). Malkin discusses xenia relations with foreigners and the role he played in Lysander's bribery of oracle, however if we think about the role of xenia relations this may have played a part in the bribe Pleistoanax received. Xenia relations are further discussed in Harvey, "Dona Ferentes: some aspects of bribery in Greek politics" 107.
- ⁵⁶ "He would not suffer the names to be inscribed, except only of men who fell in the wars, or women who died in a sacred office." Lycurgus only allowed those who died in childbirth in battle to have gravestones, because they died in direct service of the polis. Plutarch, John Dryden, and Arthur Hugh Clough. *Plutarch's Lives, the Dryden Plutarch*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, ltd, 1932, 288.27.2.
- ⁵⁷ Hooker, J, "Spartan Propaganda," 132. Hooker illustrates the precedent Lycurgus set down by going to the oracle prior to reforming Sparta.
- ⁵⁸ The origin of the use of oracles to enact government reform goes back to Lycurgus. Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedemonians* 164: "before delivering his laws to the people he paid a visit to Delphi, accompanied by the most important citizens, and inquired of the god whether it was desirable and better for Sparta that she should obey the laws that he himself had framed. Only when the god answered that it was better in every way did he deliver them."
- ⁵⁹ Hooker, J, "The Life and Times of Lycurgus the Lawgiver," *Klio*, 70 (2016), 340-341. Hooker explains the origins of going to oracles to enact Spartan reform and how Lycurgus used an oracle.
- ⁶⁰ Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Herodotus*, 6.66.2.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid*, 6.82.1
- ⁶² Strassler, Robert B, ed, *The Landmark Thucydides: a Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 5.16.2.
- ⁶³ The lore of Sparta describes the descendants of Heracles —the Agiads and Eurpontids—that were the two dynasties that produced Spartan kings. By focusing on looking for a demigod son of Zeus abroad, the oracle had a highly specific focus that indicated Pleistonax alone.
- ⁶⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.3.
- ⁶⁵ Malkin, "Lysander and Libys," 542; Flower, "Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta," 81. Flower goes into detail about how Lysander understood the way to enact reform within Sparta, specifically through the usage of oracles.
- ⁶⁶ Malkin, "Lysander and Libys," 542.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 542. Malkin discusses the role of xenia relations and how Lysander may have used a xenia relation in his attempts to bribe oracles.
- ⁶⁸ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.3-47.7.
- ⁶⁹ Diodorus, *Library of History Book 14*, 45.2.
- ⁷⁰ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.131.2.
- ⁷¹ Taylor, *Bribery in Athenian Politics*, 54. Taylor refers to the term *sykophancy* "can be described as a form of bribery (paying money to someone to avoid a court appearance)."
- ⁷² Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.128.7.
- ⁷³ Hooker, *Spartan Propaganda*, 125. Hooker discusses Thucydides depiction of Pausanias.
- ⁷⁴ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.130.1.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 4.121.1.
- ⁷⁶ Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 5.16.1.
- ⁷⁷ Cawkwell, *The Decline of Sparta*, 394. A *mothax* is someone who was not a full Spartan citizen (or Spartiate) who underwent the training in the *agogē*. It was thought Lysander was a *mothax*, Cawkwell mentions several sources that indicate in the affirmative
- ⁷⁸ H. W. Parke, "The Deposing of Spartan Kings," *The Classical Quarterly* 39, no. 3/4 (1945): 109-110. Parke addresses a number of possible nuances that explain the deposing of Spartan kings for bribery.
- ⁷⁹ Strassler, *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika*, 163.
- ⁸⁰ Cartledge and Nafissi, *New Perspectives on Sparta*, 131. One such example was Pleistoanax after altering his military campaign by leaving Attica early. Nafissi addresses the role of the ephors and how they interacted with other Spartan individuals and bodies (*gerousia*, kings, etc).
- ⁸¹ Hodkinson, *The Imaginary Spartan Politeia*, 240-241. Hodkinson addresses the evolving role of ephors and kings.