

Sparta's Spectacular Austerity

1) **Plutarch, *Lyc. 27.2***: καὶ κατεπύκνου παραδειγμάτων πλήθει τὴν πόλιν, οἷς ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἐντυγχάνοντας αἰεὶ καὶ συντρεφομένους ἄγεσθαι καὶ κατασχηματίζεσθαι ἰόντας πρὸς τὸ καλόν.

“He [Lycurgus] caused the city to be thickly studded with a mass of models; those who came into continuous contact with them and were brought up together with them would necessarily be influenced into conforming with what was good.”

2) **Xenophon, *Lac. Pol. 10.4***: ὃς ἐπειδὴ κατέμαθεν ὅτι ὅπου οἱ βουλόμενοι ἐπιμελοῦνται τῆς ἀρετῆς οὐχ ἱκανοὶ εἰσι τὰς πατρίδας αὔξειν, [ἐκεῖνος] ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ ἠνάγκασε δημοσίᾳ πάντας πάσας ἀσκεῖν τὰς ἀρετάς. ὥσπερ οὖν [οἱ ἰδιῶται] τῶν ἰδιωτῶν διαφέρουσιν ἀρετῇ οἱ ἀσκοῦντες τῶν ἀμελούντων, οὕτω καὶ ἡ Σπάρτη εἰκότως πασῶν τῶν πόλεων ἀρετῇ διαφέρει, μόνῃ δημοσίᾳ ἐπιτηδεύουσα τὴν καλοκάγαθίαν.

“When he [= Lycurgus] had observed that where those who voluntarily cultivate virtue are not sufficient to increase in power their native lands, in Sparta he compelled all to practice all the virtues in public. Therefore, just as in the case of private individuals those who practice virtue are superior in it to those who neglect it, so Sparta, too, is reasonably superior to all *poleis* with respect to virtue, because she alone practices *kalokagathia* in public.”

3) **Aristotle, *Pol. 1270b33-35***: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ δίαίτια τῶν ἐφόρων οὐχ ὁμολογουμένη τῷ βουλήματι τῆς πόλεως· αὐτὴ μὲν γὰρ ἀνειμένη λίαν ἐστίν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις μᾶλλον ὑπερβάλλει ἐπὶ τὸ σκληρόν, ὥστε μὴ δύνασθαι καρτερεῖν ἀλλὰ λάθρα τὸν νόμον ἀποδιδράσκοντας ἀπολαύειν τῶν σωματικῶν ἡδονῶν.

“And the mode of life of the ephors is not in conformity with the aim of the state, for it is too unrestrained, while in the case of others [= citizens] it is excessive in the direction of austerity, with the result that they are unable to endure it and secretly shun the law and enjoy the pleasures of the body.”

4) **Aristotle, *EN 1127b26-29***: οἱ δὲ τὰ μικρὰ καὶ φανερὰ [προσποιοῦμενοι] βαυκοπανοῦργοι λέγονται καὶ εὐκαταφρονητότεροί εἰσιν· καὶ ἐνίοτε ἀλαζονεῖα φαίνεται, οἷον ἡ τῶν Λακώνων ἐσθῆς· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ὑπερβολὴ καὶ ἡ λίαν ἔλλειψις ἀλαζονικόν.

“Those who disclaim trifling or obvious qualities are called affected humbugs and are more contemptible; and sometimes this seems to be boastfulness, like the dress of the Spartans, for both excess and great deficiency are boastful.”

5) **Xenophon, *Lac. Pol. 7.3***: ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ἱματίων γε ἔνεκα χρηματιστέον· οὐ γὰρ ἐσθῆτος πολυτελεία ἀλλὰ σώματος εὐεξία κοσμοῦνται.

“Well, in truth, one does not need to make money even for cloaks, for they adorn themselves not with the costliness of their clothing but with the vigor of their bodies.”

6) Xenophon, Ages. 11.11: καὶ γὰρ ἐκαλλωπίζετο τῇ μὲν ἀμφὶ τὸ σῶμα φαυλότητι . . . (καὶ) τῷ μὲν αὐτὸς ὡς ἐλαχίστων δεῖσθαι . . .

“For he prided himself on the simplicity of his own dress [and] on his needing as little as possible.”

7) Plutarch, Ages. 14.2: ἥδιστον δὲ θέαμα τοῖς κατοικοῦσι τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἕλλησιν ἦσαν οἱ πάλαι βαρεῖς καὶ ἀφόρητοι καὶ διαρρέοντες ὑπὸ πλοῦτου καὶ τρυφῆς ὕπαρχοι καὶ στρατηγοὶ δεδιότες καὶ θεραπεύοντες ἄνθρωπον ἐν τρίβωνι περιϊόντα λιτῷ, καὶ πρὸς ἐν ῥῆμα βραχὺ καὶ Λακωνικὸν ἀρμόζοντες ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μετασχηματίζοντες. . .

“And it was most pleasing for the Greeks who dwelled in Asia to see the viceroys and generals, who had long been insufferably oppressive and had reveled in wealth and luxury, fearing and paying court to a man who went about in a paltry coat, and at one brief and laconic speech from him, conforming themselves and changing their form . . .”

8) Plutarch, Ages. 36.5-6: ὡς δὲ ἐώρων λαμπρότητα μὲν καὶ κατασκευὴν οὐδεμίαν, ἄνθρωπον δὲ πρεσβύτην κατακείμενον ἐν τινὶ πόσῃ παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν, εὐτελεῆ καὶ μικρὸν τὸ σῶμα, τραχὺ καὶ φαῦλον ἱμάτιον ἀμπεχόμενον, σκώπτειν αὐτοῖς καὶ γελωτοποιεῖν ἐπήει. . . ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀτοπίαν ἐθαύμασαν, ὅτε ξενίων προσκομισθέντων καὶ προσαχθέντων ἄλευρα μὲν καὶ μόσχους καὶ χῆνας ἔλαβε, τραγήματα δὲ καὶ πέμματα καὶ μύρα διωθεῖτο, καὶ βιαζομένων λαβεῖν καὶ λιπαρόντων ἐκέλευσε τοῖς εἴλωσι διδόναι κομίζοντας.

“But when they saw no brilliant array but an old man lying in some grass by the sea, his body paltry and small, covered in a cloak that was coarse and mean, they were moved to jeering and laughter. . . But they wondered still more at his eccentricity. When friendly gifts were brought and set before him, he accepted the wheat-meal and the calves, and the geese, but he rejected the sweetmeats and the pastries, and the perfumes, and when he was pressed hard and besought to accept them, he ordered them to be carried away and given to the helots.”

9) Critias fr. 6 Diels-Kranz (ap. Athen. 432d); cf. fr. 33 (ap. Athen. 463e): καὶ τόδ' ἔθος Σπάρτηι μελέτημά τε κείμενόν ἐστι/πίνειν τὴν αὐτὴν οἰνοφόρον κύλικα,/μηδ' ἀποδωρεῖσθαι προπόσεις ὀνομαστί λέγοντα,/μηδ' ἐπὶ δεξιτερὰν χεῖρα κύκλωι θιάσου/. . ./ οἱ Λακεδαιμονίων δὲ κόροι πίνουσι τοσοῦτον,/ὥστε φρέν' εἰς ἰλαρὰν ἐλπίδα πάντας ἄγειν/ἔς τε φιλοφροσῆνην γλῶσσαν μέτριόν τε γέλωτα/. . ./ἢ Λακεδαιμονίων δὲ δίαιθ' ὀμαλῶς διάκειται,/ἔσθαι καὶ πίνειν σύμμετρα πρὸς τὸ φρονεῖν/καὶ τὸ πονεῖν εἶναι δυνατούς· οὐκ ἔστ' ἀπότακτος/ἡμέρα οἰνῶσαι σῶμ' ἀμέτροισι πότοις.

Trans. Sprague 1972: “And it is a habit and established practice at Sparta to drink from the same wine cup and not to give toasts mentioning someone by name and not to pass it round, as is customary in Athens, moving to the right in a circle around the company. . . Lacedaemonian youths, however, drink only enough to direct the thinking of all towards cheery hopefulness and the tongue towards friendliness and temperate laughter. . . The way of life of the Lacedaemonians is evenly ordered: to eat and drink the appropriate amount to render them capable of thought and labor. No day is set aside for soaking the body through immoderate draughts.”

10) Xenophon, *Lac. Pol.* 5.3-4: καὶ σῖτόν γε ἔταξεν αὐτοῖς ὡς μήτε ὑπερπληροῦσθαι μήτε ἐνδεεῖς γίνεσθαι. . . . καὶ μὴν τοῦ πότου ἀποπαύσας τὰς [οὐκ] ἀναγκαίας πόσεις, αἱ σφάλλουσι μὲν σώματα, σφάλλουσι δὲ γνώμας, ἐφῆκεν ὅποτε διψῶν ἕκαστος πίνειν, οὕτω νομίζων ἀβλαβέστατόν τε καὶ ἡδιστόν ποτόν γίνεσθαι. οὕτω γε μὴν συσκηνοῦντων πῶς ἂν τις ἢ ὑπὸ λιχνεῖας ἢ οἰνοφλυγίας ἢ αὐτόν ἢ οἶκον διαφθείρειεν;

“And he prescribed food for them so that they would neither be overfull nor be left wanting.... And, moreover, concerning drinking, having put a stop to compulsory draughts, which trip up bodies and trip up minds, he allowed each to drink whenever he was thirsty, since he believed that in this way drinking is most harmless and most pleasant. Thus, therefore, how then could one of those messing together destroy either himself or his household either through gluttony or drunkenness?”

11) Plutarch, *Lyc.* 10.1-3; cf. 12; *Mor.* 226e-f, 236f: Ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐπιθέσθαι τῇ τρυφῇ καὶ τὸν ζῆλον ἀφελέσθαι τοῦ πλοῦτου διανοηθεῖς, τὸ τρίτον πολίτευμα καὶ κάλλιστον ἐπέηγε, τὴν τῶν συσσιτίων κατασκευὴν, ὥστε δειπνεῖν μετ’ ἀλλήλων συνιόντας ἐπι

κοινοῖς καὶ τεταγμένοις ὄψοις καὶ σιτίοις, οἴκοι δὲ μὴ διαιτᾶσθαι κατακλινέντας εἰς στρωμνὰς πολυτελεῖς καὶ τραπέζας, χερσὶ δημιουργῶν καὶ μαγείρων ὑπὸ σκότος, ὥσπερ ἀδηφάγα ζῶα, πιανομένους . . .

“With the aim of attacking luxury still more and removing the passion for wealth, he introduced his third and finest measure, the establishment of the common messes so that they might dine with one another in companies, on common and prescribed cooked dishes and victuals and not lead their lives at home, reclining on expensive couches at expensive tables, delivering themselves into the hands of confectioners and cooks to be fattened in the dark, like gluttonous animals . . .”

12) Xenophon, *Lac. Pol.* 1.5: ἐπεὶ γε μὴν γυνὴ πρὸς ἄνδρα ἔλθοι, ὁρῶν τοὺς ἄλλους τὸν πρῶτον τοῦ χρόνου ἀμέτρως ταῖς γυναιξὶ συνόντας, καὶ τούτου τάναντία ἔγνω· ἔθηκε γὰρ αἰδεῖσθαι μὲν εἰσιόντα ὀφθῆναι, αἰδεῖσθαι δ’ ἐξιόντα. οὕτω δὲ συνόντων

ποθειντέρως μὲν ἀνάγκη σφῶν αὐτῶν ἔχειν, ἐρρωμενέστερα δὲ γίνεσθαι, εἴ τι βλάστοι οὕτω, μᾶλλον ἢ εἰ διάκοροι ἀλλήλων εἶεν.

“Since he saw that the others during this first period of time had unlimited intercourse with their wives, he also determined things opposite to this practice. For he established that it was shameful for a man to be seen entering or leaving [sc. his wife’s room]. By engaging in intercourse in this way, they would necessarily be more desirous of one another, and if any offspring should be produced in this way, it would be more vigorous than if they were satiated with one another.”

13) Plutarch, *Lyc.* 15.5; cf. 15.4; *Mor.* 228a: ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη σύνοδος οὐ μόνον ἐγκρατείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ἄσκησις ἦν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς τε σώμασι γονίμους καὶ τῷ φιλεῖν ἀεὶ καινοῦς καὶ προσφάτους ἦγεν ἐπὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν, οὐ διακορεῖς οὐδ’ ἐξιτήλους ταῖς ἀνέδην κοινωνίαις . .

“And such intercourse not only was an exercise in self-control and temperance but also united husbands and wives when their bodies were fertile and their affections new and fresh, not when they were sated and dulled by unrestricted intercourse.”

14) Plutarch, *Lyc.* 27.1-2 (cf. *Mor.* 238d): Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰ περὶ τὰς ταφὰς ἄριστα διεκόσμησεν αὐτοῖς. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἀνελῶν δεισιδαιμονίαν ἄπασαν ἐν τῇ πόλει θάπτειν τοὺς νεκρούς, καὶ πλησίον ἔχειν τὰ μνήματα τῶν ἱερῶν οὐκ ἐκώλυσε, συντρόφους ποιῶν ταῖς τοιαύταις ὄψεσι καὶ συνήθεις τοὺς νέους, ὥστε μὴ ταράττεσθαι μηδ’ ὀρρωδεῖν τὸν θάνατον ὡς μαίνοντα τοὺς ἀψαμένους νεκροῦ σώματος ἢ διὰ τάφων διελθόντας. ἔπειτα συνθάπτει οὐδὲν εἶασεν, ἀλλὰ ἐν φοινικίδι καὶ φύλλοις ἐλαίας θέντες τὸ σῶμα περιπτελλόν. ἐπιγράψαι δὲ τοῦνομα θάψαντας οὐκ ἐξῆν τοῦ νεκροῦ, πλὴν ἀνδρὸς ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ γυναικὸς τῶν ἱερῶν ἀποθανόντων.

Furthermore, Lycurgus made the most excellent regulations in the matter of their burials. First, he did away with all superstitious fear by allowing them to bury their dead within the city and to have memorials of them near the sacred places, thereby making the youth familiar with and accustomed to such sights, so that they were neither agitated by them nor feared death as polluting those who touched a corpse or walked among the graves. Next, he allowed them to bury nothing with the dead; instead, they wrapped the body in a crimson military cloak and olive leaves when they laid it in the grave. To inscribe the name of the deceased was not permitted for those carrying out the burial, except for a man who died in war and a holy woman [*text still disputed*].

15) Thucydides 1.84.2-3: καὶ δύναται μάλιστα σωφροσύνη ἔμφρων τοῦτ’ εἶναι· μόνοι γὰρ δι’ αὐτὸ εὐπραγίαις τε οὐκ ἐξυβρίζομεν καὶ ξυμφοραῖς ἧσσον ἐτέρων εἴκομεν· τῶν τε ζῶν ἐπαίνῳ ἐξοτρυνόντων ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὰ δεινὰ παρὰ τὸ δοκοῦν ἡμῖν οὐκ ἐπαιρόμεθα ἠδονῆ, καὶ ἦν τις ἄρα ζῶν κατηγορίᾳ παροξύνῃ, οὐδὲν δὲ μᾶλλον ἀχθεσθέντες ἀνεπίεσθημεν. . . . εὐβουλοὶ δὲ ἀμαθέστερον τῶν νόμων τῆς ὑπεροψίας παιδευόμενοι καὶ ζῶν χαλεπότητι

σωφρονέστερον ἢ ὥστε αὐτῶν ἀνηκουστεῖν, καὶ μὴ τὰ ἀχρεῖα ξυνετοὶ ἄγαν ὄντες τὰς τῶν πολεμίων παρασκευὰς λόγῳ καλῶς μεμφόμενοι ἀνομοίως ἔργῳ ἐπεξιέναι . . .

“The quality that they condemn is really nothing but sensible moderation; on account of it, we alone do not become insolent in success and give way less than others in misfortune. We are not carried away by the pleasure of hearing ourselves praised when people are urging us towards dangers that run counter to our judgment; nor are we, when annoyed, more likely to be persuaded by an attempt to goad us through accusation. . . . And we are good at deliberation because we are educated with too little learning to despise the laws and too severely trained in self-control to disobey them. And we are trained to avoid being too clever in useless matters – such as being able to produce in words an excellent criticism of the enemy’s preparations and then failing to proceed against them with equal success in practice . . .”

16) Thucydides 1.86: Τοὺς μὲν λόγους τοὺς πολλοὺς τῶν Ἀθηναίων οὐ γινώσκω· ἐπαινέσαντες γὰρ πολλὰ ἑαυτοὺς οὐδαμοῦ ἀντεῖπον ὡς οὐκ ἀδικοῦσι τοὺς ἡμετέρους ξυμμάχους καὶ τὴν Πελοπόννησον· καίτοι εἰ πρὸς τοὺς Μήδους ἐγένοντο ἀγαθοὶ τότε, πρὸς δ’ ἡμᾶς κακοὶ νῦν, διπλασίας ζημίας ἄξιοι εἰσιν, ὅτι ἀντ’ ἀγαθῶν κακοὶ γεγένηται. ἡμεῖς δὲ ὁμοῖοι καὶ τότε καὶ νῦν ἐσμέν, καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους, ἦν σωφρονῶμεν, οὐ περιοψόμεθα ἀδικουμένους οὐδὲ μελλήσομεν τιμωρεῖν· οἱ δ’ οὐκέτι μέλλουσι κακῶς πάσχειν. ἄλλοις μὲν γὰρ χρήματά ἐστι πολλὰ καὶ νῆες καὶ ἵπποι, ἡμῖν δὲ ξύμμαχοι ἀγαθοί, οὓς οὐ παραδοτέα τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ἐστίν, οὐδὲ δίκαις καὶ λόγοις διακριτέα μὴ λόγῳ καὶ αὐτοὺς βλαπτομένους, ἀλλὰ τιμωρητέα ἐν τάχει καὶ παντὶ σθένει. καὶ ὡς ἡμᾶς πρέπει βουλευέσθαι ἀδικουμένους μηδεὶς διδασκέτω, ἀλλὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας ἀδικεῖν μᾶλλον πρέπει πολὺν χρόνον βουλευέσθαι. ψηφίζεσθε οὔν, ὦ

Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἀξίως τῆς Σπάρτης τὸν πόλεμον, καὶ μήτε τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἔατε μείζους γίνεσθαι μήτε τοὺς ξυμμάχους καταπροδιδῶμεν, ἀλλὰ ξὺν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπίωμεν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας.

“I do not understand these long speeches of the Athenians. They praised themselves a good deal, but they nowhere denied that they are injuring our allies and the Peloponnesus. And yet if they behaved well against the Medes then but ill against us now, they deserve double punishment, since they have ceased to be good and have become bad. We, on the other hand, are the same men then and now, and if we are sensible, we will not allow our allies to be wronged or wait to help them; they are no longer waiting to suffer. Others have a lot of money and ships and horses, but we have good allies, whom we ought not to betray to the Athenians. Nor is this a matter which should be decided by lawsuits and words, since it is not in word that we ourselves are being injured. Instead, we must assist our allies quickly and with all our might. And let no one instruct us that it is fitting for us to deliberate when we are being wronged; long deliberation is rather fitting for those intending to do wrong. Vote, then, Lacedaemonians, for war, as the honor of Sparta demands, and do not allow the Athenians to grow greater nor let us betray our allies, but with the gods’ help let us advance against the aggressors!”

17) Herodotus 3.46: ἐπέειτε δὲ οἱ ἐξελασθέντες Σαμίων ὑπὸ Πολυκράτεος ἀπίκοντο ἐς τὴν Σπάρτην, καταστάντες ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἔλεγον πολλὰ οἷα κάρτα δεόμενοι. οἱ δὲ σφι τῇ πρώτῃ καταστάσει ὑπεκρίναντο τὰ μὲν πρῶτα λεχθέντα ἐπιλεληθέναι, τὰ δὲ ὕστερα οὐ συνιέναι. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δεύτερα καταστάντες ἄλλο μὲν εἶπον οὐδέν, θύλακον δὲ φέροντες ἔφασαν τὸν θύλακον ἀλφίτων δέεσθαι. οἱ δὲ σφι ὑπεκρίναντο τῷ θυλάκῳ περιεργάσθαι· βοηθέειν δ' ὧν ἔδοξε αὐτοῖσι.

“When the Samians who had been expelled by Polycrates came to Sparta, they came before the authorities and made a long speech to show the greatness of their need. The Spartans, however, at this first presentation, answered that they had forgotten the beginning of the speech and did not understand its end. After this the Samians came before them a second time, bearing a sack, and said nothing other than that the sack needed barley-meal. To this the Spartans replied that they had overdone it with their ‘sack,’ but they did resolve to help them.”

18) Plato, *Prot.* 342d-e: γνοῖτε δ' ἂν ὅτι ἐγὼ ταῦτα ἀληθῆ λέγω καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν καὶ λόγους ἄριστα πεπαίδευνται, ὧδε· εἰ γὰρ ἐθέλει τις Λακεδαιμονίων τῷ φαυλοτάτῳ συγγενέσθαι, τὰ μὲν πολλὰ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις εὐρήσει αὐτὸν φαῦλόν τινα φαινόμενον, ἔπειτα, ὅπου ἂν τύχη τῶν λεγομένων, ἐνέβαλεν ῥῆμα ἄξιον λόγου βραχὺ καὶ συνεστραμμένον ὥσπερ δεινὸς ἀκοντιστής, ὥστε φαίνεσθαι τὸν προσδιαλεγόμενον παιδὸς μὴδὲν βελτίω.

“And you may know that what I say is true and that the Lacedaemonians are the best educated in philosophy and rhetoric by the following: If someone wishes to converse with the meanest of the Lacedaemonians, you will find that for most of the time he makes a poor show in the conversation. But then, at some chance point in the conversation, he throws in a notable remark that is terse and pithy, like a deadly javelin-thrower, that makes the one he is talking with seem no better than a child.”

19) Plato, *Leg.* 641e: τὴν πόλιν ἅπαντες ἡμῶν Ἕλληνας ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ὡς φιλόλογός τε ἐστὶ καὶ πολύλογος, Λακεδαίμονα δὲ καὶ Κρήτην, τὴν μὲν βραχύλογον, τὴν δὲ πολύνοιαν μᾶλλον ἢ πολυλογίαν ἀσκοῦσαν.

“All the Greeks are of the opinion that while our own city is both fond and full of speech, Lacedaemon is given to brevity in discourse, while Crete is inclined to wittiness rather than wordiness.”

20) Plutarch, *Agis* 4.1: ὁ δ' Ἄγις οὕτω πολὺ παρήλλαπτεν εὐφυΐα καὶ φρονήματι ψυχῆς οὐ μόνον τοῦτον, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἅπαντας ὅσοι μετ' Ἀγησίλαον τὸν μέγαν ἐβασίλευσαν, ὥστε μηδέπω γεγωνῶς εἰκοστὸν ἔτος, ἐντεθραμμένος δὲ πλούτοις καὶ τρυφαῖς γυναικῶν, τῆς τε μητρὸς Ἀγησιστράτας καὶ τῆς μάμμης Ἀρχιδαμίας, αἱ πλεῖστα χρήματα Λακεδαιμονίων ἐκέκτηντο, πρὸς τε τὰς ἡδονὰς εὐθύς ἀπισχυρίσασθαι, καὶ τὸν ἐπιπρέψαι μάλιστα τῇ χάριτι τῆς μορφῆς ὠραῖσμον δοκοῦντα περισπάσας τοῦ σώματος, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐκδύς καὶ διαφυγῶν πολυτέλειαν, ἐγκαλλωπίζεσθαι τῷ τριβωνίῳ, καὶ δεῖπνα καὶ λουτρὰ καὶ διαίτας Λακωνικὰς

ζητεῖν, καὶ λέγειν ὡς οὐδὲν δέοιτο τῆς βασιλείας, εἰ μὴ δι' αὐτὴν ἀναλήψοιτο τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν πάτριον ἀγωγὴν.

“Agis so far surpassed in natural goodness and in loftiness of soul not only Leonidas but almost all the kings who came after great Agesilaus. Accordingly, before his twentieth year, although he had been reared amid the wealth and luxury of women, namely, his mother Agesistrata and his grandmother Archidamia, who possessed the greatest wealth among the Lacedaemonians, he at once firmly opposed pleasures. He stripped from his body the adornment which was thought especially to suit the grace of his figure, and, having stripped off and escaped every extravagance, he took pride in his short Spartan cloak, sought after Spartan customs in his meals and baths and general ways of living, and declared that he did not want the kingship unless through it he could restore the laws and the ancestral upbringing.”

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