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## THE SPARTAN KRYPTeia REVISITED\*

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*Résumé.* – Cet article propose une nouvelle lecture des sources littéraires portant sur la *krypteia* spartiate. Il examine les deux traditions littéraires différentes, Platon (entraînement à la survie) et «Aristote» (chasse aux hilotes), et montre que la source de Plutarque pour la chasse aux hilotes pendant la *krypteia* n'était pas Aristote mais Héraclide Lembos et des épitomies des *politeiai* aristotéliennes de la période hellénistique qui racontent très souvent des histoires d'une extrême brutalité. Il souligne également l'absence totale de toute autre témoignage littéraire de la chasse aux hilotes pendant la *krypteia* et propose de considérer la *krypteia* comme un entraînement de survie dans le but d'incorporer ceux qui l'ont accompli dans l'unité militaire homonyme, présente à Thèbes en 379 et à la bataille de Séllasie en 222 av. n. ère. Des documents épigraphiques qui mentionnent cette unité militaire existent dans le dème de Rhamnonte en Attique pendant le III<sup>e</sup> s. av. n. ère.

*Abstract.* – This paper offers a new reading of the literary evidence about the Spartan *krypteia*. It examines the two different literary traditions of Plato (survival training) and 'Aristotle' (helot hunting) and shows that Plutarch's source for helot hunting during the *krypteia* was not Aristotle but Heraclides Lembos and epitomes of the Aristotelian *Politeiai* of the Hellenistic period that very often tell stories of extreme brutality. The article also underlines the complete absence of any other evidence for helot hunting during the *krypteia* and, using Phylarchus and one of Plato's sources, proposes to interpret the *krypteia* as a survival training with the aim of incorporating those who accomplished it into the homonymous military unit that participated at Thèbes in 379 and at the battle of Sellasia in 222 B.C. Epigraphic evidence for this military unit survives from the Attic deme of Rhamnous during the 3rd c. BC.

*Mots-clés.* – *Krypteia*, helotes, Sparte, Platon, Aristote, Plutarque, Héraclide Lembos, unité militaire, chasse aux hilotes.

*Keywords.* – *Krypteia*, helots, Sparta, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Heraclides Lembos, military unity, helot hunting.

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“Es ist ein erstaunliches Phänomen, das trotz fragwürdiger Überlieferung die “Helotenjagd“ der *kryptoi* ein Bestandteil des Sparta-Mythos geblieben ist.“<sup>1</sup>

In 1933 François Ollier published *Le mirage spartiate: étude sur l'idéalisation de Sparte dans l'antiquité grecque du début de l'époque cynique jusqu'à la fin de la cité*.<sup>2</sup> In this book he warned scholars to be skeptical about ancient sources that idealize Sparta. But scholars should be equally skeptical about ancient sources that go to the other extreme in demonizing Sparta, making the *polis* an example of cruelty and oppression.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Sparta and of other Greek communities, it is necessary to evaluate all ancient sources without preconceptions and to examine their reliability. Above all, one should be on the lookout for “fake news”. One should especially avoid confirmation bias, that is, the tendency to accept sources not because they are reliable but because they confirm what one has already decided is true.

One of the main pieces of evidence for the view that Sparta was an example of cruelty and oppression is the tradition about the *krypteia*. Two passages, one from Heraclides Lembos and another from Plutarch, describe the *krypteia* as helot-hunting by young Spartans.<sup>4</sup>

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1. K.-W. WELWEI, «War die Krypteia ein grausames Terrorinstrument? Zur Entstehung einer Fiktion», *Laverna* 15, 2004, p. 46.

2. *The Spartan mirage: study on the idealization of Sparta in Greek antiquity from the beginning of the Cynic period until the end of the city*.

3. G.E.M. DE STE. CROIX, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London 1972; P. CARTLEDGE, *Sparta and Laconia. A Regional History 1300-362 BC*, London 1979; ST. HODKINSON, «The Imaginary Spartan politeia» in M. H. HANSEN, *The Imaginary Polis*, Symposium, January 7-10, 2004, Copenhagen 2005, p. 222-281.

4. What prevailed in modern and contemporary studies focusing on Sparta is that the so-called military character of this city is the result of the fear of the helots. This idea had an enormous impact on the way Sparta has been seen: G.E.M. DE STE. CROIX 1972, *op. cit.*; P. CARTLEDGE, «Rebels and Samboes in Classical Greece: A Comparative View» in P. CARTLEDGE, F. D. HARVEY eds., *CRUX: Essays in Greek history presented to G. E. M. de Ste Croix on his 75th Birthday*, Exeter-London 1985, p. 14-46 (= P. CARTLEDGE, *Spartan Reflections*, London 2001, p. 127-152); *Id.*, «Richard Tablert's Revision of the Sparta-Helot Struggle: A Reply», *Historia* 40, 1991, p. 379-381; ST. HODKINSON, «The Development of Spartan Society and Institutions in the Archaic Period» in L.G. MITCHELL, P. J. RHODES eds., *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*, London 1997, p. 96-97; S. LINK, *Das frühe Sparta. Untersuchungen zur spartanischen Staatsbildung im 7. und 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, St Katharinen 2000; P. CARTLEDGE, «Raising hell? The Helot Mirage – a personal re-view» in N. LURAGHI, S. E. ALCOCK eds., *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia. Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, Washington 2003, p. 12-30; ST. HODKINSON, «Was Classical Sparta a Military Society?» in ST. HODKINSON, A. POWELL eds., *Sparta and War*, Swansea 2006, p. 132-133; B. ROSS, «Crypteia: A Form of Ancient Guerilla Warfare», *Grand Valley Journal of History* 1.2.4, 2012, p. 1-10. Cf. Thuc. IV.80.3 and V.23.3.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> c. specialists of Sparta, of education, of initiation rites, and of religion examined this institution and have offered different explanations for what seems to be a Spartan peculiarity:<sup>5</sup>

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5. J.J. BARTHELEMY, *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce dans le milieu du quatrième siècle avant l'ère vulgaire*, Paris 1788; J. F. REITERMEIER, *Geschichte und Zustand der Sklaverey und Leibeigenschaft in Griechenland*, Berlin 1789; J.C.F. MANSO, *Sparta. Ein Versuch zur Aufklärung der Geschichte und Verfassung dieses Staates*, Leipzig 1800-1805; H. KÖCHLY, «De Lacedaemoniorum cryptia commentatio» in G. M. THOMAS ed., *Gesammelte Kleine Philologische Schriften I*, Leipzig 1835, p. 580-591; K.O. MÜLLER, *Geschichte hellenischer Stämme und Städte. Die Dorier*, Breslau 1844; H. WALLON, «Explication d'un passage de Plutarque sur une loi de Lycurgue: La Cryptie» in *Histoire des institutions politiques de la Grèce*, Paris 1850, p. 15-16; G. GROTE, *A History of Greece II*, Cambridge 1880; *Id.*, *Geschichte Griechenlands*, Berlin 1846; L. GRASBERGER, *Erziehung und Unterricht im klassischen Altertum*, vol. 3. *Die Ephebenbildung oder die musische und militärische Ausbildung der griechischen und römischen Jünglinge*, Würzburg 1881; M. DUNCKER, *Griechische Geschichte bis zum Tode des Perikles. Sonderausgabe der dritten, vierten und fünften Auflage der Geschichte des Altertums*, Leipzig 1888; G. BUSOLT, *Griechische Geschichte bis zur Schlacht von Chaironeia*, Goth 1893; J. BURCKHARDT, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, Basel 1898; P. GIRARD, «Un texte inédit sur la cryptie des Lacédémoniens», *REG* 11, 1898, p. 31-38; *Id.*, «Krypteia» in *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines III* 1, Paris 1900, p. 871-873; M.P. NILSSON, «Die Grundlagen des spartanischen Lebens», *Klio* 12, 1912, p. 308-340; H. JEANMAIRE, «La cryptie lacédémonienne», *REG* 26, 1913, p. 121-150 and *Id.*, *Couroi et Courètes. Essai sur l'éducation spartiate et sur les rites d'adolescence dans l'antiquité hellénique*, Lille 1939; H. BERVE, *Sparta*, Darmstadt 1937; D. LOTZE, *Metaxy eleutheron kai doulon. Studien zur Rechtsstellung unfreier Landbevölkerungen in Griechenland bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Berlin 1959; H. MICHELL, *Sparta*, Cambridge 1964; P. VIDAL-NAQUET, «Le chasseur noir et l'origine de l'éphébie athénienne», *Annales (ESC)* 23, 1968, p. 947-964 (=«The Black Hunter and the Origin of the Athenian Ephebeia », *PCPhS* 194, 1968); M.I. FINLEY, «Sparta» in J.-P. VERNANT ed., *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, Paris-La Haye 1968, p. 14-160 and *Id.*, «Sparta» in M. I. FINLEY ed., *The Use and Abuse of History*, London 1975, p. 161-177, p. 238-240, reprinted in K. CHRIST ed., *Sparta*, Darmstadt 1986, p. 327-350; P. OLIVA, *Sparta and her Social Problems*, Prag 1971; D. BRIQUEL, «Initiations grecques et idéologie indo-européenne», *Annales (ESC)* 37, p. 454-464; P. CARTLEDGE, *Agasilaos and the crisis of Sparta*, London 1987; E. LÉVY, «La cryptie et ses contradictions», *Ktema* 13, 1988, p. 245-252; J. DUCAT, «Les hilotes», Paris 1990, p. 123-125; *Id.*, «La cryptie en question» in P. BRULÉ, J. OULHEN eds., *Esclavage, guerre, économie en Grèce ancienne: hommages à Yvon Garlan*, Rennes 1997a, p. 43-74 et «Crypties», *CCG* 8, 1997b, p. 9-38; *Id.*, *Spartan Education. Youth and Society in the Classical Period*, Swansea 2006, p. 281-331; M. WHITBY, «Two Shadows: Images of Spartans and Helots» in A. POWELL, S. HODKINSON eds., *The Shadow of Sparta*, London-New York 1994, p. 105-110; L. THOMMEN, *Lakedaimonion Politeia. Die Entstehung der spartanischen Verfassung*, Stuttgart 1996; *Id.*, *Sparta. Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte einer griechischen Polis*, Stuttgart 2017, p. 129-130; *Id.*, *Archaisches und klassisches Griechenland*, Stuttgart 2019; M. MEIER, *Aristokraten und Damoden. Untersuchungen zur inneren Entwicklung Spartas im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr. und zur Funktion der Dichtung des Tyrtaios*, Stuttgart 1998; E. BALTRUSCH, «Mythos oder Wirklichkeit. Die Helotengefahr und der Peloponnesische Bund», *HZ* 272, 2001, p. 1-24; C. SCHUBERT, *Athen und Sparta in klassischer Zeit. Ein Studienbuch*, Stuttgart 2003; K.-W. WELWEI, *Unfreie im antiken Kriegsdienst I. Athens und Sparta*, Wiesbaden 1974 and *Id.* 2004, *op. cit.*; ST. HODKINSON, «Was Classical Sparta a Military Society?» in ST. HODKINSON, A. POWELL eds., *Sparta and War*, Swansea 2006, p. 111-162 and *Id.*, «Transforming Sparta: New Approaches to the Study of Spartan Society», *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers* 41-44, 2011-2014, p. 1-42 and *Id.* 2015, *op. cit.*; S. LINK, «Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der spartanischen Krypteia», *Klio* 88, 2006, p. 34-43; J.-CHR. COUVENHES, «Les kryptoi spartiates» in *Sparte hellénistique, IV<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles avant notre ère, Actes de la table ronde organisée à Paris les 6 et 7 avril 2012*, Besançon 2014, p. 45-176; F. CERRONE, *Aristotele, Costituzione degli Spartani-Frammenti* (Doct. thesis, Salerno) 2014-2015; M. NAFISSI, «Krypteiai spartane» in A. BELTRÁN, M. VALDÉS eds., *Los espacios de la esclavitud y la dependencia en la Antigüedad. Homenaje a Domingo Plácido. Actas del XXXV colloquio GIREA*, Madrid 2015,



initiation rite,<sup>6</sup> secret police,<sup>7</sup> survival training.<sup>8</sup> Anthropologists proposed to explain it as an initiation rite, while others stressed its military character.<sup>9</sup> One can find the history of debate and relevant research in recent works published by J.-Chr. Couvenhes, M. Nafissi and M. Handy.<sup>10</sup> The aim of my paper is to offer a fresh look on old and new literary evidence about the *krypteia* and the *kryptoi* and combine it with what we learn about *kryptoi* in Attica from Attic inscriptions. Let us turn first to the evidence.

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with p. 207; M. HANDY, «Bemerkungen zur spartanischen Krypteia» in K. STROBEL ed., *Die Geschichte der Antike aktuell: Methoden, Ergebnisse und Rezeption*, Klagenfurt 2005, p. 99-120, *Id.*, «The Spartan krypteia. Some thoughts» in J. FISCHER, R. FELDBACHER eds., *Marginalized Groups in Antiquity*, Hamburg 2021, p. 157-175; R. KULESZA, *Sparta: History, State and Society*, Berlin 2022, (tran. Kl. Michalowicz), p. 448-55. For a comparison of the *krypteia* with the Gestapo: V.D. HANSON, *Wars of the Ancient Greeks*, London 1999; O. PATTERSON, «Reflections on Helotic Slavery and Freedom» in N. LURAGHI, S. E. ALCOCK eds., *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia. Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, Washington 2003, p. 289-309.

6. P. GIRARD 1898 and 1900, *op. cit.*; H. JEANMAIRE 1913 and 1939, *op. cit.*, p. 550-551; P. VIDAL-NAQUET 1968, *op. cit.*; *Id.*, «Le cru, l'enfant et le cuit» in J. LE GOFF, P. NORA, *Faire de l'histoire, III*, Paris 1974, p. 137-168; *Id.*, *Le Chasseur noir. Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec*, Paris 1981 [1991<sup>3</sup>]; A. BRELICH, *Paides et parthenoi I*, Rome 1969, p. 155-157; J. DUCAT 1990, *op. cit.*; *Id.* 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 308-309, p. 323-329; F. CERRONE 2014-2015, *op. cit.*, p. 174; M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*; M. TRUNDLE, «The Spartan Krypteia» in W. RIESS, G.G. FAGAN eds., *The Topography of Violence in the Graeco-Roman World*, Ann Arbor 2016, p. 60-76. *Contra* M. WHITBY 1994, *op. cit.*, p. 105-106. Whitby explained why the anthropological approach is wrong. His main arguments are the following: (a) the *krypteia* was not on an annual basis; (b) was not for all Spartans but only for the most intelligent; (c) killing a helot was not the obligation of every Spartan, and some Spartans could kill more; (d) there is no information about a special force in which those that were successful entered. For J. DUCAT (2006, *op. cit.*, p. 297), the former members of the *krypteia* constituted a kind of 'pool' from which the *agathoergoi* (Hdt 1.67) were later selected. For hunting and the *krypteia* see E. DAVID, «Hunting in Spartan Society and Consciousness», *Echos du monde Classique* 12, 1993, p. 393-413; F. CERRONE 2014-2015, *op. cit.*, p. 170-174. For a connection of the *krypteia* to Isocrates' *Archidamus* see V. AZOULAY, «L'Archidamos d'Isocrate: une politique de l'espace et du temps», *REG* 119, 2006, p. 504-531. For a plausible inversion of roles, young Spartan *kryptos* vs hoplite see P. VIDAL-NAQUET 1968, *op. cit.*; 1974; 1981. For criticisms of the 'black hunter' thesis see S.D. LAMBERT, *The Phratries of Attica*, Ann Arbor 1993, p. 144-152.

7. M.I. FINLEY 1968, *op. cit.*: from a brutal initiation rite to a secret police service. He was followed by others: P. CARTLEDGE 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 30-32, 128; E. DAVID 1993, *op. cit.*; L. THOMMEN 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 464. Cf. M. TRUNDLE 2016, *op. cit.* See also M.P. NILSSON 1912, *op. cit.*, p. 336-337; J. OEHLER, «Krypteia» *RE* 9, 1922, col. 2031-2032, 2031.

8. D. KNOEPFLER, «Les kryptoi du stratège Epicharès à Rhamnonte et le début de la guerre de Chrémonidès», *BCH* 117, 1993, p. 327-341; K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*

9. For initiation rite see *supra* n. 6. For its military character see J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 61-65; M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 223: 'un non premeditato fattore di stabilità sociale'. *Contra* J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 319-320.

10. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 319-327; J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*; M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*; M. HANDY 2021, *op. cit.*

## LITERARY EVIDENCE

## A. – PLATO' LAWS, THE SCHOLIA AND POMPEIUS TROGUS

Evidence for the *krypteia* derives from Plato's *Laws*, and a scholion on the passage.<sup>11</sup> In the *Laws* the Spartan Megillus states that (633b9-c4):

ἔτι δὲ καὶ κρυπτεία τις ὀνομάζεται θαυμαστῶς πολύπονος πρὸς τὰς καρτερήσεις, χειμῶνων τε ἀνυποδησίαι καὶ ἀστρωσίαι καὶ ἄνευ θεραπόντων αὐτοῖς ἑαυτῶν διακονήσεις νύκτωρ τε πλανωμένων διὰ πάσης τῆς χώρας καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν.

“There is also something called the *Krypteia*, which is an extraordinary harsh form of training: in winter, neither footgear nor bedding; no slaves, so that each one looks after himself; and wandering all over the territory, night and day’.<sup>12</sup>

This is not the only information one finds about Spartan institutions in the *Laws* of Plato: At 691 the work accurately describes the main political institution of Sparta: the double kingship, the council of twenty-eight elders, and the ephors. In another passage, 778d, the work states that the city of Sparta has no walls, and in the last book (950b) there is an allusion to *xenelasia*, the practice of driving out foreigners. All this information is well confirmed by other sources for the Classical period. In other words, the *Laws* is a reliable source for Spartan institutions. There is therefore no reason to doubt this description of the *krypteia*, which was ignored by scholars for decades.<sup>13</sup>

From the *scholion* on the passage, which most probably dates from the 9<sup>th</sup> c. AD and goes back to the commentary of Proclus,<sup>14</sup> we learn that:

Scholia to Plato *Laws* 633b9-c4:

‘κρυπτεία τις. ἡφίετό τις ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως νέος ἐφ’ ᾧ τε μὴ ὀφθῆναι ἐπὶ τοσόνδε χρόνον. ἡναγκάζετο οὖν τὰ ὄρη περιερχόμενος καὶ μήτε καθεύδων ἀδεῶς, ἵνα μὴ ληφθῇ, μήτε ὑπηρέταις χρώμενος μήτε σιτία ἐπιφερόμενος διαζῆν. ἄλλο δὲ καὶ τοῦτο γυμνασίας εἶδος πρὸς πόλεμον· ἀπολύοντες γὰρ ἕκαστον γυμνὸν προσέταττον ἐνιαυτὸν ὅλον ἔξω ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι πλανᾶσθαι, καὶ τρέφειν ἑαυτὸν διὰ κλοπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, οὕτω δὲ ὥστε μηδενὶ κατὰδηλον γενέσθαι. διὸ καὶ κρύπτεια (sic) ὠνόμασται· ἐκολάζοντο γὰρ οἱ ὀπουδήποτε ὀφθέντες.

11. For Sparta as a possible model for the *Laws* of Plato see E. DAVID 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 406; F. CERRONE 2014-2015, *op. cit.*, p. 171. Cf. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 313; J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 55. For the date of the *Leges* see W. K. C. GUTHRIE, *The Later Plato and the Academy. A History of Greek Philosophy V*, Cambridge 1978, p. 322-323. For the differences between *krypteia* and *agronomia* see J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 313-314.

12. See the analysis of J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 61-62.

13. It was after the publication of E. LÉVY, *op. cit.*, that scholarship began to pay attention to Plato. Cf. M. WHITBY, *op. cit.*, p. 104, who stressed that Plato and his description of the *krypteia* should not be ignored.

14. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 289-290, 293.

‘A young man would be sent out of the city on the condition that he could not be seen for a certain length of time.<sup>15</sup> He was therefore forced to live wandering the mountains, sleeping with one eye open so as not to be caught, and without being able to use slaves or carry provisions. This was also a form of training for war, since each young man was sent out naked, having been ordered to spend an entire year wandering outside the city, up in the mountains, and to keep himself alive by stealing and other tricks of that kind, and do it in such a way as to avoid being seen by anybody. This is why it was called the *krypteia*: because those who had been seen, wherever that might occur, were punished’.<sup>16</sup>

The new elements are the mountain, the duration of a year and the need to be careful also while resting.<sup>17</sup> This evidence is also found in a passage from the Epitome of the *Philippica* of Pompeius Trogus by Justin.<sup>18</sup>

Pomp. Trogus (ap. Epitome of Justin) 23.1.7-9:

Namque Lucani isdem legibus liberos suos quibus et Spartani instituere soliti erant. 8 Quippe ab initio pubertatis in silvis inter pastores habebantur sine ministerio servili, sine veste, quam induerent vel cui incubarent, ut a primis annis duritiae parsimoniaeque sine ullo usu urbis adsuescerent. 9 Cibus his praeda venatica, potus aut lactis aut fontium liquor erat. Sic ad labores bellicos indurabantur.

‘The Lucanians were accustomed to raise their children with the same kind of laws as the Spartans; for, from their earliest boyhood, they were kept in the wilds among the shepherds, without any slaves to attend them, and even without clothes to wear or to sleep upon, that, from their first years, they might be accustomed to hardiness and spare diet; having no intercourse with the city. Their food was what they caught by hunting, and their drink fresh milk or spring water. Thus were they prepared for the toils of war’.

The main points in these three sources are consistent and can be summarized as follows: the *krypteia* was to train young Spartans in endurance, while there is no mention of weapons or policing. The fragment of Trogus extends the period of training for a longer time, but the basic details are similar to those found in Plato.

#### B. – HERACLIDES AND PLUTARCH

Another passage, this time of Plutarch’s *Life of Lycurgus* brings additional evidence for the *krypteia*. In this chapter Plutarch mentions both Plato and Aristotle.

Plut. *Lyc.* 28.1-7 = Arist. fr. 538 ROSE = 543 GIGON

15. M. PIÉART, *Platon et la Cité grecque. Théorie et réalité dans la Constitution des «Lois»*, Bruxelles 1974, p. 279-280: “over a designated period”. Cf. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

16. In Plat., *Leg.* 633b, ed. W. C. GREENE, *Scholia Platonica*, Haverford 1938. See J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 289-293, 297, 300-301, 302.

17. Cf. M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

18. *Contra* J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 295. He admits that there are common points: ‘All of this bears a close resemblance to Plato’s passage on the *Crypteia*, with elaborations which show that these descriptions are being used to draw attention to a *cliché*, that of ‘life in the wild’.

Ἐν μὲν οὖν τούτοις οὐδέν ἐστιν ἀδικίας ἵχνος οὐδὲ πλεονεξίας, ἣν ἐγκαλοῦσιν ἔνιοι τοῖς Λυκούργου νόμοις, ὡς ἱκανῶς ἔχουσι πρὸς ἀνδρείαν, ἐνδεῶς δὲ πρὸς δικαιοσύνην. ἡ δὲ καλουμένη κρυπτεία παρ' αὐτοῖς, εἴ γε δὴ τοῦτο τῶν Λυκούργου πολιτευμάτων ἐν ἐστίν, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης ἰστόρηκε, ταύτην ἂν εἴη καὶ τῷ Πλάτῳ περὶ τῆς πολιτείας καὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐνεργασμένη δόξαν. (2) ἥν δὲ τοιαύτη· τῶν νέων οἱ ἄρχοντες διὰ χρόνου τοὺς μάλιστα νοῦν ἔχειν δοκοῦντας εἰς τὴν χώραν ἄλλως ἐξέπεμπον, ἔχοντας ἐγχειρίδια καὶ τροφὴν ἀναγκαίαν, ἄλλο δὲ οὐδέν· οἱ δὲ μεθ' ἡμέραν μὲν εἰς ἀσυνδήλους διασπειρόμενοι τόπους, ἀπέκρυπτον ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀνεπαύοντο, νύκτωρ δὲ κατιόντες εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς τῶν εἰλώτων τὸν ἀλίσκόμενον ἀπέσφαττον. (3) πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀγροῖς ἐπιπορευόμενοι τοὺς ῥωμαλεωτάτους καὶ κρατίστους αὐτῶν ἀνήρουν. ὥσπερ καὶ Θουκυδίδης ἐν τοῖς Πελοποννησιακοῖς ἰστορεῖ τοὺς ἐπ' ἀνδρεία προκριθέντας ὑπὸ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν στεφανώσασθαι μὲν ὡς ἐλευθέρους γεγονότας καὶ περιελθεῖν τὰ τῶν θεῶν ἱερά, μικρὸν δὲ ὕστερον ἅπαντας ἀφανεῖς γενέσθαι, πλείονας ἢ δισχιλίους ὄντας, ὡς μήτε παραχρῆμα μήτε ὕστερον ἔχειν τινὰ λέγειν ὅτῳ τρόπῳ διεφθάρησαν. (4) Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ μάλιστα φησι καὶ τοὺς ἐφόρους, ὅταν εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν καταστῶσι πρῶτον, τοῖς εἰλωσι καταγγέλλειν πόλεμον, ὅπως εὐαγὲς ᾗ τὸ ἀνελεῖν.

“1. Now in all this there is no trace of injustice or arrogance, which some attribute to the laws of Lycurgus, declaring them efficacious in producing valour, but defective in producing righteousness. The so-called ‘*krypteia*,’ or secret service, of the Spartans, if this be really one of the institutions of Lycurgus, as Aristotle says it was, may have given Plato also this opinion of the man and his civil polity. [2] This secret service was of the following nature. The magistrates from time to time sent out into the country at large the most discreet of the young warriors, equipped only with daggers and such supplies as were necessary. In the day time they scattered into obscure and out of the way places, where they hid themselves and lay quiet; but in the night they came down into the highways and killed every Helot whom they caught. [3] Oftentimes, too, they actually traversed the fields where Helots were working and slew the sturdiest and best of them. So, too, Thucydides, in his history of the Peloponnesian war (Thuc. 4.80.3-4), tells us that the Helots who had been judged by the Spartans to be superior in bravery, set wreaths upon their heads in token of their emancipation, and visited the temples of the gods in procession, but a little while afterwards all disappeared, more than two thousand of them, in such a way that no man was able to say, either then or afterwards, how they came by their deaths. [4] And Aristotle in particular says also that the ephors, as soon as they came into office, made formal declaration of war upon the Helots, in order that there might be no impiety in slaying them” (trans. B. Perrin).

Aristotle is cited by Plutarch as his source for two things: (a) The institution of the *krypteia* that goes back to Lycurgus, which Plutarch doubts,<sup>19</sup> and (b) the oath of the ephors.

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19. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 286. Plutarch admired Lycurgus: Plut., *Lyc.* 21. Cf. Plut., *Comp. Luc. et Numa*, 1.5: εἰ δὲ καὶ τὸ περὶ τοὺς Εἰλωτας ἀναγκάσει τις ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν Λυκούργου θέσθαι πολιτείαν, ὡμότατον ἔργον καὶ παρανομώτατον, μακρῷ τινὶ τὸν Νομᾶν ἑλληνικώτερον γεγονέναι νομοθέτην φήσομεν, ὅς γε καὶ τοὺς ὁμολογημένους δούλους ἔγευσσε τιμῆς ἐλευθέρας, ἐν τοῖς Κρονίοις ἐστιᾶσθαι μετὰ τῶν δεσποτῶν ἀναμειγμένους ἐθίσας (and if we must ascribe to the administration of Lycurgus the treatment of the helots, a most savage and lawless practice, we shall own that Numa was far more Hellenic as a lawgiver, since he gave acknowledged slaves a taste of the dignity of freedom, by making it the custom for them to feast in the company of their masters during the Saturnalia, trans. B. PERRIN, Loeb).



The information that is derived from Aristotle in fact frames the description of the *krypteia* by Plutarch and what he considers as a parallel case:<sup>20</sup> Thucydides 4.80 and a presumed mass slaughter of helots in 424, just before the campaign of Brasidas in Thrace.<sup>21</sup>

The only source apart from Plutarch that offers the same description of the *krypteia* is Heraclides Lembos, author of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, who lived in Alexandria, and negotiated the Peace between Ptolemy VI and Antiochos IV in 169 av. J.-C.<sup>22</sup> Among Heraclides' works is an *epitome* of the *Constitutions* attributed to Aristotle that gathered information on the history and organisation of the Greek city-states. This epitome covers 44 cities and opens with the constitution of Athens. For the *krypteia*, Heraclides, who used the term *krypte*,<sup>23</sup> says:

Heraclides *Excerpta politiarum* fr. 10 DILTS = Arist. fr. 538 and 611, 10 ROSE = 143, 1, 2, 10 GIGON:

λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὴν κρυπτήν εἰσηγήσασθαι (sc. ὁ Λυκοῦργος), καθ' ἣν ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐξιόντες ἡμέρας κρύπτονται, τὰς δὲ νύκτας μεθ' ὅπλων κρύπτονται<sup>24</sup> καὶ ἀναιροῦσι τῶν εἰλώτων ὅσους ἂν ἐπιτήδειον ᾖ.

It is said that he [Lycurgus] also set up the *krypteia*, whereby, even to this day, men go out of the city to hide by day, and by night in arms [to disperse] and slaughter helots as they think necessary'.

20. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

21. See also Diod. Sic. XII.67.3-4. For this passage see A. PARADISO, «The Logic of Terror: Thucydides, Spartan duplicity and an improbable massacre» in TH. J. FIGUEIRA ed., *Spartan Society*, Swansea 2004; *Id.*, «Politiques de l'affranchissement chez Thucydide» in A. GONZALES ed., *La fin du statut servile? Affranchissement, libération, abolition*, Besançon 2008, p. 65-76; *Id.*, «Spartan Suspicions and the Massacre, Again», *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades* 19.37, 2017, p. 257-269; M. HANDY 2021, *op. cit.*, p. 167-168 with notes; D.M. LEWIS, *Greek Slave Systems in their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c. 800- BC.*, Oxford 2018, p. 135-136. For a list of mass slaughters see A. PARADISO 2004, *op. cit.* For the two different interpretations see D.M. LEWIS, «Helots» in S. HORNBLLOWER, A. SPAWFORTH, E. EIDINOW eds., *The Oxford classical dictionary*, Oxford 2021, p. 4: 'a credible story which fits the historical context of the 420s BC' (D. HARVEY, «The Clandestine Massacre of the Helots (Thucydides 4.80)» in TH. FIGUEIRA ed., *Spartan Society*, Swansea 2004; D.M. LEWIS 2018, *op. cit.*, p. 135-136) or 'an apocryphal story concocted for propagandistic reasons' (A. PARADISO 2004, *op. cit.* and *Id.*, «La quatrième invention du législateur. Sur le rapport entre texte et scholies chez Platon Lois 663b-c» in N. BIRGALIAS, K. BURASELIS, P. CARTLEDGE eds., *The Contribution of Ancient Sparta to Political Thought and Practice*, Athens 2007, p. 261-274). For the 420s see also Eur., *Andr.*, 450: τί δ' οὐκ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔστιν; οὐ πλεῖστοι φόνοι: What crime is not to be found in your midst? Are there not countless murders? (trans. D. Kovacs).

22. R. DAEBRITZ, «Heraclides Lembos (51)», *RE* 8-1, 1945, p. 488-491. For the identification of the author of this work with Heraclides Lembos see also H. BLOCH, «Heraclides Lembos and his Epitome of Aristotle' Politeiai», *TAPA* 71, 1940, p. 31-39; M.R. DILTS, *Heraclidis Lembi. Excerpta Politiarum*, Durham 1971, p. 8. Cf. Suda s.v. Ἡρακλείδης; Diog. L. 8.7.

23. For *krypte*/ *krypteia* see the analysis of D. KNOEPFLER 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 330-332.

24. M. MARCOVICH, «Heraclidis Lembi Excerpta politiarum», *AJPh* 96.1, 1975, p. 16-18, esp. 16-17: [ἐκρίπτονται] with the meaning of διασπείρονται (cf. Sept. *Judges* 15.9; Sch. *Aesch. Prom.* 885c; Sch. *Eur. Andr.* 4.2; Phot. s.v. σκορακίζονται) at the place of the second κρύπτονται. Βλ. *LSJ* s.v. ἐκρίπτω.

Heraclides began with the attribution of the introduction of the *krypteia* to Lycurgus, a common point with Plutarch. In both authors the description of the *krypteia* follows, and what comes next is the mention of the ephors, the respectful character of this magistracy,<sup>25</sup> and in Plutarch the oath that they swear as they enter office and legalizes the slaughter of the helots (ὅπως εὐαγὲς ἢ τὸ ἀνελεῖν).<sup>26</sup>

We therefore have two traditions, Plato, the scholia to Plato, and Pompeius Trogus on the one hand and Aristotle (?), Heraclides Lembos, and Plutarch on the other.

### COMPARING THE TWO LITERARY TRADITIONS

Thus, we have the following differences between the two traditions:

ἑκάστων (Sch.): each person who took part in the <i>krypteia</i>	ἐξιόντες: Men go out of the city (Heraclides); Τῶν νέων τοὺς μάλιστα νοῦν ἔχειν δοκοῦντας: the most discreet of the young warriors (Plut.)
ἀνυποδησαίαι καὶ ἀστρωσαίαι: neither footgear nor bedding (Plato); <i>sine veste, quam induerent vel cui incubarent</i> : even without clothes to wear or to sleep upon (Pompeius)	
Χειμώνων: in winter (Plato); ἐνιαυτὸν ὅλον: ordered to spend an entire year wandering outside the city (Sch.)	
Μήτε σιτία ἐπιφερόμενος: without being able to carry provisions (Sch.); Καὶ τρέφειν ἑαυτὸν διὰ κλοπῆς καὶ τῶν τοιούτων: to keep himself alive by stealing and other shifts of that kind (Sch.); <i>Parsimoniae</i> : spare diet (Pompeius) <i>Cibus his praeda venatica, potus aut lactis aut fontium liquor erat</i> : Their food was what they took in hunting, and their drink milk or water. (Pompeius)	ἔχοντας τροφήν ἀναγκαίαν: such supplies as were necessary (Plut.)

25. For the ephors see Xen. *Lak. Pol.* 8.4 and 15.6.

26. P. CARTLEDGE 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 171; J. DUCAT, «Le mépris des Hilotes», *Annales (ESC)* 29, 1974, p. 1451-1464; *Id.* 1990, *op. cit.*, p. 108, 119, 181-182; *Id.* 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 322-323; J.-P. VERNANT, *L'individu, la mort, l'amour*, p. 200-201, Paris 1989, (= «Entre la honte et la gloire», *Mètis* 2, p. 269-300); cf. M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 221. It is with these atrocities in mind – the slaughter of the helots – that Plutarch cited it as the way to avoid the *miasma*. R. PARKER (*Miasma : pollution and purification in early Greek religion*, Oxford 1983, p. 104-143) claims that beliefs about pollution for homicide grew weaker by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, but E.M. HARRIS, «Pollution for Homicide after 400 BCE: More evidence for the persistence of a belief», *Dike* 18, 2015, p. 143-149 shows with much evidence that concern for such pollution continued down through the Hellenistic period.

Γυμνόν (Sch.): each young man was sent out naked (without arms)	Μεθ' ὅπλων: in arms (Heraclides); ἔχοντας ἐγχειρίδια: equipped only with daggers (Plut.)
ἄνευ θεραπόντων: no slaves (Plato); μῆτε ὑπηρέταις χρώμενος: without being able to use slaves (Sch.); <i>sine ministerio servili</i> : without any slaves to attend them (Pompeius)	
Μήτε καθεύδων ἁδεῶς: sleeping with one eye open so as not to be caught (Sch.)	ἀνεπαύοντο: they lay quiet (Plut.)
Νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν: night and day' (Plato); ἐφ' ᾧτε μὴ ὀφθῆναι ἐπὶ τοσόνδε χρόνον ... οὕτω δὲ ὥστε μηδενὶ κατὰδηλον γενέσθαι: in such a way as to avoid being seen by anybody (Sch.)	ἐξιόντες ἡμέρας κρύπτονται, τὰς δὲ νύκτας ἐκρίπτονται: to hide by day, and by night [to disperse] (Heraclides); οἱ δὲ μεθ' ἡμέραν μὲν εἰς ἀσυνδήλους διασπειρόμενοι τόπους, ἀπέκρυπτον ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀνεπαύοντο: νύκτωρ δὲ κατιόντες: In the day time they scattered into obscure and out of the way places, where they hid themselves and lay quiet; but in the night they came down (Plut.).
ἐκολάζοντο οἱ ὅπουδῆποτε ὀφθέντες: because those who had been seen, wherever that might occur, would be punished (Sch.)	
Πολύπονος πρὸς τὰς καρτερήσεις: an extraordinary harsh form of training in winter (Plato); Γυμνασίας εἶδος πρὸς πόλεμον: a form of training for war (Sch.); <i>duritiae parsimoniaeque sine ullo usu urbis adsuescerent καὶ sic ad labores bellicos indurabantur</i> : having no intercourse with the city. Thus, were they prepared for the toils of war' (Pompeius)	ἄλλως: with no specific objective (Plut.)
	ἀναιροῦσι τῶν εἰλώτων ὅσους ἂν ἐπιτήδειον ᾖ: slaughter helots as they think necessary (Heraclides); τῶν εἰλώτων τὸν ἀλίσκόμενον ἀπέσφαττον ... τοὺς ῥωμαλεωτάτους καὶ κρατίστους αὐτῶν ἀνήρουν: and killed every Helot whom they caught. [3] Oftentimes, too, they actually traversed the fields where Helots were working and slew the sturdiest and best of them (Plut.).

Several attempts have been made to reconcile the two different traditions.<sup>27</sup> It has been assumed that there was ‘a shift in the nature of the *Krypteia*, from a training regime in Plato’s day to a Helot-hunting exercise in Aristotle’s day, or that both of these writers preserve incomplete pictures of the same institution’.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the introduction of Helot-hunting raised questions. It has been assumed that this was a primitive system of initiation, which had its origins in Indo-European prehistory. Alternatively, the practice has been interpreted as a reaction to the Helot revolt of 464 BC or as a development during the period after 369 BC, which applied only to Laconia.<sup>29</sup>

### COMPARING HERACLIDES AND PLUTARCH

For this passage, the editor of Heraclides, Mervin Dilts, refers to Carl von Holzinger, an eminent Austrian philologist, author of a long and rich article on the extracts from the *Constitutions of the Lacedaemonians* and the *Cretans* by Heraclides Lembos. For Holzinger, who followed Schneidewin, the first editor of Heraclides in 1847, it is Plutarch’s description of *krypteia* which agrees with that of Heraclides which provides the proof – *die Sicherheit* – that the source of Heraclides was Aristotle.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the parallels between the passage of Heraclides and the passage of Plutarch about the *krypteia* are striking:

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27. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 304-307, 307-308. See also *supra* n. 10.

28. D.M. LEWIS 2021, *op. cit.*, p. 4 with bibliography. Cf. E. LÉVY, *op. cit.* a preliminary test (Plato) and the ‘job’ for those who succeeded it (Plutarch). See also J. DUCAT 1990, *op. cit.*, p. 123-125; *Id.* 1997, *op. cit.*; *Id.* 2006, p. 287, p. 306-307; *Id.*, «Le catalogue des ‘endurcissements’ spartiates dans les Lois de Platon (I, 633b-c)», *Ktèma* 34, p. 421-441: relation of *krypteia* with the continuous oppression of the helots, which was a choice of the Spartan elite, and plausible changes between 350 and 330 that explain the distinct traditions.

29. D.M. LEWIS 2021, *op. cit.*, p. 4 with n. 6. *Post* 464 BC: L. THOMMEN 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 128; N. BIRGALIAS, *L’Odyssée de l’éducation Spartiate*, Athens 1999, p. 113-114; *Id.*, «Helotage and Spartan Social Organization» in A. POWELL, S. HODKINSON eds., *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage*, London-Swansea, 2002, p. 256; M.A. FLOWER, «The Invention of Tradition in Classical and Hellenistic Sparta» in A. POWELL, S. HODKINSON eds., *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage*, London-Swansea 2002, p. 206; cf. M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.* *Post* 369 BC: J. CHRISTIEN, «The Lacedaemonian State: Fortifications, frontiers and historical problems» in S. HODKINSON, A. POWELL eds., *Sparta and War*, Swansea 2006, p. 163-183; J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*; S. LINK 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39; J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 66; M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 219-223. For a relation of the introduction of the *krypteia* with Isocrates’ *Archidamos*, written in 366 BC, see V. AZOULAY 2006, *op. cit.* He was followed by J. CHRISTIEN 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 176. For the oath of the ephors, if this was an old one that reflected the relations between Spartans and helots, or a recent one introduced either after 464 or after 369 BC see M. WHITBY 1994, *op. cit.*, p. 106 (after 464 BC); L. THOMMEN 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 128; J. CHRISTIEN 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 176. Cf. N. BIRGALIAS 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 113-114. See also M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 219-223: after 369 BC. For a number of scholars (*supra* n. 26) the oath of the ephors served to legalize the atrocities against helots and their vassalage towards the Spartans. It is with these atrocities in mind – the slaughter of the helots – that Plutarch cited it.

30. C. VON HOLZINGER, «Aristoteles’ und Herakleides’ lakonische und kretische Politien», *Philologus* 5, 1894, p. 76-77; F.G. SCHNEIDEWIN, *Heraclidis Politiarum quae extant*, Göttingen 1847. Cf. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

Heraclides Lembos	Plutarch
ἐξιώντες: men go out of the city	εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐξέπεμπον: send into the countryside
μεθ' ὅπλων: in arms	ἔχοντες ἐγχειρίδια: equipped only by daggers
ἡμέρας κρύπτονται: to hide by day	μεθ' ἡμέραν ἀπέκρυπτον ἑαυτοὺς καὶ ἀνεπαύοντο: by day, they stayed hidden, and rested
Τὰς δὲ νύκτας ... ἀναιροῦσι τῶν εἰλώτων ὅσους ἂν ἐπιτήδειον ᾖ: and by night... slaughter helots as they think necessary	νύκτωρ δὲ κατιόντες εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς τῶν εἰλώτων τὸν ἀλίσκόμενον ἀπέσφαττον. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἀγροῖς ἐπιπορευόμενοι τοὺς ῥωμαλεωτάτους καὶ κρατίστους αὐτῶν ἀνήρουν: but in the night they came down into the highways and killed every Helot whom they caught. [3] Oftentimes, too, they actually traversed the fields where Helots were working and slew the sturdiest and best of them.
ἐκρίπτονται: to disperse (by night)	εἰς ἀσυνδήλους διασπειρόμενοι τόπους: dispersed in concealed positions.

The second κρύπτονται (to hide), which precedes the verb used for 'slaughter' (ἀναιροῦσι) in Heraclides, creates a problem and was corrected by Marcovich in [ἐκρίπτονται], meaning διασπείρονται (to disperse).<sup>31</sup> Thus, the ἐκρίπτονται with the meaning of διασπείρονται of Heraclides becomes διασπειρόμενοι in Plutarch. Plutarch actually says the same thing using a synonym and placing what it describes during the day. Although Plutarch does not mention Heraclides, but the great philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, and the respectful historian Thucydides, it is obvious that he uses Heraclides and his epitome as his source.

### UNRELIABILITY OF HERACLIDES

We have seen that Plato in the *Laws* offers a very different account of the *krypteia* and that his information about other Spartan institutions is reliable. What about Heraclides and his epitome? Modern scholars interested in the *krypteia* do not examine the reliability of Heraclides. If we turn once more to his editor Mervin Dilts, we read in the 'Introduction': "Prior to the publication of a papyrus text of Aristotle's *Athenaion Politeia* in 1891, there was much discussion on the authenticity of these excerpts. For instance, Köler, Deswert, Müller, Rose and Schrader denied that *Excerpta Politiarum* derived directly from Aristotle's *Politiae* and suggested Ephorus or other writings of Heraclides as the sole source of *Excerpta*

31. See *supra* n. 24. For other efforts to correct this passage see E. LÉVY, *op. cit.*, p. 247 n. 13.



*Politiarum*.<sup>32</sup> In his edition of 1847 Schneidewin stated that Aristotle was the sole source of *Excerpta Politiarum* and his conclusions have been confirmed by the discovery of *Athenaion Politeia*, which seems to have been the first constitution in Aristotle's *Politeiai*.<sup>33</sup> This view was partly challenged by Polito who considers the *Excerpta Politiarum* as a series of short excerpts taken from an anonymous compiler without caring particularly about the coherence of the whole; and since the work of Heraclides was an epitome of the Aristotelian *Politeiai*, what we possess is an *epitome of an epitome*.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the only reason Heraclides (and his *epitome*) is considered a reliable source is the section of the *Athenaion Politeia* that he reproduced. Heraclides (and his *epitome*) in fact preserved the order of Aristotle's original text, but showed no interest in the changes (*metabolai*) of the Constitution, i.e. Aristotle's main argument.<sup>35</sup> We need now to turn to the rest of the epitome. Heraclides' editor, Dilts, considers him a careless excerptor.<sup>36</sup> He stresses that he failed to make a distinction between the two Aristotelian works he excerpted, and he did not choose the most significant information to record. In fragment 5 of the *Constitution of the Athenians* he confuses Ephialtes and Cimon, and says that Ephialtes made his own land available to those who wished to harvest it, and that with this he gave dinners to many persons.<sup>37</sup> This indicates that even when Heraclides is reporting information from Aristotle, he cannot be trusted to report this information accurately. In fragment 3 he says that Solon went

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32. G.D. KÖLER, *Heraclidae Pontici fragmenta de rebus publicis*, Halle 1804, p. 129-32; E. DESWERT, *Dissertatio de Heraclide Pontico*, Louvain 1830, p. 159-162; C. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum II*, Paris 1848 (T. MÜLLER, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris 1848-1878 = *FHG II* 204-207); V. ROSE, *Aristoteles Pseudepigraphus*, Leipzig 1863, p. 400-537; H. SCHRADER, «Heraclidea», *Philologus* 44, 1885, p. 223-261; *Aristotelis Opera (ex recensione I. Bekkeri, ed. 2), III: Librorum Deperditorum Fragmenta*, O. GIGON ed., Berlin-New York 1987.

33. M.R. DILTS 1971, *op. cit.*, p. 7. Cf. M. LUPI, «L'archaia moira: Ossevazioni sui regime fondiario spartano a partire da un libro recente», *Incidenza dell'Antico* 1, 2003, p. 155 n. 11. For problems with the *Excerpta* of Heraclides see also K. VON FRITZ, «Menedemos», *RE* 15, 1931, p. 788-790; H. BLOCH 1940, *op. cit.*, p. 36; M.R. DILTS 1971, *op. cit.*, p. 8 n. 12. Contra A.A.I. WAISGLASS, «Demonax, βασιλεύς Μαντινέων», *AJPh* 77, p. 169.

34. M. POLITO, *Dagli scritti di Eraclide sulle costituzioni: un commento storico*, Napoli 2001, p. 229-243; M. LUPI, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

35. G. VERHASSELT, «Heraclides' Epitome of the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia» in D. LEÃO, D. FERAIIRA N.S. RODRIGUES, R. MORAIS eds., *Our Beloved Polites. Studies Presented to Peter J. Rhodes*, Oxford 2022, p. 76-91, esp. p. 88.

36. M.R. DILTS 1971, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

37. For these habits of Cimon see [Arist.], *AthPol*, 27.3-4; Plut., *Per.* 9.1-3; *Cim.* 10. Cimon's generosity is also reported by Theopompus: F. JACOBY, *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, Leiden 1923 = *FGrHist* 115 F 89. For this fragment of Heraclides see M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 206, 210-211, 212. For Ephialtes see M. ZACCCARINI, «The Fate of the Lawgiver», *Historia* 67, 2018, p. 495-512; E. M. HARRIS, «Aeschylus' Eumenides, The Role of the Areopagus and Political Discourse in Attic Tragedy» in A. MARKANTONATOS, E. VOLONAKI eds., *Poet and Orator: A Symbiotic Relationship in Democratic Athens*, Berlin-Boston 2019, p. 389-419. See also G. VERHASSELT 2022, *op. cit.*, p. 81-82.

to live in Egypt, when some gave him trouble about his laws.<sup>38</sup> This resembles the story that Solon, not wishing to change his laws, went to Egypt for trade and sightseeing found at the *Constitution of the Athenians* (11.1) but slightly misrepresents the passage.<sup>39</sup>

Fragment 16 from the *Constitution of Cyrene* focuses on Pheretime, the wife of Battos and mother of Arcesilaus.<sup>40</sup> The story is narrated by Herodotus,<sup>41</sup> but only some details attracted Heraclides: 'Indeed while making war against the Barcaeans, she captured Barce, impaled the men, and cut off the breasts of the women. Not long afterwards she became putrescent while alive.' Here we see Heraclides' interest in stories of brutality.

Let's see now what sort of evidence Heraclides and his *epitome* recorded.

*Constitution of Corinth* nos 19 and 20 (= Arist. fr. 611 nos 19, 20 Rose, cf. 516 Rose *ap.* Diog. L. 1.98)

*Formerly Corinth was known as Ephyra until the time of Corinthus, from whom it derives its name. Also, Bacchis was the third king. Although he was lame and shabby in appearance, he ruled well and like a statesman. He had three daughters and seven sons, who so strengthened their family that those descended from them were called 'Bacchiadae' instead of 'Heraclidae'.*

*Periander was the first to change the constitution by virtue of his having a body guard and not allowing people to live in the city, and also by entirely outlawing the possession of slaves and luxuries. But he was moderate in other respects: in not levying a tax on anyone, in being satisfied with a tax on goods from the market and the harbor, and in being neither unjust nor overbearing, but hating knavery. He had all prostitutes thrown into the sea. At the last, he established a council, which did not allow spending beyond one's income.*<sup>42</sup>

Herodotus also mentions the Bacchiadae and Periander, but does not mention the tyrant forbidding citizens to live in the city or to own slaves.<sup>43</sup> The story with the prohibition against living in the city is to be found in Diogenes Laertius, who refers to Ephorus and Aristotle.<sup>44</sup> But, in the publication of the fragments of Ephorus the reference is to the Aristotelian *Ath. Pol* 16 speaks about Peisistratus and his attitude towards poor citizens and not Periander, while the reference to Aristotle is in fact to Heraclides. Cypselus and Periander appear in Aristotle's

38. The Athenians swear an oath not to change Solon's laws over a period of ten (Hdt 1.29) or hundred years (Plut., *Sol.*, 25).

39. For fragments 3 and 5 see also M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 28-29, 202-203 and 36-39; G. VERHASSELT 2022, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

40. For this fragment and sources hostile to Battos see M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 80-82.

41. For the story see Hdt. 4.200-203.3, 205; Menecl. *FGrHist* 270 F 5; Polyae. 8.47.17-23. The details that interested Heraclides are to be found in 4.202 and 205. Cf. D. ASHERI, A. LLOYD, A. CORCELLA, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I-IV*, Oxford 2011, p. 720, 721.

42. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 87-96.

43. Hdt. 1.14; 5.92 (Cypselus); 1.20, 23-24; 3.48-53; 5.92, 95.8 (Periander); 6.128 (*Kypselidai*). For the change under Periander see Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrHist* 90 F 58; Diog. L. 1.98. For the Cypselids of Corinth see M. KÖRŮ, «Reading ancient tradition: the rulers of Archaic Corinth», *Chiron* 49, 2019, p. 93-129.

44. Diog. L. 1.98; Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 179; Arist. fr. 516 Rose.

*Politics*, but the only common point between this work and the epitome is the mention of Periander's bodyguards.<sup>45</sup> The sensational story about throwing all the prostitutes into the sea, also not found in Herodotus,<sup>46</sup> is mentioned by Hermippus in *The Seven Sages*.<sup>47</sup> This was the sort of details that interested Heraclides in the epitome.

The most gruesome fragment is about a tyrant of Elis.

*Constitution of Elis* fr. No 21

*Pantaleon, who was over bearing and severe, ruled among them. He castrated ambassadors who had come to him, and compelled them to eat their testicles.*

Once more we see interest in stories of extreme cruelty. To cite Marina Polito about this fragment: 'it responds to the usual taste of our compiler'.<sup>48</sup>

There is another example of a tyrant's injustice in fragment 64 about the *Constitution of the Cephallenians*.<sup>49</sup>

*In Cephallenia a son of Promnesus ruled and he was cruel, and he did not allow them more than two festivals nor to live more than ten days of the month in the city. He himself knew carnally the virgins before they married. Antenor, who had put on a woman's clothing and armed himself with a dagger, got into the bed and killed him. The people honored him and made him their leader, and the virgin for whom he had attacked (the tyrant) became famous.*

In this fragment Heraclides (or the epitome) borrowed the verb γαμίσκεσθαι from Aristotle's *Politics* about Troezen.<sup>50</sup>

A third story about a cruel tyrant is found at fragment 69 about Phalaris of Acragas.

*Phalaris (Acragas) was a tyrant and exceeded all in lawlessness, for he not only killed many, but he also resorted to illegal punishments. He put some men into boiling cauldrons, and others into craters of fire. He put still others into a brazen bull and burned them alive. The people punished him, and they also burned his mother and friends.*

45. Arist. *Pol.* 1315b27-29. Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1284a26-33; 1311a20-32 (Periander and Thrasybulus of Miletus) and [Arist.] *Oec.* 1346a32-b6 (Cypselus).

46. We are told by Theopompus that the tyrant of Methymna killed prostitutes in the same way: *FGrHist* 115 F 227.

47. Hermippus fr. 11 F. WEHRLI, *Die Schule des Aristoteles: Texte und Kommentare*, Basel, Stuttgart 1967-1969 (*ap.* Ath. 10.60.18-19).

48. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 97: "essa risponde all'abituale gusto del nostro compilatore". See also G. VERHASSELT 2022, *op. cit.*, p. 89: "... sensational, sexual and macabre anecdotes... written not only for instruction but also for entertainment".

49. *Ibid.* p. 176-177.

50. Arist., *Pol.*, 1335a20-21 and previous note.

A story about King Tennes of Tenedos in fragment 24 provides an interesting example of Heraclides' treatment of evidence.<sup>51</sup>

*Constitution of Tenedos fr. 24*

*They say that King Tennes established a certain law whereby if one caught an adulterer, it was legal to kill him with an axe. And when his own son was apprehended and when the captor asked the king what was to be done, the king replied, 'Obey the law'. Therefore, on one side of the coin is engraved an axe, on the other, the face of a man and a woman with the same neck. On account of this, it is said concerning severe men, 'To have been cut off by the Tenedian axe'.*

The types of the coins of Tenedos are janiform heads of a man and a woman on the obverse and a double axe on the reverse.<sup>52</sup> Both types – the double axe is the emblem (*parasemon*) of Tenedos<sup>53</sup> – refer to the eponymous of the island Ten(n)es and his sister Hemitheia, both children of Kyknos. Their story – completely different from what we learn from fragment 24 – we know from another fragment of the epitome, as well as from Conon, Lycophron, Diodorus, Pausanias and Plutarch.<sup>54</sup> The story about the adulterous couple told by Heraclides in this fragment 24 and reproduced in later sources<sup>55</sup> is 'surely an artificial *aition* of the coin type and proverb, a case of iconatrophie,<sup>56</sup> which belongs to the same genre as, if it is not directly adopted from the story of Zaleukos and his son, who was convicted under his father's adultery law'.<sup>57</sup> Nothing could better illustrate the methods of Heraclides and the epitome: the interest in bloody punishments and the misrepresentation of the figures on the obverse.

51. For the differences with Stephanus Byzantius s.v. Τένεδος see M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 101-102.

52. H. BLOESCH, *Griechische Münzen in Winterthur: Münzkabinet der Stadt*, Winterthur 1971, nos 2792-2796. Cf. T.P. KISBALI, «Two Faces and many Interpretations: A Note on the Janiform Coinage of Tenedos», *NAC* 49, 2020, p. 27-37.

53. It is also to be found on weights of Tenedos, a proxenic decree from Olympia (W. DITTENBERGER, K. PURGOLD eds, *Inscriptionen von Olympia*, Berlin 1896, 39 [= S. MINON, *Les inscriptions éléennes dialectales (VI<sup>e</sup>-II<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C.)*, Geneva 2007]), and a dedication from Delphi mentioned by Paus. 10.14.1-4 and not by Plut., *Mor.*, 399f5-400a2 as M. KILLEN, *Parasema. Offizielle Symbole griechischer Poleis und Bundesstaaten*, Berlin 2017, p. 219-220.

54. Heraclides Lembos 22 DILTS; Conon, *Narr.*, 28; Lycophron, *Alexandra* 233-234 and Tzetzes *Scholia*; Diod. Sic. 5.83.1-5; Paus. 10.14.1-4; Plut., *Mor.*, 297d7-f5. Cf. Str. 8.6.22. The story serves to explain the name of the island, Tenedos, as well as some elements concerning the cult of the eponymous Ten(n)es. For the literary evidence see W.R. HALLIDAY, «Tenēs», *CQ* 21, 1927, p. 37-44; M. POLITO, «A iracconti di fondazione su Tenedo: il τελέδιος πέλεκυς e la Αἰολέων στρατιή» in A. MELE, M. L. NAPOLITANO, A. VISCONTI eds., *Eoli ed Eolide, tra madepatria e colonie*, Naples 2004, p. 187-199.

55. Heraclides 24 DILTS (= Arist. 593). See also from the same fragment Arist. 593 ROSE: Diogenian., *Prov.* 8.58; Steph. Byz. s.v. Τένεδος; Photius s.v. Τενέδιος ξυνήγορος; Hsch. s.v. Τενέδιον βέλος.

56. For an analysis of the phenomenon and other examples in Greek literature see E.M. HARRIS, «Herodotus and the Social Contexts of Memory in Ancient Greece» in Z. ARCHIBALD, J. HAYWOOD eds., *The Power of the Individual and Community in Ancient Athens and Beyond: Essays in Honour of John K. Davies*, Swansea 2019, p. 91-93.

57. W.R. HALLIDAY 1927, *op. cit.*, p. 42. For Zaleukos see Val. Max. 6.4.3; Ael., *VH* 13.24.

Another sensational story is found in fragment 29 about the *Constitution of Keos*.<sup>58</sup>

Since the island has a healthy climate and men and especially the women reach old age, they do not wait for death when they are old, but before they become ill or disabled in any way, some poison themselves with poppy, others with hemlock.

More incredible stories are told in fragments 32 and 35 about the *Constitution of Samos*.

*Pherecydes of Syros was consumed by lice and died in Samos. And when Pythagoras came, he extended to him through an opening a finger bare of flesh.*

Plutarch also lists Pherecydes under those that died from a sort of *phtheiriasis*.<sup>59</sup>

*One of the Samians, Theogenes, was well-endowed, but otherwise profligate and evil. He fled his fatherland, spent time in Athens with Euripides, seduced his wife, and having made him an accomplice, persuaded the Athenians to send two thousand men to Samos. They came and exiled everyone.*

Because the passage mentions 2000 cleruchs, it has been proposed to connect it to the history of Samos in the period after the expulsion of Cyprothemis and the Persian garrison by the Athenian general Timotheus during the fifth prytany of 366/5 (around November).<sup>60</sup> Samos had rich agricultural land, and the Athenians therefore took the opportunity to send cleruchs in the following years.<sup>61</sup> The Athenians also had strategic aims because Samos was “too valuable to leave in the hands of Mausolus.”<sup>62</sup> It is very improbable that it was the Samian Theogenes who persuaded the Athenians to send 2000 more cleruchs to Samos. It seems also unlikely that all Samians were expelled, as Heraclides claims.<sup>63</sup>

58. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 111: “L’interesse del compilatore è sempre rivolto a particolari poconoti”.

59. Plut., *Sulla*, 36. Cf. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 117-118.

60. *RE* 2 Reihe vol. 5.2 no 5 (s.v. Theogenes) 1934, 1970 (K. FIEHN, «Theogenes» no 5, in *RE* 2. Reihe, vol. 5.2, 1970): 352 BC; M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 122. For the siege by Timotheus see Dem. 15.9, who uses the term ἡλευθέρωσε. See also Polyae. 3.10.5 and 9.

61. Athens sent cleruchs three times. The first time in 365 BC: Arist., *Rh.*, 1384b32-35: speech of Cydias; Diod. Sic. 18.18.9: return of the Samian exiles with the initiative of Perdiccas in 322 BC after 43 years of exile. This was the decision taken by the kings. i. e. Perdiccas, after the report of Antipater in the aftermath of the Lamian War: Diod. Sic. 18.18.6. The second time in 361/0 BC: Schol. Aeschin. 1.53: when Nicophemus was eponymous archon at Athens. The third time in 352/1 BC: Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 154 (= Dion. Hal., *Dein.* 13 [1.319.10 U-R]): when Aristodemus was eponymous archon at Athens. Among the cleruchs was also Epicurus’ father: Strabo 14.1.18; Diog. L. 10.1; Cic., *De nat. deorum* 1.72. See G.J. SHIPLEY, *A History of Samos, 800-188 BC*, Oxford 1987, p. 140-142.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

63. Cf. G.J. SHIPLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 141-143.



We find another story about cruel punishments at fragment 43 about the *Constitution of Lycia*.<sup>64</sup>

The Lycians spend their lives as brigands. They don't employ laws, but customs, and from ancient times they have been ruled by women. They sell those convicted of perjury and confiscate their possessions.

There is another story about cruel punishment in fragments 61 and 63 of the *Constitution of Epizephyri Locri*.<sup>65</sup>

If anyone is caught stealing, his eyes are gouged out. The son of Zaleucus was caught (stealing) and when the Locrians let him go, Zaleucus did not allow this, but he gouged out one of his own eyes and one of his son's.

And another story about a cruel punishment, this time by weasels, in fragment 62 about the Locrians.<sup>66</sup>

*After Polemarchus swore falsely, he escaped from the Corinthian fleet. And they say that when he was sleeping one night, weasels attacked him, and in utter despair he killed himself.*<sup>67</sup>

In fragment 48 about the *Constitution of the Leucanii* we find a supernatural detail of the sort that strongly interest 'il nostro compilatore'.<sup>68</sup>

*The Leucanians are hospitable and just. Lamiscus was their king, whose middle toe was like that of a wolf.*

Heraclides is also interested stories about reversal of gender roles in fragment 53 about the *Constitution of the Athamanes*.<sup>69</sup>

*In the land of the Athamanes, the women farm while the men graze cattle.*

In fragment 57 about the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* we read another scandalous story about the Spartans.<sup>70</sup>

*When the Lacedaemonians were fighting with the Messenians and while the men were away, their wives gave birth to some children. The fathers suspected that they were illegitimate and called them 'Partheniae'. They were vexed.*

One can well understand why the men were troubled. This is the foundation story of Taras, that we know also from Antiochus of Syracuse, Aristotle and Ephorus.<sup>71</sup>

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64. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 134-135. For the rule of women see Hdt. 1.173.3-5; Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrHist* 90 F 103 (ap. Stob. 4.2.25); Plut., *Mor.* 247f2-248d10.

65. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 171-172.

66. For the *modus excerpenti* see *ibid.* p. 172-173.

67. For the similar death of Aristides of Locri see Ael. *VH* 14.4.

68. M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 151, 252 who believes that this derives from *Nomima barbarica*.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 163-164.

71. Antiochus, *FGrHist* 555 F 13; Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 216; Arist., *Pol.*, 1306b.

And there are stories about the bizarre, if not pornographic customs of the Thracians at fragment 58.

*Each man marries three or four women, some even thirty. They treat their wives as slaves. The marriages grow out of a surplus (of women), and the men lie with the women in rotation, and (the wife) both washes and serves. And after intercourse most women sleep on the ground. And if any (husband) is annoyed (with his wife), the parents return what they received and take away their daughter; for they join their daughters (in marriage) on receiving payment. And when a man dies, they acquire wives through inheritance, as other things.*

Finally, Heraclides is fond of incredible details in a story about the Chalcidians of Thrace.

*The Chalcidians on Athos also settled Cleonae; they left Elymnus because of mice, they report, which consumed their possessions and even iron.*

In fragment 70 about the *Constitution of Ithaca* we find another incredible tale with a bizarre etymology.

*The god told Cephalus, when he was consulting the oracle about children, to have sexual intercourse with whomever he should encounter first. He met a bear and through intercourse with the bear, he begot a woman, by whom it is said that Arceisus was appropriately named.*

And in the *Constitution of the Thespians* fr. 76

*Among the Thespians, it was shameful to learn a trade and to spend time in agriculture. Therefore, the majority of them were poor; and they were deeply in debt to the Thebans, who were thrifty.*

Fragment 12 from the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* mentions the ban on selling the *archaia moira*: “it is shameful for the Lacedaemonians to sell land, and it is not permitted (to sell land) from the ancient inheritance”. It is not a coincidence that this is what we also learn from Plutarch.<sup>72</sup> However, what Aristotle simply says in his *Politics* is that it was dishonorable (οὐ καλόν) to sell property, while he never mentions this ancient inheritance (*archaia moira*).<sup>73</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, who has analyzed the evidence for land-holding in Sparta, has shown that this information is contradicted by contemporary sources and is not reliable.<sup>74</sup> This is important because it shows that Plutarch drew on Heraclides.

72. Plut., *Mor.*, 238e5-8. See the long discussion about the ancient inheritance and these passages in M. LUPI, *op. cit.*; Cf. S. LINK, *Landverteilung und sozialer Frieden im archaischen Griechenland*, Stuttgart 1991, p. 92-95; J.F. LAZENBY, «The Archaia Moira: A Suggestion», *CQ* 45, 1995, p. 87-91.

73. Arist., *Pol.*, 1270a19-22: ὠνεῖσθαι μὲν γάρ, ἢ πωλεῖν τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν, ἐποίησεν οὐ καλόν, ὁρθῶς ποιήσας, διδόναι δὲ καὶ καταλείπειν ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκε τοῖς βουλομένοις (and this has also been badly regulated by the laws; for the lawgiver made it dishonourable to sell a family's existing estate, and did so rightly, but he granted liberty to alienate land at will by gift or bequest, trans. H. Rackham). See also ST. HODKINSON, «Land Tenure and Inheritance in Classical Sparta», *CQ* 36.2, 1986, p. 388. For the *archaia moira* and this passage see also J.F. LAZENBY 1995, *op. cit.*; M. POLITO 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 60-61; M. LUPI, *op. cit.*

74. ST. HODKINSON 1986, *op. cit.* Cf. fragment 13 and women in Sparta. For women in Sparta see A. BRESSON, «Women and Inheritance in Ancient Sparta: the Gortynian Connection», *Studi Ellenistici* 30, p. 9-68..

These are the sort of stories, mostly ridiculous and sensational and many clearly unreliable, that interested Heraclides. When given a choice between Plato in the *Laws* as a source for the nature of the *krypteia* and the scandal-monger Heraclides, it should be clear whom we should trust. There is no reason to assume that all Heraclides' fragments are derived from Aristotle, who worked on the *Constitutions* of the Greek cities during the last years of his life and after having finished the *Nikomacheia*.<sup>75</sup> In fact, if we are to retain our high opinion of Aristotle and his students, we should hope that most of the fragments of Heraclides are not based on information found in works attributed to his school. To this also points the absence of any mention to Aristotle by the scholia to Plato.<sup>76</sup> One should also note that Aristotle extensively used the material he collected for the books 4, 5 and 7 of his *Politics*.<sup>77</sup> In these, he also mentions the helots, but says nothing about the *krypteia*, as Welwei stressed.<sup>78</sup> For Welwei, the verb λέγεται that Heraclides used to introduce the description of the *krypteia*, clearly shows that what he says about the *krypteia* does not go back to Aristotle.<sup>79</sup> He also stressed that, although Heraclides claims that this, the *krypteia*, happened also in his times, whatever we call the Spartan education,<sup>80</sup> was abolished by Philopoemen in 188 BC,<sup>81</sup> and it was Nabis (207-192 BC), who almost put an end to Spartan slavery.<sup>82</sup>

#### OTHER EVIDENCE CONTRADICTING HERACLIDES (AND PLUTARCH)

Most Greek historians have ignored the *krypteia*. It is the case with Herodotus, who offers plenty of information about Sparta, and attributed to Lycurgus the common meals and the institution of the ephors.<sup>83</sup> Critias of the Thirty Tyrants mentioned how difficult life was for

75. Arist., *Eth. Nic.*, 1181b15-20. Cf. P.J. RHODES, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, Oxford 1981, p. 58-63.

76. See discussion in J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

77. He mentions Lycurgus in his *Politics* whether by his name or by the term 'legislator' (*nomothetes*). See *Pol.* 1270a7: Lycurgus and the women; *epitropos* of Charilaos, who visited Crete: 1271b25; changed the Constitution: 1273b33; student of Thales: 1274a 29; *mesos polites* like Solon and Charondas: 1269a20. Books 4-6 are the latest part of the *Politics*: P.J. RHODES 1981, *op. cit.*, p. 59 with earlier bibliography.

78. Arist., *Pol.* 1269<sup>b</sup>11-12; 1271<sup>b</sup>40-<sup>a</sup>1; 1272<sup>b</sup>19. This has also been pointed out by Welwei: K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39. He also stressed that the orders to the young Spartans in the frame of the *krypteia* were given to them by the *archontes*, according to Plutarch, while the ephors swore the oath and could condemn the helots to death without trial: *ibid.*, p. 36, 44.

79. K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 37-38.

80. N.M. KENNEL, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in ancient Sparta*, Chapel Hill 1995; ST. HODKINSON 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 97; N. BIRGALIAS 1999, *op. cit.*; R. KULESZA, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

81. Plut., *Phil.*, 16.8.

82. K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 38 with n. 11; N.M. KENNEL, *Spartans: a new history*, Malden MA 2010, p. 177-178. Cf. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 307 with Aristotle in mind.

83. Hdt. 1.65.

the helots,<sup>84</sup> Theopompus of Chios stressed how the helots were treated by the Spartans,<sup>85</sup> while Ephorus offered many details about them.<sup>86</sup> But none of these writers mentioned the *krypteia*. Isocrates, who heavily criticized the Spartans and their methods in his *Panegyricus* of 380 BC, forty years later, in his *Panathenaicus*, mentions that the ephors had the power to execute helots *akritous* – without a trial – which can be seen as a reference to the oath of the Ephors, that we have already mentioned.<sup>87</sup> However, Isocrates did not mention the systematic slaughter of the helots. There is nothing on the *krypteia* in the *Hellenica*, *Agésilas* and the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* of Xenophon.<sup>88</sup> If there were stories of this sort – slaughter of helots, an archaic *krypteia* – in the distant past, Xenophon could have said something, as he did with old traditions about marriage etc. in his *Lakedaimonion politeia* Chapter One.<sup>89</sup> The fact that he never mentions the *krypteia* is striking, given that he stressed how much the helots hated the Spartans.<sup>90</sup>

84. Critias Fr. 37 D-K ap. Liban. *Or.* 25.63 (II 567 R. Förster, *Libanii Opera*, 1923 Leipzig).

85. *FGrHist* 115 F 13 (ap. Ath. 6.272a1-7]): Θεόπομπος δ' ἐν ζ' Ἑλληνικῶν περὶ τῶν εἰλώτων λέγων ὅτι καὶ ἐλεᾶται καλοῦνται γράφει οὕτως: «τὸ δὲ τῶν εἰλώτων ἔθνος παντάπασιν ὡμῶς διάκειται καὶ πικρῶς: εἰσὶ γὰρ οὗτοι καταδεδουλωμένοι πολλὴν ἤδη χρόνον ὑπὸ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν, οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν ἐκ Μεσσηνίας ὄντες, οἱ δ' ἐλεᾶται κατοικοῦντες πρότερον τὸ καλούμενον Ἑλὸς τῆς Λακωνικῆς (Theopompus in Book VII of the History of Greece writes as follows in his discussion of the fact that the helots are also referred to as heleatai: The helots are in an utterly brutal, bitter position; for they have been kept in slavery for a long time now by the Spartiates. Some of them are from Messenia, while the heleatai previously inhabited the part of Laconia known as Helos, trans. S. Douglas Olson).

86. Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 29 and 117. See also TH. J. FIGUEIRA, «Chapter 8. The Demography of the Spartan Helots» in N. LURAGHI, S. E. ALCOCK eds., *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, Washington 2003, p. 193-239 with previous bibliography; N. LURAGHI, «Helotic Slavery Reconsidered» in A. POWELL, S. HODKINSON eds., *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage*, London 2002a, p. 227-248; *Id.*, «Helots called Messenians? A Note on Thuc. 1.101.2», *CQ* 52.2, 2002b, p. 588-592, 227-248; *Id.*, «The Imaginary Conquest of the Helots» in N. LURAGHI, S.E. ALCOCK eds., *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia. Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, Washington 2003, p. 109-141, *Id.*, «The Helots: Comparative approaches, ancient and modern» in S. HODKINSON ed., *Sparta's Comparative Approaches*, Swansea 2009, p. 261-304.

87. Isocr. 12 (*Panathenaicus*) 181: ἔξεστι τοῖς ἐφόροις ἀκρίτους ἀποκτείνειν τοσούτους ὅπόσους ἂν βουληθῶσιν· ἂ τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλήσιν οὐδὲ τοὺς πονηροτάτους τῶν οἰκετῶν ὅσιόν ἐστι μαιφονεῖν (the Ephors have the power to put to death without trial as many as they please, whereas in the other states of Hellas it is a crime against the gods to stain one's hands with the blood of even the basest of slaves, trans. G. Norlin).

88. Cf. the explanation of this omission of Xenophon by C. VON HOLZINGER 1894, *op. cit.*, p. 77. For C. von Holzinger (and F. CERRONE 2014-2015, *op. cit.*, p. 174), it was Plato's choice not to give more details about the cruel *krypteia*, because he wanted to protect the image of Sparta. *Contra* M. NAFISSI 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 219: the omission of the slaughter is not a result of Plato's pro-Spartan feelings or the shortage of literary sources (J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 283, 284, 288, 293, 305- 306, 308). For training in Sparta see also Xen., *Anab.*, 4.6.14. See also C. VON HOLZINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

89. Xen., *LP*, 1.7-9.

90. Xen., *Hell.*, 3.3.6: αὐτοὶ μέντοι πᾶσιν ἔφασαν συνειδέναι καὶ εἴλωσι καὶ νεοδαμώδεσι καὶ τοῖς ὑπομείοσι καὶ τοῖς περιοικοῖς· ὅπου γὰρ ἐν τούτοις τις λόγος γένοιτο περὶ Σπαρτιατῶν, οὐδένα δύνασθαι κρύπτειν τὸ μὴ οὐχ ἡδέως ἂν καὶ ὡμῶν ἐσθίειν αὐτῶν (the leaders claimed, that they were in the plot with everyone else – helots, freedmen, lower-grade Spartans and Perioeci – since all these people showed clearly enough, if there was ever any mention of the Spartan officer class, that they would be glad to eat them up raw, trans. R. Warner).

Authors who accused Sparta in the years following the foundation of Messene also ignored the *krypteia* described by Heraclides and Plutarch.<sup>91</sup> To Isocrates, whom we have already mentioned, we can add Alcidas of Elaea (4<sup>th</sup> c. BC),<sup>92</sup> Myron of Priene (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC)<sup>93</sup> and Zenobios, the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD author of the *Paroimiai*.<sup>94</sup> What Myron writes can be explained by the right of the ephors to condemn to death the helots without a trial mentioned by Isocrates.<sup>95</sup>

Xenophon reveals, while describing the conspiracy of Cinadon, that the *ochlos* had access to tools for agriculture, carpentry and quarrying.<sup>96</sup> One wonders how young Spartans could attack helots who were very well trained by working in the fields, day and night, and had this sort of arms.

#### OTHER EVIDENCE ABOUT THE SPARTAN *KRYPTeia* AND *KRYPTOI*

Although Plato and the sources of Plutarch described the *krypteia* as a training exercise for young men, there is other literary evidence about the *krypteia*, this time as a military unit.<sup>97</sup> Phylarchus mentioned the orders given by king Cleomenes III to a certain Damoteles, the commander of the *Krypteia*, before the battle of Sellasia:<sup>98</sup> ‘to observe and investigate what was going on at the rear of, and around the lines’.<sup>99</sup> This was a special mission that this

91. K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 40-41 n. 15-20. Grote was the first historian who cast doubt on Plutarch: 1846, 498-501.

92. Alcidas of Elaea (*Messenikos logos*): Schol. Arist., *Rh.*, 1373b1ff

93. Myron of Priene *FGH* IV frg. 1 (p. 461) of *Messenika* (*ap. Ath.* 14.657c7-e1): ‘Ὅτι δὲ τοῖς εἰλωσιν ὑβριστικῶς πάνυ ἐχρῶντο Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ Μύρων ὁ Πριηνεὺς ἱστορεῖ, ἐν δευτέρῳ Μεσσηνιακῶν γράφων οὕτως· «Τοῖς δ’ εἰλωσι πᾶν ὑβριστικὸν ἔργον ἐπιτάττουσι πρὸς πᾶσαν ἄγον ἀτιμίαν. Κυνὴν τε γὰρ ἕκαστον φορεῖν ἐπ’ ἀνάγκης ὥρισαν καὶ διφθέραν περιβεβλησθαι, πληγὰς τε τεταγμένας λαμβάνειν κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν ἀδικήματος χωρὶς, ἵνα μήποτε δουλεύειν ἀπομάθωσι. Πρὸς δὲ τούτοις, εἴ τις ὑπερακμάζοιεν τὴν οἰκετικὴν ἐπιφάνειαν, ἐπέθηκαν ζημίαν θάνατον, καὶ τοῖς κεκτημένοις ἐπιτίμιον, εἰ μὴ ἐπικόπτοιεν τοὺς ἀδρουμένους. Καὶ παραδόντες αὐτοῖς τὴν χώραν, ἔταξαν μοῖραν, ἣν αὐτοῖς ἀνοίσουσιν αἰεὶ (That the Spartans treated the helots in an extremely ugly and demeaning way is recorded by Myron of Priene in Book II of the history of Messenia [*FGH Hist* 106 F 2], where he writes as follows: The assign the helots all the ugly and demeaning jobs that bring nothing but dishonor with them. For they required each of them to wear a dog-skin cap and dress in a rough leather robe, and to be whipped a certain number of times every year, regardless of whether they did anything wrong, to keep them from forgetting that they were slaves. In addition, they imposed the death penalty on any of them who looked healthier than a domestic slave should, and they fined their masters if they failed to take disciplinary measures against any who had too much flesh on their bones. And when they assigned the helots their land, they fixed a share of the crop that they were to bring to the Spartans in perpetuity. trans. S. Douglas Olson).

94. Zenobios *Paroimiai* 2.80: ἐπειδὴ πολλάκις ἀποστάντες τοὺς Μεσσηνίους ἐδουλώσαντο οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ ἐχρῶντο αὐτοῖς χαλεπώτερον ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις δούλοις (because there were many revolts of the Messenians, the Lacedaemonians enslaved them and treated them in a harsher way than all other slaves).

95. See *supra* n. 87.

96. Xen., *Hell.*, 3.3.7.

97. Contra J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 293-295.

98. Phylarch., *FGH Hist*, 81 F 59.21-40 *ap. Plut., Ag. et Cleom.* 28.1, 49.4. Cf. Georg. Choerob., *De orthogr.* 234: Κομπειὰ καὶ Κρυπτεῖα.

99. Trans. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 293.



military unit had to execute and for this, its head, Damoteles, received strict orders from the king himself. We are told the rest of the story that reveals how significant this mission was and how the treachery of Damoteles defeated Cleomenes in the battle of Sellasia: “But Damoteles (who had previously been bribed, as we are told, by Antigonus) told him to have no concern about flanks and rear, for all was well there, but to give his attention to those who assailed him in front, and repulse them. So Cleomenes, putting faith in what he was told, advanced upon Antigonus”.

To the evidence provided by Phylarchus is added a passage from Plutarch’s *De genio Socratis*, as it has been masterfully suggested by D. Knoepfler in a recently published paper.<sup>100</sup> D. Knoepfler proposed to read κρυπτούς instead of κρείττους in a passage of the story reported by Plutarch about the Theban attack against the Lacedaemonian garrison of Kadmeia in 379 BC.<sup>101</sup> The mission of Spartan *kryptoi* of the passage was to watch at night the ways giving access to the citadel, *i.e.* to guard the Kadmeia during night.<sup>102</sup> In this case, we have a contingent with members who belonged most probably to the same group of age, which strongly recalls that described by Phylarchus hundred and fifty-seven (157) years later. The expression ‘the so-called *kryptoi*’ (κρυπτούς λεγομένους) of this passage and the head of the *krypteia* (ἐπὶ τῆς κρυπτείας τεταγμένος) present a special interest as they refer to a sort of unit of the Spartan army. Thus, there is evidence that there was at Sparta a military unit named *kryptoi* and that Spartan *kryptoi* were present not only in Sellasia in summer 222 but also in Thebes already in 379 BC. The Spartan *kryptoi* were integrated in the army already in the early 370s.<sup>103</sup>

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100. D. KNOEPFLER, «Des *kryptoi* athéniens à la *krypteia* spartiate un nouveau décret de Rhamnonte et un témoignage littéraire méconnu (Plutarque, *De genio Socratis*, 34, *Moralia*, 598<sup>c</sup>)», *HiMA* 9, 2020, Dossier : Les troupes d’élite et l’État dans l’Antiquité, p. 93-124.

101. Plut., *Mor.*, 598e4-8 (= *Socrates’ Daimonion* 34): οἱ μὲν οὖν λακωνίζοντες ἐκ τῆς ἄλλης πόλεως ἐπὶ τὴν Καδμείαν ἔφευγον ἐπισπασάμενοι καὶ τοὺς † κρείττους λεγομένους, εἰωθότας δὲ περὶ τὴν ἄκραν κάτω νυκτερεύειν: *The partisans of Sparta fled from the town to the Cadmeia, drawing along with them the so-called “incomparables”, a body of men whose custom it was to bivouac nightly at the foot of the citadel* (trans. Ph. H. De Lacy and B. Einarson).

102. For Spartan day-watchers on the path of Anopaea before the battle of Thermopylae see J.F. LAZENBY, *The Defense of Greece, 490-479 B.C.*, Warminster 1993, p. 141-143. Cf. J. Rop, «The Phocian Betrayal at Thermopylae», *Historia* 68.4, 2019, p. 418 with n. 20.

103. M. Handy (2021, *op. cit.*, p. 169-172) proposes to identify the *kryptoi* with the three hundred (300) *hippeis*, and associates them to the security of the frontiers. For J. Christien-Tregaro («Les temps d’une vie. Sparte, une société à classe d’âge», *Mètis* 12, 1997, p. 70-72), the *krypteia* replaced the cavalry after 369 BC, and for J.-CHR. Couvenhes (2014, *op. cit.*, p. 71), following K.M.T. Chrimes (*Ancient Sparta. A re-examination of the evidence*, Manchester 1949, p. 375-376), the *kryptoi* replaced the *Skiritai* after that date. We have already mentioned that for J. Ducat (2006, *op. cit.*, p. 297), the former Crypteians constituted a kind of ‘pool’ from which the *agathoergoi* (Hdt 1.67) were later selected: see *supra* n. 6.

## CONCLUSION

There are two traditions concerning the Spartan *krypteia*: the first one comprises Plato, the scholia to the *Laws* and Pompeius Trogus, and the second includes Heraclides Lembos, his epitome and Plutarch. I tried to show that the reliable evidence for the *krypteia* is derived from Plato and his Scholion and is reflected in Pompeius Trogus.<sup>104</sup> Plutarch relies on Aristotle only for the introduction of the *krypteia* by Lycurgus and the oath of the ephors.<sup>105</sup> But for the description of the *krypteia*, which includes the most problematic helot-hunting, Plutarch relied neither on Aristotle nor on Plato, but on Heraclides Lembos and his epitome. He borrowed Plato's vocabulary to make the distinction – which Plato did not do – between activities of the *kryptoi* during day and night (νόκτωρ .... καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν),<sup>106</sup> reversed Plato's order, and paraphrased Heraclides without citing him. The way Heraclides described the *krypteia* most probably derives from obscure sources of the sort this Hellenistic scandalmonger used or the entire story was invented by him.

The reliable evidence for the *krypteia* describes a survival training of young Spartans – *neoi* for the Scholion, *i.e.* young men in their 20s, most probably the *hebontes* of Xenophon.<sup>107</sup> In that case, their age fits with their service in the army.<sup>108</sup> This training was on an annual base and for a short period of time, during winter (Plato).<sup>109</sup> It seems that a restricted number of young Spartans were selected to participate in this form of training for war.<sup>110</sup> According to the scholion, the *kryptoi* were dispatched in the mountains, most probably those of Laconia, Taygetos and Parnon.<sup>111</sup> From Plato and the scholion, we can deduce that they were supposed to wander without carrying (heavy) weapons or provisions, and that they had neither mattress nor footgear, and were not accompanied by slaves.<sup>112</sup>

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104. The passage of Xenophon's *Anabasis* (4.6.14-15), written c. 370 BC but pointing to a discussion that took place in 400 BC refers to the theft of foodstuffs by Spartan boys mentioned also by Xenophon in *Lakedaimonian politeia* (2.6-7) and also by several other authors. On this point, see ST. HODKINSON, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, London 2000, p. 201-205. The statement that the boys could steal only 'anything that the law does not prevent you from taking' matches Xen., *Lak. Pol.*, 2.6's indication that the boys' thefts were limited to 'some things'. I wish to thank St. Hodkinson for this remark.

105. For Lycurgus and his place in the Spartan miracle, one needs to turn to the most recent synthesis about the lawgiver by M. NAFISSI, «Lykourgos, the Spartan 'Lawgiver'» in A. POWELL ed., *A Companion to Sparta*, Chichester 2018. For the oath of the ephors see *supra* nn. 26 and 29.

106. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 303-304.

107. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

108. *Ibid.* p. 296: 'it would be nice to know whether their membership of the *Crypteia* took effect at the beginning or the end of this stage'.

109. Cf. the remarks of J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 297-298 for the scholia.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 297.

111. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 300. See *ibid.* 300-310 for stealing, 302-303 for wandering and the rest.

Thus, the *krypteia* as a custom, ‘which consisted of sending out of the city, at certain times, a certain number of young men to live with a certain length of time under difficult conditions, without letting themselves be seen by anyone’,<sup>113</sup> strongly recalls similar exercises of all armies from Ancient to Modern Times. It needs to be considered as a survival training *à la dure* with the aim of incorporating those from the young Spartans who accomplished it successfully into the homonymous military unit.<sup>114</sup> It cannot be excluded that those that participated in this special training were already selected on the basis of their performances and that this training was on annual basis or repetitive. As a military unit the *kryptoi*, whose training is described by Plato and the scholion, were incorporated into the Spartan army already during the Spartan-Olynthian War and the Spartan intervention in Boeotia. We are told that the *kryptoi* were charged with the special mission of guarding Kadmeia at night. They also played an active role in the army later, since before the battle of Sellasia they were ordered to inspect the phalanx. The evidence we have about the missions of this unit at Thebes and Sellasia both point to its special character strongly recalling modern practices.

Plato never mentions a reform of the *krypteia* because such a reform never took place. One must not attempt to reconcile the two traditions; one is reliable, and the other is not. Although helots collaborated with Sparta and served as soldiers,<sup>115</sup> being a helot in Sparta was not easy. There is plenty of evidence on this score that has already been cited. The ephors policed the helots and had the right to condemn them to death without a trial. But, what needs to be taken seriously under consideration is that these helots were the property of Spartan citizens, who needed their labor.<sup>116</sup> For this vast area – for Greek standards – that was Sparta and its enormous *chora* of 8.500 km<sup>2</sup>, *i.e.* three times that of Attica, before 369 BC, helots were the backbone of the economy.<sup>117</sup> Sparta needed them to cultivate the land, work in the quarries

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113. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

114. Cf. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 295: ‘... the old type Crypteia could have constituted a recruitment test or period of training that was aiming towards the other type’.

115. M. HANDY 2021, *op. cit.*, p. 164-165, 167-168 with literary evidence.

116. ST. HODKINSON 1986, *op. cit.*

117. K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45; M. HANDY 2021, *op. cit.*, p. 169. One recalls that they could be liberated only by decision of the state and they could not be sold abroad by their masters. For the literary sources see Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 117; Thuc. 4.26.5-6; 5.34.1-2; Xen., *Hell.*, 6.5.28-29; Diod. Sic. 12.67.3-4. See S.L. ZANOVELLO, *From Slave to Free: A Legal perspective on Greek Manumission*, Alessandria 2021, p. 190-199 with previous bibliography). The slaves in the manumission records from the sanctuary of Poseidon at Tainaron (*IG* V 1, 1228, 420-410 BC; 1229, 365 BC; 1230, 380 BC; 1231, 365 BC; 1232, 375-370 BC; 1233, 350-340 BC) were not helots: D.M. MACDOWELL, *Spartan Law*, Edinburgh 1986, p. 379; J. DUCAT, «Esclaves au Ténare» in *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque*, vol. 4, Besançon 1990b, p. 173-193; Cf. L. DARMEZIN, *Les affranchissements par consécration en Béotie et dans le monde grec hellénistique*, Nancy 1999, nos 3-8. For P. CARTLEDGE 1979, *op. cit.*, p. 179-180 and J. MYLONOPOULOS, *Poseidon der Erdeschütterer*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 237 and 351 they belonged to *perioikoi*. For the *Tainarion agos* see Thuc. 1.128.1.

and the mining districts, or even serve in the army.<sup>118</sup> From this point of view, killing helots indiscriminately and in large numbers seems inconceivable,<sup>119</sup> and, as we have tried to prove, is based on the unreliable evidence of a scandalmonger.<sup>120</sup> The use of the *kryptoi* in the Spartan army further supports the view that the *krypteia* was a survival technique in adverse conditions that also served military needs.

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118. See previous note and ST. HODKINSON, «Sharecropping and Sparta's economic exploitation of the Helots» in J. M. SANDERS ed., *Philolacon. Lakonian Studies in honour of Hector Catling*, London 1992, p. 123-134. For the various Spartan resources see L. THOMMEN, *Die Wirtschaft Spartas*, Stuttgart 2014.

119. K.-W. WELWEI 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 44-45. Slaves were significant for the economy of the Greek cities and the *oikos*. One recalls Chios and Corcyra. For Corcyra see S. PSOMA, «Corcyra's Wealth and Power» in C. ANTONETTI, E. CAVALLI eds., *Prospettive corciresi*, Pisa 2015, p. 145-167; M. INTRIERI, «Aspetti dell'ordinamento sociale corcirese» in G. DE SENSI SESTITO, M. INTRIERI eds., *Sulle sponde dello Ionio: Grecia occidentale e Greci d'Occidente. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Rende, 2-4 dicembre 2013*, Pisa 2016, p. 241-270. For Chios see the following literary sources: Hdt. 8.105-106; Thuc. 8.40.2; Eupolis PCG (= R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, I-VIII, Berlin-New York 1983-2001) V 296 (= *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta* 269); Nymphod. *FGrHist* 572 F 4; Theop. *FGrHist* 115 F 122. See also N. LURAGHI 2009, *op. cit.*; D.M. LEWIS 2018, *op. cit.*, p. 9, 99, 139, 145, 194, 297.

120. For the origins of helots see N. LURAGHI 2002a, 2002b, 2003, *op. cit.*; *Contra* J. DUCAT, «Les hilotes à l'époque archaïque» in J. ZURBACH ed., *La main d'œuvre agricole en Méditerranée archaïque. Statuts et dynamiques économiques*, Paris 2015, p. 165-195. Cf. D.M. LEWIS, «The Homeric Roots of helotage» in J. C. BERNHARDT, M. CANEVARO eds., *From Homer to Solon: Continuity and Change in Archaic Greece*, Leiden-Boston 2022, p. 64-92.

## APPENDIX

*KRYPTOI* AT ATHENS AND THASOS

Although the terms *kryptos/ krypte* are the normal expressions to denote something that took place in secret, it is helpful to mention their occurrences in Euripides and Aristophanes,<sup>121</sup> and sources of later date.<sup>122</sup> According to this evidence, a κρύπτης/ κρύπται (Pouilloux, Ducat) or a κρυπτός (Knoepfler) was an official who acted in secret (Knoepfler), while officials named *kryptai* (Ducat), were Athenians during the 5th c. BC (Dunant-Pouilloux, Knoepfler) or Thasians (Ducat).<sup>123</sup> For Thasos, we can assume that there were special needs related – as in the case of Sparta and Athens – to the dimensions of its *chora*, where mines operated and the harvests needed to be protected from pirates.<sup>124</sup>

*KRYPTOI* AT ATHENS IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> C. BC

A contingent of *kryptoi* with its own commander under the orders of the general of the *paralia* is mentioned in a number of Attic documents from Rhamnous, that all date from the 3rd c. BC.<sup>125</sup> The earliest one dates from 268/7, first year of the Chremonidean War. According to this decree, the *kryptoi* of line 9 had to keep an eye on the countryside and protect the harvest from the Macedonians of Antigonos Gonatas.<sup>126</sup> The second decree voted by the *demotai* of Rhamnous and the Athenians residing at Rhamnous dates from the year Diomedon

121. Ar. *Thesm.* 599-600: ἀλλὰ σκοπεῖν τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ ζητεῖν ὅπου λέλειθεν ἡμᾶς κρυπτός ἐγκαθήμενος (we've got to look for this man, and find out where he's been sitting unnoticed in his disguise, trans. J. Henderson; Schol. Ar., *Thesm.* 600: ἀντὶ τοῦ κεκρυμμένος. Καλοῦνται γὰρ καὶ κρύπται παρὰ Πλάτωνι τῷ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων πολιτείαις. Καὶ ἐν Θάσῳ ἀρχὴ τις κρύπται/ κρύπτεται. ἀπλῶς ἀντὶ τοῦ κεκρυμμένος (Instead of hidden. They are called hidden by Plato the philosopher, Euripides and the Constitution of the Lacedaemonians. And there is a magistracy called 'hidden' at Thasos); Eur. *Andr.* 1064: κρυπτός καταστάς ἢ κατ' ὄμμ' ἐλθὼν μάχῃ (crouching in ambush or in open battle, trans. D. Kovacs); Eur. Fr. 1126 J. A. NAUCK, *Euripidis Tragoediae supersites et deperditarum fragmenta, ex recensione Augusti Nauckii*, Leipzig 1854: κρυπαί. See also D. KNOEPFLER 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 331, n. 23.

122. See previous note for the Scholion in Aristophanes and Lex. Segh. s.v. κρυπτή, ἀρχὴ τις ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων πεμπομένη εἰς τοὺς ὑπηκόους ἵνα κρύφα ἐπιτελέσωσι τὰ ἔξω γινόμενα (crypt, originally sent by the Athenians to the subjects to find out what was happening outside). Cf. D. KNOEPFLER 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

123. CHR. DUNANT, J. POUILLOUX, *Recherches sur l'histoire et les cultes de Thasos*, Paris 1954, p. 115; D. KNOEPFLER 1993, *op. cit.*, p. 332; J. DUCAT 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 33-36; *Id.* 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 315-317. See also J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 56-57.

124. See also J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

125. D. KNOEPFLER 1993, *op. cit.*; J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 49-55. See also following notes.

126. I. Rhamnous (= V. PÉTRAKOS, *Ὁ δῆμος τοῦ Ραμνοῦντος, I, Τοπογραφία, II, Οἱ Ἐπιγραφές*, Athens 1999, VI, *Οἱ ἐπιγραφές, τὰ χαράγματα, τὰ σταθμῖα, οἱ μαρτυρίες*, Athens 2020) 403 ll. 8-11: καὶ τὸν σιτ[ικὸν καὶ] τοὺς ξυλίνους καρποὺς μέχρι τριάκοντα σταδίων συνεκόμισεν (Ἐπιχάρης ἵππαρχος) | τοῦ [στ]ρατο[πέδου ὄν]τος [ἐν τῇ] χώραι, καταστησάμενος κρυπτοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς σκο|[πὰς, παρεφε]δρεύων αὐτὸς μετὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν, ὅπως ἀσφαλῶς γένηται ἡ | [συγκομιδὴ τῶν κ]αρπῶν τοῖς γεωργοῖς (The hipparch Epichares collected the grain and the fruits of the trees up to a distance of 30 stadia, because the military camp was in the country, and established *kryptous* and kept guard together with his soldiers with the aim of collecting the harvest for the farmers). Cf., p. 49-50.

was archon (248/7 BC).<sup>127</sup> These were the years of the war against Alexander, son of Craterus. At the date of the decree the countryside was full of pirates and the general recruited *kryptoi* among the soldiers, whom he later sent to positions on the borders of the surveillance zone with the aim of protecting herds and slaves (τα τε βοσκήματα καὶ τὰ σώματα).<sup>128</sup> The third decree was voted by the *kryptoi* and dates c. 233/2-229/8.<sup>129</sup> With this decree the *kryptoi* voted honors for the general Philotheos son of Philon Phrearrhios, the secretary Kallistratos from Aphidnai and their hegemon Athenodoron Oathen. The *kryptoi* operated under the orders of the general of the *paralia*, Philotheos, and had their own leader (*hegemon*), Athenodoros from the deme of Oa (Oathen). One of their duties was protecting the countryside.<sup>130</sup> The *kryptoi* are mentioned in two other decrees from Rhamnous – one of these was voted by the *kryptoi* – and in a dedication for the general Phoxias son of Leosthenes.<sup>131</sup> In three out of the five cases the *kryptoi* are mentioned in the decrees from Rhamnous the verb καθίσταμαι is used to denote

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127. *I. Rhamnous* 407 ll. 14-16: κατεστήσατο δὲ / καὶ κρυπτοὺς χρησίμους, ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ τῶν στρατιω/ τῶν τῶν μεθ' αὐτοῦ [ἐ]πὶ τὰς ἐπικαιροτάτας τῶν σκοπῶν, / ὅπως διασώζηται τὰ τε βοσκήματα καὶ τὰ σώματα (and he chose useful *kryptoi* among his own soldiers and established them in the most important watchtowers so as to keep safe flocks and slaves). Cf. J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 50-51; A. CHANIOTIS, «Policing the Hellenistic Countryside. Realities and Ideologies» dans C. BRÉLAZ, P. DUCREY éds., *Sécurité collective et ordre public dans les sociétés anciennes*, Geneva 2008, p. 103-153.

128. J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 51: «Le décret établit une distinction nette entre “la guette” (*epi tèn skopen*, au singulier) qui servit de lieu d'affectation des plus jeunes des citoyens et “les guettes” (*tôn skopôn*, au pluriel) où sont déployés les *kryptoi*». For D. Knoepfler, «ces *skopai* devaient donc être plus éloignées et partant plus dangereuses que “La Guette” dont la garde était confiée aux jeunes citoyens encore relativement inexpérimentés»: Ap. J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

129. *I. Rhamnous* 20 (235-229 av. J.-C.) l. 1: ἔδοξεν τῶν κρ[υπ]τῶν τοῖς τεταγμένοις ὑπὸ Φιλόθεον (decision of the *kryptoi* under Philotheos); l. 5: ἐφρόντισεν δὲ καὶ τῶν κρυπ[τῶν - - ] (and he took care of the *kryptoi*); l. 15: τὴν χώραν φρο[v]τίζων τῶν κρυπτῶν (*taking care of the kryptoi*); ll. 17-20: δε[δόχθαι τοῖς] κρυπτοῖς ἐπαινέσαι Φιλόθεον Φιλίωνος [Φρεάρρη] / ον καὶ στεφανῶσαι χρυσῶι στεφάνωι ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύ/ νης ἧς ἔχων διετέλεσεν πρὸς τοὺς κρυπτούς; [— — — c.10 — — —] α[.] ἂν δόξηι τοῖς κρυπτοῖς (the *kryptoi* decided to praise Philotheon son of Philon Phrearrion and offer him a golden crown because of his virtue and spirit of justice toward the *kryptoi*); ll. 23-27: ἐπαινέσαι δὲ καὶ .... ὃν ἡγεμόνα τῶν κρυπτῶν Ἀ[θ]ηνόδορ[ον] / Ὁάθεν ... [ἀρε] τῆς ἔνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἧς ἔχοντες διετέλεσαν εἰς τοῖς / κρυπτ[οῖς] (and also to praise ... the leader of the *kryptoi* Athenodoron from Oia because of his virtue and spirit of justice toward the *kryptoi*). For the date see D. KNOEPFLER 2020, *op. cit.*, p. 97. Another decree also voted by the *kryptoi* is *I. Rhamnous* 409, second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. Cf. also *I. Rhamnous* 422 l. 16 (restored), 155/ 4 BC.

130. *I. Rhamnous* 20 ll. 5-7 (235-229 BC).

131. *I. Rhamnous* 409, 422. For the dedication of the *stratiotai*, the *kryptoi* and the *prosairetoi* of the *strategos* Phoxias son of Leosthenes see *I. Rhamnous* 472, l. 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC.



the initiative of the generals to appoint *kryptoi*.<sup>132</sup> In one of these it is explicitly mentioned that the *kryptoi* were appointed from the existing soldiers.<sup>133</sup> As we have seen, two of these decrees were voted by the *kryptoi*.<sup>134</sup>

Attic decrees and the passage of Phylarchus use the same term to denote the appointment of the *hegemon* of the *krypteia*/ *kryptoi*: Δαμοτέλης ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς κρυπτείας τεταγμένος in Phylarchus and οἱ κρ[υπ]τοὶ οἱ τεταγμένοι ὑπὸ Φιλοθέου in the Attic decree. The Athenian *kryptoi* were both citizens and *xenoi*, as is revealed by the list recording their names, demotics, and – in the case they were foreigners – ethnic.<sup>135</sup> For Couvenhes, “... in this study of Athenian *kryptoi*, hovers the ghost of the *agronomoi* of Plato”, with their excellent knowledge of the countryside.<sup>136</sup> This epigraphic evidence from 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC Athens reveals that units of this type were to be found also in other cities either as a response to special needs or under Spartan influence, Sparta being well known for its innovative character as far as military is concerned.

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132. Καταστησάμενος κρυπτοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς σκο[πιάς] (establishing *kryptoi* on the most crucial watchtowers): *I. Rhamnous* 403 ll. 9-10; κατεστήσατο δὲ | καὶ κρυπτοὺς χρησίμους, ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ τῶν στρατιω[τῶν] τῶν μεθ' αὐτοῦ [ἐ]πὶ τὰς ἐπικαιροτάτας τῶν σκοπῶν (and he chose useful *kryptoi* among his own soldiers and established them on the most crucial watchtowers): *I. Rhamnous* 407 ll. 14-16; [στρατιώτας | κατ]αστήσας εἰς τοὺς ἐπικαίρ[ους] τόπους κρυπτοῦς] (and he established hidden soldiers on the most crucial places): *I. Rhamnous* 422 ll. 15-16.

133. *I. Rhamnous* 407 ll. 15-16: ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν στρατιω[τῶν] τῶν μεθ' αὐτοῦ (among his own soldiers). See also J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 59: «les deux corps de troupe semblent pouvoir partager des fonctions comparables de renseignement, de reconnaissance et vraisemblablement aussi d'intervention active. À l'époque hellénistique, les *kryptoi* athéniens comme les *kryptoi* spartiates peuvent être considérés, sinon comme un “commando d'élite”, du moins comme une troupe spécialisée affectée à la défense du territoire, celui contrôlé par une forteresse (à Rhamnonte) ou bien celui tenu par une armée en campagne (à Sellasie)».

134. *Rhamnous* 20 l. 1; 409 l. 1.

135. *Rhamnous* 20 ll. 32-39. Cf. J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 52: it was also the case of the 5th c. BC Athenian *peripoloi*. It seems that these *kryptoi* replaced the 5th and the 4th centuries BC *peripoloi* in the defense of the territory between 268/7 and 233/2 BC and were replaced by the *hypaiethrioi* after the liberation of Attica: J.-CHR. COUVENHES, «Péripoloi, kryptoi et hypaiethrioi de la cité athénienne » in J.-CHR. COUVENHES, S. CROUZET, S. PÉRÉ-NOGUÈS eds., *Pratiques et identités culturelles des armées hellénistiques du monde méditerranéen*, Bordeaux 2011, p. 295-306, 295-306; *Id.* 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 57-58. Cf. J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 317-319.

136. J.-CHR. COUVENHES 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 54. For the discussion see *ibid.* 54-55. For the *agronomoi* in Plato see *Leg.* 763b1-c2, 760d-761a, 778e. For *agronomoi* and the *krypteia* see J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 312-315. For BM Papyrus no 187 and its description of an institution that resembles the Platonic *agronomoi* see J. DUCAT 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 309-312.

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