

# Spartan college essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Acknowledged as the world's expert on the issue of Spartans and Sparta, Professor Cartledge knows it all. He is a Professor of Greek History and is currently teaching at the University of Cambridge and Hellenic Parliament and a global distinguished Professor of New York University. In 2002, he was given the Gold Cross of the Order of Honour of the Greek Republic. The award was given personally by the President of Greece. In 2004, he was elected an Honorary Citizen of Sparta.

He is also the consultant academically for the series *The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization* which is being run and produce by the PBS and BBC. Some of his famous books which were being used in universities for Spartan history were *Sparta and Lakonia* (1979) and *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta* (1989; co-authored with Tony Spawforth), and *Agessilaos* (1987). Many books have been written about the Spartans but no one can describe them better than Cartledge. He dutifully traces the rise and fall of Spartan society and explored the tremendous influence of the Spartans on our society and to the Western world. The Spartans were known for their warrior-heroes society and perfect examples for their core values, discipline, self-sacrifice and courage.

Known for their excellent skills in combat, the Spartans have established a warrior culture in Ancient Greece which has been respected because of their unparalleled strong military prowess. The Spartans formed their society through conquest and suppression conquering and ruling over tribes and kingdoms in their era. In the year 490 and 479, the joint forces of the Spartans and the Athenians defeated the Persians in the battle of Thermopylae, Plataea and Mycale and the rise of Hellenistic power on the

Mediterranean began. Paul Cartledge's "Spartan Reflections" detailed the remarkable history on the rise and fall of Sparta from its origins in 1100 B.

C. to the successful battle of Thermopylae in 480 B. C. as well as its downfall in the fourth century B. C.

(Alexander and Lucase)Spartan Reflections is one of Cartledge's masterpieces and it has thirteen essays which are separated into four parts. Almost all these have already been published previously but only one appears in English version. Each main part of the book has an essay which best describes the content and description in details. Here are some of the summaries as well as what the critics say from this book: Part I, "Sparta-Watching" has less than three pages of text which describes the unusual position of Sparta in the progress of the Greek City State and kingship of the Spartans. It describes the similarities of the societies of the Greeks and the Spartans as well as the legend of Sparta, its roots and evolution, the discovery of their culture through archeology and comparison of the Spartan's society with the Athenians.

Part II highlights the number of ways what made the Spartans unique and different from other societies of that period. It specifically describes the absence of a wall in any of their domain. Life in Sparta is described to be in an armed camp where every night the citizens congregate in their mesh hall to dine. This made them more united and politically aware of their society and government. Having been united with the Athens, the Spartans were comparatively different with the Athens.

Given the privilege for *syssition*<sup>1</sup>, they have been able to preserve and protect their roughly 8000 sq. kilometers territorial boundary. For their national festival the Spartan have their *Hyakinthia*<sup>2</sup> and the Athenian has their *Panathenaia*<sup>3</sup> and. The *Hyankinthia* is a national festival that reinforced hierarchy between territory and the city.

The third article, “ The Peculiar Position of Sparta in the Development of the Greek City-1 - ancient Greek custom of eating chief meal together in public<sup>2</sup> - Spartan Religious festivities in honor of Hyacinth, legendary prince of Sparta and Apollo<sup>3</sup> - most important Athenian festival in the entire Greek world in honor of Goddess Athena<sup>State</sup>” asks and describes Sparta if it is a polis (city-state). Cartledge thought of considering the requirement for polis hood but unfortunately Sparta did not meet the required standard, re: the lack of both a city and an organized community. There are parts of the essay describing the origins of the Lacedaemonians<sup>4</sup> and their stable political situation. The last part of the essay is the demise of the Sparta as a polis.

On the next essay, “ Literacy in the Spartan Oligarchy”, the author presented a broad array of evidence for literacy in Laconia, the devotion of a sacrificial meat-hook and the inscription on an archaic aryballos<sup>5</sup> to the different inscriptions of the Hellenistic papyrus<sup>6</sup> indicating that the Spartans were literate. The author demonstrates that many segments of Spartan society, *hupomeiones* or the “ inferiors”, and women too, possessed a certain degree of literacy. Competition of powers creates tension between the ephor<sup>7</sup> and the king, the gap between the rich and the ordinary as well as the king and the people. Part III has the “ Society, Economy and Warfare” and has the toughest articles in this book. The essays within have the most controversial

subjects and the most popular. “ A Spartan Education” tackled when and how the agoge<sup>8</sup> existed and its influence in the classical period and how education influenced the Spartan society.

This chapter also reviewed the difference in the educational system between Athens and Sparta. The author also checked the creation of helots<sup>9</sup> as the most important factor to the institution of the agoge. The essay within this chapter “ The Politics of Spartan Pederasty”, illustrates the problems<sup>4</sup> – Principal region of the Spartan state<sup>5</sup> – A small spherical or globular flask with a narrow neck used in Ancient Greece. 6 – the etymon of “ paper”, a similar substance. 7 – an official of ancient Sparta<sup>8</sup> – a meticulous training and education all Spartan citizens must undergo<sup>9</sup> – the serfs (peasants) of Sparta<sup>9</sup> faced by the Spartan mirage. Homosexuality in the society of the Spartans was discussed and a great comparison was observed by the author among the Greek’s belief and acceptance.

“ Spartan Wives: Liberation or Licence”, as the ninth chapter tackled the Spartan women enjoying their freedom as compared to their Greek counterpart. The society of the Spartans is almost ruled by women and the author described how a society ruled by women had an impact on the citizenry of men. Also contained in the book is “ The Birth of the Hoplite: Sparta’s Contribution to Early Greek Military Organization”. The author noted that by 500 B. C.

the hoplites<sup>9</sup> always conquered the battlefield. Part IV, “ The Mirage Re-Viewed”. There are two chapters on this part. First is “ The Mirage of Lykourgan Sparta: Some Brazen Reflections”, and second is “ The

Importance of Being Dorian: An Onomastic Gloss on the Hellenism of Oscar Wilde.

” With the former chapter, it focuses on Spartan’s accessories such as bronzes, mirrors and early porcelains. The archeology of Sparta has been particularly described the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. And lastly is the last essay entitled, “ The Importance of Being Dorian”. This essay served to reflect the coming of Sparta in the English territory in the nineteenth century. More on Spartan’s notoriety for homosexuality was widely discussed in this last essay (Barnes)For additional reviews and comments, Cartledge connected various questions probing the Spartan history as bound to happen. The book which covered the Laconian approach to slavery, homosexuality, the perfections in war, and the leniency of their society, the position of Spartan women in their government and the education of young Spartan males.

Cartledge tried to describe what is really like in Sparta. He emphasized the uniqueness of Sparta to other Greek cities. But in order to comprehend this book it would be sensible for the reader to have familiarity with the Homeric epics as well as of Herodotus and Thucydides. Or you might get lost trying to grasp every Cartledge’ assumption with every page.

(Roberts)