

Source: Description of Greece by Pausanias (Translated by Arthur Richard Shilleto 1905)

BOOK III.—LACONIA.

CHAPTER I.

NEXT to the Hermæ comes Laconia on the West. And according to the Lacedæmonian tradition Lelex the *autochthon* first reigned in this land, and the people over whom he ruled were called after him Leleges. And Lelex' sons were Myles and a younger son Polycaon. Where Polycaon went to and why I shall relate elsewhere. But on the death of Myles his son Eurotas succeeded him in the kingdom. He diverted to the sea by a canal all the stagnant water that filled the plain, and as it flowed to the sea in mighty volume and became a noble river, he called it the Eurotas. As he had no male children he left the kingdom to Lacedæmon, whose mother was Taygete, (who gave her name to the mountain Taygetus), and reputed father Zeus. And Lacedæmon married Sparta the daughter of Eurotas, and when he succeeded to the kingdom he first gave the country and inhabitants his own name, and then built and gave his wife's name to the city Sparta, which is so called even to our day. And Amyclas his son, wishing also himself to leave a memorial behind him, built the little town Amyclæ in Laconia. And of his sons Hyacinthus, the youngest and most handsome, died in his father's lifetime, and there is a monument of him at Amyclæ close to the statue of Apollo. And on the death of Amyclas the succession devolved upon Argalus his eldest son, and after the death of Argalus upon Cynortas. And Cynortas had a son called Cēbalus. He married Gorgophone the daughter of Perseus from Argos, and had a son Tyndareus, with whom Hippocoon contended for the kingdom, claiming it on the ground of seniority. And Icarius and his party espousing Hippocoon's cause, he far exceeded Tyndareus in power, and compelled him to retire from fear to Pellene, according

to the Lacedæmonian account. But the account of the Messenians is that Tyndareus fled to Aphareus in Messenia, and that Aphareus was the son of Perieres and the uterine brother of Tyndareus: and they say he dwelt at Thalamæ in Messenia, and had sons born to him there. And some time afterwards he was restored by Hercules and recovered his kingdom. And his sons reigned after him, as well as his son-in-law Menelaus the son of Atreus, and Orestes the husband of Hermione the daughter of Menelaus. But when the Heraclidæ returned in the reign of Tisamenus the son of Orestes, one party in Messene and Argos made Temenus king, and another section Cresphontes. And in Lacedæmon as Aristodemus had twins there were two royal houses, and they say this was in accordance with the oracle at Delphi. And they say that Aristodemus died at Delphi before the Dorians returned to the Peloponnese. Some indeed, magnifying their own history, say that Aristodemus was shot with arrows by Apollo, because he had not gone to the oracle, but consulted Hercules whom he chanced to meet first, as to how the Dorians should return to the Peloponnese. But the truer account is that the sons of Pylades and Electra, who were cousins of Tisamenus the son of Orestes, murdered Aristodemus. The names of his two sons were Procles and Eurysthenes, who though they were twins were in most respects very unlike one another. But though they hated one another very cordially, yet they jointly combined with Theras, the son of Autesion, their Argive mother's brother, and their Regent, in establishing a colony at the island which was then called Calliste, Theras hoping that the descendants of Membliarus would abandon the kingdom of their own free will, as in fact they did, reckoning that Theras' pedigree went up to Cadmus, whereas they were only descendants of Membliarus, a private individual whom Cadmus left in the island as leader of the colonists. And Theras gave his own name to the island instead of Calliste, and the people of Thera even now yearly offer victims to him as their founder. And Procles and Eurysthenes vied with one another in their zeal for carrying out the wishes of Theras, but in all other respects were at variance together. Not that, even if they had been one in heart and mind, I could have put all

their descendants into one common pedigree, as cousin with cousin, and cousins' children, with cousins' children, and so on, that to the latest posterity they should arithmetically dovetail in with one another. I shall therefore pursue the history of each family separately, and not mix up the two together in one account.

CHAPTER II.

EURYSTHENES, the eldest of the sons of Aristodemus, had a son Agis they say : (and from him they call the descendants of Eurysthenes Agidæ). During his reign, when Patreus the son of Preuges founded the city in Achaia called to this day Patræ after him, the Lacedæmonians took part in that colony. They co-operated also with Graïs, the son of Echelas, the son of Penthilus, the son of Orestes, who was sailing with a fleet to make a colony somewhere or other. And he indeed was destined to occupy the country between Ionia and Mysia, which is in our day called Æolis: his grandfather Penthilus had already occupied Lesbos, the island opposite this mainland. And during the reign of Echestratus the son of Agis at Sparta the Lacedæmonians expelled all the Cynurians that were in their prime, alleging as their excuse that robbers from Cynuria ravaged Argolis, and the Argives were their kinsmen, and that the Cynurians themselves made open incursions into Argolis. If tradition speaks true the Cynurians were originally Argives, and they say their founder was Cynurus the son of Perseus. And not many years afterwards Labotas the son of Echestratus was king at Sparta. This Labotas, as we are told by Herodotus in his account of Cræsus, had during his minority the famous legislator Lycurgus as his Regent, only Herodotus calls him Leobotes instead of Labotas. In his days first did the Lacedæmonians make war against the Argives, and they alleged as their reasons for declaring war that the Argives when they invaded Cynuria took a slice of Lacedæmonian territory, and tried to stir up their neighbouring subjects to revolt. In this war they say nothing very

notable was done on either side: and those of this family who succeeded one another as kings, *viz.* Doryssus the son of Labotas and Agesilaus the son of Doryssus, both died at no great interval after one another. And it was when Agesilaus was king that Lycurgus legislated for the Lacedæmonians, and some say that he derived his laws from Crete, others that he was instructed by the Oracle at Delphi. And the Cretans say that their laws come from Minos, who received divine assistance in codifying them. And it seems to me that Homer has hinted as much in the following lines about the legislation of Minos, "There too is Gnosus, the great city where Minos reigned nine years, the bosom-friend of great Zeus."¹ But of Lycurgus I shall have more to say hereafter. And the son of Agesilaus was Archelaus. In his reign the Lacedæmonians conquered in war and enslaved one of the neighbouring cities called Ægys, suspecting that the people of it had an understanding with the Arcadians. And Charillus, the king of the other family, assisted Archelaus against Ægys, and his own separate doings as leader of the Lacedæmonians I shall relate later on when I come to the so-called Eury-pontidæ. And the son of Archelaus was Teleclus. In his reign the Lacedæmonians took in war the neighbouring cities of Amyclæ and Pharis and Geranthræ, which were then in the possession of the Achæans, and razed them to the ground. The inhabitants however of Pharis and Geranthræ, being terrified at the approach of the Dorians, agreed to evacuate the Peloponnese upon conditions: but the people of Amyclæ they could not drive out at first assault, but only after a long siege and the greatest exhibition of valour. And the Dorians themselves shewed this by erecting a trophy after the conquest of Amyclæ, as thinking that conquest no small feather in their cap. And not long after all this Teleclus was killed by the Messenians in the temple of Artemis in the town of Limnæ, on the borders between Laconia and Messenia. And after the death of Teleclus Alcamenes his son succeeded him, and during his reign the Lacedæmonians sent to Crete Charmidas the son of Euthys, one of the most famous men in

¹ *Odyssey*, xix. 178, 179.

Sparta, who put down the insurrection at Crete, and persuaded the Cretans to abandon the cities which were inland and in other respects weak, and to inhabit instead those which were conveniently situated on the coast. The Lacedæmonians also depopulated Helos, a city by the sea in the possession of the Achæans, and defeated the Argives who came to the help of the people of Helos.

CHAPTER III.

AND after the death of Alcamenes Polydorus his son succeeded to the kingdom, and the Lacedæmonians sent a colony into Italy to Croton, and to the Locrians at the promontory Zephyrium : and the war that was called the war with Messene was at its height when Polydorus was king. The Lacedæmonians and Messenians give different reasons for this war. Their different accounts, and the progress of the war, will be set forth by me in their turn : but thus much will I record at present that Theopompus the son of Nicander had the greatest hand in the first war with the Messenians, being the king of the other house. And after the end of the war, when Messenia was already conquered by the Lacedæmonians, and Polydorus was in good repute at Sparta, and popular with the Lacedæmonians and especially with the populace, for he exhibited no violence either in word or deed to anyone, and in legal cases tempered justice with mercy, when in short he had a brilliant fame throughout all Greece, he was murdered by Polemarchus a man of no mean family in Lacedæmon, but hotheaded, as indeed he shewed by this murder. And after his death Polydorus received many notable honours from the Lacedæmonians. Polemarchus also had a monument at Sparta, whether being judged to have been a good man previously, or that his relatives buried him privately. During the reign of Eurycrates the son of Polydorus the Messenians patiently endured the Lacedæmonian yoke, nor was any revolution attempted by the Argive people, but in the days of Anaxander the son of Eurycrates—for fate was already driving the Messenians out of all the Peloponnese—the Messenians

revolted from the Lacedæmonians, and fought against them for some time, but were eventually conquered, and evacuated the Peloponnese upon conditions of war. And the remnant of them became slaves on Lacedæmonian soil, except those who inhabited the maritime towns. All the circumstances of this war and revolt of the Messenians I have no need to recount in detail in the present part of my history. And Anaxander had a son Eurycrates, and this second Eurycrates a son Leo. During their reigns the Lacedæmonians met with the greatest reverses in fighting against the people of Tegea. And in the reign of Anaxandrides the son of Leo they overcame the people of Tegea, and in the following way. A Lacedæmonian by name Lichas came to Tegea at a time when Lacedæmon and Tegea were at peace together. And on Lichas' arrival they made a search for the bones of Orestes, and the Spartans sought for them in accordance with an oracle. And Lichas discovered that they were lying in the shop of a blacksmith, and he discovered it in this way: all that he saw in the blacksmith's shop he compared with the oracle at Delphi, thus he compared the blacksmith's bellows to the winds, because they produce a strong wind, the hammer was the blow, that which resists the blow was the anvil, and that which was a source of woe to man he naturally referred to iron, for people already began to use iron in battle, for the god would have spoken of brass as a source of woe to man in the days of the heroes. And just as this oracle was given to the Lacedæmonians about the bones of Orestes, so afterwards the Athenians were similarly instructed by the oracle to bring Theseus' bones to Athens from Scyrus, for otherwise Scyrus could not be taken. And Cimon the son of Miltiades discovered the bones of Theseus, he too by ingenuity, and not long after he took Scyrus. That in the days of the heroes all arms alike were brass is borne witness to by Homer in the lines which refer to the axe of Pisander and the arrow of Meriones. And I have further confirmation of what I assert in the spear of Achilles which is stored up in the temple of Athene at Phaselis, and the sword of Memnon in the temple of Æsculapius at Nicomedia, the former has its tip and handle of brass, and the latter is of brass throughout. This we know to be the case. And Anaxandrides

the son of Leo was the only Lacedæmonian that had two wives together and two households. For his first wife, excellent in other respects, had no children, and when the ephors bade him divorce her, he would not consent to this altogether, but only so far as to take a second wife as well. And the second wife bare a son Cleomenes, and the first wife, though so long barren, after the birth of Cleomenes bare Dorieus, and Leonidas, and Cleombrotus. And after the death of Anaxandrides, the Lacedæmonians though they thought Dorieus the better man both in council and war, reluctantly rejected him, and gave the kingdom to Cleomenes according to their law of primogeniture.

CHAPTER IV.

AND Dorieus, as he would not remain at Lacedæmon subject to Cleomenes, was sent to form a colony. And Cleomenes commenced his reign by an inroad into Argolis, gathering together an army of Lacedæmonians and allies. And when the Argives came out to meet him armed for battle, he conquered them, and when they were routed about 5,000 of them fled into a neighbouring grove, which was sacred to Argus the son of Niobe. And Cleomenes, who often had a touch of the mad, ordered the Helots to set this grove on fire, and the grove was entirely consumed, and all these fugitives in it. He also marched his army against Athens, and at first, by freeing the Athenians from the yoke of the sons of Pisistratus, got for himself good fame among the Lacedæmonians and all the Greeks, but afterwards in his favour to an Athenian called Isagoras, tried to get for him the dominion over the Athenians. But failing in this expectation, and the Athenians fighting stoutly for their freedom, he ravaged various parts of their territory, and they say laid waste a place called Orgas, sacred to the gods at Eleusis. He also went to Ægina, and arrested the leading men there for their support to the Medes, as they had persuaded the citizens to supply King Darius the son of *Hystaspes with earth and water*. And while Cleomenes was staying at Ægina, Demaratus the king of the other family

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