Plutarch, Lysander, and a Disappearing Heraclid Reform

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MANY ANCIENT AUTHORS preserve a tradition that the influential Spartan general Lysander formed plans to fundamentally reform Sparta's dual-kingship, with the aim of becoming king himself. If so, these plans were never brought to fruition, and their historicity has long been a matter of debate among scholars. Perhaps because of that ongoing debate, comparatively little attention has been devoted to the precise form that these plans took. Of those scholars who defend the authenticity of Lysander's revolutionary designs, most prefer a version presented by Plutarch whereby the two royal houses were to be deprived of their privileges and the king(s) elected from among the whole number of Spartan Heracleidae.[1] This stands against a version according to which the new king(s) were to be elected from among all the Spartiates.

Scholars have opted for the 'Heraclid version' of this planned reform on the basis of reasonable considerations: that it was more moderate and thus easier to justify; and that Lysander was himself a Heraclid, and would not have wished to "cast the net too wide."[2] However, close examination of Plutarch's texts

[1] It is unclear whether these plans envisaged the maintenance of the dyarchy, or the creation of a monarchy. See J.-F. Bommelaer, *Lysandre de Sparte: Histoire et traditions* (Paris 1981) 224–225; U. Bernini, "Il 'progetto politico' di Lisandro sulla regalità spartana e la teorizzazione critica di Aristotele sui re spartani," *StIt* 3 (1985) 230–233; P. A. Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (London 1987) 96.

[2] Bommelaer, *Lysandre* 224: "Nous ne savons, mais nous préférerions la seconde solution, parce que cette cause était plus facile à plaider que l'autre, et que Lysandre était lui-même un Héraclide." Cartledge, *Agesilaos* 96: "If we

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shows that this plan for a kingship open to all Heracleidae appears at only a single point in the *Life of Lysander*, and stands at odds with multiple testimonies elsewhere in Plutarch's corpus, as well as testimonies of other ancient writers. In fact, I suggest, the Heraclid version of Lysander's reform is likely to be a fiction, a product of the rationalisation of conflicting source traditions, influenced by the emphasis which Plutarch lays upon Lysander's Heraclid descent.

Plutarch's versions: Spartiate vs Heraclid

I will not discuss in detail the arguments for and against the historicity of Lysander's revolutionary scheme. The tradition that Lysander made such plans certainly originated in the fourth century, since Aristotle briefly refers to it (*Pol.* 1301b17–20). However, the inconsistencies in our accounts have long rendered the claim subject to scepticism, which I share.[3] Most notably, Plutarch reports that these plans became known only after Lysander's death, when the Eurypontid king Agesilaus visited his house in search of some entirely unrelated documents and happened to stumble upon a speech written for Lysander by the rhetorician Cleon of Halicarnassus which advocated the replacement of the hereditary dyarchy with an elective office

must choose, the latter alternative is hugely preferable, since Lysander was himself a Heraklid and, being very far from egalitarian, will not have wished to cast the net too wide." Cf. D. A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's Lives," *G&R* 13 (1966) 153.

[3] R. E. Smith, "Lysander and the Spartan Empire," *CP* 43 (1948) 148; W. K. Prentice, "The Character of Lysander," *AJA* 38 (1934) 39–40; M. A. Flower, "Revolutionary Agitation and Social Change in Classical Sparta," in M. A. Flower and M. Toher (eds.), *Georgica: Greek Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (London 1991) 81–83; A. G. Keen, "Lies about Lysander," *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 9 (1996) 289–292; A. Powell, "Divination, Royalty and Insecurity in Classical Sparta," in S. Hodkinson and A. Powell (eds.), *Sparta: The Body Politic* (Swansea 2010) 121–125; *contra* Bommelaer, *Lysandre* 223–225; E. David, *Sparta between Empire and Revolution (404–243 B.C.): Internal Problems and their Impact on Contemporary Greek Consciousness* (Salem 1981) 13–17; Cartledge, *Agesilaos* 94–97.

(Plut. *Lys*. 30.3–4, cf. 25.1).[4] Plutarch goes on to say that Agesilaus decided to keep the matter secret, and gives no indication of how these plans subsequently became common knowledge (*Lys*. 30.4–5, *Ages*. 20.4–5, *Mor*. 212C, 229F).

These unusual circumstances have led some scholars to suggest that Agesilaus fabricated Lysander's revolutionary ambitions in order to posthumously blacken his name.[5] However, whether Lysander's plans existed in reality or only in black propaganda does not determine their purported nature. This discussion hinges upon the first part of the account provided by Plutarch in his *Life of Lysander* (24.3–6). Here, Plutarch engages with both presentations of the scope of Lysander's planned reform: he intended to open the Spartan kingship either to all Spartiates or to all Spartan Heracleidae. However, Plutarch does not treat these two versions equally.

Having explained that Lysander desired to bring about a revolutionary change because of his anger at being slighted by Agesilaus while they were on campaign in Asia Minor (23.1–24.2), Plutarch states that Lysander's plans "were as follows" (24.2–6):[6]

> Of the Heracleidae who joined with the Dorians and came down into the Peloponnese, a large and distinguished stock flourished in Sparta. However, not all of these shared in the royal succession; the kings came from only two houses, called the Eurypontidae and Agiadae. The other Heracleidae enjoyed no special place in the constitution on account of their good birth, but those honours which result from virtue lay open to all who were fit. Lysander was of such birth, and, when he had risen to great repute through

[4] Diodorus (14.13.8) and Cornelius Nepos (*Lys.* 3) present the same core narrative, but in less detail. In particular, Diodorus does not specify Cleon of Halicarnassus as author of the speech, and neither of them names Agesilaus as the individual who found the speech among Lysander's papers.

[5] E.g. Powell, in *Sparta: Body Politic* 122.

[6] Greek text of Plutarch follows the Teubner editions: K. Ziegler, *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae*[2] III.2 (Leipzig 1973) for the *Lysander*, *Sulla*, and *Agesilaus*; W. Nachstädt, *Plutarchi Moralia* II.1 (Leipzig 1935) for the *Spartan Sayings* and *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. All other Greek text follows the editions used by the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. All translations are my own.

his actions and gained many friends and influence, he was irked to see Sparta grown more powerful by his efforts, but ruled by others of no better birth than himself, and he planned to take the kingship away from the two houses and open it equally to all of the Heracleidae; or, as some say, not to the Heracleidae, but to all the Spartiates, so that the honour would go not to those descended from Heracles, but to those like Heracles, judged on the basis of virtue, which was what led Heracles to his divine honours. And Lysander expected that, with the kingship being awarded in this way, no Spartiate would be chosen in preference to himself.

ἦν δὲ τοιάδε. τῶν ἀναμειχθέντων Δωριεῦσιν Ἡρακλειδῶν καὶ κατελθόντων εἰς Πελοπόννησον πολὺ μὲν ἐν Σπάρτῃ καὶ λαμπρὸν ἤνθησε γένος, οὐ παντὶ δ' αὐτῶν τῆς βασιλικῆς μετῆν διαδοχῆς, ἀλλ' ἐβασίλευον ἐκ δυεῖν οἴκων μόνον Εὐρυπωντίδαι καὶ Ἀγιάδαι προσαγορευόμενοι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις οὐδὲν ἑτέρου πλέον ἔχειν ἐν τῇ πολιτείᾳ διὰ τὴν εὐγένειαν ὑπῆρχεν, αἱ δ' ἀπ' ἀρετῆς τιμαὶ πᾶσι προὔκειντο τοῖς δυναμένοις. τούτων οὖν γεγονὼς ὁ Λύσανδρος, ὡς εἰς δόξαν τῶν πράξεων ἦρθη μεγάλην, καὶ φίλους ἐκέκτητο πολλοὺς καὶ δύναμιν, ἤχθετο τὴν πόλιν ὁρῶν ὑφ' αὑτοῦ μὲν αὐξανομένην, ὑφ' ἑτέρων δὲ βασιλευομένην, οὐδὲν βέλτιον αὐτοῦ γεγονότων, καὶ διενοεῖτο τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ τῶν δυεῖν οἴκων μεταστήσας εἰς κοινὸν ἀποδοῦναι πᾶσιν Ἡρακλείδαις, ὡς δ' ἔνιοί φασιν, οὐχ Ἡρακλείδαις ἀλλὰ Σπαρτιάταις, ἵν' <ᾖ> μὴ τῶν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους ἀλλὰ τῶν οἷος Ἡρακλῆς τὸ γέρας, ἀρετῇ κρινομένων, ἢ κἀκεῖνον εἰς θεῶν τιμὰς ἀνήγαγεν. ἤλπιζε δὲ τῆς βασιλείας οὕτω δικαζομένης οὐδένα πρὸ αὐτοῦ Σπαρτιάτην ἂν αἱρεθήσεσθαι.

Plutarch provides a substantial excursus in explanation of Lysander's plan to open the kingship to all of the Spartan Heracleidae; he then briefly adds to this that "some say" Lysander intended a more expansive reform, opening the kingship to all Spartiates. All told, he dedicates some thirteen lines of Greek (in the Teubner edition) to the Heraclid version, compared with three lines for the Spartiate, within which he justifies that version also with reference to Heracles. In short, Plutarch invests significantly more attention in the Heraclid version of Lysander's reform at this point.

This strongly contrasts with the *Life of Agesilaus*, where Plutarch clearly states that Lysander intended to open the kingship to all

the Spartiates (8.3: ἐπεβούλευεν ὅπως τῶν δυεῖν οἴκων τὴν βασιλείαν ἀφελόμενος εἰς μέσον ἅπασιν ἀποδοίη Σπαρτιάταις). It also differs, if more subtly, from later in the *Life of Lysander*. Plutarch says that Lysander intended to obtain the appearance of divine sanction for his reform by producing a "previously unrevealed" oracle of Apollo (26.1–6); this recommends that it would be better for the Spartans if they selected their kings from out of "the best of the citizens" (26.5: ὡς ἄμεινον εἴη καὶ λώϊον Σπαρτιάταις ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων πολιτῶν αἱρουμένοις τοὺς βασιλέας). Later, Plutarch describes how Agesilaus found the speech by Cleon of Halicarnassus among the deceased Lysander's papers (30.3–5, cf. 25.1); this similarly proposes that the royal honour be taken away from the Agiad and Eurypontid lineages, and granted to "the best" (30.4: ὡς χρὴ τῶν Εὐρυπωντιδῶν καὶ Ἀγιαδῶν τὴν βασιλείαν ἀφελομένους εἰς μέσον θεῖναι καὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν αἵρεσιν ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων). In these two instances we find no mention of Heracles or Heracleidae. The emphasis which Plutarch earlier granted to the Heraclid version of the reform is absent. One might argue that Plutarch's use of the term *aristos* means "best" in every sense, implicitly including the criterion of Heraclid descent.[7] Certainly, in Sparta (and elsewhere) Heraclid descent will have figured positively in assessing an individual's worth. However, given the two versions of the reform which Plutarch has already presented at this point in his narrative, I am not convinced that ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων is implicitly equivalent to "from among the Heracleidae (and only the Heracleidae)." The language is ambiguous, and perhaps deliberately so.

Heracles is also absent from Plutarch's *Comparison of Lysander and Sulla*. Here, assessing the respective revolutionary activities of these two figures, Plutarch speaks approvingly of Lysander's planned reform (2.1–4):

> Lysander did indeed attempt to change the constitution, as we have said, but by means both more moderate and more legal than Sulla's. For it was by persuasion, not by arms, and not overturn-

[7] Cf. Bernini, *StIt* 3 (1985) 217–218.

> ing everything altogether, like Sulla, but simply reforming the institution of the kingship. Indeed, it seemed but natural justice that the best of the best should rule the city which led Greece on account of its virtue, rather than its good birth. For just as a hunter seeks out a particular hound, not the offspring of a particular bitch, and the horseman a particular horse, not the offspring of a particular mare (for what if from a horse a mule is born?), just so a politician makes a grave error if he asks not what sort of man a ruler is, but of what father he is. For that matter, the Spartans themselves removed from power some of their kings on the grounds that they were not regal, but rather diminutive and good for nothing; and if weakness even on the part of one of good family is dishonourable, then what is honourable is not virtue gained by good birth, but virtue of itself.
>
> ἐπεχείρησε μὲν οὖν ὁ Λύσανδρος ὡς εἴρηται μεταστῆσαι τὰ περὶ τὴν πολιτείαν, πραότερον <δὲ> καὶ νομιμώτερον ἢ Σύλλας· πειθοῖ γὰρ, οὐ δι' ὅπλων, οὐδὲ πάντα συλλήβδην ἀναιρῶν ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος, ἀλλ' αὐτὴν ἐπανορθούμενος τὴν κατάστασιν τῶν βασιλέων· ὃ καὶ φύσει που δίκαιον ἐδόκει, τὸν ἐξ ἀρίστων ἄριστον ἄρχειν ἐν πόλει τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἡγουμένῃ δι' ἀρετήν, οὐ δι' εὐγένειαν. ὥσπερ γὰρ κυνηγὸς οὐ ζητεῖ τὸ ἐκ κυνός, ἀλλὰ κύνα, καὶ ἱππικὸς ἵππον, οὐ τὸ ἐξ ἵππου (τί γάρ, ἂν ἐξ ἵππου ἡμίονος γένηται;), οὕτω καὶ ὁ πολιτικὸς ἁμαρτήσεται τοῦ παντός, ἐὰν μὴ ζητῇ τὸν ἄρχοντα τίς ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τίνος. αὐτοί γέ τοι Σπαρτιᾶται βασιλεύοντας ἐνίους ἀφείλοντο τὴν ἀρχήν, ὡς οὐ βασιλικούς, ἀλλὰ φαύλους καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας· εἰ δὲ κακία καὶ μετὰ γένους ἄτιμον, οὐδ' ἀρετὴ δι' εὐγένειαν, ἀλλ' ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς ἔντιμον.

We should not automatically assume that we can directly and unproblematically combine Plutarch's comments here with those he makes in the *Life of Lysander* itself. The relationship between the Comparisons and the Lives to which they relate is complex, and this is compounded by the fact that Plutarch's pairing of Lysander and Sulla is generally regarded as one of the most enigmatic in terms of the moral messages it seeks to convey.[8] There are occasions where Plutarch's statements and inter-

[8] For discussions of the *Lysander-Sulla* see P. A. Stadter, "Paradoxical Paradigms: Lysander and Sulla," in *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* (London

pretations in a Comparison expand upon, adjust, or in some cases even contradict those in the relevant Life.[9] One reason for this is that the Comparisons are more rhetorical in character. Plutarch is attempting to provide the best possible defence of both of the figures in question. Thus, in this case, his insistence upon the mildness of Lysander's planned reforms, and the fact that they were milder than Sulla's revolutionary actions, form part of his defence of Lysander.

Bearing this caveat in mind, however, Plutarch's discussion in the *Comparison* certainly does not appear to be concerned with the Heraclid version of Lysander's planned reform. Plutarch supports Lysander by reasoning that the leader of a state should be the best individual available and that the best individual is determined, not by his birth, but by his virtue. Plutarch's several analogies illustrate this point, and at the beginning and end of his discussion he explicitly contrasts *aretē* and *eugeneia*. If we return to his excursus on the Spartan Heracleidae in the *Life of Lysander*, we find the same explicit contrast, with *eugeneia* denoting Heraclid descent: other than the royal lineages, the Heracleidae of Sparta enjoy no special place in the constitution on account of their good birth (24.3: διὰ τὴν εὐγένειαν), but those honours which result from virtue (ἀπ' ἀρετῆς) lie open to all who are fit; Lysander was irked to see Sparta ruled by men of no better birth than himself (24.4: οὐδὲν βέλτιον αὐτοῦ γεγονότων); opening the kingship to all Spartiates would grant it to those who resembled Heracles in virtue, rather than those descended from Heracles

1992) 41–55; T. E. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford 1999) 161–204; J. M. Candau Morón, "Plutarch's *Lysander and Sulla*: Integrated Characters in Roman Historical Perspective," *AJP* 121 (2000) 453–478. Cf. T. E. Duff, "Moral Ambiguity in Plutarch's *Lysander-Sulla*," in J. M. Mossman (ed.), *Plutarch and his Intellectual World* (Swansea 1997) 169–188.

[9] Duff, *Plutarch's Lives* 200–204; Duff goes further, suggesting that Plutarch wants to "problematize" the cases of Lysander and Sulla, and so encourage his readers to make their own judgement. Cf. his "Plutarch's *Lives* and the Critical Reader," in G. Roskam and L. van der Stockt (eds.), *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics* (Leuven 2011) 74–75.

(24.5: μὴ τῶν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους, ἀλλὰ τῶν οἷος Ἡρακλῆς τὸ γέρας, ἀρετῇ κρινομένων, ἢ κἀκεῖνον εἰς θεῶν τιμὰς ἀνήγαγεν).

So, to recap, Plutarch provides us with a clear statement of the Spartiate version of Lysander's planned reform in the *Life of Agesilaus*; a presentation of both possibilities in the *Life of Lysander* which gives significantly more attention to the Heraclid version; ambiguous references later in the *Life of Lysander*; and a discussion in the *Comparison of Lysander and Sulla* which seems to concern itself with the Spartiate version of the reform.

Plutarch's source(s)

As always, a major concern for scholars has been to identify Plutarch's sources. For the bulk of his narrative regarding Lysander's revolutionary machinations, Ephorus' identity as a major source is mercifully obvious. Plutarch at two points directly cites Ephorus as his source for elements of his narrative (*Lys.* 25.3, 30.3). Furthermore, Diodorus Siculus, who makes extensive use of Ephorus as a source for fourth-century history,[10] matches Plutarch's account in a number of details: Lysander's attempted bribery of the Pythia (14.13.3, cf. Plut. *Lys.* 25.3); his similar efforts at Dodona (14.13.4, cf. *Lys.* 25.3) and at the sanctuary of Ammon in Cyrene (14.13.5, cf. *Lys.* 25.3); his successful self-defence in a trial for the latter attempt (14.13.7, cf. *Lys.* 25.4); and the ultimate discovery, after his death, of the incriminating speech among his papers (14.13.8, cf. *Lys.* 30.3–4). Both accounts even include the minor detail of the name of the individual through whom Lysander sought to bribe the oracle at Dodona, though, likely because of corruption of the manuscript traditions, they report this as Pherecrates (Diod. 14.13.4) and Pherecles (Plut. *Lys.* 25.3).

[10] That Ephorus was a major source for Books 14 and 15 of Diodorus is acknowledged, even by those scholars who rightly stress Diodorus' originality as an author. See G. L. Barber, *The Historian Ephorus* (Cambridge 1935); K. S. Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton 1990) 13; P. J. Stylianou, *A Historical Commentary on Diodorus Siculus, Book 15* (Oxford 1998) 49; P. Green, *Diodorus Siculus, Books 11–12.37.1* (Austin 2006) 7 n.35, 27; G. Parmeggiani, *Eforo di Cuma: Studi di storiografia greca* (Bologna 2011) 391.

However, all of Diodorus' testimony only displays awareness of the Spartiate version of Lysander's reform.[11] Diodorus explicitly describes Lysander's goal as being not only to have the kings selected "from out of all the Spartiates/citizens" (14.13.2: κοινὴν ἐκ πάντων Σπαρτιατῶν ποιῆσαι τὴν αἵρεσιν τῶν βασιλέων; 14.13.8: πείσων ἐξ ἁπάντων τῶν πολιτῶν αἱρετοὺς γίνεσθαι βασιλεῖς), but also to destroy the rule of the Heracleidae (14.13.2: διενοεῖτο καταλῦσαι τὴν τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν βασιλείαν; 14.13.8 περὶ τῆς τοῦ Λυσάνδρου προαιρέσεως εἰς τὸ καταλῦσαι τοὺς ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους βασιλεῖς). If we allow the assumption that Diodorus' narrative on this topic broadly follows Ephorus', this suggests that Ephorus was a major source for Plutarch's narrative, but not for the Heraclid version of Lysander's reform.[12]

Faced with this conclusion, some scholars have sought to identify an alternative source for this aspect of Plutarch's narrative.[13] However, we have very little evidence upon which to base any such identification. Plutarch does attribute part of his narrative to "one who was both a historian and a philosopher" (25.5: ἀνδρὸς ἱστορικοῦ καὶ φιλοσόφου λόγῳ κατακολουθήσαντες). Speculations as to who this might be include Posidonius, Theophrastus, and Ephorus himself.[14] To my mind, the context favours the latter identification. In the middle of his account of Lysander's attempts to procure a false oracle supporting his reform, Plutarch pauses, and notes that, since this conspiracy was intricate and complex, relying for its success "like a mathematical proposition" upon the completion of a succession of

[11] The Heraclid version of the reform also goes unmentioned in the account of Cornelius Nepos (*Lys.* 3), which similarly presents the events of Ephorus' narrative concerning Delphi, Dodona, Ammon, and Cleon of Halicarnassus. However, Nepos' account is so heavily abbreviated that this absence would not by itself be noteworthy.

[12] Cf. Parmeggiani, *Eforo di Cuma* 485–486.

[13] E.g. Bernini, *StIt* 3 (1985) 229.

[14] See Bommelaer, *Lysandre* 191 n.99; David, *Sparta between Empire and Revolution* 181 n.46; Bernini, *StIt* 3 (1985) 222; Flower, in *Georgica* 82 n.27.

intermediate steps, he will follow the account of "one who was both a historian and a philosopher."[15] Plutarch's intention here seems to be to highlight the sophistication of Lysander's scheme and the specially pertinent qualities of his existing source, rather than to introduce a new source in a deliberately enigmatic manner. At this point he has already named Ephorus as a source for this section of his narrative (25.3).

Plutarch's rationalisation of source traditions

Ultimately, while we should not simply assume that Plutarch had no source other than Ephorus, we have very little basis upon which to identify another source. Moreover, the identification of a second source would not in itself explain the significant variation in the emphasis which Plutarch grants to the Spartiate and Heraclid versions of Lysander's planned reform at different points in his writings. I suggest that we should instead seek to explain this with reference to Plutarch's own authorial interests and input.[16]

Heraclid descent is one of the first attributes with which Plutarch characterises Lysander. At the opening of the *Life*, after describing the statue of Lysander which stands in the Treasury of the Acanthians at Delphi (1.1–3), Plutarch notes that "it is said that Lysander's father, Aristocleitus, was not of a royal house, but otherwise of Heraclid lineage" (2.1: λέγεται δ' ὁ Λυσάνδρου πατὴρ Ἀριστόκλειτος οἰκίας μὲν οὐ γενέσθαι βασιλικῆς, ἄλλως δὲ γένους εἶναι τοῦ τῶν Ἡρακλειδῶν).[17] This, combined with

[15] τὴν δ' ὅλην ἐπιβουλὴν καὶ σκευωρίαν τοῦ πλάσματος, οὐ φαύλην οὖσαν οὐδ' ἀφ' ὧν ἔτυχεν ἀρξαμένην, ἀλλὰ πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας ὑποθέσεις, ὥσπερ ἐν διαγράμματι μαθηματικῷ προσλαβοῦσαν, καὶ διὰ λημμάτων χαλεπῶν καὶ δυσπορίστων ἐπὶ τὸ συμπέρασμα προϊοῦσαν, ἡμεῖς ἀναγράψομεν, ἀνδρὸς ἱστορικοῦ καὶ φιλοσόφου λόγῳ κατακολουθήσαντες.

[16] For a similar approach taken with regard to Plutarch's and Xenophon's accounts of the Eurypontid succession dispute see K. M. Trego, "Agesilaus the Puppet? The Effects of Thematic Development on Plutarch's Story of the Accession," *ICS* 39 (2014) 39–62. Cf. C. D. Hamilton, "Plutarch and Xenophon on Agesilaus," *AncW* 25 (1994) 205–212.

[17] Either Plutarch or a later copyist in fact misidentifies Lysander's father

the immediately subsequent statement that Lysander was apparently raised in poverty (2.2: ἐτράφη δ' ὁ Λύσανδρος ἐν πενίᾳ), establishes a background of 'well-born poverty' which provides one of Lysander's major parallels with his comparandum, Sulla.[18]

After this, major appearances of Heraclid descent in the *Life of Lysander* include Lysander's planned reform and, a couple chapters before that, the succession dispute which followed the death of the Eurypontid king Agis II (22.6–13). Upon the death of Agis, claim to the Eurypontid kingship was contested by his supposed son, Leotychidas, who was rumoured to be illegitimate, and his half-brother, Agesilaus. Concurrences in various details of content and language indicate that Xenophon (*Hell.* 3.3.1–3.3.4) was Plutarch's main source for this episode,[19] although Plutarch's account unsurprisingly places greater emphasis upon the role played by Lysander.[20]

According to Plutarch, Leotychidas' case was aided by one Diopeithes, "a man well-reputed with regard to oracles" (22.10:

here, since both Pausanias and epigraphic evidence name him as Aristocritus (6.3.14: ἀθάνατον πάτρᾳ καὶ Ἀριστοκρίτῳ κλέος ἔργων, Λύσανδρ', ἐκτελέσας δόξαν ἔχεις ἀρετᾶς, cf. *IG* II² 1385.20, 1388.32, 1400.15, 1407.32).

[18] Stadter, in *Plutarch and the Historical Tradition* 44. Plutarch tells us that Sulla's family had patrician status but was of modest means (*Sull.* 1.1–7). For a broader discussion of Plutarch's use of ancestors to indicate key characteristics of the individual, or key themes in their Life, see Duff, *Plutarch's Lives* 310–311. For discussion of the traditions regarding Lysander's origins see Bommelaer, *Lysandre* 36–38. Cf. I. Malkin, "Lysander and Libys," *CQ* 40 (1990) 541–545.

[19] In addition to the specific parallels cited here see C. Mossé, "L'Image de Sparte dans les vies parallèles de Plutarque," in N. Birgalias et al. (eds.), *The Contribution of Ancient Sparta to Political Thought and Practice* (Athens 2002) 303–304, for the general prevalence of Xenophon as a source for Plutarch's *Life of Lysander.*

[20] For a fuller analysis of the divergences between the extant narratives of this dispute see D. R. Shipley, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Life of Agesilaos: Response to Sources in the Presentation of Character* (Oxford 1997) 79–95; Trego, *ICS* 39 (2014) 39–62.

Διοπείθης, ἀνὴρ εὐδόκιμος ἐπὶ χρησμολογίᾳ, cf. Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.3: Διοπείθης δέ, μάλα χρησμολόγος ἀνήρ), who adduced an oracle warning against a "lame kingship" (22.11: μὴ σέθεν ἀρτίποδος βλάστῃ χωλὴ βασιλεία, cf. Xen. 3.3.3: φυλάξασθαι τὴν χωλὴν βασιλείαν). Lysander argued in response, in support of Agesilaus, that the oracle should be interpreted as referring not to Agesilaus' lameness (22.12: οὐ γὰρ ἂν προσπταίσας τις ἄρχῃ Λακεδαιμονίων, δυσχεραίνειν τὸν θεόν, cf. Xen. 3.3.3: οὐκ οἴοιτο τὸν θεὸν τοῦτο κελεύειν φυλάξασθαι, μὴ προσπταίσας τις χωλεύσαι), but to the prospect of those who are illegitimate and basely born ruling, rather than Heracleidae (22.12: ἀλλὰ χωλὴν εἶναι τὴν βασιλείαν, εἰ νόθοι καὶ κακῶς γεγονότες βασιλεύσουσι <καὶ μὴ> Ἡρακλεῖδαι,[21] cf. Xen. 3.3.3: μὴ οὐκ ὢν τοῦ γένους βασιλεύσειε. παντάπασι γὰρ ἂν χωλὴν εἶναι τὴν βασιλείαν ὁπότε μὴ οἱ ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους τῆς πόλεως ἡγοῖντο).

Plutarch's Lysander perhaps does not state his case quite as emphatically as Xenophon's, who warns that "the kingship will be lame in every sense when the descendants of Heracles no longer rule the city." However, in both accounts the significance of Heraclid descent as a prerequisite for Spartan kingship is clear. Plutarch also stresses this point at the outset of his account, where he tells us that Lysander persuaded Agesilaus to contest the succession on the grounds that he was a legitimate Heraclid (22.6: ὁ Λύσανδρος ἔπεισεν αὐτὸν ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῆς βασιλείας, ὡς Ἡρακλείδην ὄντα γνήσιον). Following Xenophon, Plutarch's account of the succession dispute ascribes to Lysander explicit endorsement of Heraclid descent as an essential attribute for Spartan kings.

Shortly after this, however, Plutarch begins to discuss Lysander's plans to reform the Spartan kingship, following a principal source (Ephorus) who appears to have presented this exclusively as an attempt to open the kingship to all Spartiates. These two source traditions conflict in their presentation of Lysander's attitudes towards Heraclid descent and Spartan kingship. One

[21] I follow Ziegler's emendation. Alternatively, following Sintenis, Lysander argues that the oracle warns against the prospect of the illegitimate and basely-born ruling "alongside Heracleidae" (<σὺν> Ἡρακλείδαις).

might dismiss this apparent conflict as a product of Lysander's duplicity, a characteristic which Plutarch emphasizes (*Lys.* 7.5–8.5). By this interpretation Lysander's endorsement of Heraclid descent as an essential attribute for Spartan kings was a tactical manoeuvre to help secure the Eurypontid kingship for Agesilaus, and he felt no compunction in abandoning that principle when it was in his interests to do so. However, I think it is no coincidence that at this point in his narrative Plutarch presents in detail the Heraclid version of Lysander's planned reform—a version which avoids the conflict between these two source traditions, and which is not obviously apparent later in the *Life of Lysander*, or in the *Comparison of Lysander and Sulla*, and directly contradicts the account Plutarch gives in his *Life of Agesilaus*.

It is possible that the incongruity of these two source traditions led Plutarch to draw at this point in his narrative upon a now unknown source, who presented the Heraclid version of Lysander's planned reform. However, Plutarch may well himself have developed a scenario which rationalized the discrepancies of these source traditions, and simultaneously served to re-emphasize Lysander's own Heraclid descent. Such a rationalisation will have required a degree of inventiveness on Plutarch's part, but would be entirely in keeping with the 'creative reconstruction' of which scholars have observed he is more than capable.[22] Indeed,

[22] C. Pelling, "Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's Lives," in *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London 2002) 156 (reprinted and updated from D. A. Russell (ed.), *Antonine Literature* [Oxford 1990]): "He does not always behave as we would, certainly; he tidies and improves, and in some cases he must have known that he was being historically inaccurate. But the process has limits, and the untruthful tidying and improving is never very extensive. The big changes, the substantial improvements tend to come where he could genuinely claim—'yes, it must have been like that'." See also, although primarily with reference to Roman Lives, "Plutarch's Adaptation of his Source-material," in *Plutarch and History* 91–116 (reprinted and updated from *JHS* 100 [1980] 127–140). Cf. Mossé, in *Contribution of Ancient Sparta* 303. For an example of Plutarch's reworking of material elsewhere in his Spartan Lives see his alteration of the significance of the earthquake cited by Agesilaus as evidence of Leotychidas' illegitimacy (*Ages.* 3.9, cf. Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.2), discussed by Shipley, *Plutarch's Life of Agesilaos* 88–90.

he may have applied a similar rationale to those scholars who have preferred the Heraclid to the Spartiate version of this reform: it was a more moderate proposal and was in sympathy with Lysander's own Heraclid descent.

Plutarch's adaptation of source material

Thus far, we have considered the narratives of Lysander's planned reform which Plutarch presents in his Lives. However, comparison with Plutarch's *Spartan Sayings* may allow us to gain insight into how he adapted source material to serve those narratives. Such comparison hinges upon the vexed question of the relationship between Plutarch's Lives and his two anecdote collections—the *Spartan Sayings* and the *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*. Among recent discussion of this topic, Pelling suggests understanding both collections as works in their own right, while Stadter identifies the *Spartan Sayings* as a "working document," the Spartan section of a personal anecdote collection which Plutarch amassed over an extended period and drew upon in composing his published works.[23]

For my own part, I agree with Stadter. He considers both collections separately and persuasively argues for the rougher quality of the *Spartan Sayings*.[24] Pelling's analysis deals primarily with the *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*, and he acknowledges the possibility that for the *Spartan Sayings* Stadter's model may be

[23] C. Pelling, "The *Apophthegmata Regum et Imperatorum* and Plutarch's Roman Lives," in *Plutarch and History* 65–91; P. A. Stadter, "Plutarch's Compositional Technique: The Anecdote Collections and the *Parallel Lives*," *GRBS* 54 (2014) 665–686, esp. 666–674. On the *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* see also M. Beck, "Plutarch to Trajan: The Dedicatory Letter and the Apophthegmata Collection," in P. A. Stadter and L. Van der Stockt (eds.), *Sage and Emperor: Plutarch, Greek Intellectuals, and Roman Power in the Time of Trajan* (Leuven 2002) 163–173.

[24] Unlike the *Sayings of Kings and Commanders*, the *Spartan Sayings* contains duplicate entries: Stadter, *GRBS* 54 (2014) 666. Also, the anecdotes attributed to Lycurgus, Lysander, and Agesilaus in the latter each follow the same order as in the corresponding Life, suggesting that they reflect Plutarch's preparation of those Lives (Stadter 666–668).

correct.[25] At the same time, there is significant common ground between the two scholars. While Stadter regards the anecdotes in the *Spartan Sayings* as being close to the original source material, he acknowledges that they are not verbatim extracts, rather paraphrases and free summaries which potentially introduce new elements and emphases.[26] Conversely, while Pelling's model implies that these anecdotes have gone through at least two stages of adaptation, it still allows that they may preserve a stage of development prior to their equivalents in the Lives; this is because Pelling argues that the anecdote collections draw not (or not exclusively) upon the Lives themselves, but upon the *hypomnemata* or draft versions of the Lives.[27]

Critically, neither scholar seeks to resurrect the once common understanding of the anecdote collections as digests of material drawn from the Lives.[28] The one or more levels of 'handling' by Plutarch which, by either interpretation, the anecdotes in the *Spartan Sayings* have undergone mean that we cannot treat them as if they directly represent his 'raw' source material. However, in the absence of an independently-extant source (such as Xenophon provides for various sections of Plutarch's Spartan Lives),

[25] Pelling, *Plutarch and History* 84–85.

[26] Thus Stadter notes that the recounting in the *Spartan Sayings* of the encounter between Agesilaus and Megabates contains an accusation of cowardice not found in Xenophon, seemingly added by Plutarch: *GRBS* 54 (2014) 670, 672.

[27] The *hypomnemata* from which the anecdotes were drawn will already have reflected the major narrative strategies and concerns of the Lives for which they were drafts; Plutarch will then have condensed the anecdotes to suit the concise style appropriate to an anecdote collection: Pelling, *Plutarch and History* 75–76.

[28] Many scholars have noted the flaws of such an identification, such as the presence within the anecdote collections of material not found in the Lives (and vice versa), and the divergences apparent in the form and ordering of some of the shared anecdotes. For discussion see F. Fuhrmann, *Plutarque: Oeuvres Morales* III (Paris 1988) 132–140; C. Santaniello, *Plutarco: Detti dei Lacedemoni* (Naples 1995) 13–19; D. del Corno, "Introduzione," in G. Zanetto, *Plutarco: Le Virtù di Sparta* (Milan 1996) 32–35; Pelling, *Plutarch and History* 70.

the text preserved in the *Spartan Sayings* may provide instructive insight into the ways in which Plutarch adapted source material in composing his Lives.[29]

To give one example, the *Life of Lysander*, the *Spartan Sayings*, and the *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* each preserve an anecdote in which someone criticises Lysander's willingness to gain victories through deceit and he blithely retorts that "where the lion's skin is lacking, it must be patched up with that of the fox" (*Lys.* 7.6: ὅπου γὰρ ἡ λεοντῆ μὴ ἐφικνεῖται, προσραπτέον ἐκεῖ τὴν ἀλωπεκῆν). In the *Life*, the complaint is that "Heracleidae should not wage war by deceit" (7.6: τῶν δ' ἀξιούντων μὴ πολεμεῖν μετὰ δόλου τοὺς ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους γεγονότας); in the other two instances the complaint is that to gain victory through deceit is "not worthy of Heracles" (*Mor.* 190E: πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ψέγοντας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ δι' ἀπάτης τὰ πολλὰ πράσσειν ὡς ἀνάξιον τοῦ Ἡρακλέους; 229B: πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ψέγοντας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ δι' ἀπάτης τὰ πλεῖστα πράττειν ὡς ἀνάξιον τοῦ Ἡρακλέους καὶ δόλῳ, οὐκ ἄντικρυς κατορθοῦντα). Keeping in mind the caveats expressed above, this divergence may indicate that in composing the *Life of Lysander*, Plutarch took an anecdote which called upon Heracles in a more generic manner and subtly adapted the text to explicitly invoke him as an ancestor, thus further highlighting Lysander's Heraclid descent.

Similar insight is provided by the anecdote about Agesilaus' discovery of the speech written for Lysander by Cleon of Halicarnassus. In the *Life of Agesilaus* this speech is reported in brief as proposing a change to the constitution (20.4: περὶ πραγμάτων καινῶν καὶ μεταστάσεως τοῦ πολιτεύματος). This version is also preserved under Agesilaus' name in the *Spartan Sayings* (*Mor.*

[29] On Plutarch's manipulation of anecdotes to fit different literary contexts see also M. Beck, *Plutarch's Use of Anecdotes in the Lives* (diss. Univ. of North Carolina 1998), and "Plato, Plutarch and the Use and Manipulation of Anecdotes in the Lives of Lycurgus and Agesilaus: History of the Laconic Apophthegm," in A. Pérez Jiménez et al. (eds.), *Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles* (Madrid 1999) 173–187; P. A. Stadter, "Notes and Anecdotes: Observations on Cross-Genre Apophthegmata," in A. G. Nikolaidis (ed.), *The Unity of Plutarch's Work: Moralia Themes in the Lives, Features of the Lives in the Moralia* (Berlin 2008) 53–66.

212C: περὶ πραγμάτων καινῶν καὶ μεταστάσεως τοῦ πολιτεύματος). However, under Lysander's name, a version is presented which combines elements found at two different points in the *Life of Lysander*. First we are told, in the same language as in the *Life of Lysander*, that Cleon's speech proposed that the kingship be taken away from the Agiad and Eurypontid lineages, and opened up to "the best" (229F: χρὴ τῶν Εὐρυπωντιδῶν καὶ Ἀγιαδῶν τὴν βασιλείαν ἀφελομένους εἰς μέσον θεῖναι καὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν αἵρεσιν ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων). In the *Sayings*, however, this proposal is followed by a justification that thus the kingship would go to those alike to Heracles in virtue, rather than those descended from Heracles (ἵνα μὴ τῶν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους, ἀλλὰ <τῶν> οἷος Ἡρακλῆς τῇ ἀρετῇ κρινομένων τὸ γέρας ᾖ, ᾗ κἀκεῖνος εἰς θεῶν τιμὰς ἀνήχθη). This is the same rationale, in almost the same language, which Plutarch provides in the *Life of Lysander* for the Spartiate version of Lysander's reform (24.5: ἵν' <ᾖ> μὴ τῶν ἀφ' Ἡρακλέους ἀλλὰ τῶν οἷος Ἡρακλῆς τὸ γέρας, ἀρετῇ κρινομένων, ἢ κἀκεῖνον εἰς θεῶν τιμὰς ἀνήγαγεν).

This suggests the possibility that, in incorporating this anecdote into his *Life of Lysander*, Plutarch split it in two.[30] He took the rationale for opening the kingship to all Spartiates, which originally had a specific context in the speech of Cleon of Halicarnassus, and instead employed it as a more general statement when he first explains this version of Lysander's planned reform. On one level, it is not surprising that Plutarch should wish to make use of this statement at this point: the contrast which it draws between *aretē* and *eugeneia* in relation to Heracles is succinct and expressive. However, this relocation also has other consequences which were arguably factors in his choice. Relying upon this concise justification at 24.5 maintains the brevity of

[30] This interpretation works under either Stadter's or Pelling's model. Following Pelling's model, an alternative hypothesis would be that the two elements—proposal and rationale—were in fact separate in the *hypomnema*, but Plutarch brought them together when he composed the *Spartan Sayings*. However, bringing together two unrelated sections of text in order to create a longer, fuller anecdote would appear to run contrary to Plutarch's general trend in the *Sayings* towards compression and concision.

Plutarch's engagement with the Spartiate version of the reform relative to the significantly longer discussion of the Heraclid version which immediately precedes it. It also creates a thematic connection between the two, reinforcing Heracles/Heracleidae as a key issue. In short, the use at this point of the rationale drawn from Cleon's speech helps to create the primacy which Plutarch here appears to grant the Heraclid version of Lysander's planned reform.

Detaching the rationale from the rest of the anecdote also subtly alters how we understand Cleon's speech. The substance of this anecdote, if not its precise language, probably derives from Ephorus; Plutarch directly names Ephorus in the *Life of Lysander* as his source for the speech's post-mortem discovery (30.3). As presented in the *Spartan Sayings*, with the rationale, the anecdote clearly associates the speech with the Spartiate version of Lysander's planned reform.[31] I have argued above that, as presented in the *Life*, without the rationale, Cleon's speech and within it the phrase ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων is still not obviously suggestive of the Heraclid version of the reform. However, it is ambiguous, and can be thought to refer to either of the versions which Plutarch presents in that work. One might even suggest that this 'constructive ambiguity' was Plutarch's initial motivation for removing the rationale from its original context. In integrating this anecdote into his *Life of Lysander*, Plutarch appears to have adapted it to accommodate the Heraclid version which, I suggest, he had himself developed.

To summarise my argument, the representation of Lysander's planned reform of Sparta's dual-kingship in Plutarch's corpus is inconsistent. Ephorus was a, quite possibly the, major source for Plutarch's account of that reform, but not for the Heraclid version which features within that account. However, rather than identifying or hypothesizing another source, this is one of the many instances where variations within Plutarch's narratives or divergences between Plutarch and his sources should be understood by looking to his own authorial interests and input. In

[31] This corroborates our connection (above) of Ephorus with the Spartiate version of the reform.

writing his *Life of Lysander*, I argue, Plutarch constructed the Heraclid version of Lysander's reform himself, in response to the seeming conflict between the Ephorean tradition of that reform and the Xenophontic tradition of Lysander's earlier statements regarding Heraclid descent and Spartan kingship.

This has implications for historical discussions of this subject. Faced with the two versions of this reform presented in our sources, scholars have generally favoured the Heraclid over the Spartiate. This has been on the basis of practical considerations as to why Lysander *should* have preferred to propose opening the kingship only to all Spartan Heracleidae. The question whether we should regard Lysander's planned reform as historical reality or merely 'black propaganda' remains open to debate. In either case, however, I suggest that it is in terms of opening the kingship to all Spartiates that we should conceive those plans.[32]

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