

Sparta

Lycurgus



MACQUARIE
University



Lycurgus as one of the Seven Wise Men
The Nuremberg Chronicle (1493)

Lycurgus

A CASE STUDY

- Plut. *Lyc.* 1.1
- Concerning Lycurgus the lawgiver, in general, nothing can be said which is not disputed, since indeed there are different accounts of his birth, his travels, his death, and above all, of his work as lawmaker and statesman; and there is least agreement among historians as to the times in which the man lived.

Did Lycurgus establish the Spartan constitution?

ANCIENT ALTERNATIVES

- Divine responsibility: Pythia dictated the laws to Lycurgus (so from Apollo) .
- Herodotus [c. 430 BC] 1.65.2-5
- The whole constitution is attributed to Lycurgus
- Heraclides Lembos [4th century BC] fr. 9 Dilts
- Heraclides' work is composed of excerpts from Aristotle's lost works on constitutions[= Aristot. fr. 611.9 Rose]
- 'Some people attribute the whole Spartan constitution to Lycurgus.'
- Lycurgus was not involved
- Hellanicus (*BNJ* 4 F 116) and Ephorus (*BNJ* 70 F 118). [End of fifth century-fourth century] in Strabo, *Geography* 8.5.5
- Hellanicus says that Eurysthenes and Procles established the constitution (i.e., for Sparta). But Ephorus (*BNJ* 70 F 118) criticizes him, claiming that he never once mentioned Lycurgus, and assigned his deeds to people who had nothing to do with him.
- Aegimius responsible
- Pindar *Olympian* 1.60-64 [For Hieron of Syracuse; Single Horse Race 476 BC]
- [60] 'Come, let us devise a friendly song for the king of Aetna, for whom Hieron founded that city with god-built freedom, in accordance with the laws of the rule of Hyllus. The descendants of Pamphylus, and, truly, of the Heracleidae also, dwelling beneath the cliffs of Taygetus, are willing to abide forever as Dorians under the ordinances of Aegimius.'
- Gradual development, eg Theopompus involved
- Plato: a gradual development of the Spartan constitution; Theopompus establishes ephorate (*Leg.* 3.691e-692a).

Lycurgus

KEY SOURCES

Key methodology: historical criticism or historical-critical method [source criticism]

Historical criticism aims to :

discover a text's original meaning in its original historical context

establish a reconstruction of the historical situation of the author and audience of the text

Examine the text's historical origins

Who wrote the text?

When was the text written?

Where was it written (place/work)?

Who was it written for (audience/readers)?

Ask questions of the text

What is it about ?

What were the sources used by the author of this text?

What questions does the text answer or ask on the historical problem that we are addressing?

Lycurgus

A CASE STUDY

Evidence for the lawgiver and his role in the Spartan laws and way of life is complicated.

How do we analyse a text?

‘we have to eliminate discordant elements in the sources and base our reconstruction on the self-consistent residue’ ; *look for* ‘a small but valuable kernel’ (Hooker p.344)

Example: Thucydides on the Trojan War.

But note this is nuanced

‘ ...we need to deconstruct the interpretations imposed...[on a piece of evidence] in antiquity and reconstruct what it meant to its original audience’ (Van Wees p.1)

Lycurgus

KEY TOPICS & METHOD

Written evidence for the development of the Spartan constitution and way of life.

Topics

Great Rhetra

Tyrtaeus

Lycurgus Tradition

And Ancient Tradition

Key methodology: historical criticism or historical-critical method

Sources

Herodotus

Diodorus

Strabo

Plutarch

Pausanias

KEY SOURCES

- **Herodotus**

- Wrote to c. 430 BC
- Some say
- Lacedaemonians themselves say

- **Diodorus**

- fl. c. 1st century BC.
- Tyrtaeus '*Eunomia*' time of the second Messenian War (c. 640/30-600 BC)

- **Strabo**

- 1st century BC-1st Century AD
- Hellanicus 5th century BC (trad. c. 480-395)
- Ephorus 4th century BC
- Pausanias: Agiad reigned 408 to 394 BC

- **Plutarch**

- c. AD 45-120
 - Tyrtaeus '*Eunomia*' time of the second Messenian War (c. 640/30-600 BC)
 - Simonides of Ceos (poet) c. 556-467 BC
 - Xenophon of Athens (historian) c. 430 – 354 BC) –quotes a passage we have...
 - Aristotle of Stagira (philosopher) 384–322 BC
 - Aristoxenus of Tarentum (philosophy and music) second half 4th century BC (fl. c. 330 BC)
 - Cretans in Aristoxenus; reference to physical memorial
 - Dieutychidas unknown. Taken to be a textual error for Dieuchidas of Megara (historical chronicler) 4th century BC
 - Lycurgus himself ***apophthegmata*** – recorded sayings and letters Plut. *Lyc.* 19.3-4, cf. 31.2 (Plutarch notes both belief and scepticism with regard to their authenticity).
 - Timaeus of Tauromenium, Sicily (historian) 352-256 BC
 - Hermippus of Smyrna (philosopher and biographer) second half 3rd century BC
 - Eratosthenes of Cyrene (geographer and mathematician) 276-196 BC
 - Apollodorus of Athens (grammarian; mythographer too?) 2nd century BC
 - Apollothemis mentioned only here; otherwise unknown
-
- Some (consensus?) including Aristotle
 - 'most writers...'

- **Pausanias**

- Born c. 110: 2nd century AD
- Visits Sparta

Lycurgus

KEY SOURCES

Who wrote the laws? Lycurgus or Apollo/the Pythia or the Cretans

As soon as he entered the hall, the priestess said in hexameter:

[3] “You have come to my rich temple, Lycurgus,
A man dear to Zeus and to all who have Olympian homes.
I am in doubt whether to pronounce you man or god, (*anthropos...theos*)
But I think rather you are a god, Lycurgus. ”

[4] Some say that the Pythia also declared to him the constitution that now exists at Sparta, but the Lacedaemonians themselves say that Lycurgus brought it from Crete when he was guardian of his nephew Leobotes, the Spartan king. [5] Once he became guardian, he changed all the laws and took care that no one transgressed the new ones. Lycurgus afterwards established their affairs of war: the sworn divisions, the bands of thirty, the common meals; also the ephors and the council of elders.

Herodotus 1.65.3-5 (c. 430 BC)

Trans. A. D. Godley. (Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1920).

Lycurgus

KEY SOURCES

Who wrote the laws? Lycurgus or Apollo/the Pythia or the Cretans

...Now Hellanikos (BNJ 4 F 116) says that Eurysthenes and Prokles established the Lakedaimonian constitution, but Ephoros castigates him (T 30a) for this, saying that Hellanikos nowhere mentions Lykourgos and instead attributes Lykourgos' accomplishments to people that had nothing to do with them. At any rate the Lakedaimonians erected a temple to Lykourgos alone and made annual sacrifices to him, but to Eurysthenes and Prokles, even though they had founded the state, they did not grant even this, namely that those descended from them should be called 'Eurysthenidai' and 'Prokleidai'. Instead, they are called 'Agidai' after Agis, the son of Eurysthenes, and 'Eurypontidai' after Eurypon, the son of Prokles. For the latter two reigned justly, but the former two, who accepted aliens into the country, maintained their power through them. For this reason they were not considered 'Archegetae', a title which is accorded to all founders. And Pausanias, who went into exile owing to the enmity of the other royal house, the Eurypontids, while an exile composed a book against the laws of Lykourgos, because Lykourgos belonged to the house that had banished him, in which book he recounts even the oracles which Lykourgos received from ... (text here corrupt and unintelligible).

Strabo, *Geography* 8.5.5

Trans. Victor Parker in *BNJ* (2011)

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= Hellanikos **BNJ 4 F 116**

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= Ephorus **BNJ 70 F 118**

From Pausanias, the Spartan king (reigned 408 to 394 BC)

Trans. Victor Parker in *BNJ* (2011)

Sources cited

-
- Hellanicus 5th century BC (trad. c. 480-395)
 - Shows there was a rival tradition without Lycurgus
 - Differs again from Herodotus 1.65.3-5 (c. 430 BC) ('some say Pythia...Spartans say Lycurgus [reign of Leobates...])
 - Ephorus 4th century BC
 - Used a Spartan source
 - Pausanias: Agiad reigned 408 to 394 BC
 - Pausanias tried to abolish the ephorate (Ar. *Pol.* 1301b 17-19); 'aiming at tyranny' (Paus. 2.9.1)
 - *Why did he focus on oracles?*
 - *Why anti-Lycurgus?*
 - May have pointed to the oracles as they don't mention ephors (in our extant examples).
 - Apparently accepted the existence of Lycurgus – politically motivated to critique the constitutional position of the ephors
 - competing claims to authority between Pausanias and the Spartan admiral Lysander.
 - 'But where our ignorance is so deep as it is for Spartan traditions in the two centuries after Leuktra (371), it is doubtful whether we should apply the principle of economy of hypotheses to marry the few things about which we know just a little.'
 - Powell, Anton, "Pausanias II, king of Sparta (582)", in: *Brill's New Jacoby*, General Editor: Ian Worthington (University of Missouri). Consulted online on 09 May 2018 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1873-5363_bnj_a582>First published online: 2016
 - Strabo 1st century BC-1st Century AD
 - *Did Strabo read Hellanicus and Ephorus? Does Ephorus' information come from Pausanias?*

Tyrtaeus

SECOND KEY SOURCE

Lyc. 5.7 and 6.2 (‘Aristotle says...’)

And they were actually able to persuade the city that the god authorized this addition to the *rhētra*, as Tyrtaeus reminds us in these verses:—

Having listened to Phoebus they brought home from Delphi
prophecies of the god and words that will come true.

‘Counsel is to begin with the divinely honoured kings,
Who have the lovely city of Sparta in their care,
And with the ancient elders. Then the men of the people
Responding in turn to straight *rhētrai*’

Plutarch *Lyc.* 6.5
[trans. Van Wees’]

Plutarch attributes the lines to the poet Tyrtaeus
Tyrtaeus’ work was called ‘Eunomia’

Red part quoted by Diodorus as well as Plutarch
The passage attributed to Aristotle.

Eunomia by Tyrtaeus

CASE STUDY

- Consensus view: this is a key piece of evidence for the date of the *Rhetra*
- *Eunomia* by Tyrtaeus. Around the time of the second Messenian War (c. 640/30-600 BC: mentions Theopompus F.5)
- Cf. Tyrtaeus claiming to have fought in the war: F8 = Strabo 8.4.10
- An account of the conquest of Messenia by Theopompus and consultation of Delphic oracle
- Quoted by Plutarch, in a passage attributed to Aristotle
- ‘They’ brought oracles from Delphi concerning the government of Sparta.
- Plutarch/Aristotle say the people were persuaded to accept the changes to the constitution as they were authorized by Apollo through the oracles referred to.
- Diodorus quotes the same four lines in a longer extract from the same poem,
 - though his first two lines differ from those in Plutarch
- Diodorus says the lines come from a Delphic oracle given to Lycurgus.
- Key point: Tyrtaeus’ text existed in Aristotle’s day (accepting the attribution) and Diodorus’
- Aristotle & Diodorus interpreted the poetry to suit their reconstruction of the formation of the Spartan constitution
- We should attempt to understand the poetry in its original context.
 - Ie remove it from the interpretative ‘frame’ that has been constructed by the authors who have quoted it.
 - If it had mentioned Lycurgus would they not have quoted that too? (see Van Wees).

Tyrtaeus

KEY SOURCES

The Pythian priestess delivered to Lycurgus an oracle regarding a political constitution in these words:

So the lord of the silver bow, far-shooting Apollo
of the golden hair proclaimed from out his rich *adyton*:

‘Let the sway in the council belong to the god-honoured kings,
whose care is the lovely Sparta,
and the *gerontes* of elder birth (or of old age), and next the common men
answering with (or to) the straight *rhētrai*,
they must speak fair and do all that is right
nor give any bad counsel to the city,
and let the mass of the people have victory and power.’

Diodorus 7.11 Trans. Kōiv

Note the *Rhētrai* are not verse oracles—unless we accept the *common* view in Herodotus that they come from the god

Rhētra – means verbal agreement, covenant; decree of the Spartan kings (later meaning?) Plut. *Agis* 8

Tyrtaeus

KEY SOURCES

Fragment of *Eunomia*

2 Oxyrhynchus papyrus (late 1st or early 2nd cent. a.d.)

In what precedes v. 9 there are references to consultation of the Delphic oracle and to men standing up, presumably to speak.

. . . dear to the gods . . . let us obey (the kings since they are?) nearer to the race (of the gods?). For Zeus himself, the son of Cronus and husband of fair crowned Hera, has given this state to the descendants of Heracles. With them we left windy Erineus and came to the wide island of Pelops . . . of the grey-eyed . . .

Trans. Douglas E. Gerber (Loeb, 1999)

Tyrtaeus Fragment

A CASE STUDY

- Diodorus cites 9 lines from the poem
- 4 lines coincide with the extract in Plutarch: accepted that it is the same poem, called by other writers including Aristotle, *Eunomia* (Ar. *Pol.* 1306b, Strabo 8.362)
- But first two lines are different & Diodorus has additional lines:
 - Plutarch has a plural subject: ‘they brought home’ (implies the kings Plutarch has mentioned in his context, Theopompus and Polydorus)
 - Diodorus has a singular subject : Apollo gives the oracle; and additional lines
- The citation of the *Rhetra* and Tyrtaeus in Plutarch has been attributed by scholars to Aristotle (fr.536 Rose) (cf. Kōiv p. 234) from a lost work, the *Spartan Constitution*.
- See *Lyc.* 5.7 and 6.2 (‘Aristotle says...’)
- Kōiv p.234, ‘Aristotle also quoted six lines of Tyrtaios...’;
- Kōiv p.235 ‘Aristotle believed that the verses referred to the addition of the Rider by Theopompos and Polydoros.’

Tyrtaeus

KEY SOURCES

Van Wees' translation

Having listened to Phoebus they brought home from Delphi
prophecies of the god and words that will come true...

...

‘Counsel is to begin with the divinely honoured kings,
Who have the lovely city of Sparta in their care,
And with the ancient elders. Then the men of the people
Responding in turn to straight *rhētrai*’
they must speak fair and do all that is right
nor give any bad counsel to the city,
and let the mass of the people have victory and power.’

Van Wees argues that :

The prophecy he records belongs to a different occasion

The poem *Eunomia* has a different political context evident from the difference between it and the *Great Rhetra* .
It is Aristotle who has contextualised the poem with the *Great Rhetra*.

- Plutarch/Aristotle may have omitted lines without indication – hence first two lines and those in the Diodorus version could all come from the original poem.
- Spartans did not believe their laws came directly from the Pythia. (Hdt. 1.65.4) (so this is not about the Great Rhetra).
- Tyrtaeus does not reference the *Great Rhetra* nor Lycurgus (...or it would have been quoted...)

Tyrtaeus

CASE STUDY

The oracle belongs to a different occasion, Tyrtaeus was not writing about the 'Lycurgan' constitution
The poem *Eunomia* has a different political context evident from the difference between it and the *Great Rhetra*.

It is Aristotle who has contextualised the poem with the *Great Rhētra* and the reforms of Lycurgus.

Aristotle praises King Theopompus for moderating the power of the kings with Ephors. *Pol.* 1313a 25-7

And curbing the power of the assembly

adding the 'rider' Plut. *Lyc.* 6.4: 'But if the people should adopt a crooked motion, the Elders and Kings shall have power of adjournment.'

le. Theopompus steers Sparta to Aristotle's ideal middle and moderate constitution

Aristotle interprets the evidence to coincide with the 'ideal' constitution he is proposing.

Later fiction:

Tyrtaeus military role: Athenaeus 14.630f ; Strabo 8.4.10

Spartans sing his song while on campaign: Athenaeus 14.630f

Cf. Telesilla of Argos: Paus. 2.20.8-10; Plut. *Fine Deeds of Women* 4.245c-f.

Tyrtaeus

CASE STUDY: CONTEXT FOR HIS POEM

Evidence that Sparta was on brink of civil war in 7th century (during Messenian War)

[3] ...[during the Messenian War...] scarcity arose in Sparta, and with it revolution. For those who had property here could not endure its lying idle. Their differences were being resolved by Tyrtaeus,...

Pausanias 4.18.3. Trans. W.H.S. Jones (Loeb, 1918) [adapted]

Ar. *Pol.* [1306b] Faction in aristocracies also arises when some of the well-born are too poor and others too rich (which happens especially during wars, and this also occurred at Sparta at the time of the Messenian War—as appears from the poem of Tyrtaeus entitled *Law and Order*, [1307a] [1] for some men being in distress because of the war put forward a claim to carry out a re-division of the land of the country).

Eunomia a 7th context (Messenian War)
God called upon for authority to help restore political order
Especially the power of the kings and Gerousia

People being told to obey the Kings and Elders
This is vital for victory in the war

‘Counsel is to begin with the divinely honoured kings,
who have the lovely city of Sparta in their care,
and with the ancient elders. Then the men of the people,
responding in turn to straight *rhētrai*
must say what is noble and do all that is just,
but no longer [?] plot [?] against this city [?].
Victory and power will attend the multitude of the people.’
For thus Phoebus declared to the city in these matters.

Lycurgus

THE GOD

1. *Understanding ancient legend and myth narrative process.*

Cornford: 'infiguration' 'Facts shift into legend, and legend into myth. The facts work loose; they are detached from their roots in time and space and shaped into a story. The story is moulded and remoulded by imagination, by passion and prejudice, by religious preconception or aesthetic intent, by the delight in the marvellous, by the itch for the moral, by the love of a good story; and the thing becomes a legend. A few irreducible facts will remain, no more, perhaps, than the names of persons or places...but even these may at last drop out or be turned by a poet into symbols...The history has now all but won over into the mythical. Change the names and every trace of literal fact will have vanished; the story will have escaped from time into eternity.'

Cornford (1907, 131); Szegedy-Maszak (1978, 201)

Cornford, F.M. *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (1907, repr. New York, 1969)

Contemporary with the founder of the Olympic Games (Paus. 5.4.5)

Contemporary with the founder and co-founder himself (Aristotle: Plut. Lyc. 1.31)

NARRATIVE *TOPOI*

Anomia to Eunomia

1. Crisis including stasis, civil conflict
2. One man selected to resolve conflict: virtuous, educated, widely-travelled, experienced; promulgates new law code
3. Crisis resolved, lawgiver leaves power voluntarily, exile, death.

Political Crisis

Lycurgus abuse of royal power; conflict between rich and poor; murder of king (Plut. *Lyc.* 3)

Solon: conflict between debtors and creditors (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 5.2)

One Man steps up to solve the crisis

Exceptionally virtuous; extensive travel and study with a great philosopher. Travels and borrows from other states with Eunomia.

Lycurgus: Crete, Egypt and Ionia (Plut. *Lyc.* 4, Mor. 345E; Ephorus FGrHist 70F 149 (in Strabo 10.14.9); Hecataeus of Abdera FGrHist 264F 25 (in Diod. 1.96.2-3).

And India, Libya and Iberia: Aristocrates the Spartan (FGrHist 591F 2, in Plut. *Lyc.* 4).

Solon's travel (Plut. *Sol.* 2.1)

and study with a great philosopher

Lycurgus: Thaletas (in Loeb as Thales the Cretan): Ephorus FGrHist 70F 149 (in Strabo 10.14.9); Plut. *Lyc.* 4

Solon: Thales of Miletus, Ancharsis, Epimenidas of Crete: Plut. *Sol.* 5-6, 12, Hdt. 1.29; Diog. Laert. 1.101-2, 112-3.

BIOGRAPHY: SOME EXAMPLES OF INCONSISTENCIES

Royal

Son of Eunomus Eurypontid King

Or his brother, both being sons of Prytanis Plut. L.1.4; or son of Eunomus and half brother of king Polydectes ;or son of Agis

And guardian of a king - Either Charillus (as a Eurypontid) or Leobates (as an Agiad: Herodotus 1.65)

11th in descent from Heracles Plut. *Lyc.* 1; king at Sparta for many years Plut. *Solon.* 16, but for only 8 months before birth of nephew Plut. *Lyc.* 3.4

Lived in mythical time: the time of Homer (and met him) Plut. *Lyc.* 1.2; the time of the Heracleidae Xen. *Lac.* 10.8

Divine contact

Consults Delphic Oracle: contact with god: Delphi Plut. *Lyc.* 29.2

Lycurgus & ‘voice from heaven’ with regard to the Olympic games: Hermippus in Plut. *Lyc.* 23.2; 29.2; tomb struck by lightning *Lyc.* 31.4

His rules *nomothetēmata* were in the form of *rhētrai* ‘believed to come from the god as oracles’ Plut. *Lyc.* 13.6; text ‘corrected’ in Loeb to ‘implying they came from the god’

Wise sayings

No writings (cf. idea that he forbade the writing of laws Plut. *Lyc.* 1.13.1-3)

but ***apophthegmata*** – recorded sayings Plut. *Lyc.* 19.3-4, cf. 31.2

A feature of fictional characterisation (eg of Pythagoras and Pythagoras’ wife Theano)

Lycurgus

Features of a hero

- Associated with the founding of games (Plut. *Lyc.* 1.31; cf. Paus. 5.4.5: just contemporary of Iphitus; cf a Lycurgus involved in foundation story of Nemean Games: Apollodorus 3.6.4)
- Travelled / exile
- We don't really know when he lived / Mystery over his death/more than on tomb
- Worship after death (as a hero)

Sources cited
by Plutarch:
Eratosthenes
Apollodorus
Some
(consensus?)

Apollothemis
Timaeus
Aristoxenus

[Cretans in
Aristoxenus;
reference to
physical
memorial]

[1.]...Some claim that he was in his prime at the same time as Iphitus and was his partner in instituting the Olympic truce [ie. 776 BC]. **Among these is Aristotle the philosopher**, and he alleges as proof the discus at Olympia on which an inscription preserves the name of Lycurgus [Aristotle fragment 533 [Rose]]. But others like **Eratosthenes** and **Apollodorus**, who calculate his period by the succession of kings at Sparta, make the claim that he lived a great many years before the First Olympiad. [31.] ...**Some say** that Lycurgus died in Cirrha: **Apollothemis** says that he had been conveyed to Elis; **Timaeus** and **Aristoxenus** say that he ended his life in Crete, and **Aristoxenus** claims that **Cretans** point out his tomb at Pergamia by the 'Strangers' road....

Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 1, 31 (Trans. R.J.A. Talbert, Penguin, 1988)

BIOGRAPHY

Therefore **Aristotle says** that the honours paid him in Sparta were less than he deserved, although he enjoys the highest honours there. For **he has a temple (*hieron*), and sacrifices are offered to him (*thuouisi*) yearly as to a god (*theos*)**. It is also said that when his remains were brought home, his tomb was struck by lightning, and that this hardly happened to any other eminent man after him except Euripides Euripides, who died and was buried at Arethusa in Macedonia. The lovers of Euripides therefore regard it as a great testimony in his favour that he alone experienced after death what had earlier befallen **a man who was most holy and beloved of the gods.**

Plutarch *Lyc.* 31.3

Trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library edition (Cambridge, MA and London, 1914)

Aristotle Fragment 534 [Rose]

Worship as a god: authority of the Delphic Oracle
implied by Herodotus— ie about 430 BC.

V. Rose, *Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1886

Lycurgus' sanctuary in Sparta

[6]The Lacedaemonians have also made *a sanctuary (hieron) for Lycurgus, who drew up the laws, looking upon him as a god (theos). Behind the temple (naos)* is the grave of Eucosmus, the son of Lycurgus, and by the altar the grave of Lathria and Anaxandra. Now these were themselves twins, and therefore the sons of Aristodemus, who also were twins likewise, took them to wife; they were daughters of Thersander son of Agamedidas, king of the Cleonaeans and great-grandson of Ctesippus, son of Heracles. Opposite the temple (*naos*) is the tomb of Theopompus son of Nicander, and also that of Eurybiades, who commanded the Lacedaemonian warships that fought the Persians at Artemisium and Salamis. Near is what is called the *hero-shrine (heroon) of Astrabacus*.

Pausanias 3.16.6

Pausanias born AD 110

Demonstrates longevity of the worship of Lycurgus

Clear distinction between god and hero in worship

Lycurgus' sanctuary in Sparta

-
- SEG 44 361 — Honorific statue base for Octavia Agis, ca. 110-130 A.D.

Octavia Agis... descendant of the founding gods of the polis, Heracles and Lycurgus.

- evidence for cult to Lycurgus
 - IG V,1 45, 130, 311, 312, 541, 542, 683 (from Sparta, second century AD—early third century).
 - Officials holding office in the cult *of the god Lycurgus*

As a hero would be more understandable: not uncommon for great war heroes or city founders to be elevated to hero status, on a level with the heroes of epic. Brasidas (Thuc. 4.102.1-2; 5.11.1.); Spartan kings (Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 15.9; Paus. 3.14.1).

No apotheosis story

Aetiology

MYTH IN HISTORY

Myth likes to explain the past

One way in which this appears is in names

Names are turned into narrative plot drivers; or invented to 'explain' plot.

Suspicious names

1. *Eunomus*

His father or brother: *Eunomos* = good law ie Eunomia Plut. *Lyc.* 1.4

2. *Prytanis*

His father or grandfather (Plut. *Lyc.* 1.4): Prytanis = ruler, lord

Title of gods Poseidon, Apollo, Zeus (cf. Pi. *P.* 6.24) and became a political office

3. *Dionassa*

His mother: = 'Zeus' queen'

second wife of Eunomus, as Dieutychidas Plut. *Lyc.* 1.4. Dieutychidas is unknown, so normally read as Dieuchidas, Megarian chronicler of 4th century BC, BNJ 485 F 5.

4. **Lycurgus** Λυκοῦργος (light-worker or wolf- ?) cf Apollo *Lykeios* (*Lycian or wolf or Light*) or Λυκηγενής (wolf-born) or *Lycoctonus* (wolf-slayer). There are a number of Lycurguses in Greek myth.

'For example, the poet Simonides says that Lycurgus was not the son of Eunomus, but that both Lycurgus and Eunomus were sons of Prytanis.' Simonides F.628 = Plut. *Lyc.* 1

Plutarch's agenda

COMPARISON to DEFINE THE GOOD RULER

Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa 1.1

Now that we have recounted the lives of Numa and Lycurgus, and both lie clearly before us, we must attempt, even though the task be difficult, to assemble and put together their points of difference. For their points of likeness are obvious from their careers: their wise moderation, their piety, their talent for governing and educating, and their both deriving their laws from a divine source. But each also performed noble deeds peculiar to himself. To begin with, Numa accepted, but Lycurgus resigned, a kingdom.

[2] One got it without asking for it, the other had it and gave it up. One was made by others their sovereign, though a private person and a stranger; the other made himself a private person, though he was a king. It was a noble thing, of course, to win a kingdom by righteousness; but it was also a noble thing to set righteousness above a kingdom. For it was virtue which rendered the one so famous as to be judged worthy of a kingdom, and virtue, too, which made the other so great as to scorn a kingdom.

Trans. Bernadotte Perrin. (Loeb 1914)

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- **Note Plutarch's rationalism: the law-givers like Lycurgus may have just pretended to speak with the god: *Numa* 4.6-8.**
 - [7] Is it worth while, then, if we concede these instances of divine favour, to disbelieve that Zaleucus, Minos, Zoroaster, Numa, and Lycurgus, who piloted kingdoms and formulated constitutions, had frequent audience of the Deity? Is it not likely, rather, that the gods are in earnest when they hold converse with such men as these, in order to instruct and advise them in the highest and best way, but use poets and warbling singers, if at all, for their own diversion? [8] However, if any one is otherwise minded, I say with Bacchylides, 'Broad is the way.' Indeed there is no absurdity in the other account which is given of Lycurgus and Numa and their like, namely, **that since they were managing headstrong and captious multitudes, and introducing great innovations in modes of government, they pretended to get a sanction from the god**, which sanction was the salvation of the very ones against whom it was contrived.
 - Trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1914).

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