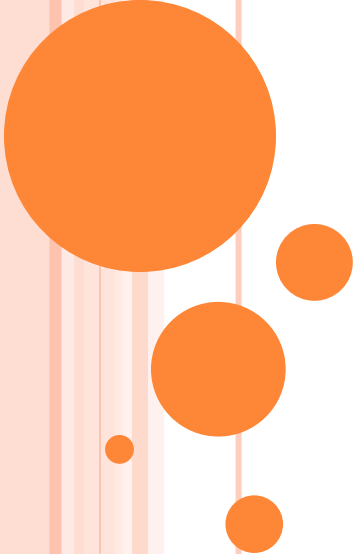




SPARTA: AN EXTRAORDINARY POLIS

Lecture 2: Geography

SOURCES AND EVIDENCE



LITERARY SOURCES

- There are no literary histories written by Spartans
- Most authors on Sparta are not contemporary



ARCHAIC PERIOD

- The main literary sources on Sparta for the archaic period are Tyrtaeus, Alcman and Herodotus



TYRTAEUS

- Spartan elegiac poet of the mid-7th cent. BC.
- His works are said to have filled five books; some 250 lines or parts of lines survive in quotations and papyri.
- They are of great historical interest in relation to two crises affecting Sparta at the time. One was civic unrest that threatened the authority of the kings and elders.
- The other crisis was the Second Messenian War. Here too Tyrtaeus functioned as a sort of state poet, exhorting the Spartans to fight to the death for their city
- Besides elegies, the Suda credits Tyrtaeus with 'martial songs'.

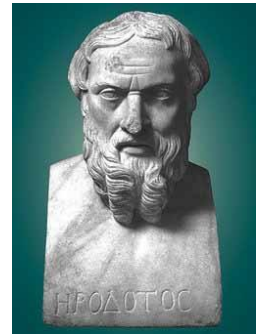


ALCMAN

- lyric poet, active in the mid-to late 7th cent. BC in Sparta. His birthplace was disputed. Some believed him a Laconian, while a number of ancient authors made him a Lydian
- The *Suda* credits him with six books of lyric songs
- The lyric songs, mostly choral, included maiden-songs, which were probably arranged into two books by Alexandrian scholars
- The *Suda* credits him with love-poetry, and fragments with erotic content survive (58, 59a)
- The most important surviving works are fragments of two maiden-songs found on papyri.
- Together the two songs show a gaiety and humour not usually associated with Sparta.
- Some other fragments come from maiden-songs, but many defy classification.
- The songs are composed in the Laconian vernacular, with intermittent epic and aeolic forms.
- The poetry had achieved classic status by the late 5th cent.



HERODOTUS



- Herodotus' *Histories* look back to the fall of the Lydian kingdom in western Turkey in 545 BC and forward to events in the early 420s, during the great war between Athens and Sparta but it has as its focus and raison d'être for the 'war between Greeks and non-Greeks', which we call the Persian Wars.
- We do not know exactly when it was written but it was already familiar in Athens in 425 BCE
- We know very little about the life of its author: he nowhere claims to have been an eyewitness or participant in any of the major events or battles that he describes, but records conversations with those who were and with the grandsons of those involved in events of the late 6th cent.
- His birthplace, Halicarnassus in Caria, was a Greek city but at Herodotus' time it was subject to Persian control
- He seems to have taken part in political struggles against the Persian-nominated tyrant Lygdamis
- Most of what he tells us about himself concerns his travels and enquiries
- He is likely to have died where his allusions to later events themselves end, in the 420s; he may well have been less than 60 when he died.

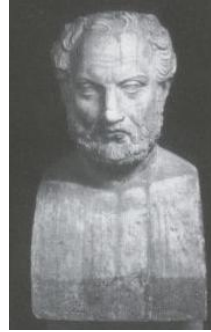


THE LITERARY SOURCES: THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

- The main literary sources for the classical period are Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristotle, Diodorus and Plutarch



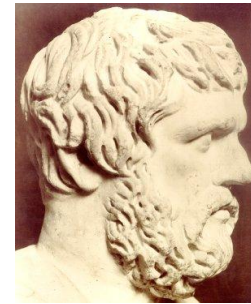
THUCYDIDES



- Author of the (incomplete) History of the War between Athens and Sparta, 431–404 BC, in eight books.
- He was born probably between 460 and 455 BC: he was general in 424 and must then have been at least 30 years old
- He probably died about 400. He shows no knowledge of 4th-cent. events.
- He caught the plague, some time between 430 and 427, but recovered, and in 424 failed in the task of saving Amphipolis from Brasidas.
- He was exiled for this (424 winter) and returned twenty years later, after the war was over, and died within a few years.
- He had property and influence in the mining district of Thrace.
- His father's name was Olorus, the name of Cimon's Thracian grandfather; his tomb was in Cimon's family vault.
- It is almost certain he was related by blood to Cimon, and probably to Thucydides the statesman
- Born in the anti-Pericles opposition, he followed Pericles with a convert's zeal.



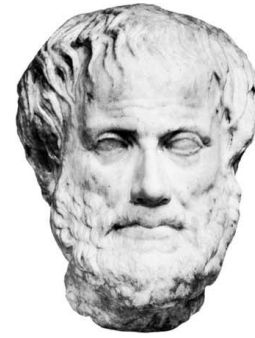
XENOPHON



- Xenophon was born into a wealthy but politically inactive Athenian family around 430.
- He served in the cavalry and associated with Socrates
- This background did not encourage enthusiasm for democracy.
- He stayed in Athens under the Thirty Tyrants and fought the democratic insurgents in the civil war (404–403).
- He was among the 10,000 Greeks involved in Cyrus' rebellion and defeat at Cunaxa (401).
- After the murder of the Generals, Xenophon emerged as a replacement and led the survivors to Byzantium and then into service with the Thracian Seuthes.
- When the Spartans under Thibron arrived in Anatolia for a war of 'liberation' (399) and took over the Cyreans, he became a Spartan mercenary.
- In 394 Agesilaus returned home to confront rebellion amongst Sparta's allies and Xenophon fought for the Spartan cause at Coronea against, among others, his fellow-Athenians.
- Exiled as a result of this he was settled by the Spartans at Scillus, near Olympia.
- As a Spartan protégé he became vulnerable during the disturbances which followed Leuctra, was expelled, and spent the rest of his life in Corinth.



ARISTOTLE



- Aristotle (384–322 BC) was born in Stagira in Chalcidice.
- His father Nicomachus was court physician to Amyntas II of Macedonia, and Aristotle may have spent part of his childhood at the court in Pella.
- At the age of 17 he travelled to Athens and entered Plato's Academy, remaining until Plato's death in 348/7 BC.
- Plato's philosophical influence is evident in all of Aristotle's work. Even when he is critical (a great part of the time) he expresses deep respect for Plato's genius.
- At Plato's death Aristotle left Athens, probably because of political difficulties connected with his Macedonian ties. Invited by Philip II of Macedon to Pella in 342 BC, he became tutor to Philip's son Alexander the Great. His instruction focused on standard literary texts, but probably also included political theory and history. Aristotle's opinion of his pupil's philosophical ability is unknown, but in later years their relationship was distant.
- In 335, after a brief stay in Stagira, Aristotle returned to Athens. He established his own school.
- On the death of Alexander in 323 BC, an outbreak of anti-Macedonian feeling forced Aristotle to leave Athens once again. Alluding to the death of Socrates, he said that he was leaving to prevent the Athenians from 'sin[ning] twice against philosophy'.
- He retired to Chalcis, where he died in 322 of a digestive illness.



DIODORUS

- Diodorus of Agyrium, Sicily is the author of the *Bibliothèque* (*Library*), a universal history from mythological times to 60 BC.
- Only 15 of the original 40 books survive fully (bks. 1–5; 11–20); the others are preserved in fragments.
- Despite his claim to cover all of known history, Diodorus concentrates on Greece and his homeland of Sicily, until the First Punic War, when his sources for Rome become fuller.
- But even in its fragmentary state, the *Bibliothèque* is the most extensively preserved history by a Greek author from antiquity.
- For the period from the accession of Philip II of Macedon to the battle of Ipsus, when the text becomes fragmentary, it is fundamental; and it is the essential source for classical Sicilian history and the Sicilian slave rebellions of the 2nd cent. BC.
- For many individual events throughout Graeco-Roman history, the *Bibliothèque* also sheds important light.
- Diodorus probably visited Egypt c.60–56 BC, where he began researching his history.
- By 56, he may have settled in Rome, completing the *Bibliothèque* there around 30.
- He read Latin and had access to written materials in Rome, but, despite his admiration for Caesar, there is no evidence that he personally knew Romans of prominence.
- Diodorus originally intended to cover events to 46; perhaps the dangers of writing

PLUTARCH



- L.(?) Mestrius Plutarchus of Chaeronea; b. before AD 50, d. after AD 120; philosopher and biographer.
- The family had long been established in Chaeronea, and most of Plutarch's life was spent in that historic town, to which he was devoted.
- He knew Athens well, and visited both Egypt and Italy, lecturing and teaching at Rome.
- His wide circle of influential friends include the consulars L. Mestrius Florus, Q. Sosius Senecio and C. Minicius Fundanus, as well as magnates like the exiled Syrian prince Julius Antiochus Philopappus
- For the last thirty years of his life, Plutarch was a priest at Delphi.
- A devout believer in the ancient pieties and a profound student of its antiquities, he played a notable part in the revival of the shrine in the time of Trajan and Hadrian; and the people of Delphi joined with Chaeronea in dedicating a portrait bust of him 'in obedience to the decision of the Amphictions'
- Late authorities (*Suidas*, *Eusebius*) report that he received *ornamenta consularia* from Trajan, and was imperial procurator in Achaëa under Hadrian; whatever lies behind this, he was a man of some influence in governing circles, as he was in his writing an active exponent of the concept of a partnership between Greece, the educator, and Rome, the great power, and of the compatibility of the two loyalties.

LITERARY SOURCES: HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

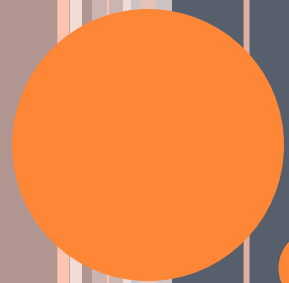
- The main literary sources for the Hellenistic and Roman periods are Diodorus, Polybius and Plutarch



POLYBIUS

- c.200 – c.118 BC, son of Lycortas of Megalopolis
- Member of Achaean Confederacy
- Captive at Rome after 168
- Becomes associated with the Scipios
- Most important work, *Histories* which attempts to explain the rise to dominance of Rome in the Hellenistic world.
- Mostly lost, only have 1-5 of original 40 books, fragments and summaries of many of the others.
- Originally he planned to cover the years 220 to 168, but changed at some point to cover down to 146.

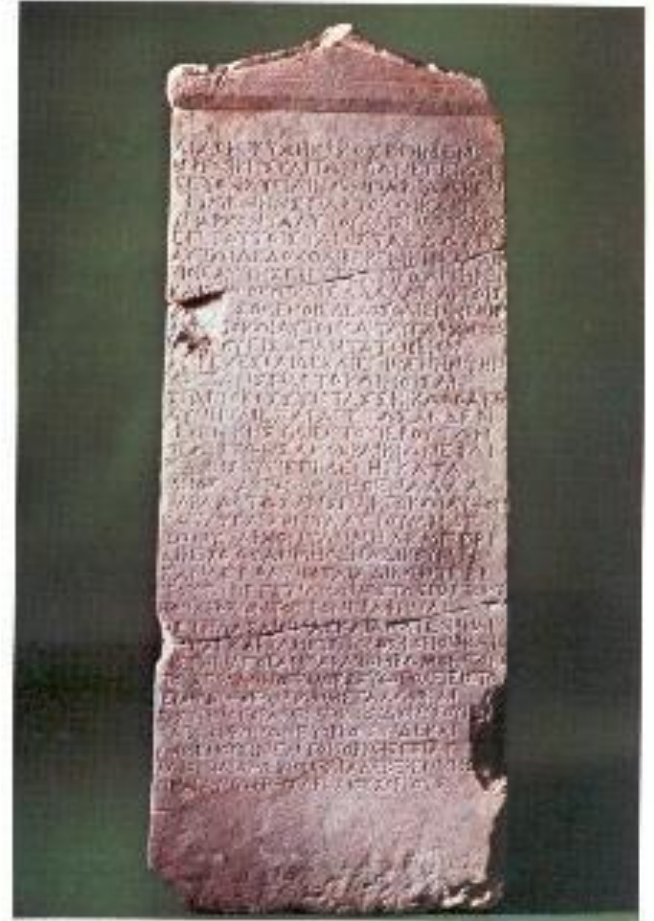




EPIGRAPHY

INSCRIPTIONS

- Inscriptions are documents on stone
- There are state documents such as decrees and laws
- Also there are private documents, such as *horoi* and funerary inscriptions



INSCRIPTIONS ON OTHER MATERIALS

- There are inscriptions which are not on stone but on other media
- Such as lead tablets, whitewashed boards and coins



Inscription on a lead curse tablet

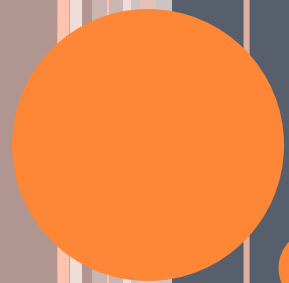


An Athenian coin with an inscription denoting origin

SPARTAN EPIGRAPHY

- Spartans did not write many inscriptions, either public or private.
- Most of the epigraphic evidence relating to Sparta comes from other poleis and either mentions Sparta or refers to events that Sparta was involved in.





ARCHAEOLOGY

THE LIMITATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGY

- Most perishable materials such as wood, fabric and foodstuffs do not survive
- Metals survive well but were widely re-used both in antiquity and later



SPARTAN ARCHAEOLOGY

- Laconia has been excavated to some extent, mainly religious buildings, such as the temple of Artemis Orthia.
- Archaeology is particularly important in the study of the archaic period.
- Archaeological evidence includes buildings, statuary and pottery.



SPARTAN MYSTIQUE

- Unlike Athens and other poleis in the archaic and classical periods, the vast majority of sources on Sparta were created by outsiders.
- Thucydides, Xenophon, Herodotus were all outsiders.
- Plutarch and Diodorus were not only outsiders but also lived long after the classical period.
- Are we looking at Sparta through a rose-tinted glass?



AN ARISTOCRATIC IDEAL?

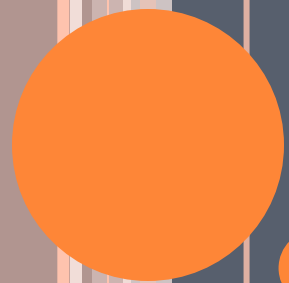
- The Spartan constitution and social structure was essentially elitist.
- Theoretically that elite was based not on power or wealth but on descent and merit.
- Very importantly within the elite, again theoretically, all were equal.
- Our sources were upper-class people.
- How much is Sparta idealised?



ON THE OTHER HAND...

- Sparta was one of the most powerful poleis in the Greek world in the classical period.
- It enjoyed a hegemony in the Peloponnese for almost two centuries and over the Greek world for almost half a century.
- It had the most powerful army in Greece until 371 BCE.
- It won the Peloponnesian War, arguably the most important war in the classical period.





GEOGRAPHY

THE GREEK WORLD

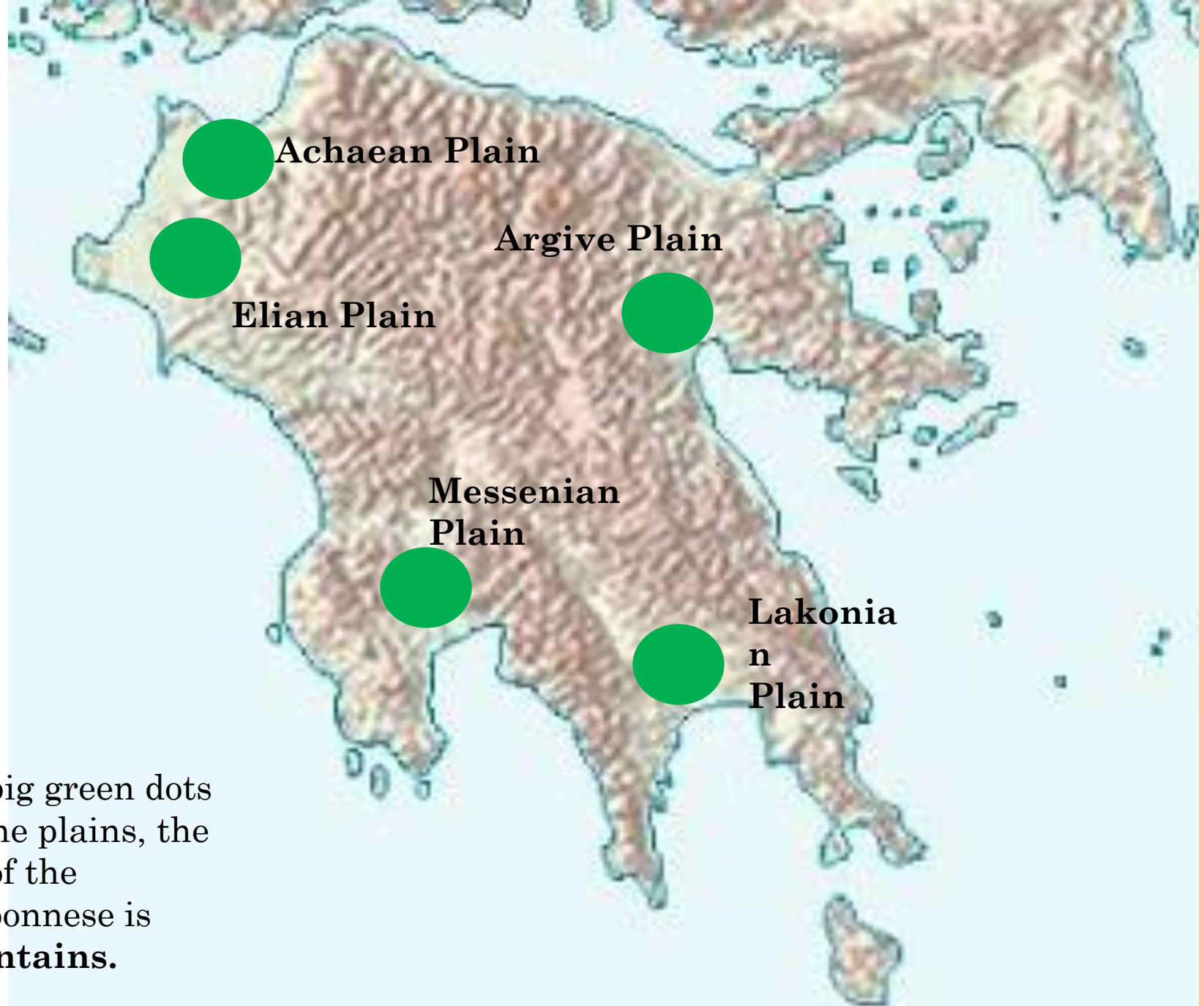


GREECE GEOGRAPHY AND CITIES









The big green dots
are the plains, the
rest of the
Peloponnese is
mountains.



Messenia Lakonia



Nedha

Alpheios

Tanos

Ayios Andreas

Oinous

Pamisos

Evrotas

Little Pamisos

**Main Rivers in
Lakonia and
Messenia**

THE EVROTAS VALLEY



http://www.sparta-in-silico-oncology.iccs.ntua.gr/mission_clip_image002_0006.jpg

THE EVROTAS RIVER NEAR BRONTAMA



<http://www.evrotas.gr/pic/medium/7.jpg>

The River Pamisos



http://farm1.static.flickr.com/136/318388681_70513f3636.jpg



Waterfalls at the River Nedha

<http://www.iridaresort.gr/photos/irida12.png>





**Main Mountains
In Lakonia and
Messenia**



Taygetos Mountain

View of
Taygetos
From modern
Sparti



LAKONIA AND LACEDAIMON

- The terms Sparta, Lakonia and Lacedaimon are **not interchangeable**.
- Lakonia is the area east of Mt. Taygetos.
- Lakonia is **not a state, Sparta is**.
- Lacedaimon is the state including Messenia.





Messenia Lakonia

Lacedaimon

THE AREA OF LACEDAIMON

- These figures relate to the period after 545 BCE.
- Area: $8,500 \text{ km}^2 = 2,100,395 \text{ acres}$
- Lacedaimon was the largest single political entity in the Greek world. Its nearest rival, Athens, had merely $2,500 \text{ km}^2 (=617,763 \text{ acres})$



THUCYDIDES 1.10.2

- For I suppose if Lacedaemon were to become desolate, and the temples and the foundations of the public buildings were left, that as time went on there would be a strong disposition with posterity to refuse to accept her fame as a true exponent of her power. And yet they occupy **two-fifths of Peloponnese and lead the whole, not to speak of their numerous allies without.**



THE CLIMATE

- The climate in the eastern Mediterranean and particularly in Greece is one of constant fluctuation.
- Climatic factors influence agriculture and hence the wealth of a community and its ability to feed itself, as well as produce surplus for trade.



THE CLIMATE IN LAKONIA

- Mean temperature in July: 27°C
- Mean temperature in January: 8.8°C
- Mean rainfall 81.66 cm
- Average number of rain-days: 87 pa
- Annual drought season: 2 months (July and August)
- Wind power: Force 7-8 Beaufort scale (meltemi season).



THE INFLUENCE OF THE MOUNTAINS

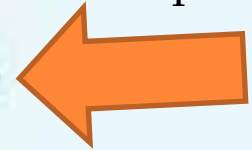
- Lakonia receives more rainfall per year than most areas in southern Greece.
- The drought season is often alleviated by rainstorms.
- Mt Taygetos and Mt Parnon are responsible for the updraughts that bring more rain.



CAPE MALEAS

- Cape Maleas along with Cape Caphereas in Euboea and the Athos peninsula in the Chalcidice are considered the most important marine hazards in the Aegean Sea.
- Ships, even today, will go to considerable lengths to avoid sailing the cape, especially when the wind is strong.

Cape Maleas



HERODOTUS 7.168

- As for the Corcyraeans, their answer to the envoys and their acts were as I will show. The men who had gone to Sicily sought their aid too, using the same arguments which they had used with Gelon. The Corcyraeans straightaway promised to send help and protection, declaring that they would not allow Hellas to perish, for if she should fall, the very next day would certainly see them also enslaved. They would accordingly have to help to the best of their ability. [2]Now this answer seemed fair enough, but when the time came for sending help, their minds changed. They manned sixty ships and put out to sea, making for the coast of the Peloponnese. There, however, they anchored off Pylos and Taenarus in the Lacedaemonian territory, waiting like the others to see which way the war should incline. ... [4]They were, however, also ready with an excuse which they could make to the Greeks, and in the end they made it; when the Greeks blamed them for sending no help, they said that they had manned sixty triremes, **but that they could not round Malea because of the Etesian winds. It was for this reason, they said, that they could not arrive at Salamis; it was not cowardliness which made them late for the sea-fight. With such a plea they put the Greeks off.**



FOLLOW-UP READING

- Cartledge, Paul. *Sparta and Lakonia : A Regional History, 1300-362 BCE*, London, 2002, pp.3-40
- Pausanias *Periegesis* Book 3
- This reading can be found online; links can be found in the follow-up reading links for this lecture on Moodle.



MAP QUIZ

- There is a Map Quiz for you to do on Moodle.
- You should first download the list of places that will paper on the Quiz.
- You should then learn where the places are.
- Then take the Map Quiz.
- You can take the Quiz as many times as you like.
- These are a few of the places that will be of significance in the course and it will be very useful to know where they are.



QUESTIONS?

