

Mothax
Recognition as
Spartiates: A
Critical
Analysis on
Boundaries



Introduction

This presentation will reflect my chosen topic(s) on the existence of the Mothax, or divulgence of the Spartan Mirage and its complex boundaries on what is, and isn't —



addressing the potential questions I will expand upon, and the challenges I will face during the research phase, including sourcing and referencing from both the modern and ancient perspectives.

There is an audio dictation in my presentation to allow me to have a personal touch, as I will not be able to present it in person.

My Potential Questions & the Challenges I Will Face:

Audio Preface/Disclaimer on the Spartan Mirage:

Why is the Spartan Mirage dictative of the Mothax? – Very in-depth question with many layers considering I'll need to take the entirety of both concepts into account and compare them to answer it fully.

Who were the Mothax? – The Mothax, specifically in ancient times, were not well documented – if they were, the information given was limited. It shouldn't be fully trusted due to the lack of such information.

Why did the Mothax have their own class? – Very few trustworthy sources, lack of information and supporting evidence



Who set those boundaries?
– Most of this section will involve the lawmaker Lycurgus/Lykourgos – a controversial figure regarding his existence, a fact that I will have to keep referring to.

Why do the boundaries exist?
– the reasoning behind this via Lycurgus will be an educated guess at best, I will likely need to use my own knowledge and logic to discern it for myself.

Perception and the Spartan Mirage

Perception will be a figurehead for both topics; it acts as a constant problem for both, and it would be remiss to leave it out due to the influence it has – for a critical analysis of either topic, the perception of both the ancient and modern period and the development of both concepts as they have aged is one that would indefinitely need to be explored.

Another major point regarding this would be how the Spartan Mirage itself has developed up until it was coined as an actual term, contributing to its significance – the idea of its existence as a present concept would also be vital to the context of the Mothax as well, so a question asked based around the boundary of perception and the Spartan Mirage would be imperative to have for both topics.



Ancient vs. Modern

- Regarding perspective, it would be absurd to leave the periodic relationships to both concepts out entirely.
- The ancient perspectives are vital as primary sources, however, they are extremely biased due to the social and economic backgrounds of authors who wrote of Sparta – in fact, few primary sources weren't from Athens (Aristotle, Thucydides, Xenophon, etc.) which in itself poses yet another challenge.



- The modern perspectives that act as secondary sources will always be inferior because of the time differences – each society today will have its own biases and incorrect perspectives based on personal upbringing and societal development, including the country's political standings. Sparta was a militant society, something unknown now in the Western world where most secondary sources come from (Paul Cartledge, Stephen Hodkinson) along with Ancient Greece itself being made up of honour-based societies.

Conclusion

I believe exploring the boundaries and definitions put onto the Mothax throughout both the ancient and modern periods with comparative arguments and evidence from both ancient and modern sources will be the most beneficial for me in terms of learning more about Sparta and moving through both modules.



Definitions

*Note: Definitions will be taken from Livius.org as they specifically work within the Ancient Periods – their definitions will be the most supported and accurate – if there is **not** one from Livius, then Merriam-Webster or Britannica will be the substitute.

Mothax: "type of citizen in ancient Sparta"

Spartiate: "a member of the dominant race in Sparta." – Male full-citizens in Sparta, paid a membership-like contribution to their syssitias to be full-citizens and recognised as soldiers.

Spartan: English for 'Lacedaemonian(s)' – These were the people that lived within the region of Laconia

Helot: "class of unfree peasants in Spartan society, who may be defined as state-owned serfs."

Syssitia: "(a system analogous to the symposium system)"

Bibliography

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List of Figures

Slide 1:

- Ancientgreesparta, (Invalid Date), '*Spartan Kylix*', example of surviving pottery of Sparta, digital photograph, Ancient Sparta: Arts and Architecture, accessed 2 November 2024 <<https://ancientgreesparta.wordpress.com/arts-and-architecture/>>

Slide 2:

- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Lead figure of a winged goddess*', religious depiction found in the ruins of the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, digital photograph, accessed 2 November 2024, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/251570>>

Slide 3:

- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Bronze mirror with a support in the form of a nude girl*', potential household item, digital photograph, accessed 2 November 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/253556>

Slide 4: (left image, then right)

- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Bronze mirror with a support in the form of a nude girl*', potential household item, digital photograph, accessed 2 November 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/244558>
- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Bronze rod tripod stand*', potentially used for religious/sacrificial rites as a basin or an altar. A famous example of a tripod was the seat of the Oracle of Delphi, digital photograph, accessed 2 November 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/256861>

Slide 5:

- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Bronze hydria (water jar)*', potential household item, digital photograph, accessed 2 November 2024, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/256220>>

Slide 6

- The Met Museum, (Invalid Date), '*Terracotta kylix (drinking cup)*', potential household item, digital photograph, accessed 3 November 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/248848>