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Kleomenes III and Laconian Landscapes

The Spartan-controlled territory in Messenia and Laconia underwent enforced reorganization in the fourth century bc. The loss of Messenia was a disaster for those Spartans who depended on the product of helot labour to pay their citizenship dues. Such men may represent the bulk of those demoted from citizenship and probably designated *ἰνφρησ*. Those Spartans, on the other hand, with land in Laconia failed to mitigate the inequality produced by the new situation, which traditional inheritance practices probably exacerbated. By the 240s, Sparta was a plutocracy of *ἄ*not more than 700 *π* full citizens, of whom about 100 controlled most of the land (Plut. *Agis* 5.6). The Laconia Survey data point to the reoccupation *c.*300 bc of low-grade hill land near Sparta by small farms that may have belonged to some of the 600 poorer citizens, or to *ἰνφρησ* living as dependants of the rich.

In the 240s, Agis IV unsuccessfully attempted to address this critical situation. Kleomenes III revived Agis's reforms in the early 220s, seeking to rebuild military power through land division that would put poor citizens on a firmer footing, re-enfranchise *ἰνφρησ*, and enrol new citizens from among Spartans *perioikoi* (citizens of dependent towns). He created 4,000 plots in Sparta's core territory for old and new citizens, and 15,000 in the outlands for the remaining *perioikoi*.

Earlier studies focused on such issues as Kleomenes's military strategy, his manipulation of kingship, the revived *agoge*, and the credibility of Phylarchos's account. This paper takes a new approach, resting on the belief that to understand Hellenistic history we must understand both a *polis*'s internal dynamics and its external links. First, it considers how the reforms were implemented in practice, using topographical evidence and reassessing Sparta's relationship with the *perioikoi*. It then contextualizes the reforms within longer-term developments in the kingship and in Sparta's cultural interaction with the wider Hellenistic world.

Evidence suggests that the shifting balance of power between Spartans and *perioikoi* significantly influenced the implementation of Kleomenes's reforms. Topographical evidence implies that the new *perioikic* farms were smaller than those of Spartan citizens. Yet *perioikic* towns such as Geronthrai and Gytheion were developing as urban entities, while Sparta's increasing reliance on frontier garrisons and *perioikic* troops gave the *perioikoi* new leverage and status. Thus Kleomenes was forced to include the *perioikoi* in his land redistribution and extend citizenship to their *ἔ*lite. Since he could not impose changes upon them, they probably retained land they already had in their own *polis* territories. The *ἄ*creation of *perioikic kleroi* thus reflects the existing modalities of *perioikic* landholding, rather than a restructuring of Laconia in general.

The reforms were the product not only of internal processes but also of broader political, social and cultural changes. Areus I (309–*c.*265) had *ἄ*modernized Sparta in different ways, sponsoring its first coinage, adopting elements of Successor kingship, and cultivating links with the Ptolemies and Seleukids. Kleomenes edged Sparta further

towards sole monarchy, maintained links with Egypt, and opened the doors wider to the outside world. He may have been competing with the great rulers of the age, who exalted themselves by founding or re-founding cities and extending patronage to philosophers and other cultural producers. Like Areus, Kleomenes may have played to a wider audience, aiming to show himself as a fully-fledged Hellenistic monarch, capable of rationally reordering the human and political landscape.