**Historical sources**

A historical sources book containing seen and unseen primary and secondary sources will be provided in the examination for Paper Two.

The seen sources are overleaf.

You must use a range of seen and unseen sources and reference them in your response.

**Enquiries**

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## Seen sources for Questions 1 and 2 (Sources A–S)

### The Spartan Constitution — general information

**Source A — The Spartan Constitution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Numbers*</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Powers and responsibilities</th>
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| Kings             | 2        | Hereditary position              | • Commanded Spartan army (one at a time)  
• Had religious duties as priests  
• Had limited civil power, e.g. over adoption of children, marriage of heiresses and control of public roads  
• Were supported at the state’s expense |
| Gerusia (council of elders) | 28 | • Men over 60 only, plus the two kings  
• Elected by acclamation of people  
• Only nobles | • Held office for life  
• Prepared all matters for the apella to discuss  
• Acted as court of justice in *criminal* cases  
(sentence of death or exile)  
• Could veto any unacceptable decisions of apella |
| Ephors ("overseers") | 5 | • Elected by people  
• Any Spartan over 30  
• One year of office only | • Supervised morals and discipline, were responsible for education of youth, and had the right to declare war on helots  
• Two always accompanied kings in battle  
• Dealt with foreign ambassadors, had control of secret police (*krypteia*), formed supreme *civil* court in Laconia  
• During year in office had power over all citizens, including kings |
| Apella (assembly) | All Spartans over 30 | • Met monthly, did not debate, but listened to kings and ephors (the latter chaired the meetings)  
• Elected gerusia and ephors by acclamation (cheering)  
• Voted on such issues as declaration of war and the signing of treaties, but decisions could be overridden by gerusia |

* In all cases, only men were eligible


### Source B

Sparta’s social structure and the firm leadership of the ephors, which henceforth competed with the traditional role of the kings, prevented the state from ever being ruled by a tyrant, as in fact the rise to eminence of any individual was excluded, except for a few great powerful military leaders.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, *From Solon to Socrates*, p. 43
Source C

Many people try to describe it as a democracy because its system has many democratic elements, for example, to begin with, the education of children (for the sons of the rich are brought up in the same way as those of the poor, and are educated in a manner which is also possible for the sons of the poor), and the same is the case in the next age group, and when they become men (for thus there is no distinctive mark of being rich or poor) the arrangements for eating in the common messes (syssitia) are the same for everybody, and the rich wear such clothing as any of the poor could afford. Additionally, of the two most important offices the people choose the members of one and share in the other (for they elect the elders and share in the ephorate). Those who call it an oligarchy do so because of its many oligarchic features, for example that everyone is elected and no one chosen by lot, and that a few people have supreme authority to give sentences of death or exile, and many other similar points.

Aristotle, Politics, 1294b19–34
From Dillon, M and Garland, L 2010, Ancient Greece, p. 227

Source D

Later admirers regarded Sparta’s constitution as a mixture of the three main forms — monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, represented respectively by kings, gerusia, and ephors with the ephors. There is some truth in this theory, though the “mixed constitution” was not the cause of Sparta’s stability. There was no equal distribution of power among the elements of the constitution; the conflicts between the kings and the ephors never ceased, while oligarchy was restricted by the authority of the ephors; the ephors were also responsible for the fact that under their leadership the assembly was to play a more important part, though it is unlikely that the body of well-drilled Spartiates would ever try to act independently.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, From Solon to Socrates, p. 47

Source E

Officially, and especially in the descriptions by later writers, the rule of law was proclaimed … However, as there were no written laws, their application by ephors and gerusia could be very arbitrary. Tradition and discipline, both based on a firm belief in divine sanction, had created a state which might be called authoritarian. Authority was chiefly in the hands of the ephors; but usually they had to get the assembly’s consent. As they changed annually, theirs was not a personal authority: they were the powerful tools rather than the masters of the system, and the old men of the gerusia were the guardians of the tradition.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, From Solon to Socrates, p. 48
Kings

Source F

I wish to explain with sufficient detail the nature of the covenant between king and state as instituted by Lykourgos [Lycurgus]; for this, I take it, is the sole type of rule which still preserves the original form in which it was first established; whereas other constitutions will be found either to have been already modified or else to be still undergoing modifications at this moment.

He laid it down as law that the king shall offer in behalf of the state all public sacrifices, as being himself of divine descent, and shall lead wherever the state despatches an army. He granted him to receive honorary gifts from the sacrifices, and he assigned him choice land in many of the subject cities, enough to satisfy moderate needs without excess of wealth.

All rise from their seats for the king, but ephors do not rise from their seats of office. Monthly they exchange oaths, the ephors in behalf of the state, the king himself in his own behalf. This is the oath on the king’s part: “I will exercise my kingship in accordance with the established laws of the state”. And on the part of the state the oath runs: “So long as he (who exercises kingship) shall abide by this oath we will not suffer his kingdom to be shaken”.

Xenophon, Constitution of the Spartans, 15
From Hennessy, D (ed) 1991, Studies in Ancient Greece, p. 66

Source G

Of constitutional kingships, the Spartan type is thought by some to come nearest to the true pattern. But this is not really so. The kings of Sparta command the army on foreign expeditions, and may supervise religious worship; beyond that their sovereignty does not extend. This sort of kingship may accordingly be described as an independent and permanent generalship. It has never included the power of life and death, except that in ancient times a king, when on campaign, might execute a subject “by right of superior force”.

Aristotle, Politics, 3.1.1 [1285a]
From Hennessy, D (ed) 1991, Studies in Ancient Greece, p. 66

Source H

Aristotle (Pol. 3.14.4 [1285b]) calls the Spartan kingship a perpetual hereditary generalship, but in the hands of an able king it could be and normally was far more than that. The king, it is true, was at home merely one of the elders, and the political leadership of the assembly was in the hands of the ephors. But the advice of a successful general had immense weight with the assembly, and the kings had the advantage of permanency over their potential rivals. A king might, it is true, be baulked by his colleague, but this in fact very rarely happened, since the colleague of an influential king was very often a minor or an ineffective character. In fact, the number of Spartan commoners who swayed Spartan policy can be numbered on the fingers of one hand — the legendary Chilon, Hetoemaridas, Brasidas, Lysander, Antalcidas. The history of Sparta falls naturally into reigns of a series of great kings — Cleomenes I, Archidamus, Agesilaus, Areus, Agis III, Cleomenes IV, Nabis — who left their imprint, for good or ill, on the fortunes of their country.

AHM Jones, Sparta
Source I

The Spartiates have given their kings these prerogatives: two priesthoods, of Zeus Lakedaimon and Zeus Ouranios, and the power to declare war against any country they might choose; none of the Spartiates is allowed to hinder this, and if one should, then he is put under a curse. When they take the field, the kings are the first to go and the last to return; on campaign they are guarded by a hundred picked men; and on their expeditions they can use as many animals as they wish, and they keep for themselves the skins and chines of all that are sacrificed. This is in war, and in peacetime their other prerogatives are as follows: whenever a sacrifice takes place at public expense, the kings are the first to sit down to dinner and are the first served, each being given twice as much of everything as the other guests; theirs is the right of making the first libation and they get the skins of the sacrificed animals. On the first and seventh days of every month each of them is given by the state a perfect victim for sacrifice at the temple of Apollo and a bushel of barley and a Lakonian quart of wine, and at all public games they have the privilege of specially reserved seats. It is their duty to appoint whomever of the citizens they wish as proxenoi and each of them chooses two Pythioi; the Pythioi are officials sent to Delphi, and they eat with the kings at public expense. If the kings do not attend dinner they are each sent at their houses two choinikes of barley and a kotyle of wine, and when they are present they are given double rations of everything; they are awarded this same honour when they are invited to dinner at the houses of private citizens. They guard the oracular responses, and the Pythioi also have knowledge of these. The kings have the sole right to make decisions on specific matters: concerning an heiress whom she should marry, if her father has not betrothed her, and concerning public roads. And if anyone wants to adopt a child, he must do it in the kings’ presence. And they sit beside the elders in council, of whom there are twenty-eight; and if the (two) kings are not present, those of the elders who are most closely related to them have the prerogatives of the kings and cast two votes and a third for themselves … If one of the kings dies in war, they prepare a likeness of him and carry it to burial on a finely strewn bier. And when they bury a king, no public business takes places for ten days and no election is held, but they spend all these days in mourning.

Herodotos, The Histories, 8.56–80.1: The Prerogatives of Spartan Kings
Ephors

Source J

Accordingly the ephors are competent to punish whomsoever they choose; they have power to exact fines on the spur of the moment; they have power to depose magistrates in mid-career — nay, actually to imprison and bring them to trial on the capital charge. Entrusted with these vast powers, they do not, as do the rest of states, allow the elected magistrates to exercise authority as they like, right through the year of office; but, in the style rather of despotic monarchs or presidents of gymnastic games, at the first sign of any transgression they inflict chastisement without warning and without hesitation.

Xenophon, Constitution of the Spartans, 8

Source K

We come now to a criticism of the Spartan ephorality, a board of magistrates which enjoys supreme authority in matters of the highest importance. Its members are chosen from the whole people, with the result that very poor men often find themselves elected to an office where their indigence [poverty] lays them open to bribery. The annals of Sparta contain many such instances, including the recent affair at Andros. [It is not certain to what episode Aristotle refers.] when some of the ephors were bribed and did their best to ruin the state. Their power, indeed, is so great, amounting almost to tyranny, that even the kings have been obliged to seek their favour. And in this way, too, not only the royal office, but the constitution as a whole has deteriorated; democracy has superseded aristocracy. It is true, of course, that the ephorality does hold the state together; their right to share in the highest office keeps the people contented, and this result, whether intended by the legislator or merely accidental, has proved beneficial.

Aristotle, Politics, 2.3.4 [1270b]
From Hennessy, D (ed) 1991, Studies in Ancient Greece, p. 68

Source L

It seems certain that the whole constructive policy up to the middle of the sixth century was the work of the ephors, and Chilon may have played an important part. Despite the annual change of office, the ephors had early developed a firm tradition of power. Constitutionally their leadership was safely established. They were elected “from all citizens” (Aristotle, Politics, 1270b, 27 f.); how “democratic” this “very childish” form of election by acclamation was may be doubtful. As a collegium, the ephors represented an anonymous rule, even a kind of tyranny, sanctioned by the gerusia. It was the ephors who decided state policy and supervised the whole life of the community. They shared some jurisdiction with the elders, and they left the command in the field to the kings, though normally they were responsible for the call-up of the army, and it soon became the rule that some ephors accompanied king and army. Most legal and moral matters were directed by the ephors, and they could interfere in the private lives of the citizens, to say nothing of perioeci and helots. The former stood under their direct jurisdiction. The only rivals of the ephors were some of the kings, especially among the Agiads; but the ephors knew how to play one king off against the other.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, From Solon to Socrates, p. 46
Source M

Significant for the relations between kings and ephors even under normal conditions was the monthly exchange of oaths (Xen. *rep. Lac.* 15, 7): the kings swore “to reign according to the laws”, the ephors in the name of the state “to uphold monarchy as long as the kings kept their oath”. Their mutual position could not be made clearer.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, *From Solon to Socrates* pp. 46–47

Source N

Every nine years the ephors pick a clear, moonless night, and sit in silence gazing up at the sky. Should, then, a star shoot from one sector to another sector, they conclude that the kings have committed some fault relating to religion, and they suspend them from their office until an oracle comes from Delphi or Olympia to support the kings who have been convicted by the omen. It was this sign which Lysander now claimed had appeared to him. He had Leonidas brought to trial and produced witnesses to say that he had had two children by an Asian woman whom he had acquired as a spouse from one of Seleucus’ officers; but then, when he found her intolerable and was loathed in return, he came home unexpectedly and occupied the kingship since there was no heir to it. While bringing this case, Lysander also tried to persuade Cleombrotus, Leonidas’ son-in-law and of royal birth, to lay claim to the kingship. So Leonidas panicked and became a supplicant of Athena in the Bronze House; his daughter, too, left her husband Cleombrotus and took sanctuary with her father. When he was called to trial and did not emerge, the court deprived him of his kingship and conferred it on Cleombrotus.

At this point Lysander went out of office because his term had expired. The newly installed ephors brought Leonidas out of his sanctuary, while prosecuting Lysander and Mandrocleidas on a charge of having illegally voted for cancellation of debts and redistribution of land. So in this hazardous predicament the pair of them persuaded the kings to act jointly and to ignore the ephors’ resolutions. Their argument was that this magistracy derived its power from disagreements between the kings by adding its vote to that of the one who expressed the better opinion whenever the other disputed a beneficial policy. But when the pair of them were of the same mind their authority was absolute, and opposition to them was unlawful; it was the ephors’ proper function to mediate and arbitrate between them when they were in dispute, but not to interfere when they were in agreement. Thus convinced, the two kings and their friends descended on the agora, and first removed the ephors from their chairs, and then appointed others, including Agesilaus, to take their places.

Note: Leonidas was one of the Spartan kings, early 4th century BC.


Source O

While there may be some dispute about that, certainly Agis was the first reigning king at Sparta to be put to death by ephors. The course of action he chose to follow was admirable and worthy of Sparta, even though he was of an age at which men who make mistakes gain pardon for them. His friends had more justification for finding fault with him than his enemies, because among the latter he actually saved Leonidas’ life and trusted the others, thanks to his very gentle and mild nature.

Gerusa

Source P

Their arrangements concerning the powers of the elders are also not faultless. One might suppose that as long as they are respectable men and sufficiently trained in manly virtue they would benefit the state, but it should be doubted whether they should possess for life supreme jurisdiction in cases of importance (for the mind, like the body, is subject to old age); and when they have been trained in such a manner that the lawgiver himself has no confidence in their being good men, it is dangerous. For those who have had a share in this office have manifestly been guilty of taking bribes and have been corrupt enough to give away a lot of public property. Accordingly it would be better if they were accountable; but now they are not.

Aristotle, Politics, 1270b35–1271a18

Source Q

The gerusa consisted of men over sixty who were elected for the rest of their lives by popular acclamation, a method again called childish by Aristotle (Pol. 1271a, 9), but probably well suited to preserve the aristocratic character of the gerusa. Its members were not responsible to anybody, and formed the highest court of justice. Its composition and power possibly still depended on some of the “first families”, and thus maintained an oligarchic character. The gerusa may have held the right of probouleusis, that is to say they prepared any proposal put before the apella, which retained the right of refusal. In practice, there must have been a good deal of co-operation between gerusa and ephors, though the latter held the initiative. A good example during the sixth century is their common intervention when the king Anaxandridas had no son, and they allowed him to take a second wife (Hdt. 5, 39 ff.).

Ehrenberg, V 1988, From Solon to Socrates, p. 47

Source R

Of the numerous reforms of Lykourgos, the first and most important was the institution of the elders (gerusa) which Plato says, because it was mixed with the “fevered” rule of the kings and had an equal vote with them in important matters, provided stability and common sense. For the state was unstable, at one moment inclining towards the kings and tyranny, and at the next to the populace and democracy, and by placing the office of the elders in the middle as a kind of ballast, and making it balanced, he ensured the safest organisation and constitution, with the twenty-eight elders taking the side of the kings when it was a question of resisting democracy, and alternatively strengthening the people to avoid the development of a tyranny.

Plutarch, Life of Lykourgos, 5.10–11
From Dillon, M and Garland, L 2010, Ancient Greece, p. 225
Source S

After this speech he himself, in his capacity of ephor, put the question to the Spartan assembly. They make their decisions by acclamation, not by voting, and Sthenelaidas said at first that he could not decide on which side the acclamations were the louder. This was because he wanted to make them show their opinions openly and make them all the more enthusiastic for war. He therefore said, “Spartans, those of you who think that the treaty has been broken and that the Athenians are the aggressors, get up and stand on one side. Those who do not think so, stand on the other side,” and he pointed out to them where they were to stand. Then they rose to their feet and separated into two divisions. The great majority were of the opinion that the treaty had been broken.

Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, 1, 87
Seen sources for Question 3  
(Sources A–K)

Spartan women

Source A

I recall the astonishment with which I first noted the unique position of Sparta among the states of Hellas, the relatively sparse population, and at the same time the extraordinary power and prestige of the community …

Take, for example — and it is well to begin at the beginning — the whole topic of the begetting and rearing of children. Throughout the rest of the world the young girl, who will one day become a mother (and I speak of those who may be held to be well brought up), is nurtured on the plainest food attainable, with the scantiest addition of meat or other condiments; while as to wine they train them either to total abstinence or to take it highly diluted with water. And in imitation, as it were, of the handicraft type, since the majority of artificers are sedentary, we, the rest of the Hellenes, are content that our girls should sit quietly and work wools. This is all we demand of them. But how are we to expect that women nurtured in this fashion should produce a splendid offspring?

Lykourgos pursued a different path. Clothes were things, he held, the furnishing of which might well enough be left to female slaves. And, believing that the highest function of a free woman was the bearing of children, in the first place he insisted on the training of the body as incumbent no less on the female than on the male; and in pursuit of the same idea he instituted contest in running and feats of strength for women as for men. His belief was that where both parents were strong their progeny would be found to be more vigorous.

In view of the fact that immoderate intercourse is elsewhere permitted during the earlier period of maturity, he adopted a principle directly opposite. He laid it down as an ordinance that a man should be ashamed to be seen visiting the chamber of his wife, whether going in or coming out. When they did meet under such restraint the mutual longing of these lovers could not but be increased, and the fruit which might spring from such intercourse would tend to be more robust than theirs whose affections are cloysed by satiety. By a further step in the same direction he refused to allow marriages to be contracted at any period of life according to the fancy of the parties concerned. Marriage, as he ordained it, must only take place in the prime of bodily vigour, this too being, as he believed, a condition conducive to the production of healthy offspring. Or, in the case of an old man wedded to a young wife, considering the jealous watch which such husbands are apt to keep over their wives, he introduced a directly opposite custom; that is to say, he made it incumbent on the aged husband to introduce someone whose qualities, physical and moral, he admired, to play the husband’s part and to beget him children. Or again, in the case of a man who might not desire to live with a wife permanently, but yet might be anxious to have children of his own worthy of the name, the lawgiver laid down a law in his behalf; such as one might select some woman, the wife of some man, well born herself and blest with fair offspring, and, the sanction and consent of her husband first obtained, raise up children for himself through her.

These and many other adaptations of a like sort the lawgiver sanctioned. As, for instance, at Sparta a wife will not object to bear the burden of a double establishment, or a husband to adopt sons as foster-brothers of his own children, with a full share in his family and position, but possessing no claim to his wealth and property.
So opposed to those of the rest of the world are the principles which Lykourgos devised in reference to the production of children. Whether they enabled him to provide Sparta with a race of men superior to all in size and strength I leave to the judgment of whomsoever it may concern.

Xenophon, Constitution of the Spartans, 1, 2  
From Bradley, P 1988, Ancient Greece, pp. 70–71

Source B

The archaeological evidence provides comparatively little for the Spartiates themselves. Naturally, the Spartans still knew how to dance and to make music. That was part of their education, and both sexes joined in such activities at religious festivals.

Ehrenberg, V 1968, From Solon to Socrates p. 44

Source C

He [Lycurgus] made it … honourable for men to give the use of their wives to those whom they should think fit, that so they might have children by them … Lycurgus allowed a man who was advanced in years and had a young wife to recommend some virtuous and approved young man, that she might have a child by him …

Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, 14  
From Williams, CM 1994, Chronicles: Investigating the Ancient World, Book One, p. 395

Source D

He [that is, Lycurgus] ordered the maidens to exercise themselves with wrestling, running, throwing the quoit, and casting the dart, to the end that the fruit they conceived might, in strong healthy bodies, take firm root and find better growth, and withal that they, with this greater vigour, might be the more able to undergo the pains of childbearing … he ordered that the young women should go naked in the processions, as well as the young men, and dance, too, in that condition … Nor was there anything shameful in this nakedness of the young women; modesty attended them, and all wantonness was excluded. It taught them simplicity and a care for good health and gave them a taste of higher feelings, admitted as they were to the field of noble action and glory.

Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, 14  
From Williams, CM 1994, Chronicles: Investigating the Ancient World, Book One, p. 394

Source E

Sayings of Spartan women — Gyrtias

When a messenger came from Crete to report Acrotatus’ death she said: “Wasn’t it inevitable that, when he proceeded against the enemy, either he would be killed by them or he would kill them? To hear that he died in a fashion worthy of me and the city and his ancestors is pleasanter than if he were immortal but a coward”.

Talbert, RJA and Scott-Kilvert, I (trans) 1988, Plutarch: On Sparta, p. 184
Source F

Sayings of Spartan women — Damatria

After hearing that her son was a coward and unworthy of her, Damatria killed him when he made his appearance. This is the epigram about her:

_Damatrius who broke the laws was killed by his mother —
She a Spartan lady, he a Spartan youth._

RJA and Scott-Kilvert, I (trans) 1988, _Plutarch: On Sparta_, p. 184

Source G

Sayings of Spartan women — Archileonis

Some Amphipolitans came to Sparta and visited Archileonis, the mother of Brasidas, after her son’s death. She asked if her son had died nobly, in a manner worthy of Sparta. As they heaped praise on him and declared that in his exploits he was the best of all the Spartans, she said: “Strangers, my son was indeed noble and brave, but Sparta has many better men than he”.

Talbert, RJA and Scott-Kilvert, I (trans) 1988, _Plutarch: On Sparta_, p. 183

Source H

Sparta was perceived as being unique in many ways by other ancient Greeks, who were perpetually intrigued by Spartan life.

…

The lifestyle of Spartan women was viewed as odd, to say the least, by other Greeks and, indeed, sometimes considered as shocking. Unfortunately, there exists no evidence from Sparta itself, even from men; so the viewpoint is all from outsiders. Athenian writers, such as Aristotle, Plato and Xenophon, wrote copiously about Sparta. Later the Greek historian Plutarch had much to say also and so it is from their writings that Sparta is well known to us.

Williams, CM 1994, _Chronicles: Investigating the Ancient World, Book One_ p. 394

Source I

The licence permitted women defeats the aim of the Spartan constitution and is harmful to the welfare of that state. For as a husband and wife are constituent elements of a household, we may regard the state as about equally divided into men and women; so that, in a state where the women are disorderly, half of it may be considered without the rule of law. And this is what happened in Sparta. Her lawgiver wished to make the whole civic body tough and self-disciplined, and no-one can deny the men are so; but he overlooked the women, who give free rein to every form of intemperance and luxury.

…

Female licence at Sparta dates from the earliest times … For during a long series of wars against the Argives, Arcadians and Messenians the men were constantly from home on active service …

Aristotle, _Politics_, Bk II, 1269b–1270a
Source J

Overall, Spartan women enjoyed more freedom than other Greek women. Their clothes were less restrictive — slit skirts which bared their thighs, permitting freedom of movement. Above all, Spartan women were far less tied to household tasks than other Greek women. They did not weave, for instance, but were allowed to do gymnastics and other outdoor pursuits. Possibly they exercised in the nude, although it is not certain.

Williams, CM 1994, Chronicles: Investigating the Ancient World, Book One p. 394

Source K

Sayings of Spartan women — unnamed

Someone contacted a Spartan woman to ask if she would agree to let him seduce her. She said: “When I was a child I learned to obey my father, and I did so; then when I became a woman I obeyed my husband; so if this man is making me a proper proposal, let him put it to my husband first”.

While taking part in a public procession another woman heard of her son’s success in the battle-line but also of his death from many wounds. Her reaction was not to remove her garland but to say proudly to the women near her: “Friends, how much finer it is die victorious in the battle-line than to win at the Olympic Games and live”.

Another woman, when her sons fled from a battle and reached her, said: “In making your escape, vile slaves, where is it you’ve come to? Or do you plan to creep back in here where you emerged from?” At this she pulled up her clothes and exposed her belly to them.

A woman, when she saw her son approaching, asked how their country was doing. When he said: “All the men are dead”, she picked up a tile, threw it at him and killed him, saying: “Then, did they send you to bring us the bad news?”

A woman, after sending off her five sons to war, stood on the outskirts of the city to watch anxiously what the outcome of the battle might be. When someone appeared and she questioned him, he reported that all her sons had perished. She said: “Yet this isn’t what I asked you, vile slave, but rather how our country was doing”. When he said that it was winning, she remarked: “Then I gladly accept the death of my sons too”.

Talbert, RJA and Scott-Kilvert, I (trans) 1988, Plutarch: On Sparta, p. 185–7
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