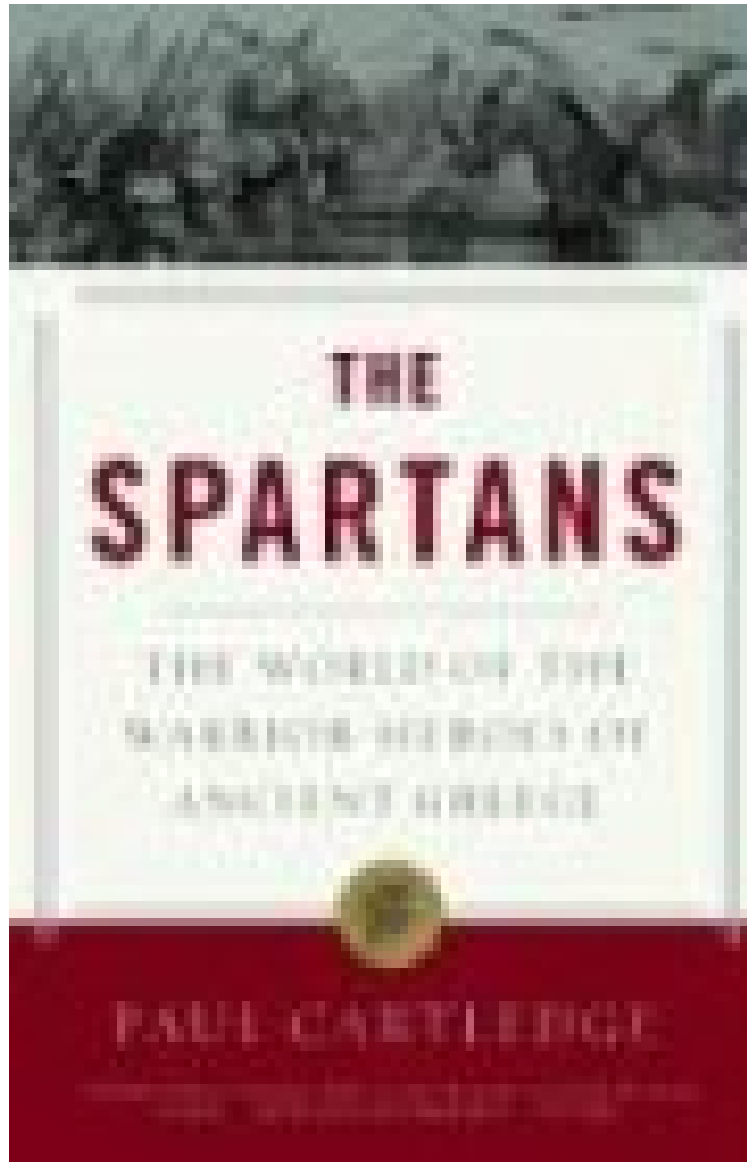


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The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece

Paul Cartledge

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#409600 in Books Vintage 2004-08-10 2004-08-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.90 x .60 x 5.20l, .71
#File Name: 1400078857320 pages | File size: 16.Mb

Paul Cartledge : The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Better than I expected By Wanderer I am in no way a Greek nor a classical scholar so I can't rate this book on its qualities as a history. I can say that the book is engaging and helpful to

me in understanding the Spartan role in classical Greek history. I was prepared for a dry, textbook approach and this is much better than that. I recommend it as an advanced book but I am anything but advanced in this area of history. Let me talk to the author: As a rank amateur historian I have three needs that go unmet in this book: 1. MAPS! There are three maps but they are poor at best. They don't always relate to the text -- an area mentioned will not be mapped. The topography of Greece is obviously important but there is no topographical map. The book covers centuries but the maps offer no help with time lines. My 7th Grade teacher would give just a C- to these maps. 2. TIMELINE. Always helpful and often included on the inside of the covers. Simply not here. I get confused about events, people, etc. and I've had to build my own (poor) timeline. I'd rather you built an accurate one. 3. Organization: I am often confused about the book's organization. It lacks timeline order. It requires a basic knowledge of the Greek kings. There is an underlying assumption that I already know a lot about Greek history and this is refinement. I need better orientation because I am often at a loss as to when/where/why I am in this history. See 'Timeline' above. I have dipped into four books on Spartan history and this is by far the best of the lot. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Disappointingly vague, less info than Wikipedia. By expatsp This book contains remarkably little information that is not available elsewhere in general histories on Greece. There was almost nothing about Spartan religious ceremonies, about their famous educational system, or about anything except broad historical outlines, vague descriptions of battles, and biographies mostly cribbed from Plutarch. To be honest, the Wikipedia entries on the Agoge and on the major Spartan festivals had more information than this book did. I gave it two stars rather than one because it's written accessibly, it has no factual errors that I can see, and you'll learn something if you haven't read any general Greek histories. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. unbiased and academically dry. By HercDriver I purchased and read this book because I wanted an accurate scholarly survey of Sparta. I did not want another hollywood-inspired story that glossed over the bad in favor of glorifying the 300. For that, *The Spartans* is quite good. Unfortunately, Mr. Cartledge offers the level of writing one would expect in a post-graduate course on ancient Greece. At times, page after page is painfully dry as he focuses on who is descended from who and how far one particular city is from another. Clearly, he is an expert on the subject. For someone looking for a casual read, this may be just a bit too much. I am happy to have read the book and feel I learned a great deal, but I also felt like I was back in grad school. Certainly educational, but not quite an entertaining read. I only point this out because it is marketed as such.

The Spartans were a society of warrior-heroes who were the living exemplars of such core values as duty, discipline, self-sacrifice, and extreme toughness. This book, written by one of the world's leading experts on Sparta, traces the rise and fall of Spartan society and explores the tremendous influence the Spartans had on their world and even on ours. Paul Cartledge brings to life figures like legendary founding father Lycurgus and King Leonidas, who embodied the heroism so closely identified with this unique culture, and he shows how Spartan women enjoyed an unusually dominant and powerful role in this hyper-masculine society. Based firmly on original sources, *The Spartans* is the definitive book about one of the most fascinating cultures of ancient Greece.

From Publishers Weekly Legendary for their ferocious combat skills, the Spartans built a warrior culture in ancient Greece unsurpassed for its courage and military prowess. Eminent historian Cartledge (*Spartan Reflections*) provides a remarkable chronicle of Sparta's rise and fall, from its likely origins around 1100 B.C. to the height of its fame and glory in the battle of Thermopylae in 480 B.C. and its fall in the fourth century B.C. The Spartans built their society through conquest and subjugation, ruling over their subject peoples with an iron hand and putting down revolts with devastating might. Between 490 and 479, Sparta joined Athens in fighting the Persians in three key wars-- Thermopylae, Plataea and Mycale--that contributed to the demise of Persian power and the rise of Hellenistic power on the Mediterranean. Cartledge punctuates his absorbing tale with brief, engaging biographies of the city-state's kings from Lycurgus, the earliest Spartan leader, who brought constitutional law to the city, to Leonidas, who led the Spartans at Thermopylae. According to Cartledge, the Spartans' legacy to Western culture includes devotion to duty, discipline, the willingness to sacrifice individual life for the greater good of the community and the nobility of arms in a cause worth dying for. Cartledge's crystalline prose, his vivacious storytelling and his lucid historical insights combine here to provide a first-rate history of the Spartans, their significance to ancient Greece and their influence on our culture. It ties in to a PBS series to air this summer. 27 bw illus., 3 maps. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist To project civic-mindedness or combativeness, American towns and school teams have appropriated the name of Sparta--so who were the Spartans and why do we care? So asks Cartledge, a Cambridge University scholar whose engaging narrative tries to discern the authenticity of events and personalities known only through fragmentary written or archaeological evidence, which can be mythical, partisan, or propagandistic. Cartledge spans Sparta's entire existence but concentrates on the century from the Persian invasions to its collapse following its triumph over Athens in 404 B.C.E. Presenting Sparta's military and diplomatic policies, the author studs his account with lively sketches of Spartan leaders, above all Leonidas. As embodiments of Sparta's warrior caste at the Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.E.), Leonidas and his 300 hoplites have redounded down the millennia, most recently in the historical novel *Gates of Fire* by Steven Pressfield (1998), which will soon be made into a movie. In his panorama of

the real Sparta, Cartledge cloaks his erudition with an ease and enthusiasm that will excite readers from page one. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Cartledge displays a marvelous ability to make the readers care about the Laconic warriors . . . and the society that shaped them. USA Today Cartledge brings [the Spartans] to life again with verve [and] style. Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel The history and atmosphere of Sparta are well conveyed by Cartledge. The New York of Books A fine overview of the rise and fall of a singular culture, spiced with anecdotes, quotations, brisk summary, and real insight. Seattle Times The Spartans presented in this book could change the popular image of ancient history, making it more compelling and accessible. The Times Literary Supplement