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Sparta: The Warrior State of Ancient Greece

Duncan Ryan

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Sparta is, with very little doubt, among the societies of the ancient world that has inspired the most wonder and amazement down through history. Rising from the Peloponnese peninsula in the far south of Greece during the Greek Dark Ages, the society would go on to become the most famous of the city-states of ancient Greece through its remarkable military prowess and its legendary rejection of non-essentials.

In ancient Greek history, the Spartans hold a special place as one of the peoples who most shaped the history of Greece as we know it today. From great feats like the last stand of Leonidas and his royal guard at Thermopylae to the great Peloponnesian War and even in achievements of diplomacy with the Persian empire, Sparta, in every era of ancient Greek history, was one of the great defining forces.

This short history of Sparta now endeavors to make the remarkable story of one of the greatest warrior societies in history easily accessible to the reader without an existing specialized knowledge of ancient Sparta. Sparta: The Warrior State of Ancient Greece is intended as a primer on Spartan history and as a framework on which readers may choose to build an even greater understanding of this incredible city-state. In it, you will find descriptions of famous battles, notable Spartans, major events in Spartan history and summaries of the character and nature of this ancient Peloponnesian city-state.

From the Dorian Invasion and the reforms of Lycurgus to the decline of Sparta after the Battle of Leuctra and its eventual incorporation into the Roman empire, this short history guides the reader through every part of Spartan history, providing much fascinating information about the Spartans as it goes. Some major events covered are as follows:

-The origins of Sparta, including the migration of the Dorians into the Peloponnese, the historical disconnect between the Homeric and Classical Spartans and the reforms of the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus.

-The Greco-Persian wars, including the famous last stand of Leonidas at Thermopylae and the eventual victory over Persia at Plataea.

-The Peloponnesian War, in which Athens and Sparta, the two great powers of ancient Greek history fought each other for dominion of Greece.

-The Battle of Leuctra and Sparta's decline, describing the fall of Sparta from power during the ascendancy of Thebes and the defeat of Spartan forces at the hands of the Theban general Epaminondas.

Because the history of Sparta is more than merely specific events, sections are also dedicated to the nature of life and society in Sparta, the construction of the Spartan military, the rigorous training of the young men of the city into hardened warriors, and Sparta's importance as an archaeological site.

Whether you are a lover of ancient Greek history or merely a general history buff, Sparta: The Warrior State of Ancient Greece has been written specifically to give you a more complete picture of one of the ancient world's most prominent militaristic societies.

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