

SPARTA IN
MODERN THOUGHT:
POLITICS, HISTORY
AND CULTURE

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and
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INTRODUCTION

Ian Macgregor Morris and Stephen Hodkinson

This book is the second of two volumes arising from the conference, ‘Sparta: Comparative Approaches and Classical Tradition’, held at the University of Nottingham, on the 18th–22nd September 2007. The first volume, *Sparta: Comparative Approaches*, edited by Stephen Hodkinson, was published by the Classical Press of Wales in 2009.

The conference was held as part of the research project ‘Sparta in Comparative Perspective, Ancient to Modern: history, historiography and classical tradition’, directed by Stephen Hodkinson with Ian Macgregor Morris as the project’s research fellow, and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project has sought to combine three interrelated strands of academic enquiry. The first is the study of ancient Spartan society from the perspective of comparable institutions and practices in other societies, both within and beyond ancient Greece. A second involves a historiographical consideration of comparative approaches to the study of Sparta in modern scholarship. The third strand comprises an examination of the Spartan tradition in modern thought and political and popular culture, especially through the appropriation and presentation of Sparta as a comparative model. The Nottingham conference was organised on the principle that each of these strands enlightens the others. The *Sparta: Comparative Approaches* volume consisted primarily of contributions on the first strand, substantive study of ancient Sparta in comparative perspective. This volume turns to the project’s second and third strands, though there remains considerable relation between the two volumes, with several papers in the first volume considering modern comparative models, and several papers in this volume relating modern models to ancient antecedents.

In this volume the term ‘modern’ is taken in the sense of ‘post-classical’, a definition necessary in considering the ‘classical’ tradition: thus the range of papers included here covers the twelfth to the twenty-first centuries, from scholasticism to *YouTube*. The volume’s contributions consider aspects of the Spartan tradition, focusing, above all, on their comparative nature. The Spartan tradition, like the classical tradition in general, has always been comparative. Indeed, the invocation or representation of the

TREATMENTS OF SPARTAN
LAND TENURE IN EIGHTEENTH- AND
NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE:
FROM FRANÇOIS FÉNELON TO
FUSTEL DE COULANGES

Paul Christesen

From where do the theories of Saint-Simon on the family come, if not from the example of Lycurgus? What is the *phalanstère* of Fourier, if not a variant of the communal habitations of Sparta? What is the source of the definition of property given by Robespierre (less to explain it than to destroy it), if it is not the Spartiates' tyrannical system of property? All these novelties are thus inopportune rehashes and tarnished plagiarism of ancient political institutions, the bad end of which is known.

M. Troplong (1852): see below pp. 188–9

Before Eve was formed, the lordship of temporal things was exclusive to Adam, not common. Indeed, it could not have been common, since at that time he was alone, and in respect of one who has never had any fellows nothing can be called common.

Papal bull, *Quia Vir Reprobus* (1329), section 27¹

The logic of this last statement, that property was not communally held at the dawn of human existence, because there was only one human extant, and that private property was thus ordained by God from the very beginning, may in present circumstances seem faintly comical. It was, however, part of a serious debate that took place in the first half of the fourteenth century between Pope John XXII on one hand, and dissident Franciscans, including William of Ockham, on the other. John issued *Quia Vir Reprobus* in response to the argument made by those dissidents that neither Franciscans individually nor the order collectively should own any property. The dissidents buttressed their position by claiming that private property was unknown in the Garden of Eden, which accounts for John's desire to demonstrate that Adam was, initially, the sole proprietor of the

Garden. The dispute between John and his Franciscan opponents is of interest here for two reasons. It serves as an example of the strident debates over the propriety of private property that have punctuated Western intellectual history from the time of Plato and Aristotle to the present.² And it speaks to an enduring and widespread habit of seeking legitimization through appeal to the past, a habit facilitated by the ability and willingness to creatively re-imagine the past. In this case the Biblical source material gave the past a special authority, but in many cases classical antiquity has proven to be, in itself, sufficient. Indeed, as F. M. Cornford advised in his *Guide for the Young Academic Politician*, a satiric pamphlet that enjoys minor notoriety among classicists and Cambridge graduates, 'Every public action which is not customary, either is wrong, or, if it is right, is a dangerous precedent. It follows that nothing should ever be done for the first time'.³

This essay focuses on treatments of Spartan land tenure found in French sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁴ Those treatments were products of the intersection between deep-seated concerns about private property and the habit of seeking legitimization in precedents from the distant past. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France was the site of ferocious debates about the legitimacy of private property. With the French Revolution and the rise of socialism, those debates became much more than intellectual exercises. Private property, especially in the form of land, was a foundational institution of French society, but the revolutionary agitation that repeatedly surfaced during this period made it seem entirely possible that that institution could be undermined or even abolished. Sparta was described by a number of Greek and Roman authors, most notably Plutarch, as a place with an unusually communitarian property regime, and French thinkers who attacked private property regularly cited Sparta as a precedent, either because Sparta's classical pedigree gave it a special patina or because it was seen as an example of an actual historical state in which land was communally held.⁵ Defenders of the established order felt compelled to reply in kind and either to prove the existence of private property in Sparta or, if they conceded the existence of a communal property regime, to show that it had disastrous results. Sparta thus became a locus for a controversy over a fundamental feature of French society, a controversy that was conducted with passion for nearly two centuries. As a result, treatments of Spartan land tenure constitute one of the more significant components in the engagement with classical antiquity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France.

The goals of this essay are to trace why and how treatments of Spartan land tenure in French sources evolved over the course of the period in question and to show that they responded to contemporary political

concerns and typically present convenient caricatures rather than careful analyses of historical evidence.⁶ I begin by arguing that in the first half of the eighteenth century a number of inter-related factors helped give Sparta in general, and the system of land tenure in Sparta in particular, prominent places in French thought. The erosion of the controls imposed by French monarchs, evident from the publication of François Fénelon's *Télémaque* in 1699, made possible overt discussion of political and economic reform. The decline in the authority of the Catholic Church that came with the Enlightenment and the concomitant replacement of Biblical models with material and precedents from classical antiquity, along with the insertion of Sparta into a long-standing debate about the merits and dangers of luxury, helped produce a general interest in Sparta. Land seizures that were occurring as part of colonialism stimulated theoretical work on the origins and justification of private property. The arrival in France of what has been called classical republicanism generated interest in the highly specific subject of the system of land tenure in Sparta, and Sparta became an example of a polity in which republican government was underpinned by an egalitarian distribution of private property and in which austerity reigned supreme. Montesquieu and Rousseau played particularly significant roles in focusing attention on the Spartan property regime.

The next part of the paper centers on the second half of the eighteenth century, when an alternative view of land tenure in Sparta – that land was communally held – enjoyed considerable popularity. Gabriel Bonnot de Mably was the first to elaborate that belief, which was vociferously rejected by many of his contemporaries, such as Jean-François Vauvilliers. Even the most enthusiastic Laconophiles, however, were at that time not inclined to remake France in Sparta's image. The gap between ancient republic and modern monarchy appeared unbridgeable, and discussions of Spartan land tenure had a rather abstract quality.

The third section examines a major shift that took place with the French Revolution, which brought republican government to France and made radical societal change seem feasible. Ancient republics no longer felt nearly as distant, and it became possible to contemplate the imposition of a communitarian property regime. During the Revolution François-Noël (Gracchus) Babeuf boldly proposed putting an end to private ownership of land and pointed to Sparta as an exemplar. The shift brought about by the French Revolution was subsequently reinforced by the emergence of socialism as a major political force.

In the fourth section of the paper I seek to show that nineteenth-century French discussions of Spartan land tenure had a much more serious air than in previous centuries. Revolutionaries and socialists were eager to

portray Sparta as a successful polity in which land was communally owned and to present Sparta as a precedent and model. Other, more conservative thinkers strongly opposed this characterization and use of Sparta.

Finally, I argue that the politicization of discussions of Spartan land tenure extended into what was ostensibly purely scholarly work. This is apparent in the series of exchanges that took place in the years 1864–1889 between Fustel de Coulanges, one of the most influential ancient historians of the nineteenth century, and the Belgian economist and socialist Émile de Laveleye. Both men wrote repeatedly on the question of land tenure in Sparta; Coulanges composed a substantial treatise on that specific subject. Despite his protestations of political innocence, Coulanges consistently went out of his way to attack the socialists' conception of Sparta; and both Coulanges and Laveleye produced notably partial treatments of Sparta's property regime. After the end of the nineteenth century, Spartan land tenure rapidly became a largely academic matter. Marx and Engels evinced little interest in Sparta, and the rise of Marxism as the dominant form of European socialism meant that the question of Sparta's property regime no longer resonated with contemporary political concerns.

Despite the fact that they were produced over the course of close to two hundred years, treatments of Spartan land tenure in French sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries form a coherent body of material best examined as a group. Significant social and political changes in France in the first half of the eighteenth century created a particular version of a debate on private property that continued on much the same terms until the end of the nineteenth century, and participants in that debate were keenly aware of its history and of earlier contributions to it. This is perhaps most apparent from the fact that a scholar eulogizing Fustel de Coulanges in 1889 praised him for refuting the ideas about Spartan land tenure espoused by Mably, Rousseau, and Babeuf, all figures from the eighteenth century.⁷

It may be *à propos* by way of forewarning to point out that this chapter is written so as to be accessible to specialists in a variety of different fields, including those whose interests lie primarily in classical antiquity. Consequently, it contains considerable basic background information on French political and intellectual history and lingers over the work of Fustel de Coulanges.⁸ For those not thoroughly versed in the history of ancient Sparta, it may be helpful to note that, although the evidence is less than entirely clear, the current scholarly consensus is that land was always privately held in Sparta and that reports of communal ownership found in ancient sources are the result of what might be called the 'utopianization' of Sparta. Ancient Greek sources associated land reform in Sparta with an

early lawgiver, Lycurgus, and with two kings from the third century BCE, Agis and Cleomenes.⁹

Sparta in French thought in the first half of the eighteenth century

A thoroughgoing exploration of the reasons why Sparta in general, and Spartan property regimes in particular, assumed a prominent place in French thought in the first half of the eighteenth century would involve an in-depth discussion of much of the intellectual, political, and economic history of France during that period. Such an undertaking is obviously out of the question here, but it is possible to isolate some of the more important factors.¹⁰

The body of knowledge about the ancient Greek world available in Western Europe diminished after the sixth century CE, but it never disappeared entirely, and Sparta was not unknown to French thinkers before the eighteenth century.¹¹ The revival of interest in Greek and Roman authors that came with the Renaissance started earlier in Italy than France, but it was clearly evident by the sixteenth century and was underpinned by the first French translations of numerous classical texts. Particularly important in this regard was the translation of Plutarch's work by Jacques Amyot (published 1565–1575) since, as Antoine Leca has noted, the sixteenth century saw

in France...the triumph of Plutarch, who eclipsed a number of ancient authors judged today to be much more learned and rigorous in dealing with historical material. Sparta will therefore be perceived through this particular prism... All the specificity of French references to Sparta until the end of the eighteenth century resides in Plutarch.¹²

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Sparta began to appear with some regularity in the work of French writers such as Jean Bodin (1530–1596), Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706).¹³ In 1676 Guillet de Saint Georges published *Lacédémone ancienne et nouvelle*, the first work in French to be dedicated entirely to Sparta.¹⁴

In the first half of the eighteenth century French references to Sparta increased significantly in number and changed noticeably in nature.¹⁵ One of the more important reasons for those shifts was the loosening of official restrictions on public discussion of economic and political reform, particularly after the death of Louis XIV in 1715. During the seventeenth century the absolutist monarchs of France made it nearly impossible to publish any serious writing that did not actively support the prevailing societal order. This tended to suppress discussion of Sparta, which was not an obvious focus for authors interested in helping to legitimize the

status quo in France.¹⁶ A major change was signaled by the publication in 1699 of François Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse*, which became the most popular secular book in eighteenth-century France. *Télémaque* recounts the education of Odysseus' son Telemachos by Mentor. It supplies descriptions of two different imaginary polities as object lessons in good and bad government: Bétique, an ideal state; and Salente, a state initially corrupted by luxury and a propensity for war, which is, under Mentor's guidance, reformed by means of the imposition of austerity in place of luxury. Bétique is a utopian community notable for the complete absence of both luxury and private property, since 'all live together without dividing the land' and 'everything is common among them'.¹⁷

Télémaque can be seen as both a backward- and forward-looking work. On one hand, it is part of the extensive collection of utopian literature produced in seventeenth-century France. That genre enjoyed considerable popularity, in part because overt sociopolitical critiques were swiftly punished; but descriptions of fictive communities, even when they had less-than-entirely subtle contemporary overtones, were generally tolerated. Although it is likely that Plutarch's description of Sparta helped inspire many seventeenth-century French utopias, Sparta was rarely explicitly mentioned because its status as an actual polity made fiction read dangerously like reality. Fénelon himself, although he drew heavily on classical material, evinced no obvious interest in Sparta in *Télémaque*; he constructed the narrative around interactions between Mentor and Idomeneus, the king of Crete, and seems to have modeled Bétique on ancient Israel. *Télémaque* thus fits neatly with what came before it.¹⁸

At the same time Fénelon took a radical step by including a series of clear attacks on absolutist monarchy. In *Télémaque* Mentor strives to teach Telemachos that:

There are two grievances in government which are scarcely ever guarded against or remedied: the first is an unjust and violent authority assumed by kings; the second is luxury, which corrupts manners.¹⁹

Fénelon stands out as 'one of the rare voices that dared to raise itself forcefully against the absolutism of Louis XIV'.²⁰ *Télémaque* thus also points the way forward because in the decades that followed critical examinations of contemporary French society became increasingly common. As royal censorship eroded, the need for utopian veiling disappeared, and Sparta, which could be seen as a republic and as a society in which property was at least to some extent communally owned, rapidly became a standard referent for those dissatisfied with the France in which they lived. In a sense Sparta came to serve the function formerly fulfilled by utopias such

as Bétique. Fénelon did not by any means singlehandedly set all of this in motion, but *Télémaque* appeared at a time when significant changes were beginning to manifest themselves and helped inspire further work along the same lines. As a result, it represents a reasonable starting point for an inquiry into treatments of Spartan land tenure in France.²¹

The Enlightenment, however defined and dated, brought with it a decline in the authority of the Catholic Church and the replacement of Biblical material and models with alternatives drawn from classical antiquity. The importance of Biblical references in earlier discussions of land tenure is apparent from the quotation from *Quia Vir Reprobis* in the epigraph to this chapter. In eighteenth-century France such references became increasingly problematic, and examples drawn from the ancient world were used not only as substitutes, but also as a means of attacking religious authority. As Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Nicole Loraux have argued,

To understand what Greece meant to the *philosophes*, we must...see that the distant past served as a weapon that could be deployed against Christian society, both that of the past and that of the present, and against the Judaeo-Christian myth which supported it.²²

The result was a heightened interest in Sparta with regard to a wide range of subjects.

Another relevant development came in the 1730s, with the introduction of Sparta and Athens into a pre-existing debate about the importance of luxury for economic development.²³ Discussion in Western Europe about the effects of luxury can of course be traced back to classical antiquity and authors such as Herodotus and Livy. The issue took on new life in seventeenth-century France due in part to the actions of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's finance minister from 1665 to 1683. Colbert instituted policies intended to promote economic growth through the expansion of foreign trade, the restriction of imports, and the creation and protection of domestic manufacturing establishments. He was particularly concerned with reducing the level of importation and expanding the domestic production of luxury goods.²⁴ Colbert's actions found both supporters and critics; notable among the latter was Fénelon (see the passage quoted above for the importance of the issue of luxury in *Télémaque*). Fénelon set a pattern for subsequent authors by drawing a causal link between private property and luxury, which meant that the former was always to some extent involved in discussion of the latter.²⁵ The views on luxury expressed in *Télémaque* helped ignite a vigorous debate that extended through much of the eighteenth century.

Thucydides famously contrasted the 'hard' and 'soft' regimes of Sparta and Athens (2.37–40), and a number of ancient authors (including Plutarch at *Lycurgus* 8–10) described Sparta as marked by near total austerity, so it was almost inevitable that both Sparta and Athens became referents in discussions about luxury. However, Sparta was not featured in those discussions until the publication of Jean François Melon's *Essai politique sur le commerce* (1734).²⁶ Melon denigrates Sparta and praises Athens as an example of a vibrant, commercial city that appreciated the value of luxury:

Rigid Sparta was neither more conquering, nor better governed, nor did it produce greater men, than voluptuous Athens. There are but four Lacedaemonians, and there are seven Athenians, among the illustrious men whose lives are wrote by Plutarch...

Melon goes on to disparage the sumptuary laws of Lycurgus on the grounds that they removed any incentive for productive activity and, in a not-so-subtle attack on Fénelon, concludes that, 'It would be ridiculous to form a project to make all France...live in common'.²⁷ The contrast between a commercial, luxurious Athens and an agricultural, austere Sparta thenceforth became a standard part of the luxury debate in France.

The origins and justification of private property were subjects of particular concern in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, largely as the result of the appropriation of large tracts of land that was taking place in European colonies.

During the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius, Samuel von Pufendorf, and John Locke made important contributions to the body of ideas on private property.²⁸ In *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625) Grotius explored the origin and development of private property and argued that common ownership was the original arrangement. Pufendorf, in his treatise *De Jure Naturae et Gentium Libri Octo* (1672), claimed that immediately after Creation there was a 'negative community' of all things, none of which was assigned to a particular person. He saw the origins of private property in rivalry between brothers. In *Two Treatises on Government* (1690), Locke agreed with Pufendorf that property was originally communally held. However, he saw private property as the result of applying labor to objects such as land and trees and the desire to control that labor and hence those objects.

The influence of the Physiocrats, who argued that the right to private property was grounded in natural law, ensured that the origin of private property was a subject of vigorous discussion in mid-eighteenth-century France. The Physiocrats as an organized school of thought coalesced around François Quesnay. In 1758 Quesnay published his *Tableau économique*, which contained a systematic treatment of his views on economic matters.

Quesnay placed great importance on land because he saw it as the origin of all wealth. He took the position that the right to private property, particularly in the form of land, derived from nature and therefore was and always had been universally valid. It was the sole function of the state to protect that right, and, given that imperative, the ideal form of government was a legal despotism such as that found in China.²⁹

The factors highlighted to this point ensured that the topics of Sparta and private property were popular subjects in eighteenth-century France. Although they did not directly generate significant treatments of systems of land tenure in Sparta, they helped create an environment in which that subject seemed relevant and important. When numerous, detailed treatments of the Spartan property regime did appear, they were connected to the increased influence in France of what has been called classical republicanism, a school of political thought in which Sparta figured prominently. During the Italian renaissance Machiavelli and others had formulated a series of ideas about the ideal polity. They drew heavily on classical authors and argued that republics with mixed constitutions were superior to monarchies. Sparta had since antiquity been a prime example of a state with a mixed constitution and so became an integral part of this new political discourse. Modern-day scholars who have traced the origins and development of that discourse have variously labeled it classical republicanism, the Atlantic republican tradition, or early-modern republicanism. Classical republicanism was taken up and developed by political theorists in northern Europe and did not take strong root in France until the weakening of the French monarchy after the death of Louis XIV. It arrived in France in part through the translation of the writings of English authors – such as Algernon Sidney's *Discourses on Government* (translated into French in 1702), Thomas Gordon's work on Tacitus (translated in 1742), and Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony and Design* (translated in 1749) – and in part through Montesquieu, who encountered classical republicanism during the years he spent in London.³⁰ As French thinkers became versed in this body of ideas, they also developed an interest in Sparta.³¹

Property regimes were a significant concern in classical republican thought, and many thinkers working in that intellectual tradition characterized Sparta as a state with an unusually egalitarian distribution of landed property. Eric Nelson has recently argued that classical republicanism should be divided into two distinct strands, which shared some important features, such as privileging mixed constitutions, but which also differed in a number of ways.³² One strand drew primarily on Greek sources and emphasized the importance of happiness (*eudaimonia*)

and justice, the other was based on Roman sources and stressed freedom, civic participation, and the pursuit of honor and glory. These two types of classical republicanism had very different perspectives on property:

In the confrontation between Greek and Roman republican values we can...detect the prehistory of two basic positions on the nature of property... One sees the community as the ultimate owner of all goods, and empowers it to arrange the distribution of those goods in such a way as to advance some normative vision of human nature. The other views property as a trump against the powers of the community, and insists that the *res publica* was originally constituted in order to protect private property. The Greek tradition is the foundational expression of the first position in Western political thought, while neo-Roman ideology is the archetype of the second.³³

Nelson identifies the earliest example of Greek-influenced classical republicanism as Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in 1516. The island nation of Utopia as described by More is a place in which private property does not exist. More's debt to Plato is clear, and there is some reason to think he also had Sparta in mind when crafting *Utopia*.³⁴ Subsequent adherents of Greek-based classical republicanism, most notably James Harrington, typically took a more moderate stance than More. They advocated not abolition of private property but equal distribution of wealth, including land, as an important underpinning of a stable republic.³⁵ Many of the authors who worked in the classical republican tradition discussed passages in ancient authors such as Plutarch that portrayed Sparta as a place in which land was distributed in equal lots as a result of the reforms of Lycurgus.

The work of Montesquieu and Rousseau helped to focus French attention on Spartan land tenure. Montesquieu spent the years 1729–1731 in England, during which time he became acquainted with classical republicanism. An almost immediate result was his *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence* (1734). In this work Montesquieu analyzes the reasons for Rome's rise, which he traces in part to an equal distribution of land, and for its fall, which he traces in part to increasing inequalities in the distribution of wealth. This line of thought leads him to comment briefly on Sparta:

The founders of the ancient republics had made an equal partition of the lands. This alone produced a powerful people, that is, a well-regulated society... When the kings Agis and Cleomenes realized that instead of the nine thousand citizens Sparta had in Lycurgus' time, only seven hundred were left, hardly a hundred of whom were landowners, and that the rest were only a mob of cowards, they set out to restore the laws in this regard. Lacedaemon regained the power it once had and again became formidable

to all the Greeks. It was the equal partition of lands that at first enabled Rome to rise from its lowly position; and this was obvious when it became corrupt.³⁶

His *De l'esprit des loix* (1748) contained further praise for Lycurgus and for his equal division of land.³⁷

Rousseau did even more than Montesquieu to excite interest in Spartan land tenure, by means of his eloquent enthusiasm for Sparta as a normative ideal and his deep-seated misgivings about private property. In *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) Rousseau argues that the birth and development of civilization had corrupted and destroyed humankind's natural goodness and freedom. He cites Sparta as an example of a simple, austere polity that was unsophisticated and hence virtuous and free.³⁸ Rousseau continued to develop these ideas for much of the rest of his life. He consciously wrote as a philosopher rather than an historian, but he valued Sparta as an (ostensibly) real-world model of ideals put into practice. Sparta was thus an irrefutable reproach to those who questioned Rousseau's ideas.³⁹

Rousseau did not concern himself with the details of land tenure in Sparta, but he did have strongly expressed opinions on the deleterious effects of private property. This is most apparent in his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* (1755):

The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had someone pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: 'Do not listen to this impostor. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!'⁴⁰

Despite these sentiments, Rousseau thought the right to private property had to be respected in modern states, with the caveat that it should be circumscribed as much as possible.⁴¹

Sparta in French thought in the second half of the eighteenth century
Gabriel Bonnot de Mably (1709–1785) was one of the most widely read authors of eighteenth-century France. He initially worked in the tradition of classical republicanism inherited from Montesquieu and lauded Sparta's mixed constitution and its egalitarian distribution of privately-held property. This is apparent in his earliest discussion of Sparta, in *Observations sur les Grecs* (1749).⁴² Mably's views on Sparta, however, shifted radically between 1758 and 1768, in the aftermath of the publication of Quesnay's *Tableau économique* and the claim made therein that private property in the

form of land was a natural right. In 1758 Mably appears to have written *Des droits et des devoirs du citoyen*, a collection of eight 'letters' not published until 1789. The letters purport to reproduce a series of discussions between the author and an Englishman named Stanhope in the course of which Stanhope outlines proposed political reforms. As the author and Stanhope conclude their discussion in the fourth letter, the latter launches into a brief aside on property:

Do you know, my lord said to me as we were finishing our promenade, what is the principal source of all the misfortunes that afflict humanity? It is the ownership of goods. I know, he added, that the first societies could establish it with justice; one even finds it completely established in the state of nature because no one could deny then that a man had the right to regard as his own possession the cabin that he had built and the fruits that he had cultivated... Lacking experience to foresee the numberless difficulties which would result from this distribution, it must have seemed advantageous to establish the ownership of goods... But we who see the infinite ills which sprang from this fatal Pandora's box, if the least ray of hope struck our reason, would we not aspire to that happy communal ownership of goods (*communauté des biens*), so highly praised...that Lycurgus had established at Lacedaemon, that Plato wished to revive in his republic, and that, due to the depravity of customs, cannot anymore be anything but a chimera in this world?⁴³

Although *communauté des biens* notionally embraced all forms of property, Mably was particularly interested in land, which was a matter of overriding concern to the Physiocrats.⁴⁴ In 1768 Mably published *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes*, in reply to a work by the Physiocrat Le Mercier de la Rivière that had appeared the previous year. Mably argues that communal ownership of goods is the only property-holding system sanctioned by nature. Sparta plays a critical role in Mably's arguments about the priority of communal ownership of property because, as Johnson Wright points out in his examination of Mably's work, 'much of the resonance of this claim in Mably's writing depends on the example of Sparta, which serves as a kind of historical test-case for the feasibility of a communitarian regime'.⁴⁵ In Mably's hands Sparta became a prime example of a strong polity in which land was communally owned:

These Spartiates were not acquainted with property in the form of land; the republic gave to each citizen a certain quantity of land with respect to which he had only usufruct; and nonetheless it is while it thus held itself outside (what you call) 'the natural and essential order of societies' that Sparta did greater things than the states which you deem to be wiser than it, and enjoyed constant happiness for six hundred years.⁴⁶

Mably returned to the question of private property in *De la législation ou principes des loix*, which was written in the later 1760s but not published until 1776. Here again he attacked private property as contrary to nature and cited Sparta as an example.⁴⁷

Mably's portrayal of Sparta as a polity with a communitarian property regime became rapidly and lastingly popular among French thinkers. For example, the precise phrase *communauté des biens* and the idea that this had been instituted in Sparta by Lycurgus are both found in Joseph Saige's *Caton, ou Entretien sur la liberté et les vertus politiques*. *Caton* was published in 1770 and was modeled on Mably's *Entretiens de Phocion*.⁴⁸ Stephen Hodkinson has suggested that Mably's communitarian Sparta achieved speedy acceptance because of the influence of Rousseau, the extant tradition of classical republicanism, and the popularity of utopian thought in France.⁴⁹ Rousseau and classical republicanism have already been touched upon, and Hodkinson is quite right to emphasize that Mably lived in an environment in which there was something of a vogue for utopian schemes, including many that called for the abolition of private property. One of the more widely read schemes was proposed by the enigmatic Morelly in *Code de la Nature* (1754). Morelly's work was influential in the generations after his death, in part because it was believed to have been authored by Diderot, although that attribution is now seen as incorrect. *Code de la Nature* portrayed communal ownership of all goods as the norm in early human societies and its restoration as the key to the recovery of the harmony that had been lost due to the creation of private property. (Morelly had virtually nothing to say about Sparta.) Mably shows every sign of having been well versed in the work of Morelly and other thinkers of the same ilk.⁵⁰

Hodkinson's list of reasons for the popularity of Mably's communitarian Sparta might be supplemented by three further considerations: the widely-circulated ideas about early property regimes found in the work of seventeenth-century theorists, the prior existence of two influential works that prepared the ground for Mably's Sparta, and the historical context in which his writings appeared. We have already seen that Grotius, Pufendorf, and Locke had written influentially about the origins of private property, and Mably seems to have taken at least some ideas about that subject directly from Locke. Although Locke *et al.* were not by any means partisans for communal property regimes, their argument that private property did not exist in the first human societies was not unimportant to figures such as Mably who wished to advocate its abolition.⁵¹

Mably also benefited from not being the first French writer to associate communal ownership of goods with Sparta; indeed, there is good reason

to believe that Mably took the concept of a Spartan *communauté des biens*, and his specific phraseology, from a French translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Tracing the specific sources upon which Mably drew in building his picture of Sparta is difficult. He was a political theorist, not an historian. His ideas about Sparta are not based on a careful, balanced assessment of the relevant ancient evidence, which is in fact ambiguous and if anything tends to support the conclusion that property at Sparta was privately held.⁵² Moreover, Mably did not quote or cite the relevant ancient authors. However, it appears that he relied heavily on two passages from Plutarch. In his *Life of Lycurgus* (16.1), Plutarch writes that each newly-born male Spartiate who passed his physical inspection was assigned one of the 9,000 lots into which the territory around Sparta had been divided. This implies that the lots were not private property, and Mably duly noted in one of the quotations given above that 'the republic gave to each citizen a certain quantity of land'. In his *Life of Agis* (7.2–3), Plutarch writes about the king seeking to establish 'equality and community of possession among the citizens' (ἰσότητα καὶ κοινωνίαν καταστήσει τοῖς πολίταις).

In the French translation of Plutarch's *Lives* which was standard before the eighteenth century, that of Amyot, this phrase was rendered as 'remettre les Lacédémoniens en communauté et égalité'.⁵³ When André Dacier in 1721 released a new translation, which supplanted Amyot's as the most-widely used version for the rest of the eighteenth century, he rendered the key phrase as, 'retablir parmi les citoyens l'égalité et la communauté des biens'.⁵⁴ This translation gave the phrase a very different meaning, one which turned a vague statement about communality into a much more bold (implicit) assertion of the existence of a communal property regime.⁵⁵

Jean-Louis Quantin has written eloquently about the crucial role translators played as intermediaries between ancient Sparta as described by ancient Greek authors and French intellectuals. This was because, with the exception of a short period in the first half of the seventeenth century, the ability to read Greek was relatively rare in France, even among better educated persons.⁵⁶ Mably is a case in point. He consistently quoted Greek works in Latin or French translations, and 'there is no evidence that Mably read Greek'.⁵⁷ He would, therefore, have read Plutarch in translation, almost certainly that of Dacier, and it is a reasonable supposition that he had the passage quoted above in mind when he claimed that there was *communauté des biens* at Sparta.⁵⁸

Moreover, Mably was not the first French author to connect *communauté des biens* and Sparta. In 1727 Andrew Michael Ramsay published *Les Voyages de Cyrus*.⁵⁹ This work proved to be immensely popular and was almost

certainly known to Mably. Ramsay includes a scene in which Solon explains his legislation to Cyrus and says:

Here again I could not imitate Lycurgus; community of goods (*communauté des biens*) and an equality of all the members of a republic, render useless a great many laws and forms, which are absolutely necessary where there is inequality of ranks and property.⁶⁰

This passage may well have been based directly on Dacier's recent translation of Plutarch's *Agis*.

One might also add that Mably's ideas went into circulation just before and during the French Revolution (some of his work was published posthumously). The experience of radical political and social change heightened interest in those ideas, particularly since *Des droits et des devoirs du citoyen* (first published in 1789) contained surprisingly accurate predictions for how a transition from absolutist to constitutional monarchy might be effected.

Mably's treatment of Sparta in *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes* provoked immediate opposition. One of the most eloquent and widely-read responses came from the pen of an ardent Physiocrat, Jean-François Vauvilliers, in the form of a treatise with the title *Examen historique et politique du gouvernement de Sparte; ou lettre à un ami sur la législation de Lycurgue en réponse aux doutes proposés par M. l'Abbé de Mably, contre l'ordre naturel & essentiel des sociétés politiques* (1769).⁶¹ As Michael Winston points out in this volume (Chapter 4), Vauvilliers was less concerned with systematically critiquing Lycurgus' legislation than with refuting the idealized picture of Sparta presented by Mably and others.⁶²

Vauvilliers' text, which runs to 184 pages, begins with a brief summary of Mably's portrayal of Sparta and then moves directly into a discussion of property.⁶³ Vauvilliers points out that 'Mr. de Mably has advocated the elimination of private property in the form of land, and the institution of communal ownership of goods (*communauté des biens*)'. He argues instead that 'you see...that private property in the form of land was incontestably known among the Spartiates, and that their lawgiver did nothing other than establish equality (with respect to its distribution)'.⁶⁴ Vauvilliers brings forward an impressive array of ancient sources to support his views on the existence of private property at Sparta. The first is a passage from Isocrates' *Panathenaisus* (178–180) in which Isocrates accuses the Spartans of having made a grossly unfair distribution of land upon their conquest of Laconia. Vauvilliers then cites Plutarch (*Agis* 5.1), Aristotle (*Politics* 2.7), and Heracleides Lembos (F373 Dilts) to show that lots were passed down within families as inheritable, private property. He acknowledges that

Plutarch (*Moralia* 238f) and Xenophon (*Lacedaemonion Politeia* 6.3–4) state that certain possessions such as horses and dogs were shared by Spartiates, but he also points out that ‘this practice authorized by law...was however only a kind of borrowing...’ and only took place in the context of hunting and war.⁶⁵ He cites with approval Aristotle’s doubts about the benefits of holding property in common (*Politics* 2.2).⁶⁶

The picture Vauvilliers paints of Sparta is as partial as that of Mably. It is significant that Vauvilliers makes no mention of the passages from Plutarch (*Lycurgus* 16.1 and *Agis* 7.2–3) on which Mably seems to have relied in postulating a *communauté des biens* in Sparta.⁶⁷ Moreover, after dealing with land-tenure, Vauvilliers goes to some length to put paid to any idea that Sparta was a fit object of praise. He dwells on ‘cruelty towards the helots’, the whipping ritual at Sparta’s Artemis Orthia sanctuary, the exposure of infants, the violent nature of Spartan education, the encouragement of theft, the sharing of wives, the education of women, and the lack of controls on women’s behavior. He devotes thirty pages to showing that corruption in Sparta was not, as Mably argued, the result of the actions of the ephor Epitadeus and of Lysander after the end of the Peloponnesian War, but, as Aristotle argued, the inevitable result of the design of the system itself, which oriented the Spartans solely toward war and conquest. A twenty-page section bears the self-explanatory title ‘Spartiates, Enemies of Greece’. The concluding section of the work identifies numerous vices in the Lycurgan system, beginning with the fact that it was ‘directly contrary to nature’ because it denied citizens the free enjoyment of their possessions.⁶⁸ Vauvilliers goes on to argue that Spartan society destroyed the liberty of its citizens, suppressed the arts and sciences, had a badly-organized government, and survived only by becoming an armed camp whose residents were perpetually unhappy.

Treatments of Spartan land-tenure at this point in time had some real-world political overtones but, despite the energy expended upon them, were largely intellectual abstractions. Mably withheld *Des droits et des devoirs du citoyen* from publication, probably for fear of official persecution, which suggests that he felt it to be sufficiently relevant to contemporary circumstances to invite reprisals.⁶⁹ However, Vauvilliers specifically rejected the possibility that Sparta might be taken as a model for France.⁷⁰ More importantly, Mably himself did not see communal property as a feasible practice in the modern world. In one of his later works, *De la législation, ou principes des loix* (1776), Mably writes, ‘in every state in which private property is once established, it is necessary to regard it as the foundation of order, of peace, and of public security’.⁷¹ The idea that France could in any real way be refashioned along Spartan lines was not in Mably’s

imaginary. As Nicole Dockès-Lallement observes, ‘Despite the appearances of and his continual references to the Spartan model, Mably did not advocate a return to the past; he did not think of resuscitating his ideal’.⁷²

Politicizing Sparta: the French Revolution, Babeuf, and French socialism

Practices and patterns of land tenure in the French countryside received attention almost immediately after the start of the Revolution, and the distribution of land was a matter of continuing concern to the revolutionaries. A decree of the National Assembly enacted in August 1789 sought to end feudal relations and thus reshaped the terms on which a substantial portion of French land was held. Lands belonging to the church were nationalized before the end of that same year and, as the Revolution progressed, significant amounts of land belonging to *émigrés* were confiscated. All but the most radical proponents of the redistribution of land had relatively circumscribed ambitions, typically the imposition of limits on the amount of land any individual could hold and the distribution of land taken from the church and *émigrés* to landless peasants. Nonetheless, any threat to the sanctity of private property touched a raw nerve. Article 2 of the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* adopted by the National Assembly in August 1789 listed four ‘natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression’.⁷³ In March 1793 the National Convention passed a law imposing the death penalty for anyone proposing an ‘agrarian law’, i.e., any law that called for the ‘forcible re-division of property, and particularly of landed property’.⁷⁴

Classical antiquity was a popular reference point during the French Revolution for figures from all parts of the political spectrum. This is perhaps most eloquently illustrated by the fact that when the members of the National Convention moved into their new quarters in the Tuileries in May 1793, they found themselves sharing the space with busts of Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, Demosthenes, Camillus, Publicola, Brutus, and Cincinnatus.⁷⁵ Sparta was particularly popular as a touchstone in debates over education, but it also figured in discussions of other issues, including land reform. Proponents of land redistribution not infrequently made brief mention of Sparta as an example of a polity in which land was privately held on an egalitarian basis. Some of the more radical figures such as Robespierre presented Sparta as characterized by *communauté des biens*, though even he did not see this as a viable model for contemporary France.⁷⁶ In the present context it is neither possible nor necessary to rehearse the complex ways in which Sparta served as inspiration, justification, and historical precedent

for the revolutionaries.⁷⁷ Instead, it is sufficient to follow the activities of the individual who was most responsible for making Spartan land tenure a matter of real political concern: Babeuf.

François-Noël (Gracchus) Babeuf (1760–1797) was exceptional among his contemporaries in calling for the complete abolition of private property. Babeuf was intimately familiar with issues of land tenure, since he made his living before the Revolution as an expert in feudal land law. He became an avid reader of Rousseau, Mably, and Morelly and came to the conclusion that private property, especially in the form of land, was the source of most societal ills.⁷⁸ As early as 1785 he was writing letters to the secretary of the Academy of Arras in which he outlined a plan for collective farms. In 1787 he recommended that the Academy of Arras arrange an essay contest on the subject of a society with perfect equality and in which all land would be held in common. In the early 1790s he continued to advocate a radical program of land redistribution and communal ownership of property. During a spell in prison in 1795 he formulated detailed plans for radical societal reform, including the elimination of private property. After his release from prison Babeuf formed a revolutionary group, the Conspiracy of Equals, with the aim of overthrowing the government and implementing his plans. The conspiracy was uncovered by the authorities before it progressed very far, and Babeuf was guillotined in 1797.⁷⁹

Babeuf made much of the ancient precedents for his program of societal reform. This is perhaps most obvious from the surname he bestowed upon himself, Gracchus.⁸⁰ He also looked to Lycurgus and Sparta. In a letter written in 1790 he asked the question, 'Who are the men whom we admire the most and whom we revere as the greatest benefactors of humanity?' The answer was 'the apostles of agrarian laws, Lycurgus among the Greeks, and at Rome, Camillus, the Gracchi, Cassius, Brutus, etc.'⁸¹ At his trial, Babeuf cast himself as a latter-day Lycurgus or Agis:

We are certainly not the first whom the powerful of the earth persecute for reasons more or less similar. Socrates, combating fanaticism, drank the poisoned cup. Jesus the Galilean, preaching to men equality, hatred of the rich, truth, and justice, was nailed alive to a cross. Lycurgus exiled himself to avoid being sacrificed by those whom he had made happy. Agis, the only just person among the kings, was killed for having made an exception to the rule. The Gracchi at Rome were massacred.⁸²

Filippo Buonarroti, a close associate of Babeuf's who escaped the guillotine, wrote an account of the Conspiracy of Equals in which he states that 'Lycurgus especially nearly reached the goal of society, marked by nature'.⁸³ Given the extent to which Babeuf and his co-conspirators relied on earlier writers, especially Rousseau, it is likely that their knowledge of

Sparta was primarily indirect. This is perhaps apparent in Buonarroti's discussion of the importance of equality. He begins with Rousseau and gives a list of the 'true sages' who have in the past supported the sort of society envisaged by Rousseau: 'in antiquity, Minos, Plato, Lycurgus and the lawgiver of the Christians; and in times closer to our own, Thomas More, Montesquieu and Mably'.⁸⁴

Although Babeuf's plans never came to fruition, he was an inspiration to would-be reformers and revolutionaries in nineteenth-century France; he was particularly revered by French socialists, who took up his ideas about communal ownership of property and, in some cases, his willingness to contemplate violent revolution. The formalization of socialist thought, the origins of which could be traced back as far as classical antiquity, is typically associated with three figures, Charles Fourier (1772–1837), Robert Owen (1771–1858), and Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825). During the first half of the nineteenth century, socialists, under the leadership of figures such as Louis Blanc (1811–1882), Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881), Étienne Cabet (1788–1856), and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), became a significant force in French politics.⁸⁵

Socialists were deeply involved in the continuing political turbulence that France experienced until the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. A rapid review of some of the more relevant and well-known manifestations of the ongoing agitation will help sketch in the background against which contemporary discussions of Spartan land tenure must be read. In 1839 Louis-Auguste Blanqui, who was acquainted with Buonarroti, led an attempted coup in Paris in the course of which he and 400 armed revolutionaries briefly seized the city hall and *Palais de Justice*.⁸⁶ In 1848 King Louis-Philippe was forced to abdicate and a short-lived republic was established, in which socialists such as Louis Blanc enjoyed considerable influence. Blanc helped push through the creation of state-run workshops (*ateliers nationaux*), which he saw as a preliminary step toward the establishment of autonomous workers' cooperatives; these workshops came to employ over 100,000 people. After elections brought in a relatively conservative Constituent Assembly in 1848, the *ateliers nationaux* were shut down, which provoked a revolt in Paris (the June Days, June 23–26) that was suppressed with troops and artillery, at the cost of at least 1500 civilian casualties.⁸⁷ In 1871, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, the municipal government of Paris refused to accept the surrender negotiated by the national government and almost by accident set itself up as a separate entity under the title *La Commune de Paris*. Revolutionary and socialist elements exercised significant influence in the Commune, which was seen by Marx as a vindication of communist ideas. The Commune did

not, however, last long. After operating for two months, it was suppressed by government troops in a week of vicious fighting that represented the worst civil bloodshed in Europe between the French Revolution and World War II.⁸⁸

The growing importance of socialism in France meant that Spartan land tenure remained a subject of regular discussion because many nineteenth-century socialists shared Babeuf's habit of citing Sparta as an example of a successful state in which property was communally held. Sparta's value as an historical precedent and model was severely damaged by its association with the excesses of the French Revolution. For example Henri Grégoire wrote of Robespierre that, 'under the pretext of making us Spartiates, he wished to make us helots and to prepare a military regime which is nothing other than a tyranny'.⁸⁹ Yet that very association ensured that Sparta retained its cachet among reformers and revolutionaries who saw the restoration of the French monarchy in a less-than-positive light. A particularly clear case is Buonarroti, who, writing in 1828, linked figures whom he found laudable from the Revolution to Sparta: 'these wanted the frugality, the simplicity and the modesty of the beautiful days of Sparta'.⁹⁰

Ongoing political agitation and what many perceived to be a concomitant threat to the fundamental social order ensured that treatments of Spartan land tenure by both socialists and their opponents were passionate and partisan. A handful of instances taken from the writings of well-known socialists will give an adequate sense of an extensive collection of relevant material. As will become clear, most of these figures were deeply involved in contemporary political life. The first example comes from *De l'égalité* by the utopian socialist Pierre Leroux (1797–1871), a well-known follower of Saint-Simon. Leroux helped found and run several publications promoting socialist ideas, wrote a number of essays that enjoyed wide circulation, and served in the Constituent Assembly in 1848 and the Legislative Assembly in 1849. He believed that property ought to be held not by the community but by individuals who would be given right of use rather than ownership. In *De l'égalité* (1838) Leroux praises Sparta as a 'city of equals' and writes at length about its communal meals. He quotes Plutarch's description of the redistribution of land by Lycurgus and highlights Plutarch's statement that as a result 'Laconia resembled an inheritance which several brothers had just divided amongst themselves' (*Lycurgus* 8.1–3). Leroux asks how a city built on the labor of enslaved helots could have been lauded by figures such as Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle. He concludes that:

There was indeed at the base of all these institutions a divine idea, a sacred goal, drawn from the very contemplation of the divine. This idea, this goal was the establishment of human fraternity, that is to say, the true society of men.⁹¹

One of the most famous nineteenth-century socialists, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), discusses Sparta at some length in the second edition of *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (*What is Property?*: 1840). The answer that Proudhon supplies, 'property is theft' ('la propriété, c'est le vol'), can give a misleading sense of his basic philosophy because his views on property were, like Leroux's, relatively moderate. He did not object to private property in the form of land, tools, shops, and so forth, provided that the owner himself made direct use of the property for productive purposes (instead of exploiting the labor of others). Proudhon made a name for himself as an author in the 1840s, conducted a series of increasingly testy exchanges with Marx, was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1848, and was imprisoned for three years in 1849 for criticizing Louis-Napoleon.⁹² In *Qu'est-ce que la propriété* Proudhon does not go into the specifics of land tenure in Sparta, but makes it abundantly clear that in his view there was no private property of any kind:

Lycurgus, in a word, hunted property out of Lacedaemon, seeing no other way to harmonize liberty, equality, and law... It is remarkable that the most ancient of Greek legislators...should have judged the right of property incompatible with free institutions...⁹³

Proudhon was, however, skeptical whether Sparta could provide a model applicable to the modern world and criticized Lycurgus for failing to take proper steps to preserve the society he constructed.

Étienne Cabet (1788–1856) is yet another example of a prominent French socialist who touched on Sparta in his writings. Cabet made a name for himself at a young age as a writer and politician with strong socialist and revolutionary tendencies. He was elected to the National Assembly in 1830, was exiled to England in 1834 for accusing the king of being murderously oppressive, returned to France in 1839, and spent most of the 1840s deeply involved in politics. In 1849 he went to the United States, where he founded socialist colonies in the hope of putting his ideas into practice. He published in 1840 what became his most famous work, *Voyage en Icarie*, a utopian novel which outlines Cabet's ideas for a new social order. It contains a detailed description of Icarie, a fictional island off the coast of Africa, where complete *communauté des biens* is practiced and the use of money prohibited. The novel consists of three parts: the first tells the story of a journey to the island made by a young English aristocrat; the second offers long quotations from both ancient and modern writers, supporting *communauté des biens* and the prohibition of money; the third part explores the philosophical underpinnings of Icarie.⁹⁴

The second part of *Voyage en Icarie* includes a chapter labeled 'Opinions of Philosophers on Equality and on Communal Society' ('Opinions des

Philosophes sur l'Égalité et la Communauté'), in which Sparta comes in for special praise. Cabet opens this chapter by stating, 'You pretend, adversaries of communal society, that it has in its favor only opinions without credit and without weight... I am going to examine in front of you history and all the philosophers. Listen!'⁹⁵ He then states that he will not pause to discuss the many ancient peoples who, according to Plato, Aristotle, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, Caesar, and Tacitus, practiced *communauté des biens*. What does detain him is the example of Sparta:

But what a spectacle Lycurgus presents to us, having obtained from the rich the voluntary abandonment of their properties, partitioning all the land into 39,000 lots for the 39,000 citizens who could not alienate them, suppressing luxury and money, establishing equality of wealth and of education, even communality of usage or enjoyment, of meals, education, and nearly everything (845 years before Jesus Christ)! And this is the brother of a king...who established thus equality and nearly a communal society!... And this social and political organization lasted five hundred years, elevating Sparta to the highest rank of power, glory, and prosperity, admired by Xenophon, by Aristotle himself, and by all of Greece.⁹⁶

Cabet also provides a detailed description of the reforms of Agis and Cleomenes, in the course of which he writes that:

The young king (Agis)...undertook to reform his homeland and to re-establish there the ancient constitution of Lycurgus, that is to say, equality and communal ownership of goods (*communauté des biens*).⁹⁷

Cabet's enthusiasm for Sparta's reputation in the ancient world is perhaps excessive, given the trenchant criticisms of Sparta found in Book 2 of Aristotle's *Politics* and Sparta's less-than-positive relationship with many Greek states, including Athens.

Théodore Dézamy (1808–1850), who served for a time as Cabet's secretary, also looked to Sparta as an important historical exemplar. Dézamy achieved considerable renown as a socialist theoretician. Marx was influenced by Dézamy's work and wrote in *Die heilige Familie* ('The Holy Family', 1845) that 'the more scientific French communists, Dézamy, Gay and others, developed the teaching of materialism as the teaching of real humanism and the logical basis of communism'.⁹⁸ In his best-known work, *Code de la communauté* (1843), Dézamy outlines his ideas about the ideal community and supplies a list of eight 'fundamental laws' on which such a community should be based. The first two of those laws are 'all men will live as brothers...nothing belongs individually to anyone'.⁹⁹ At the end of the treatise he replies to imagined interlocutors who voice objections, including the following: 'Objection: "Communism does not have a

historical tradition; the communal system was never in force anywhere''. Dézamy ridicules this objection on the ground that it assumes the need for a precedent; he nonetheless goes on to add that:

Now, is there a need to prove that there never was an objection more false and more absurd, as well as in fact the conclusions one would pretend to draw from it? 'We do not have a historical tradition?' But what indeed were Pythagoras, Protagoras, Zoroaster, Moses, Minos, Lycurgus, Agis, Cleomenes? What were Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, Zenon, Confucius, Plutarch, Apollonius of Tyana, Jesus? Communists.¹⁰⁰

Dézamy proceeds to add a host of other figures to that rather extraordinary list, including Thomas More, Morelly, Fénelon, Rousseau, and Mably.

As one might expect, the socialists' opponents rejected this characterization of Sparta.¹⁰¹ They typically either sought to prove that property was privately held in Sparta or that a Spartan communal property regime had disastrous results. Charles Pastoret took the former approach. In his *Histoire de la législation* published in eleven volumes from 1817–1837, he asserts, 'It is not communal ownership of land, it is the distribution of land that Lycurgus had established'.¹⁰² Raymond-Théodore Troplong, in an essay entitled 'Des républiques d'Athènes et de Sparte' (1852), adopts an in-between position by arguing that Spartiates were given usufruct rather than outright title to their lots, but that any resulting equality was entirely illusory:

Now, let's look at the place of property among these rough institutions, in which the citizen is like a captive and tortured by unnatural impulses... The republic, eminent owner of the land, had given to each citizen a certain quantity of land with respect to which he held only usufruct. A nominal equality, a façade, had been established by this partition of the land. But by the nature of things real and necessary inequalities soon appeared. One might even say that there was an element of fraud, because unproductive land was formed into lots the same size as lots with fertile soil; the lots were equal in appearance, but the former, inferior in value, had been allotted to the common people by means of processes that Isocrates did not believe to be exempt from trickery.¹⁰³

Charles Marchal opted for the alternative response. In his *Histoire et réfutation du socialisme depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours* (1859), he asserts that 'Communism was applied to Lacedaemon and in the island of Crete. These countries owe to this legislation their shame, their misery, and their decadence'.¹⁰⁴

The socialists' opponents were close to unanimous in refusing to accept Sparta as a model for contemporary France. A good example can be found in Alphonse Grün's *Le vrai et le faux socialisme* (1849):

Communist institutions were never more strongly established than in the island of Crete, by the laws of Minos, and at Sparta, by the laws of Lycurgus. It is these institutions that a blind admiration for classical antiquity, aided by a complete ignorance of the first principles of political economy, for a long time consecrated as a model of republican government, a fatal error that was not unconnected to the misfortunes of our republic of 1792.¹⁰⁵

The same perspective can be seen in Alfred Sudre's *Histoire du communisme ou réfutation historique des utopies socialistes* (1849):

The most ancient examples of the application of communist ideas that history presents to our eyes are the laws of the island of Crete, attributed to Minos, and those of Lacedaemon... Although the laws of Lycurgus did not completely realize the system of communal ownership, nonetheless they did so to such an extent that one must consider them as the first source of most communist utopias. The deplorable influence that the institutions of a township in the Peloponnese exercised for so many centuries, an influence which continues to our own time, makes us determined to dedicate several pages to examining those institutions.¹⁰⁶

In such an environment even the most scholarly discussions of Spartan land tenure were almost inevitably political statements connected in one way or another to contemporary socialism. Some sense of the perceived tight link between Sparta's property regime and French socialism can be gleaned from Adolphe-Jérôme Blanqui's *Histoire de l'économie politique en Europe depuis les anciens jusqu'à nos jours* (1837).¹⁰⁷ Adolphe-Jérôme was considerably more conservative than his brother Louis-Auguste. He devoted a section of his history of European political economy to Lycurgan Sparta and accepted that Sparta was a predecessor to modern-day socialism, though he continued to subscribe to the idea that land was at least to some extent privately held in Sparta:

We do not think that any country has ever ventured upon a system of public economy as extraordinary as the laws of Lycurgus at Sparta. The strictest regulations of a community, the most radical forms decreed by the National Convention, the harmonic utopias of the Owenists, and, in these later times, the adventurous preaching of Saint-Simonism, have nothing that can be compared with those laws, in point of boldness and originality... They pass for having realized the utopia of a general division of property, and of a common education for all citizens.¹⁰⁸

Yet another instance can be found by returning once more to Troplong's essay:

From where do the theories of Saint-Simon on the family come, if not from the example of Lycurgus? What is the *phalanstère* of Fourier, if not a variant of the communal habitations of Sparta?¹⁰⁹ What is the source of the

definition of property given by Robespierre (less to explain it than to destroy it), if it is not the Spartiates' tyrannical system of property? All these novelties are thus inopportune rehashes and tarnished plagiarism of ancient political institutions, the bad end of which is known.¹¹⁰

Interestingly, Troplong was inclined to put the blame for the pernicious influence of Sparta squarely on Mably's shoulders:

It is this property regime that Mably had the courage to portray as a beautiful societal ideal... Mably, a man with a sad and sophistic mind, a speculative philosopher, who did not know how to separate history from dreams or sarcasm...

Troplong repeatedly cites Vauvilliers' rebuttal of Mably. He also accuses certain 'philosophers and...politicians' of proposing 'seriously to return to these bizarre systems and to shape society in the mould of their utopia'.¹¹¹

These examples could be multiplied, but the point is clear: discussions of Spartan land tenure in France in the first half of the nineteenth century were shaped against the background of the plans of French revolutionaries such as Babeuf and the arguments of contemporary socialists.

Coulanges and Laveleye

One might well wonder whether the politicization of views on Spartan land tenure extended into purely scholarly work. A perfect test case can be found in the exchanges between Fustel de Coulanges and Émile de Laveleye. We will see that both Coulanges and Laveleye displayed a distinct tendency to turn Sparta into a caricature, in large part due to their own political beliefs.

Coulanges was among the most renowned French historians of the nineteenth century. He received his doctorate from the École Normale Supérieure in 1858, taught history at the University of Strasbourg from 1860 to 1870, joined the faculty of the École Normale Supérieure in 1870, in 1878 took up a chair in medieval history specially created for him at the Sorbonne, and became director of the École Normale Supérieure in 1880.¹¹²

In 1864 he published his single most famous work, *La cité antique*, in which he argues that the right to private property was originally based on religious beliefs and that that right was already firmly established among the Indo-European forebears of the Greeks and Romans. Coulanges took the position that Indo-European society, which he called Aryan, was built around the worship of dead ancestors by individual families. Each family had a sacred hearth in which fire was kept burning at all times and maintained its ancestral tomb, and by necessity had

permanent and inalienable ownership of the land around its hearth and tomb:

There are three things which, from the most ancient times, we find founded and solidly established in these Greek and Italian societies: the domestic religion; the family; and the right of property – three things which had in the beginning a manifest relation, and which appear to have been inseparable.¹¹³

The institution of private property thus predated the emergence of Greeks and Romans as distinct sub-groups of the Aryans.¹¹⁴

La cité antique was a remarkably ambitious work, but Coulanges was circumspect in extending his conclusions beyond ancient Greece and Italy:

We know that there are races who have never succeeded in establishing among themselves the right of private property, while others have reached this stage only after long and painful experience. It is not, indeed, an easy problem, in the origin of society, to decide whether the individual may appropriate the soil... Among the ancient Germans the earth belonged to no one; every year the tribe assigned to each one of its members a lot to cultivate, and the lot was changed the following year... On the other hand, the nations of Greece and Italy, from the earliest antiquity, always held to the idea of private property. We do not find an age when the soil was common among them...¹¹⁵

Coulanges' readiness to believe in the existence of communal property regimes in places other than ancient Greece and Rome was something that dissipated with time, as will become clear below.

Coulanges insisted throughout his life that he was an objective observer in the tradition of Descartes and Bacon, that he was 'an apostle of science'.¹¹⁶ He castigated his fellow historians for being influenced by their political beliefs:

We historians, for the past fifty years, have been partisan. As sincere as they were, as impartial as they believed to be, they served one or the other of the political opinions that divide us.¹¹⁷

Coulanges had little doubt that he himself, through careful study of primary source material, had ascertained the objective truth about the course of events in the past.¹¹⁸ His student and biographer, Paul Guiraud, wrote that Coulanges 'had, like everyone else, his political preferences, but he did not let anything of that find expression in his books...'.¹¹⁹

The reality of the situation, however, appears to have been rather more complex, and there can be little doubt that a number of factors influenced Coulanges' views on private property. At one level, it was simply a matter of particular interest to Coulanges. He wrote on this subject both in one

of his earliest works, *Quid Vestae cultus in institutis veterum privatis publicisque valuerit* (1858) and in the final year of his life, *Le problème des origines de la propriété foncière* (1889), as well as at numerous times in the intervening period.¹²⁰

Coulanges was also, on a personal level, a firm believer in the overriding importance of private property and had a strong aversion to revolutionary and socialist ideas. His personal views are difficult to discern directly from his scholarly work, in which he habitually cites almost exclusively ancient sources and virtually never writes in the first person. However, Coulanges' beliefs about property are very apparent in his private papers, which were examined by Paul Guiraud. Those papers include an elaborate constitution for an ideal France, which Coulanges drew up while normal academic activity was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian War.¹²¹ The constitution includes a statement about the essential functions of the ideal French polity:

[The nation] guarantees to proprietors the enjoyment of their property, to tradesmen public peace, to workers, either managers or laborers, the liberty of contracts, the liberty of association, and security. It promotes neither the interests of the rich against those of the poor, nor those of the poor against those of the rich. To those who have possessions, it assures the preservation of their goods; to those who own nothing, it assures the means of acquiring them lawfully...¹²²

The importance of private property to Coulanges is reflected in the fact that his constitutional plans include a High Court (*Haute cour*) with the following duties:

[This court of justice would have for its mission to preserve] that which ought not either to perish or to be modified, that which is above the caprice of the people and the play of revolutions: the law, that is to say respect for life, for property, for liberty and for the conscience of others.¹²³

This passage makes clear the strong distaste Coulanges felt for the more revolutionary aspects of the French political tradition. That distaste extended to socialism, as is evident from the system of taxation in Coulanges' polity. Taxes would be paid primarily by property owners; but this obligation was to be balanced by the right to control the state's finances and by the knowledge that by paying taxes the well-off would become immune from the claims of socialists:

All the weight of taxes will fall again on proprietors and men of means; but these will have in exchange considerable prerogatives with respect to everything that has to do with the finances of the state; it is they who will feed the treasury, and they who will have the management of it. Besides,

wealth will be shielded from the lusts of socialism, and there will be no risk that tax revenue will be diverted from its normal purposes to serve, as some would wish it, to level fortunes.¹²⁴

The connection between Coulanges' politics and his scholarship is evident in the years immediately after the Franco-Prussian War. Before the war he had specialized in the study of the ancient world, though he had taught across the entire span of ancient and modern history and had done some work on the origins of French political institutions. He published a series of letters in 1871 in which he decried German aggression and an article in 1872 in which he took a position directly contrary to most extant scholarship in arguing that the Germanic invasions of late antiquity did little to shape medieval France. He claimed instead that it was France's Roman heritage that served as the basis of her development, and much of his scholarly energy thenceforth was devoted to proving that point in detail.¹²⁵ It would be an obvious mistake to perpetuate the biographical fallacy and to argue that Coulanges' scholarly work was a simple reflection of his political beliefs. It would, however, be equally problematic to ignore those beliefs, which were of considerable importance.

Coulanges' political positions make themselves felt at numerous points in *La cité antique*. Right at the beginning of the text he makes it clear that he has no patience for the idea that classical antiquity offers a model for contemporary France:

The ideas which the moderns have had of Greece and Rome have often been in their way. Having imperfectly observed the institutions of the ancient city, men have dreamed of reviving them among us. They have deceived themselves about the liberty of the ancients, and on this very account liberty among the moderns has been put in peril. The last eighty years have clearly shown that one of the great difficulties which impede the march of modern society is the habit which it has of always keeping Greek and Roman antiquity before its eyes.¹²⁶

The nature of the narrative in *La cité antique* means that overt references to socialism are generally lacking. There is, however, one obviously relevant passage. In summing up his argument that private property was grounded in religion, he writes:

A result of these old religious rules was, that a community of property was never established among the ancients. A phalanstery was never known among them.¹²⁷

The reader will recall that a *phalanstère* refers to Fourier's ideal of communal, communistic living arrangements.

Given the importance of Sparta in French socialist thought and

Coulanges' views on socialism, it should come as no surprise that Coulanges went out of his way to attack what might be called the Mablian view of Sparta. He dedicated a chapter of *La cité antique* specifically to the issue of 'Révolutions de Sparte'. This chapter touches on the question of land tenure in Sparta only in passing, presumably because the argument around which *La cité antique* was built inherently excluded a Greek communal property regime. In one passage, however, Coulanges overtly dismisses the idea that land was held communally in Sparta or even that it was divided in an egalitarian fashion:

The declamations of a few of the ancients, and of many of the moderns, on the wisdom of Spartan institutions, on the unchangeable good fortune which the Spartans enjoyed, on their equality, and on their living in common, ought not to blind us. Of all the cities that ever were upon the earth, Sparta is perhaps the one where the aristocracy reigned the most oppressively, and where equality was the least known. It is useless to talk of the division of the land. If that division ever took place, it is at least quite certain that it was not kept up...¹²⁸

Coulanges also very briefly discusses the reforms of Agis and Cleomenes and mentions the distribution of land that was part of those reforms. He does not delve into the relevant ancient sources, but implicitly dismisses the idea of communal ownership of land in early Sparta by writing that:

...it is worthy of remark that neither Agis nor Cleomenes avowed that he was carrying through a revolution and that both, claiming to act in the name of the old legislator, Lycurgus, pretended that they were bringing Sparta back to her ancient usages.¹²⁹

Most of the rest of the chapter consists of an extended attack on the idealizing picture of Spartan society and political institutions that Coulanges associated with Plutarch and Rousseau.¹³⁰ Coulanges' Sparta ironically enough ends up sounding much like France under the Ancien Régime, as is evident from his description of the former's socio-political system:

An aristocracy, composed of a few rich men, placed an iron yoke upon the Helots, upon the Laconians, and even upon the greater number of the Spartans. By its energy, ability, unscrupulousness, and disregard of all moral law, it succeeded in holding its power during five centuries; but it stirred up cruel hatreds, and had to suppress a great number of insurrections.¹³¹

We there see an unbridled love of wealth; everything is made secondary to this. Among a few there are luxury, effeminacy, and the desire endlessly to augment their fortunes. Beyond these there is a miserable crowd, indigent, without political rights, of no weight in the city, envious, full of hatred, and condemned by their condition to desire a revolution.¹³²

There is a wonderful irony in observing Coulanges reversing the terms of the eighteenth-century debate over luxury by accusing Sparta rather than Athens of being corrupted by luxury, greed, and effeminacy. Another amusing result of Coulanges' descriptions of Sparta is that the attempts by Agis and Cleomenes to reform Spartan society take on the color of the French Revolution. For instance, Agis' deposition of the ephors is described as the beginning of a 'régime de terreur'.¹³³

La cité antique proved to be an almost improbably popular work; it went through no less than twenty-eight editions in French by 1924 and has been translated into a large number of languages including English, German, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Modern Greek, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese.¹³⁴ Coulanges' ideas about ancient property regimes did not, however, go unopposed. A very different viewpoint found advocates in the Belgian historian and economist Émile de Laveleye, who held a professorship in political economy at the University of Liège from 1864 to his death in 1892, and Paul Viollet, a French historian who worked at the national archives in Paris and was later professor of civil and canon law at the École des Chartres.¹³⁵ In 1872 Laveleye began publishing a series of articles on primitive property regimes, while Viollet published a single article on the same subject in the same year.¹³⁶ Viollet went on to become a specialist in the history of French political and legal institutions, while Laveleye wrote prolifically about property in the succeeding decades. Moreover, Laveleye's articles on property regimes were gathered together and published as a book in 1874 with the title *De la propriété et de ses formes primitives*. In putting together this book, Laveleye incorporated Viollet's arguments into his own. We will, therefore, concentrate on Laveleye's *De la propriété*. This proved to be quite a popular work, going through five editions in thirty years and being translated into English, Dutch, Danish, German, and Russian.

Laveleye's work responded in part to so-called 'economic stage theories', according to which all societies pass through a fixed sequence of stages of economic development. These theories became particularly prominent after 1843, with the publication of Wilhelm Roscher's *Grundriss zu Vorlesungen über die Staatswirtschaft* (*Outline of Lectures on the National Economy*) and with the impetus toward evolutionary schemes of all kinds provided by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. However, stage theories had a long history before Roscher. One particularly important such theory was invented in the mid-eighteenth century by both Jacques Turgot (1727–1781) and Adam Smith. They independently postulated that all human societies pass through four consecutive stages, each of which was defined by the predominant mode of subsistence: hunting, pasturage,

agriculture, commerce. Each mode of subsistence corresponded to a distinct set of legal and governmental institutions and a particular property regime.¹³⁷ Private property was typically seen as emerging at the same time as agriculture.

In his *De la propriété* Laveleye argues that private property did not come into being anywhere in the world until well after human societies adopted agriculture. He takes a somewhat different approach from many earlier scholars interested in the origins of private property by eschewing deduction and by relying instead on what he saw as modern-day survivals of primitive systems of land ownership. He examines property regimes from a wide array of times and places (including ancient Greece and Rome) and reaches the conclusion that:

It is only after a series of progressive evolutions and at a comparatively recent period that individual ownership, as applied to land, is constituted. So long as primitive man lived by the chase, by fishing or gathering wild fruits, he never thought of appropriating the soil... Under the pastoral system, the notion of property in the soil begins to spring up. It is however always limited to the portion of land, which the herds of each tribe are accustomed to graze on... Gradually, a portion of the soil was put temporarily under cultivation, and the agricultural system was established; but the territory, which the clan or tribe occupies, remains its undivided property. The arable, the pasturage and the forest are farmed in common. Subsequently, the cultivated land is divided into parcels which are distributed by lot among the several families... The soil still remains the collective property of the clan, to whom it returns from time to time, that a new partition may be effected. This is the system still in force in the Russian commune; and was, in the time of Tacitus, that of the German tribe. By a new step of individualization, the parcels remain in the hands of groups of patriarchal families dwelling in the same house and working together for the benefit of the association, as in Italy or France in the middle ages, and in Servia at the present time. Finally, individual hereditary property appears. It is, however, still tied down by the thousand fetters of seigniorial rights...¹³⁸

It is easy to overlook the fact that Laveleye staked out what was a fairly radical position by claiming that private property in land was a relatively late arrival and did not come into being until long after agriculture became the dominant mode of subsistence. He was also unusually bold in arguing that the sequence he describes in the passage above applied universally.¹³⁹

In Laveleye's opinion ancient Greece occupied an anomalous position because:

From the earliest times in their history, the Greeks and Romans recognized private property as applied to the soil, and the traces of the ancient tribe

community were already so indistinct as not to be discoverable without a careful study.¹⁴⁰

Laveleye did not, however, despair and felt able to locate traces in Greek literary sources of a communal property regime. He begins by overtly rejecting Coulanges' arguments:

Certain authors, such as Lange and M. Fustel de Coulanges, think, that the Greeks and Romans had not traversed the primitive epoch, in which the soil was the common property of the tribe or village... In his excellent work, *La Cité Antique*, M. Fustel de Coulanges allows the existence of common property in the Roman family: but he cannot find, either in Greece or Rome, collective property in the tribe... It would be very strange, if these two nations alone had not passed through a system, which, as we have seen, existed in primitive times among all other races. After the decisive treatise of M. Paul Viollet, on the *Caractère Collectif des Premières Propriétés Immobilières*, it is impossible to adopt the opinion of M. Fustel de Coulanges.¹⁴¹

Laveleye divided his examination of property regimes in classical antiquity into three chapters: on the Golden Age, on Sparta, and on Rome. He was interested in the Golden Age, a time when private property was ostensibly unknown, because he took the position that:

The ancient poets, in this as in many other points, were depicting a state of society, the recollection of which survived in their own time.¹⁴²

On the Golden Age, Laveleye cites passages from Tibullus (*Elegy* 1.3.43–4), Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 1.135–6), and Virgil (*Georgics* 1.126–8), along with Plato's *Laws* (679a) and Diodorus Siculus' account of a vaguely socialist community in the Lipari Islands off the coast of Italy (5.9.1–5). Most remarkably, however, he brings forward as evidence Diodorus' summary of Euhemerus' third-century BCE fictional utopia of Panchaea, in which property was held communally (5.41.1–46.7).¹⁴³

Laveleye then argues that Sparta, 'at the time when it appears in history, had already discontinued the system of primitive community. It had, apparently, arrived at the system of collective property in the *gens*, or clan'.¹⁴⁴ Unsurprisingly, Laveleye highlights Plutarch's statement that at birth each Spartiate male child was assigned one of 9,000 lots, which were apparently owned by the state (*Lycurgus* 16.1). He claims, without providing much in the way of proof, that an equal division of property was undertaken twice, after the foundation of Sparta around 1000 BCE and again after the conquest of Messenia three hundred years later. The problem, from Laveleye's perspective, was that the original equality of property did not endure.¹⁴⁵

As one might expect, Laveleye made much of the Spartan *syssitia*, seeing

common meals as the remnants of a system of communal property. He adds the rather unusual claim that:

Sparta had a communal domain of great extent, the produce of which served in some measure to maintain the public repasts.¹⁴⁶

It should be noted that none of the passages Laveleye cites in support of this claim (Herodotus 6.57; Pausanias 3.20; Plato *Laws* I) make any mention of tracts of public land being used to support the *syssitia* in Sparta.¹⁴⁷ The evidentiary basis of Laveleye's description of Sparta could safely be described as tenuous.

Laveleye was an ardent socialist, and his description of early property systems, including that of Sparta, was not unrelated to his political leanings. Here again it is important to avoid oversimplifying and to see Laveleye's work as determined solely by his attachment to socialism. However, as was the case with Coulanges, Laveleye's politics need to be taken into account. Laveleye was deeply influenced by François Huet, who sought to bring socialism into alignment with Christianity, became an advocate for socialism, and wrote a number of influential works including *Le socialisme contemporain* (1881), *Le luxe* (1887), and *Dépréciation des richesses* (1889). He supported state intervention in the economy and some forms of communal ownership of property, though he was by no means a revolutionary in the mould of Babeuf.¹⁴⁸ As one might expect, the Paris Commune of 1871 made a profound impression on him and appears in the statement of his political position that is front and center in the introduction to *De la propriété*:

Either you must establish a more equitable division of property and produce, or the fatal end of democracy will be despotism and decadence, after a series of social struggles of which the horrors committed in Paris in 1871 may serve as a foretaste.¹⁴⁹

Laveleye argued that primitive property regimes, in which societal needs prevailed over those of the individual, could not be revived in their original form, but could provide valuable models for new and improved systems of ownership.¹⁵⁰ This, of course, is precisely the sort of thinking against which Coulanges protested fiercely.

Coulanges, who had a penchant for engaging in scholarly polemic, did not wait long in framing a response to Laveleye's work.¹⁵¹ In November and December 1879 he delivered a series of lectures on property ownership in Sparta at the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. Those lectures proved quite popular and appeared in written form on no less than six separate occasions (with slight variations). They were usually given the collective title *Étude sur la propriété à Sparte* and ran to about 80 pages.¹⁵²

In the introduction to this treatise, Coulanges notes that new theories on the origins of property had emerged in recent years and specifically points to Laveleye's work. He states that his interest is not in whether private property existed in primitive hunting or pastoral groups, but rather in the disposition of property in early agricultural societies. He goes on to say that he has chosen to write on Sparta because it is one of the polities that seems to have practiced communal ownership of land for a long time or at least to have conserved vestiges of that arrangement.

The beginning of the main part of the analysis is dedicated to an examination of the sources on Sparta that in many ways anticipates François Ollier's *Le mirage spartiate*. Coulanges sees the era of Agis and Cleomenes as one in which numerous legends were attached to early Sparta. As a result, he divides the relevant ancient literary texts into two groups, those from before the third century BCE and those after. Coulanges then works through those texts in considerable detail and argues that from the outset land in Sparta was divided into privately owned, unequal lots that were passed down through individual families.¹⁵³ He devotes an entire section of the text to Plutarch's statement (*Lycurgus* 16.1) about the existence of 9,000 lots and the distribution of a lot to each male Spartiate at birth.¹⁵⁴ He is reluctant to dismiss Plutarch's statement outright and concludes by saying that, no matter what Plutarch might have meant, he does not provide evidence for communal ownership of land. In an interesting and significant omission, Coulanges does not discuss the *communauté des biens* ostensibly referenced in Plutarch *Agis* 7.2–3. It is at this distance impossible to reconstruct the precise reasons why Coulanges chose to ignore this passage (given his immersion in the relevant ancient sources, it was virtually certainly known to him). However, one cannot but suspect that he intentionally omitted it because it ran counter to the case he was trying to make and resisted alternative explanations.

Coulanges might well have stopped at that point, but he chose instead to attack other facets of the socialist view of Sparta. He highlights the extent to which Spartan society was based on the labor of helots. He dismisses the idea that *syssitia* were communistic in nature. He portrays Spartiates as delighting in luxury and as prone to corruption. He concludes by characterizing Sparta as a typical Greek city, one where there was nothing resembling communism:

The obedience of the citizen to the state, that was not communism. The legislator of Sparta, whoever he was, was much less concerned with equality than with discipline, and the mistake of later writers was to confuse this discipline with equality or an imaginary communal lifestyle. Lacedaemonian

discipline impeded neither private life, nor individual property, nor interior luxury, nor inequality of wealth.¹⁵⁵

Thus, fifteen years after the publication of *La cité antique*, and in direct response to the work of Laveleye, Coulanges returned to the subject of Sparta. He re-iterated in greater detail the views he had outlined in his earlier work and continued his attack on socialist appropriations of Sparta. As Jean-Médéric Tourneur-Aumont observes in his biography of Coulanges, 'Sparta was a favorite target for the destructive critique of Fustel'.¹⁵⁶

The exchanges between Laveleye and Coulanges continued right up to the latter's death in 1889.¹⁵⁷ Laveleye regularly published essays on property regimes in various parts of the world and used the opportunity provided by the appearance of new editions of *De la propriété* to dismiss politely but firmly Coulanges' arguments.¹⁵⁸ Coulanges issued skeptical reviews of Laveleye's work,¹⁵⁹ and continued to write intermittently on the history of land tenure.

In the last essay he published before his death, 'Le problème des origines de la propriété foncière', Coulanges attacks at length the work of five scholars, all of whom claimed to demonstrate communal ownership of property in early societies: G. L. von Maurer (who studied Germanic tribes), Viollet (ancient Greece), Mommsen (early Rome), Laveleye, and Marie Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville (Gallic tribes).¹⁶⁰ In this essay Coulanges took a much more categorical stance than he had in the past by arguing that there was no hard evidence for communal ownership of land in any agricultural society of any kind anywhere at any time. In *La cité antique* he had conceded that communal property regimes could well have existed in early agricultural societies, just not in ancient Greece or Italy. In *Étude sur la propriété à Sparte* he overtly declined to make sweeping statements about land tenure and chose to concentrate on a specific historical example. Now, however, he considerably expanded his geographical and temporal horizons. The introduction to the essay makes it clear that he was interested only in agricultural societies because 'it is obvious that when men were still in the hunting or pastoral stage, and had not yet arrived at the idea of agriculture, it did not occur to them to take each for himself a share of land'.¹⁶¹ What exercises him is the claim made by Laveleye and others that 'the system of agriculture was, in the beginning, an agrarian communism'.¹⁶² He states:

I do not wish to combat the theory. What I want to do is only to examine the authorities on which it has been based. I intend simply to take *all* of these authorities, as they have been presented to us by the authors of the system, and to verify them.¹⁶³

Coulanges then launches into a detailed examination of the work of the authors listed above and the sources they cite. He sums up his views on the matter as follows:

Are we to conclude from all that has gone before that nowhere and at no time was land held in common? By no means. To commit ourselves to so absolute a negative would be to go beyond the purpose of this work. The only conclusion to which we are brought by this prolonged examination of authorities is that community in land has not yet been historically proved.¹⁶⁴

Coulanges thus ended up taking a position that was almost diametrically opposed to that of Laveleye.

Coulanges maintained to the end that he was an objective historian without a political agenda of any kind, but this is belied by a number of statements in his published work, especially later in his career. In an 1886 article containing some observations on a new work by Laveleye, Coulanges writes:

I make no objection against the preference for communal property in the future that marks out Mr. de Laveleye. It is with a great elevation of spirit and with a sentiment of great generosity that he extols the advantages of a regime where each person should have their own share of the land. Against this I have nothing to say, having myself no doctrine. I want to think only of the past. It is the historical question alone that occupies my attention.¹⁶⁵

However, a statement from the end of 'Le problème des origines de la propriété foncière' gives one some reason to doubt Coulanges' self-portrayal:

We do not maintain that it is inadmissible to believe in primitive communism. What we do maintain is that the attempt to base this theory on an historical foundation has been an unfortunate one; and we refuse to accept its garb of false learning. The theory itself will always be believed in by a certain class of minds. Among the current ideas which take possession of the imaginations of men is one they have learnt from Rousseau. It is that property is contrary to nature and that communism is natural; and this idea has power even over writers who yield to it without being aware that they do so. Minds which are under the influence of this idea will never allow that property may be a primordial fact, contemporaneous with the earliest cultivation of the soil, natural to man, produced by an instinctive recognition of his interests, and closely bound up with the primitive constitution of the family. They will always prefer to assume that there must first have been a period of communism. This will be with them an article of faith which nothing can shake; and they will always be able to find authorities which can be made to support it. There will, however, always be a few, endowed with a keener critical and historical sense, who will continue to doubt what has yet to be proved.¹⁶⁶

Coulanges' eloquent protestations about his own objectivity and the subjectivity of his opponents are in some ways the clearest indications of his biases.

Conclusion

As Kostas Vlassopoulos astutely points out in Chapter 2, the vast majority of the discussions of Sparta by early modern sources were located within broader discourses and were not focused on Sparta *per se*. The same could be said of treatments of Spartan land tenure in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France. The rapid societal evolution France underwent during those centuries brought questions of political, economic, and social reform to the fore. The property regime of Sparta became part of the discussion those questions generated. Sparta was variously portrayed as a place in which land was privately held and unequally distributed, privately held and equally distributed, or communally owned. Spartan society could be cast as a veritable paradise or as a wretched failure and could be held up as a model for modern France or rejected as irrelevant. Regardless of the position adopted by any given author, the representations of Sparta produced by French authors were shaped more by contemporary socio-political discourse than by faithful analysis of the ancient sources. As Maxime Rosso has noted, 'Sparta was a city, it became an idea, a means of envisaging communal life, a vision of the state'.¹⁶⁷

After the deaths of Coulanges and Laveleye, the debate over the nature of land tenure in ancient Sparta did not so much reach a resolution as lose force. The unresolved nature of that debate at the end of the nineteenth century is perhaps most evident in a pair of statements from the obituaries of Coulanges and of Laveleye (who died in 1892). In a eulogy to Coulanges, delivered in 1889 to the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Frédéric Passy declared:

How could one forget...that beautiful work on property at Sparta, which reduced to nothing the communist legend by which we were at one time lulled and brought back to their just value the declamations of Morelly, Mably, Rousseau and Babeuf on the black broth and on the austerity of Lacedaemonian customs...¹⁶⁸

Three years later Laveleye's former student Ernest Mahaim wrote that his recently deceased *maître* was notable for arguing that property was originally communally owned and passed through various stages before becoming a purely private entity and that 'these two points are today accepted by everyone'.¹⁶⁹ The nature of land tenure in Sparta in fact remained an open question throughout most of the twentieth century.¹⁷⁰

Much of the passion went out of the debate over land tenure in Sparta with the emergence of Marxism as the dominant form of European socialism. Marx and Engels were both deeply interested in early societies and their property regimes, but neither paid much attention to Sparta. Engels published the standard Marxist statement on early societies in 1884, under the title *Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*).¹⁷¹ Engels mentions Sparta a few times in regard to the idea that Spartan women enjoyed an unusual amount of personal freedom, but that is about it. As a result, the rise of Marxism meant that much of the impetus to describe Sparta as a socialist state dissipated, and with it the political rancor that had done so much to color nineteenth-century treatments of Spartan land tenure, particularly among French thinkers.

This marked discontinuity in the terms of the debate helped produce a situation in which a deep pall of obscurity rapidly fell over the forces that shaped nineteenth-century treatments of the Spartan property regime. That has been a rather unfortunate development because scholars have continued to expend a great deal of energy exploring Spartan land tenure and in doing so have directly and indirectly wrestled with the work of their nineteenth-century predecessors, but in many cases without a clear knowledge of the ongoing dialogue to which that work was responding.¹⁷² A particularly relevant case is the book, *La propriété foncière en Grèce jusqu'à la conquête romaine*, published in 1893 by Coulanges' student Paul Guiraud. *La propriété foncière* was for the most part well received – it won a prize from the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques and was published at government expense – and continues to be influential. S. Isager and J. E. Skydsgaard, in their 1992 book on Greek agriculture and landholding, describe Guiraud's work as 'basic for all later studies of the subject...so it is for this present book'.¹⁷³ There is much to be said for the painstaking examination of sources that Guiraud undertook in *La propriété foncière*, a text that runs to over 600 pages. However, Guiraud shows every sign of having inherited many of Coulanges' biases. The first words in the text proper are a question, 'Did the Greeks start off with collectively-owned property?'¹⁷⁴ His answer is unequivocally negative.¹⁷⁵

Guiraud, like Coulanges, was a firm believer that private property appeared at the same time as agriculture in ancient Greece. Nothing strange in that, except that in separate examinations of the land reforms undertaken by Lycurgus and by Agis and Cleomenes, Guiraud cites parts of Plutarch's *Lycurgus* and *Agis*, as well as passages from Pausanias, Ephorus, Plato, Isocrates, Diogenes Laertius, and Polybius, without making any mention at all of the two sections in Plutarch's work that had since the time of Mably

been *loci classici* for those subscribing to the view that land was communally held in Sparta (*Lycurgus* 16.1, *Agis* 7.2–3).¹⁷⁶ Later in the text he briefly touches on Plutarch's statement at *Lycurgus* 16.1, that all new-born Spartiates were assigned one of 9,000 lots; but he rapidly concludes that Plutarch was himself confused and was in any event referring to joint tenancy of father and son.¹⁷⁷ In his account of Agis' reforms, he makes no explicit mention of *Agis* 7.2–3 and gives no credence to Agis' claim to have restored Lycurgan landholding patterns.¹⁷⁸ The final chapters of the book are given over to an exploration of what Guiraud sees as the disastrous consequences of attempts at radical land reform undertaken at various times and places in Greek history, as well as an explanation of why ancient Greece ought not be brought into modern discussions of socialism.¹⁷⁹ Guiraud writes in the conclusion that 'Greece perished from agrarian socialism'. With all this in mind, it comes as no surprise that Guiraud's work was anathema to socialists: it was the subject of a highly critical review by Paul Lafargue (1842–1911), a well-known socialist writer and activist and Karl Marx's son-in-law. In nearly twenty pages in the communist journal *Le devenir social*, Lafargue takes objection to nearly every facet of Guiraud's work and attempts to demonstrate the existence of communally-owned property in Greece, most particularly in Sparta.¹⁸⁰

When put back into the context in which it was produced, Guiraud's work reads very differently than when seen in isolation. This is a salutary lesson, and it is my hope that this essay will suggest new ways of reading and understanding French treatments of Spartan land tenure.

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Notes

¹ Translation by John Kilcullen and John Scott, as posted at <http://www.humanities.mq.edu.au/Ockham/wqvr.html>.

² The history of those debates is well documented in Garnsey 2007. On the conflict between John and the dissident Franciscans, see Garnsey (2007, 131–5), with further bibliography.

³ Cornford 1966 (1908), 23. On the use of the past as a source of legitimacy, see Finley 1987, 34–59. (Finley cites Cornford on p. 35.) On the creative re-imagination of the past, see the introduction to, and essays in, Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

⁴ The term 'French' is taken here to mean any writer working in the French language. This is an important definition because one of the authors whose work is discussed at length, Émile de Laveleye, was Belgian. The obvious alternative term, Francophone, has not been used simply because it becomes tiresome after multiple repetitions.

⁵ It was usually the case that debate in France over private property was driven by its opponents. This fits a wider pattern. As Garnsey notes, 'Apologists for private property have tended to be, after the manner of Aristotle, reactive, even on the defensive. The running has been made on the whole by critics and doubters of private property' (2007, 234).

⁶ The subject matter covered in this paper has not, to my knowledge, previously been subjected to careful study. It is touched on in passing, but not addressed in a focused way, by Rawson (1969), Rosso (2005: Rosso is interested primarily in Sparta's role in French debates about the advantages and disadvantages of republican government) and Grell (1995: Grell casts a wide net and therefore gives relatively little space to the specific question of Spartan land tenure). In writing the opening three sections of this essay I have drawn regularly on Hodkinson (2007). The relevant ideas and sources are treated here in greater depth and breadth than in Hodkinson's article (a brief contribution to a collection of conference papers), and the interpretation given differs in a number of small ways. We diverge sharply in regard to nineteenth-century French treatments of Spartan land tenure (which Hodkinson sees as few and politically insignificant), with the caveat that Hodkinson's article focuses on Mably and touches on nineteenth-century material only as an afterthought. A brief summary of French interest in Sparta before 1789 can also be found in Morel 1996.

⁷ See the conclusion of this essay for the relevant passage.

⁸ I have provided both English translations and the original French text of all passages taken from primary source materials. In instances in which pre-existing translations of French sources have been used, the source of the translation is cited first, followed by the French text, then a citation of the source of the French text. In instances in which translations are my own, only a single citation is given – to the source of the French text – followed by the text itself. I have not provided the original French of translations of passages from secondary literature.

⁹ The standard discussion of Spartan land tenure is Hodkinson 2000, 65–208. On the utopianization of Sparta, see Christesen (2004), with further bibliography. For a recent survey of Spartan history, Cartledge 2002.

¹⁰ See Mason's and Winston's articles in this volume, Chapters 3–4. Also of note are Guerri 1979b; Macgregor Morris 2004; Rawson 1969, 220–67; and Rosso 2005, 235–473. Rosso's work is particularly valuable because it is recent and unusually thorough, in regard to both primary sources and secondary literature. For a general overview of French writing on the classical world from the first half of the eighteenth century, Grell 1995, i.449–553.

¹¹ See Rawson (1969), and the contributions of Macgregor Morris and Vlassopoulos to this volume, Chapters 1–2.

¹² Quoted in the preface to Rosso 2005, 11.

¹³ For more on Bodin's work, see below. On Montaigne's and Bayle's views on Sparta, see Rosso (2005, 121–44 and 187–8, respectively), with further bibliography. For Bayle's articles on Sparta in his *Dictionnaire*, see Paradiso 1992.

¹⁴ See Rosso (2005, 176–86), with further bibliography.

¹⁵ These shifts are noted in both Rawson (1969, 223) and Rosso (2005, 53, 228, 231), though the former probably underestimates the importance of Sparta in the intellectual life of seventeenth-century France. On sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French writing on Sparta, see Rawson 1969, 130–85; Rosso 2005, 55–228.

¹⁶ The use of Sparta to support absolutist French monarchy presented significant challenges. This is evident from Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet's *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1679). Bossuet argues that, to the extent that Greeks had good political habits, it was because they adopted them due to interaction with Egyptian colonies in which monarchy was the prevailing form of government. Bossuet also makes much of the importance to Greek history of kings such as Leonidas and Philip of Macedon. On Bossuet, see Rosso (2005, 172–5), with further bibliography. Bossuet was a one-time friend and long-time rival of Fénelon. On the use of Sparta in apologias for the French monarchy, see Rosso 2005, 147–75.

¹⁷ *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, 110–11 ['Ils vivent tous ensemble sans partager les terres... Tous les biens sont communs...'], *Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse*, 168]. The issue of property is not directly addressed in the descriptions of Salente, but it shows every sign of having private property in both land and movable goods. On Fénelon, see the introduction to *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*; Hont 2006, 379–87; and Rosso 2005, 209–28.

¹⁸ On the influence of Sparta on utopian literature from seventeenth-century France, see Rosso 2005, 189–228, with further bibliography. There is considerable debate on the extent to which Sparta influenced Fénelon's description of Bétique. Hont is skeptical that there is any noticeable influence; Rosso is more ready to see a connection. That Fénelon was not unacquainted with Sparta is evident from another of his works, *Dialogues des morts composés pour l'éducation d'un prince* (1692), a series of fictive exchanges between famous figures from the past, in two of which Sparta is the focus of attention. There are a number of reasons why Fénelon may have kept Sparta largely out of *Télémaque*. Rosso points out that the narrative is set in the heroic period, well before the advent of Lycurgan Sparta, and that Crete and Sparta were seen as closely related polities. In addition, Fénelon had a strong aversion to war, so Sparta was not an obvious exemplar for him.

¹⁹ *Telemachus, Son of Ulysses*, 296 ['Il y a deux choses pernicieuses dans le gouvernement des peuples auxquelles on n'apporte presque jamais aucun remède; la première est une autorité injuste et trop violente dans les Rois; la seconde est le luxe qui corrompt les mœurs'], *Les aventures de Télémaque*, 466–7].

²⁰ Rosso 2005, 209. Fénelon, who had served as tutor to Louis' eldest grandson, had already incurred the king's wrath for espousing what were seen as heretical religious ideas and suffered further after the publication of *Télémaque*.

²¹ It need hardly be said that periodization of any kind tends to emphasize change at the expense of continuity and must be used cautiously, with its limitations kept in the foreground. For a good collection of essays on the perils of periodization, see Golden and Toohey 1997.

²² Vidal-Naquet 1995, 87. Mason (Chapter 3, this volume) makes the important observation that the *philosophes'* assessments of Sparta, particularly as a model for modern France, were far from universally positive.

²³ The debate over luxury was itself part of a larger controversy, frequently called

'the Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns' ('La querelle des Anciens et des Modernes'), over the value and applicability of ancient literature and history in a modern context. That larger debate, when seen from a wide perspective, had origins that reached back to the Renaissance, continued for centuries, and was played out in much of Western Europe. It cannot, therefore, be discussed here in any detail. It is sufficient to note that it was a matter of particular concern in France from roughly the middle of the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century. Proponents of luxury tended to be 'moderns', but both those who favored and those who opposed luxury and commerce could and did cite ancient precedents. See Grell (1995, i.359–780), with further bibliography.

²⁴ On the debate about luxury and austerity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, see Grell 1995, i.456–60; Hont 2006; and Vidal-Naquet 1995, 82–140 (co-authored with Nicole Loraux). On Colbert, see Coleman 1987, with further bibliography.

²⁵ See, for example, the article on luxury written by the Marquis de Saint Lambert for Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Saint Lambert writes that luxury is the result of people wishing to improve their station in life and that 'the desire to increase one's wealth is and must be one of the motivating forces of any government that is not built upon equality and communality of property' ['le désir de s'enrichir entre donc et doit entrer dans le nombre des ressorts de tout gouvernement qui n'est pas fondé sur l'égalité et la communauté des biens', (9.763)]. For the French text, see <http://encyclopedia.uchicago.edu/>; for the English translation supplied here, see <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/>. Saint Lambert briefly discusses Athens and Rome, but makes no mention of Sparta. The picture of Sparta in the *Encyclopédie* is a complex one because of the involvement of a number of authors with strongly contrasting views in crafting the relevant articles: see Rosso (2005, 267–308), with further bibliography, and Mason, this volume, Chapter 3.

²⁶ There had been earlier, scattered mentions of Sparta as an austere state in which luxury was unknown. For example, in his *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* Bossuet writes, 'Among all the republics whereof Greece was composed, Athens and Lacedemon were incomparably the chief... Athens was set upon pleasure, the life of Lacedemon was hard and laborious' (*An Universal History from the Beginning of the World to the Empire of Charlemagne*, 356) ['Parmi toutes les Républiques dont la Grèce étoit composée, Athènes et Lacédémone étoient, sans comparaison les principales... Athènes vouloit le plaisir: la vie de Lacédémone étoit dure et laborieuse', *Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, i.436.] In his *Histoire ancienne* (1730–8), Charles Rollin states that Lycurgus 'in order... to banish insolence, envy, fraud, luxury...persuaded the citizens to give up all their lands to the commonwealth, and to make a new division of them, that they might all live together in a perfect equality...' (*Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Medes and Persians, Grecians and Macedonians*, ii.248) ['Pour bannir donc l'insolence, l'envie, la fraude, le luxe...persuada à tous les citoyens de remettre leurs terres en commun, et d'en faire un nouveau partage, pour vivre ensemble dans une parfaite égalité...', *Histoire ancienne*, ii.210]. Rollin was not, however, nearly as interested in the issue of luxury as Melon. On Rollin and his work, see Macgregor Morris 2004 and Mason's and Winston's essays in this volume, Chs 3–4.

²⁷ *A Political Essay on Commerce*, 181 ['L'austere Lacédémone, n'a été ni plus conquérante, ni mieux gouvernée; ni n'a produit de plus grands hommes que la

voluptueuse Athènes. Parmi les hommes illustres de Plutarque, il y a quatre Lacédémoniens et sept Athéniens... Il seroit plaisant d'imaginer un projet de faire vivre toute la France en Commun', *Essai politique sur le commerce*, 139–40]. For the connection to Fénelon, see Hont 2006, 412.

²⁸ The legal basis of private property was a subject of regular discussion in Europe dating from classical antiquity. In the present context it is impossible, and unnecessary, to review the entire history of that discussion, but it is helpful to look briefly at the *status quaestionis* in the period under consideration here. For a concise introduction to European ideas about property in the seventeenth century, see Meek 1976, 12–16. For more detailed studies, see Buckle 1991, 1–190 and Garnsey 2007, 107–76.

²⁹ On the Physiocrats, see Hochstrasser 2006 and Lichtenberger 1895, 276–324.

³⁰ For a fuller list of relevant authors, works and translation dates, see Baker 1990, 90–1. For details of which works were translated when and by whom, see Rochedieu 1948. On the appearance of classical republicanism in France, see Baker 2001. For a concise introduction to classical republicanism and a summary of the key bibliography, see Lovett 2006. On the role of Sparta in this school of thought, see Vlassopoulos' essay in this volume, Chapter 2.

³¹ It is important to note that classical republicanism was known in France before the eighteenth century, but was not particularly influential in an environment tending toward absolutist monarchy. The exception to this general rule is Jean Bodin, who, in his *Les six livres de la République* (1576), discusses Sparta's political and economic systems at length, including what he describes as equal divisions of land carried out by both Lycurgus and Agis (e.g. *Les six livres*, 715). For a concise summary of Bodin's work, see Parker 1987. For more detailed studies, with a particular focus on Bodin's interest in the ancient world, see Cambiano 2000, 133–96 and *passim*; Nelson 2004, 96–100. On Bodin's interest in Sparta as a political model, see Rosso 2005, 103–21.

³² Nelson 2004, 1–18 and *passim*.

³³ Nelson 2004, 17. Reviews of Nelson's work can be found in Champion 2005, Dunn 2005, and Rahe 2006. Champion claims that Nelson errs by basing his understanding of the Greek tradition largely on Plato, whom Champion sees as atypical in his willingness to contemplate communal ownership of property. He seems to underestimate the extent to which Plato's ideas about property reflected beliefs that were widely held in ancient Greek communities. On that subject, see Christesen 2004. Dunn's review is generally positive. Rahe is much more critical; like Champion, he takes the position that Nelson pays insufficient attention to the contexts in which the relevant works appeared. However, both Champion and Rahe accept Nelson's argument for the existence of a strain in classical republican thought in the early modern period that emphasized the importance of egalitarianism in the distribution of property.

³⁴ For a concise summary of More's work, see Sargent 1987. On More's *Utopia* and its possible relationship to Sparta, see Africa 1979; Baker-Smith 1991, 154 and 156–7; Nelson 2004, 19–48; Rawson 1969, 170–5; Shoeck 1956.

³⁵ For a concise summary of Harrington's work, see Cotton 1987. On More's successors in the classical republican tradition, see Pocock 1975, 333–505; Nelson 2004, 87–154; and the bibliography cited by Nelson on p. 87 n. 2. Kostas Vlassopoulos points out in this volume, Chapter 2, that Harrington was innovative in arguing that the pattern of distribution of land determined a society's form of government.

³⁶ *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*, 39–41 [‘Les fondateurs des anciennes républiques avoient également partagé les terres: cela seul faisoit un peuple puissant, c’est-à-dire une société bien réglée... Les rois Agis et Cléomènes voyant qu’au lieu de neuf mille citoyens qui étoient à Sparte du temps de Lycurgue, il n’y en avoit plus que sept cents, dont à peine cent possédoient des terres, et que tout le reste n’étoit qu’une populace sans courage, ils entreprirent de rétablir les lois à cet égard; et Lacédémone reprit sa première puissance, et redevint formidable à tous les Grecs. Ce fut le partage égal des terres qui rendit Rome capable de sortir d’abord de son abaissement; et cela se sentit bien quand elle fut corrompue’, *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence*, 20–2].

³⁷ See sections 4.6 and 5.5, respectively. See also his *Pensées* #1811 (*Pensées et fragments inédits*, ii.327). For a concise summary of Montesquieu’s work, see Pangle 1987. For more detailed studies of Montesquieu’s work, with a particular focus on his interest in the ancient world, see Cambiano 1974; Grell 1995, i.513–23; Nelson 2004, 155–94; and Rosso 2005, 243–66.

³⁸ *Oeuvres complètes*, iii.13.

³⁹ See in particular *Oeuvres complètes*, iii.83 (from *Dernière réponse*, published 1752).

⁴⁰ *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, 44 [‘Le premier qui ayant enclos un terrain, s’avisait de dire: *ceci est à moi*, et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile. Que de crimes, de guerres, de meurtres, que de misères et d’horreurs, n’eût point épargnés au Genre-humain celui qui arrachant les pieux ou comblant le fossé, eût crié à ses semblables. Gardez-vous d’écouter cet imposteur; Vous êtes perdus, si vous oubliez que les fruits sont à tous, et que la Terre n’est à personne!’, *Oeuvres complètes*, iii.164].

⁴¹ For a concise summary of Rousseau’s work, see Masters 1987. For more detailed studies, with a particular focus on his interest in the ancient world, see Mason in this volume, Chapter 3, and Rosso 2005, 347–81. Some of the more directly relevant work in the massive bibliography on Rousseau includes Cartledge 1999; Grell 1995, i.460–8; Nelson 2004, 183–93; Rawson 1969, 231–41; and Rihs 1970, 37–70.

⁴² *Observations sur les Grecs* was republished in 1764 under the title *Observations sur l’histoire de la Grèce*. On Mably’s work, with a particular focus on his interest in the ancient world, see Grell 1995, i.469–95; Guerrier 1886, 38–114; Guerci 1979a, 105–40; Lichtenberger 1895, 221–46; Nelson 2004, 177–83; Rawson 1969, 245–51; and Rosso 2005, 323–46. The single most detailed study of Mably’s interest in Sparta can be found in Dockès-Lallement (1996b), which includes full citation of all of the relevant passages in Mably’s corpus. Individual sections of Wright’s valuable work on Mably are cited at the end of the relevant paragraphs. On Mably’s early writings, see Wright 1997, 1–64. This section of text draws heavily on Hodkinson 2007.

⁴³ ‘Savez-vous, me dit milord en finissant notre promenade, quelle est la principale source de tous les malheurs qui affligent l’humanité? C’est la propriété des biens. Je sais, ajouta-t-il, que les premières sociétés ont pu l’établir avec justice; on la trouve même toute établie dans l’état de nature; car personne ne peut nier que l’homme alors n’eût droit de regarder comme son propre bien la cabane qu’il avoit élevée et les fruits qu’il avoit cultivés...faute d’expérience pour prévoir les inconvénients sans nombre qui résulteroient de ce partage, il dût paroître avantageux d’établir la propriété des biens... Mais nous qui voyons les maux infinis qui sont sortis de cette boîte funeste de Pandore, si le moindre rayon d’espérance frappoit notre raison, ne devrions-nous

pas aspirer à cette heureuse communauté des biens, tant louée...que Lycurgue avoit établie à Lacédémone, que Platon vouloit faire revivre dans sa république, et qui, grâce à la dépravation des mœurs, ne peut plus être qu’une chimère dans le monde?’, *Collection complète des oeuvres de l’abbé de Mably*, xi.378–80. On *Des droits et des devoirs du citoyen* (including its date of composition), see Serve 1971 and Wright 1997, 70–80.

⁴⁴ In addition, while Plutarch’s account, in his *Life of Lycurgus*, is vague about how land was owned in Sparta, it is quite explicit that Lycurgus’ attempts to redistribute movable goods were frustrated (9.1). This gave land particular importance to anyone interested in communal ownership of property in Sparta.

⁴⁵ Wright 1997, 99.

⁴⁶ ‘Ces Spartiates ne connoissoient point les propriétés foncières; la république donnoit à chaque citoyen une certaine quantité de terre dont il n’étoit qu’usufruitier; et cependant, c’est en se tenant ainsi hors de l’ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés, que Sparte a fait de plus grandes choses que les états que vous jugez plus sages qu’elle, et a joui d’un bonheur constant pendant six cents ans’, *Collection complète*, xi.7; see also xi.14–15 and 222.

⁴⁷ *De la législation, ou principes des loix*, 73–4. On *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes*, see Grell 1995, i.500–13; Guerci 1979a, 113–20; and Wright 1997, 94–124.

⁴⁸ On Saige’s *Caton*, see Baker 1990, 128–52.

⁴⁹ Hodkinson 2007, 423–6.

⁵⁰ On French utopian thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Morelly, see Hodkinson 2007, Rihs 1970, and Wagner 1978. On Mably’s awareness of contemporary utopian thought, see Wright 1997, 99–103.

⁵¹ On the influence of Grotius, Pufendorf, and Locke on Mably, see Lecerclé 1963 and Wright 1997, 94–121.

⁵² There are a number of seemingly contradictory remarks on Spartan land tenure within Plutarch’s extensive corpus: see Hodkinson 2007, 417–19. For a more detailed examination of the sources for and *realia* of Spartan land tenure, see Hodkinson 2000, 65–208.

⁵³ *Les vies des hommes illustres de Plutarque*, ii.608.

⁵⁴ Ibid. v.522. Dacier issued the first volume of his translation of Plutarch’s *Lives* in 1694; it contained the standard first six lives (*Thesens, Romulus, Lycurgus, Numa, Solon, Publicola*). The remainder, including the translation of *Agis*, did not appear until 1721. Dacier’s translation was re-issued in 1734, 1762, and 1778 (Grell 1995, i.301). André was married to the well-known classicist Anne Dacier (née Lefèvre). On Amyot’s translation, see Billault 2002. On Dacier’s life and work, see Nicéron 1727–45, iii.123–63; on his translation, see Quantin 1988. Billault notes that ‘Dacier’s Plutarch was widely read in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ (235).

⁵⁵ The appearance of *commuauté des biens* in Dacier’s translation is not entirely surprising since the phrase was well established in French utopian language by the sixteenth century. Jean Bodin, whose work was known to and used by Mably (see, for example, *Observations sur l’histoire de France*, i.168), wrote in his *Six livres de la République* (1576) that many ancient legislators, such as Lycurgus, Agis, and Plato, ‘equally divide the goods and lands among subjects, as in our time Thomas More Chancellor of England in his *Commonweale* sayth, That the only way of safetie for an estate, is when as men live in common, the which cannot be whereas is any propriete’ (*The Six Bookes*

of a Common-weale, 569) [...divisoient les biens également à chacun des subjects: comme de nostre memoire Thomas le More Chancelier d'Angleterre, en sa Republique, dit, que la seule voye de salut public est, si les hommes vivent en communauté des biens: ce qui ne peut estre faict où il y a propriété', *Les six livres de la Republique*, 703]. In the French translation of More's *Utopia* published in 1715 and again in 1730, the concluding summary of the work contains the statement that 'cette Communauté de biens et de vivres..., c'est le fondement, c'est le pivot de leur République', and the *Table des Matières* has an entry under *communauté des biens* which guides the reader to that statement (*Idée d'une république heureuse ou l'utopie*, 346 and 351, respectively).

⁵⁶ Quantin 1988.

⁵⁷ Wright 1997, 224 n. 3.

⁵⁸ It is impossible to know for certain which translation Mably used, particularly earlier in his career when he was working on *Observations sur les Grecs* (1749). However, as Dacier's translation appeared when Mably was twelve years old, it seems likely that he used Dacier's version from the beginning. Nonetheless it remains possible that the shift in Mably's views on Spartan property regimes was in part due to his replacing Amyot with Dacier. Xenophon's comments on the sharing of property such as dogs in his *Lakedaimonion Politeia* (6.3) are also obviously relevant, but did not carry nearly as much weight as the cited passages of Plutarch.

⁵⁹ For a brief introduction to Ramsay's life and work, see Lamoine 2002, 7–18.

⁶⁰ *The Travels of Cyrus*, 219 ['C'est encore ici où je ne pouvois pas imiter Lycurgue. La communauté des biens, et l'égalité des Citoyens, avoient rendu inutile à Sparte cette foule de Loix, et de formes qui sont absolument nécessaires par-tout où se trouve l'inégalité des rangs et des biens', *Les voyages de Cyrus, avec un discours sur la mythologie*, i.167].

⁶¹ Rosso comments that this treatise is 'without a doubt the most successful and best documented response to Mably, but it remains a polemical work' (2005, 402).

⁶² See Winston this volume, Chapter 4. Dockès-Lallement notes that 'Vauvilliers wished to destroy completely the Spartan myth' (1996a, 263). On Vauvilliers and his attack on Mably, see Dockès-Lallement 1996a; Knight 1866–72; and Rosso 2005, 390–402. Vauvilliers drew heavily on two earlier works: Claude-Joseph Mathon de la Cour's *Par quelles causes et par quels degrés les loix de Lycurgue se sont altérées chez les Lacédémoniens jusqu'à ce qu'elles aient été anéanties* and the Abbé de Gourcy's *Histoire philosophique et politique de Lacédémone et des loix de Lycurgue*. These were both winning responses to an essay contest held in 1765 by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres on the causes of Sparta's decline.

⁶³ *Examen historique et politique du gouvernement de Sparte*, 1–5 and 5–20, respectively.

⁶⁴ 'M. de Mably a avancé...l'abolition des propriétés foncières, et l'institution de la communauté des biens'. 'Vous voyez...que la propriété foncière étoit incontestablement connue chez les Spartiates; et que leur Législateur n'avoit fait autre chose que d'y établir l'égalité', *Examen historique et politique du gouvernement de Sparte*, 5 and 14–15, respectively.

⁶⁵ 'Cet usage autorisé par la Loi...n'étoit pourtant qu'une espèce d'emprunt...', *Examen historique*, 16.

⁶⁶ The references to ancient sources given here use current citation systems rather than those employed by Vauvilliers.

⁶⁷ Plutarch *Lycurgus* 8.2–3 is cited in passing on p. 105 n. 55 and the consequences of a fixed number of lots are discussed on pp. 102–17.

⁶⁸ *Examen historique*, 129–30.

⁶⁹ Wright 1997, 80. See also Baker's comments on the political purposes of Mably's work (1990, 86–106).

⁷⁰ 'There is no point of comparison to be made between Sparta and the states which today divide the universe' ['Il n'y a point de comparaison à faire entre Sparte et les Etats qui divisent aujourd'hui l'Univers', *Examen historique*, 4].

⁷¹ 'Dans tout Etat où la propriété est une fois établie, il faut la regarder comme le fondement de l'ordre, de la paix, et de la sureté publique', *De la législation, ou principes des loix*, 121.

⁷² Dockès-Lallement 1996b, 248. Cf. the very similar comments in Parker 1937, 35.

⁷³ '...droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme. Ces droits sont la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté et la résistance à l'oppression' (<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/dudh/1789.asp>). The modified version of this document written in 1793 also lists four 'inalienable' rights: equality, liberty, security, and property.

⁷⁴ Rose 1984, 113. On the confiscation and redistribution of land during the French Revolution, see the just-cited article by Rose, as well as Forster 1985, Quinn 1985, and Scott 1985.

⁷⁵ See Parker 1937, 146–7.

⁷⁶ See *Oeuvres complètes*, v.210, as quoted in Rosso 2005, 441. On references to Sparta in debates about land reform during the French Revolution, see Rose 1984.

⁷⁷ The body of scholarship on the deployment of classical antiquity during the French Revolution continues to grow. Some of the more important pieces for those with a particular interest in Sparta include Mossé 1989, 87–131 and *passim*; Parker 1937, 146–70 and *passim*; Rawson 1969, 268–300; Rosso 2005, 423–73; and Vidal-Naquet 1995, 141–69. A valuable collection of articles can be found in Ganzin 1996.

⁷⁸ The table of contents to Theodore Woolsey's *Communism and Socialism* contains the following entry: 'Theories, in France, of Mably and Morelly. The same reduced to Practice in Babeuf's Conspiracy' (v). For the sources of Babeuf's ideas on property, see his own observations on the subject, from a speech delivered at his trial: Advielle 1884, ii.316. (Note that Babeuf believed that Diderot was the author of the writings circulating under the name of Morelly.) Babeuf also claimed Claude-Adrien Helvétius as an important source of inspiration for his ideas about land ownership. For a concise summary of the work of Helvétius (1715–1771), see Cranston 1987. For more specialized studies of his interest in the ancient world, see Grell 1995, i.483–6; Rawson 1969, 242–5; Rosso 2005, 482–6; as well as Mason's essay in this volume, Chapter 3. Helvétius characterized Spartans as happy due to their relative poverty and the equal distribution of land.

⁷⁹ For a concise introduction to Babeuf's life and work, see Daline 1985. On the Conspiracy of Equals, see Harkins 1985. For more detailed studies of Babeuf and his plot, see Rose 1978 and Sonenscher 2006. The account by one of his leading associates, Filippo Buonarroti, remains fundamental (Buonarroti 1828). It would appear that the title 'equals' was inspired by Rousseau, not by Sparta.

⁸⁰ Babeuf first used the name Gracchus in a letter dated May 7, 1793. In that letter he praises Robespierre as 'our Lycurgus' (Dommanget 1935, 144).

⁸¹ 'Qui sont les hommes que nous admirons le plus et que nous révérons comme

les plus grands bienfaiteurs de l'humanité? Les apôtres des lois agraires, Lycurgue chez les Grecs et à Rome, Camille, les Gracchus, Cassius, Brutus, etc.': quoted by Dommanget 1935, 129. Cf. the letter written in 1795 to Charles Germain (ibid. 207).

⁸² 'Certes, nous ne sommes pas les premiers que les puissants de la terre persécutent pour des motifs à peu près semblables. Socrate, combattant le fanatisme, but la coupe empoisonnée. Jésus le galiléen, prêchant aux hommes l'égalité, la haine des riches, la vérité et la justice, fut cloué vif à un poteau. Lycurgue s'exila pour éviter d'être sacrifié par ceux qu'il avait rendus heureux. Agis, le seul juste d'entre les rois, fut tué pour avoir fait exception à la règle. Les Gracques à Rome sont massacrés': see Advielle 1884, ii.13; cf. p. 47.

⁸³ 'Lycurgue surtout atteignit presque le but de la société, marqué par la nature', *Conspiration pour l'égalité dite de Babeuf*, i.220. On Buonarroti, see Eisenstein 1985.

⁸⁴ 'Dans l'antiquité, Minos, Platon, Lycurgue et le législateur des chrétiens; et dans les temps plus rapprochés de nous, Thomas Morus, Montesquieu et Mably', *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, i.9. Sylvain Maréchal, another prominent member of Babeuf's conspiracy, cited Moses, Minos, Lycurgus, Plato, and Rousseau as examples of legislators who founded their constitutions on communal ownership of goods, in an article in the newspaper *Révolutions de Paris* in May 1791: see Ioannisian 1984, 189. Maréchal also cited Lycurgus in his *Correctif à la Révolution* (1793) in order to prove that it was possible to compel people to renounce private property (230–1).

⁸⁵ On Fourier, see Goodwin 1987. On Owen, see Taylor 1987b. On Saint-Simon, see Taylor 1987c. On the early history of socialism, see Lindemann 1983, 1–85. On the early history of socialism in France in particular, see Becker and Candar 2004, i.1–131; Bruhat 1972–8; and Isambert 1905, 1–151.

⁸⁶ On Louis-Auguste Blanqui, see Taylor 1987a, with further bibliography.

⁸⁷ On the events of 1848–1852, see Agulhon 1983, with further bibliography. The second chapter of Agulhon's book bears the title, 'The Trial and Failure of a Kind of Socialism'.

⁸⁸ For a brief summary of the history of the Paris Commune, see Tombs 1996, 427–31. On the socialist elements in the Commune government, see Cole 1954, 134–73.

⁸⁹ From *Le Moniteur*, 30 Septembre 1794, quoted in Rosso 2005, 486: 'Sous prétexte de nous rendre Spartiates, il voulait faire de nous des hilotes et préparer le régime militaire qui n'est autre que celui de la tyrannie'. For discussion of the reputation of Sparta in France immediately after the Revolution, see Rawson 1969, 295–8. Compare Bernard Barère's comments on Antoine Saint-Just (quoted by Rawson).

⁹⁰ 'Ceux-ci voulaient la frugalité, la simplicité et la modestie des beaux jours de Sparte', *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, i.5–6. It is interesting to note that Sparta was also, for a brief period in the early nineteenth century, taken as a model by some members of the right-wing counter-revolution, who highlighted the militaristic aspects of Spartan society: see Rosso 2005, 490–1.

⁹¹ 'Il y avait en effet au fond de toutes ces institutions une idée divine, un but sacré, puisé dans la contemplation même de la Divinité. Cette idée, ce but, c'était l'établissement de la fraternité humaine, c'est-à-dire la vraie société des hommes', *De l'égalité* 133; for his overall discussion of Sparta, see pp. 131–6. On Leroux's life and work, see Bruhat 1972–8, 374–5; Leroy 1933, with further bibliography.

⁹² On Proudhon, see Vincent 1984.

⁹³ *Works of P. J. Proudhon*, i.324–5 ['Lycurgue, en un mot, chassa la propriété de Lacédémone, ne concevant pas que la liberté, l'égalité, la loi pussent être autrement consolidées... Il est remarquable que le plus ancien législateur de la Grèce...ait jugé le droit de propriété incompatible avec les institutions d'un État libre...'], *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*, 252].

⁹⁴ For an excellent overview of Cabet's life and work, and a list of the relevant bibliography, see the introduction to *Travels in Icaria*. For a full-length study, see Johnson 1974.

⁹⁵ 'Vous prétendez, adversaires de la Communauté, qu'elle n'a pour elle que quelques opinions sans crédit et sans poids... Je vais interroger devant vous l'Histoire et tous les Philosophes: écoutez!', *Voyage en Icarie*, 470. In the preface to the work, Cabet makes it clear that he takes the term *communauté* to mean something like 'a communal style of living based on *communauté des biens*'.

⁹⁶ 'Mais quel spectacle nous présente Lycurgue obtenant des riches l'abandon volontaire de leurs propriétés, partagent toutes les terres en 39,000 portions pour les 39,000 citoyens qui ne peuvent les aliéner, supprimant le luxe et la monnaie, établissent l'Égalité de fortune et d'éducation, même la *Communauté* d'usage ou de jouissance, de repas, d'éducation et presque de tout (845 ans avant J.-C.)! Et c'est le frère d'un Roi...qui établit ainsi l'Égalité et presque la Communauté!... Et cette organisation sociale et politique dure 500 ans, élevant Sparte au plus haut rang de puissance, de gloire et de prospérité, admirée de Xénophon, d'Aristote lui-même et de la Grèce entière', *Voyage en Icarie*, 470–1.

⁹⁷ 'Le jeune Roi...entreprend de Réformer la Patrie et d'y rétablir l'ancienne Constitution de Lycurgue, c'est-à-dire l'Égalité et la *Communauté* de [sic] biens', *Voyage en Icarie*, 471.

⁹⁸ *The Holy Family*, 177. On Dézamy's life and work, see Bruhat 1972–8, 394–5 and Tuminelli 1984.

⁹⁹ 'Tous les hommes vivront en frères... Rien n'appartient individuellement à personne', *Code de la communauté*, 264.

¹⁰⁰ 'Objection. – "Le communisme n'a pas de tradition historique; le système communautaire n'a jamais été en vigueur nulle part". "Maintenant, est-il besoin de prouver que jamais objection ne fut plus fautive et plus absurde, aussi bien en fait que dans les conséquences qu'on prétendrait en tirer? "Nous n'avons pas de tradition historique?" Mais qu'étaient-ce donc les Pythagore, les Protagore, les Zoroastre, les Moïse, les Minos, les Lycurgue, les Agis, les Cléomènes? Qu'étaient-ce que les Socrate, les Platon, les Epicure, les Zénon, les Confucius, les Plutarque, les Apollonius de Thyane, les Jésus? des communistes', *Code de la communauté*, 276–7.

¹⁰¹ I have provided basic biographical details for nineteenth-century French socialist writers, but not for their opponents, for two reasons. First, as pointed out in the introduction to this essay, it was critics of private property that set the tone of the debate. Second, the information supplied about socialist writers is sufficient to demonstrate that treatments of Spartan land tenure were crafted by individuals who were very political in every sense of the word.

¹⁰² 'Ce n'est pas la communauté des terres, c'est leur partage que Lycurgue avoit établi', *Histoire de la législation*, v.494.

¹⁰³ 'Maintenant, cherchons la place de la propriété au milieu de ces rudes institutions, dans lesquelles le citoyen est comme captif et tenaillé par des impulsions antinaturelles... La république, propriétaire éminente du sol, avait donné à chaque

citoyen une certaine quantité de terres dont il n'était qu'usufruitier. Une égalité nominale et apparente avait été établie par ce partage du territoire. Mais des inégalités réelles et nécessaires s'y étaient bientôt introduites par la nature des choses. On dit même que la fraude s'en était mêlée; car les terres ingrates ayant formé des lots, de même que les terres fertiles, ces lots, égaux en contenance, mais inférieurs en valeur, étaient échus aux gens du peuple par des procédés qu'Isocrate ne croit pas exempts de supercherie' ('Des républiques d'Athènes et de Sparte', 615).

¹⁰⁴ 'Le Communisme était appliqué à Lacédémone et dans l'île de Crète. Ces pays durent à cette législation leur honte, leur misère et leur décadence', *Histoire et réfutation du socialisme depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours*, 115.

¹⁰⁵ 'Les institutions communistes n'ont jamais été plus fortement établies que dans l'île de Crète et à Sparte, là par les lois de Minos, ici par celles de Lycurgue. Ce sont ces institutions qu'une aveugle admiration classique, aidée d'une complète ignorance des premiers principes d'économie politique, a longtemps consacrées comme un modèle de gouvernement républicain; fatale erreur qui n'a pas été étrangère aux malheurs de notre république de 1792', *Le vrai et le faux socialisme*, 42.

¹⁰⁶ 'Les plus anciens exemples de l'application des idées communistes que l'histoire présente à nos regards, sont les lois de l'île de Crète, attribuées à Minos, et celles de Lacédémone... Bien que les lois de Lycurgue n'aient pas complètement réalisé le système de la communauté, néanmoins elles lui ont fait une si large part, qu'on doit les considérer comme la source première de la plupart des utopies communistes. L'influence déplorable qu'ont exercée pendant tant de siècles les institutions d'une bourgade du Péloponèse, influence qui se continue encore de nos jours, nous détermine à consacrer quelques pages à leur appréciation', *Histoire du communisme ou réfutation historique des utopies socialistes*, 7. This popular work went through five editions in the next seven years. See also J. J. Thonissen, *Le socialisme depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à la constitution française du 14 Janvier, 1852*, i.21–40.

¹⁰⁷ This was another widely-read work; it went through five editions in the next fifty years and was translated into English, German, Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese.

¹⁰⁸ *History of Political Economy in Europe*, 25–6 ['Nous ne pensons pas qu'on ait hasardé en aucun pays du monde un système d'économie politique aussi extraordinaire que les lois de Lycurgue à Sparte. La règle la plus austère d'une communauté, les réformes les plus radicales décrétées par la Convention nationale, les utopies harmoniques des *Owenistes*, et, dans ces derniers temps, les prédications aventureuses du saint-simonisme n'ont rien qui puisse être comparé à ces lois, en fait de hardiesse et d'originalité... Elles passent pour avoir réalisé l'utopie d'un partage général des propriétés et d'une éducation commune à tous les citoyens', *Histoire de l'économie politique en Europe depuis les anciens jusqu'à nos jours*, i.35–6].

¹⁰⁹ A *phalanstère*, an invention of Charles Fourier, was a cooperative community of 1600 persons who shared property and possessions. It took its name and to some extent its inspiration from the ancient Greek phalanx.

¹¹⁰ 'D'où viennent les théories de Saint-Simon sur la famille, si ce n'est de la donnée de Lycurgue? Qu'est-ce que le phalanstère de Fourier, si ce n'est une variante des habitations communes de Sparte? Quelle est la source de la définition de la propriété donnée par Robespierre (moins pour l'expliquer que pour la détruire), si ce n'est l'organisation tyrannique de la propriété chez les Spartiates? Toutes ces nouveautés sont donc des redites intempestives et le plagiat décoloré de vieilleries

politiques dont on connaît la mauvaise fin' ('Des républiques d'Athènes et de Sparte', 626).

¹¹¹ 'C'est cette organisation de la propriété que Mably a eu le courage de représenter comme le beau idéal d'une société... Mably, esprit chagrin et sophistique, philosophe spéculatif, qui ne sut tirer de l'histoire que des rêveries ou des sarcasmes...' 'Philosophes et...politiques...sérieusement de revenir à ces systèmes bizarres et de pétrir la société à la guise de leur utopie' ('Des républiques d'Athènes et de Sparte', 620, 624–5).

¹¹² The single most valuable biographical treatment of Coulanges is that written by his student Paul Guiraud. Other significant studies include Hartog 2001; Herrick 1954; Momigliano 1994, 162–78; and Tourneur-Aumont 1931. For a full listing of the relevant bibliography, see Mazza 2001, 199–200.

¹¹³ *The Ancient City*, 53 ['Il y a trois choses que, dès l'âge le plus ancien, on trouve fondées et solidement établies dans ces sociétés grecques et italiennes: la religion domestique, la famille, le droit de propriété; trois choses qui ont eu entre elles, à l'origine, un rapport manifeste, et qui paraissent avoir été inseparables', *La cité antique*, 69].

¹¹⁴ *La cité antique*, 7–82.

¹¹⁵ *The Ancient City*, 52 ['On sait qu'il y a des races qui ne sont jamais arrivées à établir chez elles la propriété privée; d'autres n'y sont parvenues qu'à la longue et péniblement. Ce n'est pas en effet un facile problème, à l'origine des sociétés, de savoir si l'individu peut s'approprier le sol et établir un tel lien entre son être et une part de terre... Chez les anciens Germains la terre n'appartenait à personne; chaque année la tribu assignait à chacun de ses membres un lot à cultiver, et on changeait de lot l'année suivante... Au contraire, les populations de la Grèce et de l'Italie, dès l'antiquité la plus haute, ont toujours connu et pratiqué la propriété privée. On ne trouve pas une époque où la terre ait été commune...', *La cité antique*, 67–8]. Coulanges here implicitly refers to the work of G. L. von Maurer who in 1854 had published an influential study of early German property regimes (*Einleitung zur Geschichte der Mark-, Hof-, Dorf- und Stadt-Verfassung und der öffentlichen Gewalt*). As we will see, by 1889 Coulanges had decided that von Maurer was wrong about early German landholding practices.

¹¹⁶ 'Un apôtre de la science' (Guiraud 1896, 93). This is Guiraud's wording based on repeated conversations on the subject with Coulanges.

¹¹⁷ 'Nos historiens, depuis cinquante ans, ont été des hommes de parti. Si sincères qu'ils fussent, si impartiaux qu'ils crussent être, ils obéissaient à l'une ou à l'autre des opinions politiques qui nous divisent' ('De la manière d'écrire l'histoire en France et en Allemagne depuis cinquante ans', 243).

¹¹⁸ Guiraud states that in a discussion of his work on the origins of French political institutions, Coulanges said, 'Be certain...that what I wrote in my book is the truth' ['Soyez sûr...que ce que j'ai écrit dans mon livre est la vérité']. Coulanges described his approach to writing history in a letter to M. Geffroy, 'No generalization, no false philosophy, no or few overviews, no or few frameworks, but some topics studied in the greatest detail and on the basis of the sources' ['Nulle généralisation, nulle fausse philosophie, pas ou peu de vues d'ensemble, pas ou peu de cadres, mais quelques sujets étudiés dans le plus grand détail et sur les textes']: Guiraud 1896, 133 and 96, respectively.

¹¹⁹ '...avait, tout comme un autre, ses préférences politiques, mais il n'en laissait rien transpirer dans ses livres...': Guiraud 1896, 175–6.

¹²⁰ For Coulanges' enduring interest in property, see Guiraud 1896, 219–34. Guiraud points out that at the Sorbonne Coulanges successively taught courses on property in Greece, in Rome, and in Frankish Gaul.

¹²¹ Coulanges was in and around Paris during this period and witnessed much of the short history of the Commune first-hand. He was asked by Adolphe Thiers, who played a major role in the suppression of the Commune, to write a history of the Franco-Prussian war and made some progress to that end; but he gave the project up when he decided that the war was the fault of Bismarck and not, as Thiers believed, of Napoleon III (Guiraud 1896, 176–7).

¹²² '[La nation] garantit aux propriétaires la jouissance de leur propriété, aux commerçants la paix publique, aux travailleurs, soit patrons, soit ouvriers, la liberté des contrats, la liberté d'association et la sécurité. Elle ne favorise ni les riches contre les pauvres, ni les pauvres contre les riches. A celui qui possède, elle assure la conservation de son bien; à celui qui ne possède pas, elle assure les moyens d'acquérir légitimement...' (as quoted in Guiraud 1896, 75–6). The introduction to the quote (in square brackets) is taken from Guiraud's work.

¹²³ '[Cette cour de justice aurait pour mission de conserver] ce qui ne doit ni périr ni être modifié, ce qui est au-dessus du caprice des peuples et du jeu des révolutions, le droit, c'est-à-dire le respect de la vie, de la propriété, de la liberté et de la conscience d'autrui' (as quoted in Guiraud 1896, 80). The introduction to the quote (in square brackets) is taken from Guiraud.

¹²⁴ 'Tout le poids des impôts retombera sur les propriétaires et les rentiers; mais ceux-ci auront en échange des prérogatives considérables pour tout ce qui a trait aux finances de l'État; ce sont eux qui alimenteront le Trésor, et ce sont eux qui en auront la gestion. En outre, la richesse sera soustraite aux convoitises du socialisme, et l'impôt ne risquera pas d'être détourné de son affectation normale pour servir, comme certains le voudraient, à niveler les fortunes' (as quoted in Guiraud 1896, 77–8).

¹²⁵ For the basic narrative, see Guiraud 1896, 49–85, 112–44. For more detailed analyses of Coulanges' activity starting in the 1870s, see Hartog 2001, 54–102 and Mazza 2001. His body of scholarship on the relationship between France and Germany helped make Coulanges into something of a hero among members of Action Française, a far-right nationalist and monarchist political movement founded at the end of the nineteenth century. The attempt to make Coulanges posthumously into a rabid nationalist was strongly opposed by his family and friends: Hartog 2001, 160–215.

¹²⁶ *The Ancient City*, 1 ['L'idée que l'on s'est faite de la Grèce et de Rome a souvent troublé nos générations. Pour avoir mal observé les institutions de la cité ancienne, on a imaginé de les faire revivre chez nous. On s'est fait illusion sur la liberté chez les anciens, et pour cela seul la liberté chez les modernes a été mise en péril. Nos quatre-vingts dernières années ont montré clairement que l'une des grandes difficultés qui s'opposent à la marche de la société moderne, est l'habitude qu'elle a prise d'avoir toujours l'antiquité grecque et romaine devant les yeux', *La cité antique*, 2].

¹²⁷ *The Ancient City*, 55 ['Il est résulté de ces vieilles règles religieuses que la vie en communauté n'a jamais pu s'établir chez les anciens. Le phalanstère n'y a jamais été connu', *La cité antique*, 72].

¹²⁸ *The Ancient City*, 336 ['Les déclamations de quelques anciens et de beaucoup de modernes sur la sagesse des institutions de Sparte, sur le bonheur inaltérable dont on y jouissait, sur l'égalité, sur la vie en commun, ne doivent pas nous faire illusion. De

toutes les villes qu'il y a eu sur la terre, Sparte est peut-être celle où l'aristocratie a régné le plus durement et où l'on a le moins connu l'égalité. Il ne faut pas parler du partage des terres; si ce partage a jamais eu lieu, du moins il est bien sûr qu'il n'a pas été maintenu', *La cité antique*, 451].

¹²⁹ *The Ancient City*, 336 ['Il est digne de remarque que ni Agis ni Cléomène n'avaient qu'ils faisaient une révolution, et que tous les deux, s'autorisant du nom du vieux législateur Lycurgue, prétendaient ramener Sparte aux antiques coutumes', *La cité antique*, 457].

¹³⁰ *La cité antique*, 282.

¹³¹ *The Ancient City*, 338 ['Une aristocratie, composée de quelque riches, faisait peser un joug de fer sur les Hilotes, sur les Laconiens, et même sur les plus grand nombre des Spartiates. Par son énergie, par son habilité, par son peu de scrupule et son peu de souci des lois morales, elle sut garder le pouvoir pendant cinq siècles. Mais elle suscita de cruelles haines et eut à réprimer un grand nombre d'insurrections', *La cité antique*, 453].

¹³² *The Ancient City*, 340 ['On y voit un amour effréné de la richesse, tout mis au-dessous d'elle; chez quelque-uns, le luxe, la mollesse, le désir d'augmenter sans fin leur fortune; hors de là, rien qu'une tourbe misérable, indigente, sans droits politiques, sans aucune valeur dans la cité, envieuse, haineuse, et qu'un tel état social condamnait à désirer une révolution', *La cité antique*, 456].

¹³³ *La cité antique*, 457.

¹³⁴ It is ironic that Coulanges had a difficult time finding a publisher for *La cité antique* and ultimately had to pay for the first printing himself, 1843 francs on an installment plan for 600 copies: see Tourneur-Aumont 1931, 27–8. Coulanges made minor revisions, particularly in the seventh edition (1879), but his views on Sparta as expressed in *La cité antique* did not change in any noticeable way.

¹³⁵ The fullest biographical treatment of Laveleye can be found in Goblet d'Alviella 1895. Also valuable are Mahaim 1892 and 1930–5. Laveleye was as much what today is called a public intellectual as an academic. A former student who wrote an obituary notice described him as 'the brilliant publicist, the prolific writer' ['le brillant publiciste, l'écrivain fécond'] and observed that, despite the fact that he took up an academic post in the 1860s, 'Émile de Laveleye remained a writer rather than a professor' ['est resté plutôt écrivain que professeur'] (Mahaim 1892, 93; 95–6). Laveleye published more than 300 books and articles. On Viollet and his work, see Delaborde 1918.

¹³⁶ 'Caractère collectif des premières propriétés immobilières'. The two men had no prior knowledge of each other's research (ibid. 455 n. 1), and Viollet, who saw Laveleye's work shortly before his own article went to print, decided to proceed with publication only after some hesitation.

¹³⁷ Turgot's discussion of his stage theory appeared in the first part of *Plan de deux discours sur l'histoire universelle*, an unfinished manuscript that was probably written in the early 1750s and was published only after Turgot's death in 1781. For the French text, see his *Oeuvres*, ii.203–352; for an English translation, see *Turgot on Progress, Sociology, and Economics*. Smith's ideas on stage theories are known primarily through notes taken by students during a series of lectures on jurisprudence that he delivered in 1762–3. (The notes were found at Oxford in 1896.) For the text, see *Lectures on Jurisprudence*. On stage theories, see Hoselitz 1960; Meek 1976, 1–130.

¹³⁸ *Primitive Property*, 3–4 ['C'est seulement par une série des progrès successifs, et à une époque relativement récente, que s'est constituée la propriété individuelle

appliquée à la terre. Tant que l'homme primitif vit de la chasse, de la pêche et de la cueillette des fruits sauvages, il ne songe pas à s'approprier la terre... Sous le régime pastoral, la notion de la propriété foncière commence à poindre; toutefois, elle s'attache seulement à l'espace que les troupeaux de chaque tribu parcourent habituellement... Peu à peu une partie de la terre est momentanément mise en culture, et le régime agricole s'établit; mais le territoire que le clan ou la tribu occupe demeure sa propriété indivise. La terre arable, le pâturage et la forêt sont exploités en commun. Plus tard, la terre cultivée est divisée en lots, répartis entre les familles par la voie du sort... Le fonds continue à rester la propriété collective du clan, à qui il fait retour de temps en temps, afin qu'on puisse procéder à un nouveau partage. C'est le système en vigueur aujourd'hui dans la commune russe; c'était, au temps de Tacite, celui de la tribu germanique. Par un nouveau progrès de l'individualisation, les parts restent aux mains des groupes de familles patriarcales occupant la même demeure et travaillant ensemble pour l'avantage de l'association, comme en Italie et en France au moyen âge, et en Serbie actuellement. Enfin apparaît la propriété individuelle et héréditaire; mais elle est encore engagée dans les milles entraves des droits suzerains...', *De la propriété*, 4–5]. I have chosen to use a pre-existing English translation of Laveleye's *De la propriété*, one produced during his lifetime and with his cooperation. However, the English version does not correspond precisely to any of the French editions. The closest match seems to be to the first French edition, to which reference is made here. All passages provided here in English and French have been checked to make certain that they correspond in terms of wording (and hence do not draw from places where Laveleye or his translator made significant changes to the French text when producing the English edition).

¹³⁹ Laveleye was not the first to argue that communal property regimes existed in early agricultural societies. G. L. von Maurer had made just that argument for Germany. Other scholars had made similar claims for other, specific societies. In 1861 Sir Henry Maine published an influential work titled *Ancient Law*, which contains his famous characterization of human history as being a matter of movement from status to contract. Maine seems to have been the first to argue that in all human societies, even in those societies in which agriculture was the dominant mode of subsistence, land was originally owned by communities. Maine did not, however, expend a great deal of energy on this problem and did not undertake the large-scale cross-cultural research necessary to test this idea. That task was carried out by Laveleye. Ironically, Maine and Laveleye had very different perspectives about the significance of their evolutionist view of property ownership. Maine drew the conclusion that progress consisted of the movement from status to contract and from communal to private ownership. Laveleye drew the conclusion that progress lay in a return to earlier, more benign forms of economic organization.

¹⁴⁰ *Primitive Property*, 6 ['Dès les premiers temps de leur annales, les Grecs et les Romains connaissent la propriété privée appliquée à la terre, et les traces de l'antique communauté du clan étaient déjà si effacées qu'il faut une étude attentive pour les retrouver', *De la propriété*, 7].

¹⁴¹ *Primitive Property*, 137–8 ['Certains auteurs, comme Lange et M. Fustel de Coulanges, pensent que les Grecs et les Romains n'ont point traversé cette époque primitive où la terre était possédée en commun par la tribu ou le village... Dans son beau livre, *La cité antique*, M. Fustel de Coulanges admet chez les Romains l'existence

de la co-propriété de la famille: mais il ne trouve, ni en Grèce ni à Rome, la propriété collective de la tribu... Il serait très-singulier que ces peuples seuls n'eussent point passé par un régime qui, comme nous le verrons, a existé primitivement chez toutes les races. Je crois qu'après la lumineuse dissertation de M. Paul Viollet, sur le *caractère collectif des premières propriétés immobilières*, il est impossible d'admettre l'opinion de M. Fustel de Coulanges', *De la propriété*, 145–6].

¹⁴² *Primitive Property*, 142 ['les poètes anciens, ici comme en bien d'autres points, peignent un ancien état de civilisation dont le souvenir s'était perpétué', *De la propriété*, 152].

¹⁴³ *De la propriété*, 145–75.

¹⁴⁴ *Primitive Property*, 159 ['à l'époque où elle apparaît dans l'histoire, était déjà sortie du régime de la communauté primitive. Elle était arrivée, semble-t-il, au régime du domaine collectif de la *gens*, du clan', *De la propriété*, 177].

¹⁴⁵ *De la propriété*, 177–81. He very briefly touches on Agis' attempts at reform, but does not refer to Plutarch *Agis* 7.2–3, presumably because he was primarily interested in communal ownership of land, which is the focus of *Lycurgus* 16.1.

¹⁴⁶ *Primitive Property*, 160 ['Sparte avait un domaine communal très-étendu dont le produit servait à subvenir, en partie, à la consommation des repas publics', *De la propriété*, 179].

¹⁴⁷ In one of his later works, Coulanges points out this problem (*Étude sur la propriété à Sparte*, 7 n. 1).

¹⁴⁸ In 1875 Laveleye wrote that, 'the lasting triumph of a violent socialist revolution is impossible' ['le triomphe durable d'une révolution socialiste violente est impossible'; quoted by Goblet d'Alviella 1895, 110].

¹⁴⁹ *Primitive Property*, xxvi–ii ['Ou vous établirez un partage plus équitable des biens et des produits, ou la démocratie aboutira fatalement au despotisme et à la décadence, à travers une série de luttes sociales dont les horreurs commises à Paris en 1871 peuvent donner un avant-goût', *De la propriété*, v].

¹⁵⁰ *De la propriété*, iii–xxiv.

¹⁵¹ On Coulanges' penchant for polemic, see Guiraud 1896, 145–59 and Tournier-Aumont 1931, 20–34.

¹⁵² The lectures were published three times in journals, twice as a stand-alone monograph, and once as part of a collection of Coulanges' essays. The details are as follows:

– *Séances et travaux de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques* (Volume 113: May, 1880, pp. 617–52; June 1880, pp. 834–59 and Volume 114: July–August 1880, pp. 181–203);

– *Journal des Savants* (February 1880, pp. 96–111; March 1880, pp. 129–42; April 1880, pp. 232–46) (where they were given the title 'Du droit de propriété à Sparte' and in which the text, otherwise identical, was divided into seven rather than eight sections);

– *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques* (Volume 16: 1888, pp. 835–930);

– *Étude sur la propriété à Sparte* (Paris: Picard, 1880) (extracted from *Séances et travaux*);

– *Étude sur la propriété à Sparte* (Paris: Didot, 1888) (extracted from *Mémoires de l'Académie*);

– *Nouvelles recherches sur quelques problèmes d'histoire* (Paris: Hachette, 1891), pp. 55–114.

The version in *Journal des Savants* is set up as a review of the 1879 edition of Laveleye's *De la propriété*. The page citations given here are based on the 1880 Picard edition.

¹⁵³ *Étude sur la propriété à Sparte*, 4–14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 14–17.

¹⁵⁵ L'obéissance du citoyen à l'État, ce n'était pas le communisme. Le législateur de Sparte, quel qu'il fût, avait beaucoup moins songé à l'égalité qu'à la discipline, et l'erreur des écrivains qui sont venus plus tard a été de confondre cette discipline avec une égalité ou une communauté imaginaire. La discipline lacédémonienne n'empêchait ni la vie privée, ni la propriété individuelle, ni le luxe intérieur, ni l'inégalité des fortunes', *ibid.* 35–6.

¹⁵⁶ Tourneur-Aumont 1931, 99.

¹⁵⁷ Viollet participated in this debate. On 9 August 1886 he published a review of Coulanges' recent work, and wrote an essay on land tenure in early Germany, in which he questioned some of Coulanges' conclusions ('Review of Fustel de Coulanges, *Recherches sur quelques problèmes d'histoire* and "Étude sur le titre *De Migrantibus de la loi Salique*"'). Coulanges responded with a tart rebuttal published on October 11 of the same year ('Réponse de M. Fustel de Coulanges à l'article de M. Paul Viollet du 9 août'). Attached to Coulanges' rebuttal was a reply by Viollet ('Observations de M. Paul Viollet').

¹⁵⁸ See in particular the introduction to the fourth French edition (viii–xi). A listing of Laveleye's published work can be found in Goblet d'Alviella 1895, 229–41.

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, 'Observations sur un ouvrage de M. Émile de Laveleye intitulé "La propriété collective du sol en divers pays"'.
¹⁶⁰ This essay also appeared as a monograph in 1889 and was reprinted in a collection of Coulanges' essays, *Questions historiques*, in 1893.

¹⁶¹ *The Origin of Property in Land*, 1 ['Il est clair que, quand les hommes étaient chasseurs ou pasteurs et n'avaient pas encore l'idée de labourer, ils n'avaient non plus l'idée de s'approprier le sol', ('Le problème des origines de la propriété foncière', 349)].

¹⁶² *The Origin of Property*, 2 ['Le régime agricole aurait été d'abord le communisme agraire' ('Le problème des origines', 349)].

¹⁶³ *The Origin of Property*, 3 ['Je ne veux combattre la théorie. Je veux seulement examiner les textes sur lesquels on l'appuie. Je vais donc simplement prendre tous ces textes, tels que les auteurs du système les présentent, et je les vérifierai', ('Le problème des origines', 350)].

¹⁶⁴ *The Origin of Property*, 149 ['Concluons-nous de tout ce qui précède qu'il n'y eut jamais nulle part aucune communauté de terre? Nullement. Une négation si absolue dépasserait le but de notre travail. Nous concluons seulement de cette longue vérification des textes qu'on a cités, que cette communauté des terres n'a pas encore été démontrée historiquement', ('Le problème des origines', 437)].

¹⁶⁵ Je ne fais aucune objection contre les préférences que marque M. de Laveleye pour la propriété collective dans l'avenir. C'est avec beaucoup d'élévation d'esprit et un sentiment très généreux qu'il vante les avantages d'un régime où chacun aurait sa part de sol. Contre cela je n'ai rien à dire, n'ayant moi-même aucune doctrine. Je ne veux songer qu'au passé. La question historique est la seule qui m'occupe', ('Observations sur un ouvrage de M. Émile de Laveleye intitulé "La propriété collective du sol en divers pays"', 273–4).

¹⁶⁶ *The Origin of Property*, 150–1 ['Nous ne prétendons qu'il soit interdit de croire à une communauté primitive. Ce que nous disons, c'est qu'on fait une tentative malheureuse en voulant appuyer cette théorie sur des textes historiques. C'est ce vêtement d'érudition fausse que nous rejetons. Pour la théorie elle-même, il y a une nature d'esprits qui y croira toujours. Parmi les idées courantes qui sont maîtresses du cerveau humain, il est une que J.-J. Rousseau y a mise, à savoir que la propriété est contre nature, et que ce qui est naturel est la communauté. Cette idée règne, même chez les érudits qui lui obéissent sans s'en apercevoir. Les esprits qui sont dominés par elle n'admettront jamais que la propriété puisse être un fait primordial, contemporain des premières cultures, naturel à l'homme, engendré par les intérêts instinctivement conçus, en rapport étroit avec la constitution primitive de la famille. Ceux-là aimeront toujours mieux supposer que la communauté a dû exister d'abord. Ce sera pour eux une conviction, une foi que rien n'ébranlera; et ils sauront toujours plier quelques textes à cette conviction et à cette foi. Mais un petit nombre d'esprits, plus doués de sens critique et historique, continueront à douter de ce qui n'a pas été démontré' ('Le problème des origines de la propriété foncière', 437–8)].

¹⁶⁷ Rosso 2005, 482.

¹⁶⁸ 'Comment oublier...ce beau travail sur la propriété à Sparte, qui a réduit à néant la légende communiste dont nous avons été bercés autrefois, et ramené à leur juste valeur les déclamations des Morelly, des Mably, des Rousseau et des Babeuf sur le brouet noir et sur l'austérité des mœurs lacédémoniennes...' (Passy 1889, 870).

¹⁶⁹ 'Ces deux points sont aujourd'hui admis par tous' (Mahaim 1892, 100).

¹⁷⁰ Hodgkinson 1986.

¹⁷¹ Bloch 1983, 1–20, 43–62.

¹⁷² The exception that perhaps proves the rule is Stephen Hodgkinson, who has made fundamental contributions both to current scholarly views on the Spartan property regime and to re-contextualizing earlier scholarship on that subject: see, for instance, Hodgkinson 2000 and 2007.

¹⁷³ Isager and Skydsgaard 1992, 120–1.

¹⁷⁴ 'Les Grecs ont-ils commencé par la propriété collective?', *La propriété foncière en Grèce jusqu'à la conquête romaine*, 1.

¹⁷⁵ *La propriété foncière*, 21–3.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 41–4, 609–13.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 53–4.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 609–11. I did not in my reading of the text see any other references, implicit or explicit, to *Agis* 7.2–3. Guiraud cites other sections of *Agis* 7 in regard to the general situation in third-century BCE Sparta and the ownership of property by Spartan women (pp. 400–4).

¹⁷⁹ 'La Grèce a péri par le socialisme agraire', *La propriété foncière*, 636.

¹⁸⁰ 'Origine de la propriété en Grèce: A propos de l'ouvrage de M. Paul Guiraud "La propriété foncière en Grèce"'. On Lafargue's life and work, see Derfler 1991, with further bibliography.

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