

# Agesilaus

Xenophon



## AGESILAUS

I know how difficult it is to write an appreciation of Agesilaus that shall be worthy of his virtue and glory. Nevertheless the attempt must be made. For it would not be seemly that so good a man, just because of his perfection, should receive no tributes of praise, however inadequate.

Now concerning his high birth what greater and nobler could be said than this, that even to-day the line of his descent from Heracles is traced through the roll of his ancestors, and those no simple citizens, but kings and sons of kings?

Nor are they open to the reproach that though they were kings, they ruled over a petty state. On the contrary, as their family is honoured above all in their fatherland, so is their state glorious above all in Greece; thus they are not first in the second rank, but leaders in a community of leaders.

On one account his fatherland and his family are worthy to be praised together, for never at any time has the state been moved by jealousy of their pre-eminence to attempt the overthrow of their government, and never at any time have the kings striven to obtain greater powers than were conferred on them originally at their succession to the throne. For this reason, while no other government — democracy, oligarchy, despotism or kingdom — can lay claim to an unbroken existence, this kingdom alone stands fast continually.

However, there are not wanting signs that even before his reign began Agesilaus was deemed worthy to be king. For on the death of King Agis there was a struggle for the throne between Leotychidas, as the son of Agis, and Agesilaus, as the son of Archidamus. The state decided in favour of Agesilaus, judging him to be the more eligible in point of birth and character alike. Surely to have been pronounced worthy of the highest privilege by the best men in the mightiest state is proof sufficient of his virtue, at least before he began to reign.

I will now give an account of the achievements of his reign, for I believe that his deeds will throw the clearest light on his qualities. Now Agesilaus was still a young man when he gained the throne. He had been but a short time in power when the news leaked out that the king of the Persians was assembling a

great navy and army for an attack on the Greeks.

While the Lacedaemonians and their allies were considering the matter, Agesilaus declared, that if they would give him thirty Spartans, two thousand newly enrolled citizens, and a contingent of six thousand allies, he would cross to Asia and try to effect a peace, or, in case the barbarian wanted to fight, would keep him so busy that he would have no time for an attack on the Greeks.

His eagerness to pay back the Persian in his own coin for the former invasion of Greece, his determination to wage an offensive rather than a defensive war, and his wish to make the enemy pay for it rather than the Greeks, were enough to arouse an immediate and widespread enthusiasm for his project. But what appealed most to the imagination was the idea of entering on a struggle not to save Greece, but to subdue Asia.

And what of his strategy after he had received the army and had sailed out? A simple narrative of his actions will assuredly convey the clearest impression of it.

This, then, was his first act in Asia. Tissaphernes had sworn the following oath to Agesilaus: "If you will arrange an armistice to last until the return of the messengers whom I will send to the King, I will do my utmost to obtain independence for the Greek cities in Asia"; and Agesilaus on his part had sworn to observe the armistice honestly, allowing three months for the transaction. What followed?

Tissaphernes forthwith broke his oath, and instead of arranging a peace, applied to the King for a large army in addition to that which he had before. As for Agesilaus, though well aware of this, he none the less continued to keep the armistice.

I think, therefore, that here we have his first noble achievement. By showing up Tissaphernes as a perjurer, he made him distrusted everywhere; and, contrariwise, by proving himself to be a man of his word and true to his agreements, he encouraged all, Greeks and barbarians alike, to enter into an agreement with him whenever he wished it.

The arrival of the new army emboldened Tissaphernes to send an ultimatum to Agesilaus, threatening war unless he withdrew from Asia; and the allies and the Lacedaemonians present made no concealment of their

chagrin, believing that the strength of Agesilaus was weaker than the Persian king's armament. But Agesilaus with a beaming face bade the envoys of Tissaphernes inform their master that he was profoundly grateful to him for his perjury, by which he had gained the hostility of the gods for himself and had made them allies of the Greeks.

Without a moment's delay he gave the word to his troops to pack up in preparation for a campaign, and warned the cities that lay on the lines of march to Caria to have their markets ready stocked. He advised by letter the Greeks of Ionia, the Aeolid and the Hellespont, to send their contingents for the campaign to his headquarters at Ephesus.

Now Tissaphernes reflected that Agesilaus was without cavalry, while Caria was a difficult country for mounted men, and he thought that Agesilaus was wroth with him on account of his deceit. Concluding, therefore, that his estate in Caria was the real object of the coming attack, he sent the whole of his infantry across to that district and took his cavalry round into the plain of the Maeander, confident that he could ride down the Greeks before they reached the country where cavalry could not operate.

But instead of marching on Caria, Agesilaus forthwith turned round and made for Phrygia. Picking up the various forces that met him on the route, he proceeded to reduce the cities and captured a vast quantity of booty by sudden attacks.

This achievement also was thought to be a proof of sound generalship, that when war was declared and cozening in consequence became righteous and fair dealing, he showed Tissaphernes to be a child at deception. It was thought, too, that he made shrewd use of this occasion to enrich his friends.

For the accumulation of plunder was so great that things were selling for next to nothing. So he gave his friends the word to buy, saying that he was shortly going down to the coast with his army. The auctioneers were ordered to have a schedule made of the prices obtained and to give delivery of the goods. Thus without capital outlay, and without any loss to the treasury, all his friends made a prodigious amount of money.

Further, whenever deserters offered to give information where plunder might be taken, they naturally went to the king. In such a case he took care that the capture should be effected by his friends, so that they might at one

and the same time make money and add to their laurels. The immediate result was that he had many ardent suitors for his friendship.

Recognizing that a country plundered and depopulated could not long support an army, whereas an inhabited and cultivated land would yield inexhaustible supplies, he took pains not only to crush his enemies by force, but also to win them over by gentleness.

He would often warn his men not to punish their prisoners as criminals, but to guard them as human beings; and often when shifting camp, if he noticed little children, the property of merchants, left behind — many merchants offered children for sale because they thought they would not be able to carry and feed them — he looked after them too, and had them conveyed to some place of refuge.

Again, he arranged that prisoners of war who were too old to accompany the army were to be looked after, that they might not fall a prey to dogs or wolves. It thus came about that he won the goodwill not only of those who heard of these facts, but even of the prisoners themselves. In his settlement with the cities that he won over, he invariably excused them from all servile duties and required only such obedience as freemen owe to their rules; and by his clemency he made himself master of fortresses impregnable to assault.

However, since a campaign in the plains was impossible even in Phrygia, owing to Pharnabazus' cavalry, he decided that he must raise a mounted force, if he was to avoid continually running away from the enemy. He therefore enrolled the wealthiest men in all the cities thereabouts as breeders of horses, and issued a proclamation that

anyone who supplied a horse and arms and an efficient man should be exempt from personal service. In this way he brought it about that every one of them carried out these requirements with the zeal of a man in quest of someone to die in his stead. He also specified cities that were to furnish contingents of cavalry, feeling sure that from the horsebreeding cities riders proud of their horsemanship would be forthcoming. This again was considered an admirable stroke on his part, that no sooner had he raised his cavalry than it became a powerful body ready for action.

At the first sign of spring he collected the whole of his forces at Ephesus. With a view to their training he offered prizes for the cavalry squadron that

rode best, and for the company of heavy infantry that reached the highest level of physical fitness. He also offered prizes to the targeteers and the archers who showed the greatest efficiency in their particular duties. Thereupon one might see every gymnasium crowded with the men exercising, the racecourse thronged with cavalymen riding, and the javelin-men and archers shooting at the mark.

Indeed he made the whole city in which he was quartered a sight to see. For the market was full of arms and horses of all sorts on sale, and the coppersmiths, carpenters, workers in iron, cobblers, and painters were all busy making weapons of war, so that you might have thought that the city was really a war factory.

And an inspiring sight it would have been to watch Agesilaus and all his soldiers behind him returning garlanded from the gymnasium and dedicating their garlands to Artemis. For where men reverence the gods, train themselves in warfare and practise obedience, there you surely find high hopes abounding.

Moreover, believing that contempt for the enemy would kindle the fighting spirit, he gave instructions to his heralds that the barbarians captured in the raids should be exposed for sale naked. So when his soldiers saw them white because they never stripped, and fat and lazy through constant riding in carriages, they believed that the war would be exactly like fighting with women. He also gave notice to the troops that he would immediately lead them by the shortest route to the most fertile parts of the country, so that he might at once find them preparing themselves in body and mind for the coming struggle.

Tissaphernes, however, believed that in saying this he meant to deceive him again, and that now he would really invade Caria. Accordingly he sent his infantry across into Caria as before, and stationed his cavalry in the plain of the Maeander. But Agesilaus did not play false: in accordance with his notice he marched straight to the neighbourhood of Sardis; and for three days his route lay through a country bare of enemies, so that he supplied his army with abundance of provisions.

On the fourth day the enemy's cavalry came up. Their leader told the officer in command of the baggage-train to cross the river Pactolus and

encamp. The cavalry, meantime, catching sight of the Greek camp-followers plundering in scattered bands, killed a large number of them. On noticing this, Agesilaus ordered his cavalry to go to their help. The Persians in turn, seeing the supports coming, gathered in a mass and confronted them with the full strength of their horse.

Then Agesilaus, realising that the enemy's infantry was not yet up, while he had all his resources on the spot, thought the moment was come to join battle if he could. Therefore, after offering sacrifice, he led forward the battle line immediately against the opposing cavalry, the heavy infantrymen of ten years service having orders to run to close quarters with the enemy, while the targeteers were to lead the advance at the double. He also sent word to the cavalry to attack in the knowledge that he himself was following with the whole army.

The charge of the cavalry was met by the flower of the Persians: but as soon as the full weight of the attack fell on them, they swayed, and some were cut down immediately in the river, while the rest fled. The Greeks followed up their success and captured their camp. The targeteers naturally fell to pillaging; but Agesilaus drew the lines of his camp round so as to enclose the property of all, friends and foes alike.

On hearing that there was confusion among the enemy, because everyone put the blame for what had happened on his neighbour, he advanced forthwith on Sardis. There he began burning and pillaging the suburbs, and meantime issued a proclamation calling on those who wanted freedom to join his standard, and challenging any who claimed a right to Asia to seek a decision between themselves and the liberators by an appeal to arms.

As no one came out to oppose him, he prosecuted the campaign henceforward in complete confidence: he beheld the Greeks, compelled erstwhile to cringe, now honoured by their oppressors; caused those who arrogantly claimed for themselves the honours paid to the gods to shrink even from looking the Greeks in the face; rendered the country of his friends inviolate, and stripped the enemy's country so thoroughly that in two years he consecrated to the god at Delphi more than two hundred talents as tithe.

But the Persian king, believing that Tissaphernes was responsible for the bad turn in his affairs, sent down Tithraustes and beheaded Tissaphernes.

After this the outlook became still more hopeless for the barbarians, while Agesilaus received large accessions of strength. For all the nations of the empire sent embassies seeking his friendship, and the desire for freedom caused many to revolt to him, so that not Greeks alone, but many barbarians also now acknowledged the leadership of Agesilaus.

His conduct at this juncture also merits unstinted admiration. Though ruler of countless cities on the mainland, and master of islands — for the state had now added the fleet to his command — becoming daily more famous and more powerful; placed in a position to make what use he would of his many opportunities; and designing and expecting to crown his achievements by dissolving the empire that had attacked Greece in the past: he suppressed all thought of these things, and as soon as he received a request from the home government to come to the aid of his fatherland, he obeyed the call of the state, just as though he were standing in the Ephor's palace alone before the Five, thus showing clearly that he would not take the whole earth in exchange for his fatherland, nor new-found friends for old, and that he scorned to choose base and secure gains rather than that which was right and honourable, even though it was dangerous.

Throughout the time that he remained in his command, another achievement of his showed beyond question how admirable was his skill in kingcraft. Having found all the cities that he had gone out to govern rent by faction in consequence of the political disturbances that followed on the collapse of the Athenian empire, he brought it about by the influence of his presence that the communities lived in unbroken harmony and prosperity without recourse to banishment or executions.

Therefore the Greeks in Asia mourned his departure as though they were bidding farewell not merely to a ruler, but to a father or a comrade. And at the end they showed that their affection was unfeigned. At any rate they went with him voluntarily to aid Sparta, knowing as they did that they must meet an enemy not inferior to themselves. This then was the end of his activities in Asia.

After crossing the Hellespont, he passed through the very same tribes as the Persian king with his mighty host; and the distance that had been traversed by the barbarian in a year was covered by Agesilaus in less than a month. For



he had no intention of arriving too late to aid his fatherland.

When he had passed through Macedonia and reached Thessaly, the people of Larisa, Crannon, Scotussa and Pharsalus, who were allies of the Boeotians, all the Thessalians, in fact, except those who happened to be in exile at the time, followed at his heels and kept molesting him. For a time he led the army in a hollow square, with one half of the cavalry in front and the other half in the rear; but finding his progress hampered by Thessalian attacks on his rearguard, he sent round all the cavalry from the vanguard to the rear, except his own escort.

When the two forces faced one another in line of battle, the Thessalians, believing it inexpedient to engage heavy infantry with cavalry, wheeled round and slowly retired, their enemy following very cautiously. Agesilaus, noticing the errors into which both sides were falling, now sent round his own escort of stalwart horsemen, with orders to bid the others to charge at full speed, and to do the same themselves, and not to give the enemy a chance of rallying. As for the Thessalians, on seeing the unexpected charge they either did not rally at all, or were captured in the attempt to do so with their horses broadside to the enemy.

Polycharmus the Pharsalian, commander of the cavalry, did indeed turn, and fell fighting along with those about him. Hereupon ensued a wild flight, so that some of the enemy were killed and some were taken prisoners: at any rate they never halted until they reached Mt. Narthacium.

On that day Agesilaus set up a trophy between Pras and Narthacium, and here for the moment he paused, mightily pleased with his exploit, since he had defeated an enemy inordinately proud of his horsemanship with the cavalry that he had himself created. On the morrow he crossed the Achaean mountains in Phthia, and now his route led him through friendly country till he reached the borders of Boeotia.

Here he found arrayed against him the Thebans, Athenians, Argives, Corinthians, Aenianians, Euboeans, and both the Locrian tribes. Without a moment's delay, in full view of the enemy, he drew up his army for battle. In addition to the army that he had brought with him he had a regiment and a half of Lacedaemonians, and of the local allies only the Phocians and Orchomenians.

Now I am not going to say that his forces were far inferior in numbers and in quality, and that nevertheless he accepted battle. That statement, I think, would but show a want of common sense in Agesilaus and my own folly in praising a leader who wantonly jeopardised interests of vital moment. On the contrary — and this is what I do admire him for — he brought into the field an army not a whit inferior to the enemy's; he so armed it that it looked one solid mass of bronze and scarlet; he took care to render his men

capable of meeting all calls on their endurance; he filled their hearts with confidence that they were able to withstand any and every enemy; he inspired them all with an eager determination to out-do one another in valour; and lastly he filled all with anticipation that many good things would befall them, if only they proved good men. For he believed that men so prepared fight with all their might; nor in point of fact did he deceive himself.

I will describe the battle, for there has been none like it in our time. The two armies met in the plain of Coronea, Agesilaus advancing from the Cephissus, the Thebans and their allies from Helicon. Their eyes told them that the opposing lines of battle were exactly matched in strength, and the number of cavalry on both sides was about the same. Agesilaus was on the right wing of his army and had the Orchomenians on his extreme left. On the other side the Thebans themselves were on the right wing and the Argives held the left.

As they approached both sides for a time maintained complete silence, but when they were about a furlong apart, the Thebans raised the battle-cry and rushed forward at the double. The distance between them was still about one hundred yards when the mercenary troops under Herippidas, consisting of the

men who had gone with Agesilaus from home and some of the Cyreians, dashed out in turn from their main body, closely followed by Ionians, Aeolians and Hellespontines. All these took part in the dash, and coming within spear-thrust put to flight the force in front of them. As for the Argives, they fled towards Helicon without awaiting the attack of Agesilaus. And now some of the mercenaries were in the act of crowning Agesilaus with a wreath, when a man reported to him that the Thebans had cut their way through the Orchomenians and were among the baggage train. So he immediately wheeled

his main body and advanced against them; and the Thebans in their turn, seeing that their allies had sought refuge at the foot of Mt. Helicon, and wanting to break through and join their friends, made a strong move forward.

At this juncture one may say without fear of contradiction that Agesilaus showed courage; but the course that he adopted was not the safest. For he might have allowed the men who were trying to break through to pass, and then have followed them and annihilated those in the rear. Instead of doing that he made a furious frontal attack on the Thebans. Thrusting shield against shield, they shoved and fought and killed and fell. There was no shouting, nor was there silence, but the strange noise that wrath and battle together will produce. In the end some of the Thebans broke through and reached Helicon, but many fell during the retreat.

The victory lay with Agesilaus; but he himself had been carried wounded to his battle-line, when some horsemen rode up, and told him that eighty of the enemy retaining their arms had taken cover in the temple, and they asked what they should do. Though wounded in every part of his body with every sort of weapon, he did not forget his duty towards the gods, but gave orders that these men should be suffered to go whithersoever they wished, and would not suffer them to be harmed, and charged his escort of cavalry to conduct them to a place of safety.

Now that the fighting was at an end, a weird spectacle met the eye, as one surveyed the scene of the conflict — the earth stained with blood, friend and foe lying dead side by side, shields smashed to pieces, spears snapped in two, daggers bared of their sheaths, some on the ground, some embedded in the bodies, some yet gripped by the hand.

Then, as the day was far spent, having dragged the enemy's dead within their battle line, they supped and slept. Early next morning Agesilaus ordered Gylis, the polemarch, to draw up the army in battle order and to set up a trophy, and to command every man to wear a wreath in honour of the god and all the flute-players to play.

Now while they were carrying out these orders the Thebans sent a herald, asking leave to bury their dead under protection of a truce. And so a truce was made, and Agesilaus left for home, choosing, instead of supreme power in Asia, to rule and to be ruled at home according to the constitution.

Some time afterwards, finding that the Argives were enjoying the fruits of their land, that they had appropriated Corinth and were finding the war a pleasant occupation, he made an expedition against them. He first laid waste all their territory, then crossed to Corinth by the pass and captured the walls leading to Lechaëum. Having thus unbarred the gates of Peloponnese, he returned home for the festival of Hyacinthus and joined in singing the paean in honour of the god, taking the place assigned to him by the choirmaster.

After a time, discovering that the Corinthians were keeping all their cattle safe in Peiræum, and sowing and reaping the crops throughout that district, and — what he thought most serious — that the Boeotians were finding this route convenient for sending support to the Corinthians, with Creusis as their base, he marched against Peiræum. Seeing that it was strongly guarded, he moved his camp after the morning meal to a position before the capital, as though the city was about to surrender.

But becoming aware that supports had been hurriedly poured into the city during the night from Peiræum, he turned about at daybreak and captured Peiræum, finding it undefended, and everything in it, along with the fortresses that stood there, fell into his hands. Having done this, he returned home.

After these events, the Achæans, who were zealous advocates of the alliance, begged him to join them in an expedition against Acarnania ... . And when the Acarnanians attacked him in a mountain pass he seized the heights above their heads with his light infantry, fought an engagement and, after inflicting severe losses on them, set up a trophy; nor did he cease until he had induced the Acarnanians, Aetolians and Argives to enter into friendship with the Achæans and alliance with himself.

When the enemy sent embassies desiring peace, Agesilaus opposed the peace until he forced Corinth and Thebes to restore to their homes the citizens who had been exiled on account of their sympathy with the Lacedæmonians. And again later, having led an expedition in person against Phleius, he also restored the Phleiasian exiles who had suffered in the same cause. Possibly some may censure these actions on other grounds, but at least it is obvious that they were prompted by a spirit of true comradeship.

It was in the same spirit that he subsequently made an expedition against Thebes, to relieve the Lacedaemonians in that city when their opponents had taken to murdering them. Finding the city protected on all sides by a trench and stockade, he crossed the Pass of Cynoscephalae, and laid waste the country up to the city walls, offering battle to the Thebans both on the plain and on the hills, if they chose to fight. In the following year he made another expedition against Thebes, and, after crossing the stockade and trenches at Scolus, laid waste the rest of Boeotia.

Up to this time he and his city enjoyed unbroken success; and though the following years brought a series of troubles, it cannot be said that they were incurred under the leadership of Agesilaus. On the other hand, after the disaster at Leuctra, when his adversaries in league with the Mantineans were murdering his friends and acquaintances in Tegea, and a coalition of all Boeotia, Arcadia and Elis had been formed, he took the field with the Lacedaemonian forces only, thus disappointing the general expectation that the Lacedaemonians would not even go outside their own borders for a long time to come. It was not until he had laid waste the country of those who had murdered his friends that he returned home once more.

After this Sparta was attacked by all the Arcadians, Argives, Eleians and Boeotians, who had the support of the Phocians, both the Locrian peoples, the Thessalians, Aenianians, Acarnanians and Euboeans. In addition the slaves and many of the outlander communities were in revolt, and at least as many of the Spartan nobles had fallen in the battle of Leuctra as survived. He kept the city safe notwithstanding, and that though it was without walls, not going out into the open where the advantage would have lain wholly with the enemy, and keeping his army strongly posted where the citizens would have the advantage; for he believed that he would be surrounded on all sides if he came out into the plain, but that if he made a stand in the defiles and the heights, he would be master of the situation.

After the retirement of the enemy, none will deny that his conduct was marked by good sense. The marching and riding incidental to active service were no longer possible to a man of his years, but he saw that the state must have money if she was to gain an ally anywhere. So he applied himself to the business of raising money. At home he did all that ingenuity could suggest; and, if he saw any prospect of serving the state abroad, shrank from no

measures that circumstances called for, and he was not ashamed to go out, not as a general, but as an envoy.

And even as an envoy he accomplished work worthy of a great general. For instance, Autophradates laying siege to Ariobarzanes, an ally of Sparta, at Assos, took to his heels from fear of Agesilaus. Cotys for his part, besieging Sestos, while it was still in the hands of Ariobarzanes, broke up the siege and made off. With good reason, therefore, might the victorious envoy have set up a trophy once again to record these bloodless successes.

Again, Mausolus, laying siege to both these places with a fleet of a hundred vessels, was induced, not indeed by fear, but by persuasion, to sail for home. In this affair too his success was admirable; for those who considered that they were under an obligation to him and those who fled before him, both paid. Yet again, Tachos and Mausolus (another of those who contributed money to Sparta, owing to his old ties of hospitality with Agesilaus), sent him home with a magnificent escort.

Subsequently, when he was now about eighty years of age, he became aware that the king of Egypt was bent on war with Persia, and was possessed of large forces of infantry and cavalry and plenty of money. He was delighted when a summons for help reached him from the Egyptian king, who actually promised him the chief command.

For he believed that at one stroke he would repay the Egyptian for his good offices to Sparta, would again set free the Greeks in Asia, and would chastise the Persian for his former hostility, and for demanding now, when he professed to be an ally of Sparta, that her claim to Messene should be given up.

However, when this suitor for his assistance failed to give him the command Agesilaus felt that he had been grossly deceived, and was in doubt what he ought to do. At this juncture first a portion of the Egyptian troops, operating as a separate army, revolted from the king, and then the rest of his forces deserted him. The king left Egypt and fled in terror to Sidon in Phoenicia, while the Egyptians split up into two parties, and each chose its own king.

Agesilaus now realised that if he helped neither king, neither of them would pay the Greeks their wages, neither would provide a market, and the conqueror, whichever he proved to be, would be hostile, but if he co-operated

with one of them, that one, being under an obligation to him, would in all probability adopt a friendly attitude. Accordingly, having decided which of them showed the stronger signs of being a friend to the Greeks, he took the field with him. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy of the Greeks, and helped to establish his rival; and so having made him the friend of Sparta, and having received a great sum of money in addition, he sailed home, though it was mid-winter, with all haste, in order that the state might be in a position to take action against her enemies in the coming summer.

Such, then, is the record of my hero's deeds, so far as they were done before a crowd of witnesses. Actions like these need no proofs; the mere mention of them is enough and they command belief immediately. But now I will attempt to show the virtue that was in his soul, the virtue through which he wrought those deeds and loved all that is honourable and put away all that is base.

Agesilaus had such reverence for religion, that even his enemies considered his oaths and his treaties more to be relied on than their own friendship with one another: for there were times when they shrank from meeting together, and yet would place themselves in the power of Agesilaus. And lest anyone should think this statement incredible, I wish to name the most famous among them. Spithridates the Persian, for example, knew that

Pharnabazus was negotiating for a marriage with the Great King's daughter, and intended to take his, Spithridates', daughter as a concubine. Regarding this as an outrage, he delivered himself, his wife, his children and all that he had into Agesilaus' hands. Cotys, ruler of the Paphlagonians, who had disobeyed

the command of the Great King, though it was accompanied with the symbol of friendship, feared that he would be seized and either be fined heavily or even put to death; but he too, trusting in the armistice with Agesilaus, came to his camp and having entered into alliance elected to take the field at Agesilaus' side with a thousand horse and two thousand targeteers.

And Pharnabazus too came and parleyed with Agesilaus, and made agreement with him that if he were not himself appointed the Persian general, he would revolt from the Great King. "But," he said, "if I become general, I shall make war on you, Agesilaus, with all my might." He used this language in full confidence that nothing contrary to the terms of the armistice would

happen to him. So great and so noble a treasure has every man, and above all a general, who is upright and trustworthy and is known to be so. So much, then, for the virtue of Piety.

Next comes his Justice in money matters. Of this what proofs can be more convincing than the following? No man ever made any complaint that he had been defrauded by Agesilaus: but many acknowledged that they had received many benefits from him. One who delighted to give away his own for the good of others could not possibly be minded to defraud others at the price of disgrace. For if he had coveted money it would have cost him far less trouble to keep his own than to take what did not belong to him.

A man who would not leave unpaid debts of gratitude, which are not recoverable in the courts, cannot have been minded to commit thefts that are forbidden by law. And Agesilaus held it wrong not only to repudiate a debt of gratitude, but, having greater means, not to render in return a much greater kindness.

Again, with what show of reason could embezzlement of public property be charged against a man who bestowed on his fatherland the rewards due to himself? And is it not a striking proof of his freedom from avarice that he was able to get money from others, whenever he wanted, for the purpose of rendering financial assistance to the state or his friends?

For had he been in the habit of selling his favours or taking payment for his benefactions, no one would have felt that he owed him anything. It is the recipient of unbought, gratuitous benefits who is always glad to oblige his benefactor in return for the kindness he has received and in acknowledgment of the trust reposed in him as a worthy and faithful guardian of a favour.

Further, is it not certain that the man who by a noble instinct refused to take more and preferred to take less than his just share was far beyond the reach of covetousness? Now when the state pronounced him sole heir to the property of Agis, he gave half of it to his mother's kinsfolk, because he saw that they were in want; and all Lacedaemon bears witness that my statement is true.

On receiving from Tithraustes an offer of gifts unnumbered if only he would leave his country, Agesilaus answered: "Among us, Tithraustes, a ruler's honour requires him to enrich his army rather than himself, and to take



spoils rather than gifts from the enemy.”

Again, among all the pleasures that prove too strong for many men, who can mention one to which Agesilaus yielded? Drunkenness, he thought, should be avoided like madness, overeating like idleness. Moreover, he received a double ration at the public meals, but instead of consuming both portions himself, he distributed both and left neither for himself, holding that the purpose of this double allowance to the king was not to provide him with a heavy meal, but to give him the opportunity of honouring whomsoever he would.

As for sleep, it was not his master, but the servant of his activities; and unless he occupied the humblest bed among his comrades, he could not conceal his shame: for he thought that a ruler's superiority over ordinary men should be shown not by weakness but by endurance.

There were things, to be sure, of which he was not ashamed to take more than his share — for instance, the summer's heat and the winter's cold: and whenever his army was faced with a hard task, he toiled willingly beyond all others, believing that all such actions were an encouragement to the men. Not to labour the point, Agesilaus gloried in hard work, and showed a strong distaste for indolence.

His habitual control of his affections surely deserves a tribute of admiration, if worthy of mention on no other ground. That he should keep at arms' length those whose intimacy he did not desire may be thought only human. But he loved Megabates, the handsome son of Spithridates, with all the intensity of an ardent nature. Now it is the custom among the Persians to bestow a kiss on those whom they honour. Yet when Megabates attempted to kiss him, Agesilaus resisted his advances with all his might — an act of punctilious moderation surely!

Megabates, feeling himself slighted, tried no more to kiss him, and Agesilaus approached one of his companions with a request that he would persuade Megabates to show him honour once again. “Will you kiss him,” asked his companion, “if Megabates yields?” After a deep silence, Agesilaus gave his reply: “By the twin gods, no, not if I were straightway to be the fairest and strongest and fleetest man on earth! By all the gods I swear that I would rather fight that same battle over again than that everything I see should turn

into gold.”

What opinion some hold in regard to these matters I know well enough; but for my part I am persuaded that many more men can gain the mastery over their enemies than over impulses such as these. No doubt when these things are known to few, many have a right to be sceptical: but we all know this, that the greater a man’s fame, the fiercer is the light that beats on all his actions; we know too that no one ever reported that he had seen Agesilaus do any such thing, and that no scandal based on conjecture would have gained credence; for it was not his

habit, when abroad, to lodge apart in a private house, but he was always either in a temple, where conduct of this sort is, of course, impossible, or else in a public place where all men’s eyes became witnesses of his rectitude. If I speak this falsely against the knowledge of the Greek world, I am in no way praising my hero; but I am censuring myself.

As for Courage, he seems to me to have afforded clear proofs of that by always engaging himself to fight against the strongest enemies of his state and of Greece, and by always placing himself in the forefront of the struggle.

When the enemy were willing to join battle with him, it was not by their panic flight that he won victory, but it was after overcoming them in stubborn fighting that he set up a trophy, leaving behind him imperishable memorials of his own valour, and bearing in his own body visible tokens of the fury of his fighting, so that not by hearsay but by the evidence of their own eyes men could judge what manner of man he was.

In truth the trophies of Agesilaus are not to be counted by telling how many he set up; the number of his campaigns is the number of them. His mastery was in no way less complete when the enemy were unwilling to accept battle, but it was gained at less risk and with more profit to the state and to the allies. So in the Great Games the unchallenged champion is crowned no less than he who has fought to conquer.

Of his Wisdom I find the evidence in every one of his deeds. Towards his fatherland he behaved in such a manner that, being entirely obedient to her, he won the obedience of the citizens, and by his zeal for his comrades he held the unquestioning devotion of his friends: and as for his troops, he gained at once their obedience and their affection. Surely nothing is wanting to the strength

of that battle-line in which obedience results in perfect discipline, and affection for the general produces faithful promptitude.

As for the enemy, though they were forced to hate, he gave them no chance to disparage him. For he contrived that his allies always had the better of them, by the use of deception when occasion offered, by anticipating their action if speed was necessary, by hiding when it suited his purpose, and by practising all the opposite methods when dealing with enemies to those which he applied when dealing with friends.

Night, for example, was to him as day, and day as night, for he often veiled his movements so completely that none could guess where he was, whither he was going, or what he meant to do. Thus he made even strong positions untenable to the enemy, turning one, scaling another, snatching a third by stealth.

On the march, whenever he knew that the enemy could bring him to an engagement if they chose, he would lead his army in close order, alert and ready to defend himself, moving on as quietly as a modest maiden, since he held that this was the best means of maintaining calm, of avoiding panic, confusion, and blundering, and of guarding against a surprise attack.

And so, by using such methods, he was formidable to his enemies, and inspired his friends with strength and confidence. Thus he was never despised by his foes, never brought to account by the citizens, never blamed by his friends, but throughout his career he was praised and idolised by all the world.

Of his Patriotism it would be a long task to write in complete detail, for there is no single action of his, I think, that does not illustrate that quality. To speak briefly, we all know that when Agesilaus thought he would be serving his fatherland he never shirked toil, never shrank from danger, never spared money, never excused himself on the score of bodily weakness or old age; but believed that it is the duty of a good king to do as much good as possible to his subjects.

Among the greatest services he rendered to his fatherland I reckon the fact that, though the most powerful man in the state, he was clearly a devoted servant of the laws. For who would be minded to disobey when he saw the king obeying? Who would turn revolutionist, thinking himself defrauded of his due, when he knew that the king was ready to yield in accordance with the

laws?

Here was a man whose behaviour to his political opponents was that of a father to his children: though he would chide them for their errors he honoured them when they did a good deed, and stood by them when any disaster befell them, deeming no citizen an enemy, willing to praise all, counting the safety of all a gain, and reckoning the destruction even of a man of little worth as a loss. He clearly reckoned that if the citizens should continue to live in peaceful submission to the laws, the fatherland would always prosper and that she would be strong when the Greeks were prudent.

Again, if it is honourable in one who is a Greek to be a friend to the Greeks, what other general has the world seen unwilling to take a city when he thought that it would be sacked, or who looked on victory in a war against Greeks as a disaster?

Now when a report reached Agesilaus that eight Lacedaemonians and near ten thousand of the enemy had fallen at the battle of Corinth, instead of showing pleasure, he actually exclaimed: "Alas for thee, Hellas! those who now lie dead were enough to defeat all the barbarians in battle had they lived!"

And when the Corinthian exiles told him that the city was about to be surrendered to them and pointed to the engines with which they were confident of taking the walls, he would not make an assault, declaring that Greek cities ought not to be enslaved, but chastened. "And if," he added, "we are going to annihilate the erring members of our own race, let us beware lest we lack men to help in the conquest of the barbarians."

Or again, if it is honourable to hate the Persian because in old days he set out to enslave Greece, and now allies himself with that side which offers him the prospect of working the greater mischief, makes gifts to those who, as he believes, will injure the Greeks most in return, negotiates the peace that he thinks most certain to produce war among us — well, everyone can see these things, but who except Agesilaus has ever striven either to bring about the revolt of a tribe from the Persian, or to save a revolting tribe from destruction, or by some means or other to involve the Great King in trouble so that he will be unable to annoy the Greeks? Nay, when his fatherland was actually at war with Greeks, he did not neglect the common good of Greece, but went out with a fleet to do what harm he could to the barbarian.

Another quality that should not go unrecorded is his urbanity. For although he held honour in fee, and had power at his beck, and to these added sovereignty — sovereignty not plotted against but regarded with affection — yet no traces of arrogance could have been detected in him, whereas signs of a fatherly affection and readiness to serve his friends, even if unsought, were evident.

He delighted, moreover, to take his part in light talk, yet he showed an eager sympathy with friends in all their serious concerns. Thanks to his optimism, good humour, and cheerfulness he was a centre of attraction to many, who came not merely for purposes of business, but to pass the day more pleasantly. Little inclined to boastfulness himself, he heard without annoyance the self-praise of others, thinking that, by indulging in it, they did no harm and gave earnest of high endeavour.

On the other hand, one must not omit a reference to the dignity that he showed on appropriate occasions. Thus, when the Persian envoy who came with Calleeas, the Lacedaemonian, handed him a letter from the Great King containing offers of friendship and hospitality, he declined to accept it. "Tell his Majesty," he said to the bearer, "that there is no need for him to send me private letters, but, if he gives proof of friendship for Lacedaemon, and goodwill towards Greece, I on my part will be his friend with all my heart. But if he is found plotting against them, let him not hope to have a friend in me, however many letters I may receive."

In this contempt for the king's hospitality, as nothing in comparison with the approval of the Greeks, I find one more reason for praising Agesilaus. Admirable too was his opinion that it is not for the ruler with the deeper coffers and the longer roll of subjects to set himself above his rival, but for him who is the better leader of the better people.

Again, an instance of his foresight that I find worthy of praise is this: believing it to be good for Greece that as many satraps as possible should revolt from the king, he was not prevailed on either by gifts or by the king's power to accept his hospitality, but was careful not to give cause to those who wanted to revolt for mistrusting him.

There is yet another side of his character that everyone must admire. It was the belief of the Persian king that by possessing himself of colossal wealth, he

would put all things in subjection to himself. In this belief he tried to engross all the gold, all the silver and all the most costly things in the world. Agesilaus, on the contrary, adopted such a simple style in his home that he needed none of these things.

If anyone doubts this, let him mark what sort of a house contented him, and in particular, let him look at the doors: one might imagine that they were the very doors that Aristodemus, the descendant of Heracles set up with his own hands in the days of his home-coming. Let him try to picture the scene within; note how he entertained on days of sacrifice, hear how his daughter used to go down to Amyclae in a public car.

And so, thanks to this nice adjustment of his expenditure to his income, he was never compelled to commit an act of injustice for the sake of money. Doubtless it is thought noble to build oneself fortresses impregnable to an enemy: but in my judgment it is far nobler to fortify one's own soul against all the assaults of lucre, of pleasure, and of fear.

I will next point out the contrast between his behaviour and the imposture of the Persian king. In the first place the Persian thought his dignity required that he should be seldom seen: Agesilaus delighted to be constantly visible, believing that, whereas secrecy was becoming to an ugly career, the light shed lustre on a life of noble purpose.

In the second place, the one prided himself on being difficult of approach: the other was glad to make himself accessible to all. And the one affected tardiness in negotiation: the other was best pleased when he could dismiss his suitors quickly with their requests granted.

In the matter of personal comfort, moreover, it is worth noticing how much simpler and how much more easily satisfied were the tastes of Agesilaus. The Persian king has vintners scouring every land to find some drink that will tickle his palate; an army of cooks contrives dishes for his delight; and the trouble his lackeys take that he may sleep is indescribable. But Agesilaus, thanks to his love of toil, enjoyed any drink that was at hand and any food that came his way; and any place was good enough to give him soft repose.

Nor was he happy only in this behaviour: he was also proud to reflect that, while he was surrounded with good cheer, he saw the barbarian constrained to draw from the ends of the world the material for his enjoyment, if he would

live without discomfort.

And it cheered his heart to know that he could accommodate himself to the divine ordering of the world, whereas he saw his rival shunning heat and shunning cold through weakness of character, imitating the life, not of brave men, but of the weakest of the brutes.

Surely, too, he did what was seemly and dignified when he adorned his own estate with works and possessions worthy of a man, keeping many hounds and war horses, but persuaded his sister Cynisca to breed chariot horses, and showed by her victory that such a stud marks the owner as a person of wealth, but not necessarily of merit.

How clearly his true nobility comes out in his opinion that a victory in the chariot race over private citizens would add not a whit to his renown; but if he held the first place in the affection of the people, gained the most friends and best all over the world, outstripped all others in serving his fatherland and his comrades and in punishing his adversaries, then he would be victor in the noblest and most splendid contests, and would gain high renown both in life and after death.

Such, then, are the qualities for which I praise Agesilaus. These are the marks that distinguish him, say, from the man who, lighting on a treasure, becomes wealthier but not wiser in business, or from the man who wins victory through an outbreak of sickness among the enemy, and adds to his success but not to his knowledge of strategy. The man who is foremost in endurance when the hour comes for toil, in valour when the contest calls for courage, in wisdom when the need is for counsel — he is the man, I think, who may fairly be regarded as the perfect embodiment of goodness.

If line and rule are a noble discovery of man as aids to the production of good work, I think that the virtue of Agesilaus may well stand as a noble example for those to follow who wish to make moral goodness a habit. For who that imitates a pious, a just, a sober, a self-controlled man, can come to be unrighteous, unjust, violent, wanton? In point of fact, Agesilaus prided himself less on reigning over others than on ruling himself, less on leading the people against their enemies than on guiding them to all virtue.

However, let it not be thought, because one whose life is ended is the theme of my praise, that these words are meant for a funeral dirge. They are far

more truly the language of eulogy. In the first place the words now applied to him are the very same that he heard in his lifetime. And, in the second place, what theme is less appropriate to a dirge than a life of fame and a death well-timed? What more worthy of eulogies than victories most glorious and deeds of sovereign worth?

Justly may the man be counted blessed who was in love with glory from early youth and won more of it than any man of his age; who, being by nature very covetous of honour, never once knew defeat from the day that he became a king; who, after living to the utmost limit of human life, died without one blunder to his account, either concerning the men whom he led or in dealing with those on whom he made war.

I propose to go through the story of his virtue again, and to summarize it, in order that the praise of it may be more easily remembered. Agesilaus revered holy places even when they belonged to an enemy, thinking that he ought to make allies of the gods no less in hostile than in friendly countries. To suppliants of the gods, even if his foes, he did no violence, believing it unreasonable to call robbers of temples sacrilegious and yet to consider those who dragged suppliants from altars pious men.

My hero never failed to dwell on his opinion that the gods have pleasure in righteous deeds no less than in holy temples. In the hour of success he was not puffed up with pride, but gave thanks to the gods. He offered more sacrifices when confident than prayers when in doubt. He was wont to look cheerful when in fear, and to be humble when successful.

Of his friends he welcomed most heartily not the most powerful, but the most devoted. He hated not the man who defended himself when injured, but such as showed no gratitude for a favour. He rejoiced to see the avaricious poor and to enrich the upright, desiring to render right more profitable than wrong.

It was his habit to associate with all sorts and conditions of men, but to be intimate with the good. Whenever he heard men praise or blame others, he thought that he gained as much insight into the character of the critics as of the persons they criticized. If friends proved deceivers he forebore to blame their victims, but he heaped reproaches on those who let an enemy deceive them; and he pronounced deception clever or wicked according as it was



practised on the suspicious or the confiding.

The praise of those who were prepared to censure faults they disapproved was pleasing to him, and he never resented candour, but avoided dissimulation like a snare. Slanderers he hated more than thieves, deeming loss of friends graver than loss of money.

The mistakes of private persons he judged leniently, because few interests suffer by their incompetence; but the errors of rulers he treated as serious, since they lead to many troubles. Kingship, he held, demands not indolence, but manly virtue.

He would not allow a statue of himself to be set up, though many wanted to give him one, but on memorials of his mind he laboured unceasingly, thinking the one to be the sculptor's work, the other his own, the one appropriate to the rich, the other to the good.

In the use of money he was not only just but generous, thinking that a just man may be content to leave other men's money alone, but the generous man is required also to spend his own in the service of others. He was ever god-fearing, believing that they who are living life well are not yet happy, but only they who have died gloriously are blessed.

He held it a greater calamity to neglect that which is good knowingly than in ignorance. No fame attracted him unless he did the right work to achieve it. He seemed to me one of the few men who count virtue not a task to be endured but a comfort to be enjoyed. At any rate praise gave him more pleasure than money. Courage, as he displayed it, was joined with prudence rather than boldness, and wisdom he cultivated more by action than in words.

Very gentle with friends, he was very formidable to enemies; and while he resisted fatigue obstinately, he yielded most readily to a comrade, though fair deeds appealed more to his heart than fair faces. To moderation in times of prosperity he added confidence in the midst of danger.

His urbanity found its habitual expression not in jokes but in his manner; and when on his dignity, he was never arrogant, but always reasonable; at least, if he showed his contempt for the haughty, he was humbler than the average man. For he prided himself on the simplicity of his own dress and the splendid equipment of his army, on a strict limitation of his own needs and a boundless generosity to his friends.

Added to this, he was the bitterest of adversaries, but the mildest of conquerors; wary with enemies, but very compliant to friends. While ever ensuring security to his own side, he ever made it his business to bring to nought the designs of his enemy.

By his relatives he was described as “devoted to his family,” by his intimates as “an unfailing friend,” by those who served him as “unforgetful,” by the oppressed as “a champion,” by his comrades in danger as “a saviour second to the gods.” In one respect, I think, he was unique.

He proved that, though the bodily strength decays, the vigour of good men’s souls is ageless. At any rate, he never wearied in the pursuit of great and noble glory so long as his body could support the vigour of his soul.

What man’s youth, then, did not seem weaker than his old age? For who in his prime was so formidable to his foes as Agesilaus at the very limit of human life? Whose removal brought such welcome relief to the enemy as the death of Agesilaus, despite his years? Who gave such confidence to allies as Agesilaus, though now on the threshold of death? What young man was more regretted by his friends than Agesilaus, though he died full of years?

So complete was the record of his service to his fatherland that it did not end even when he died: he was still a bountiful benefactor of the state when he was brought home to be laid in his eternal resting-place, and, having raised up monuments of his virtue throughout the world, was buried with royal ceremony in his own land.