

# The political and religious thought of the persians and the greeks essay examples...

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Greek political and religious thought is said to have flourished during the lifetimes of the three classical Greek philosophers, namely, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The influence of these classical thinkers pervaded Western political and thought up to the modern times. The Persian influence on Greek political and religious thinking was most felt during the ancient times. The influence of Persia on Greek political and religious thought cannot be ignored. These two cultural systems have combined to give a lasting impact on much of modern political systems, especially the Greco-Athenian concept of democracy. In this exercise, we draw a comparison and contrast of both ancient systems as we seek to appreciate their legacy to Western thought. During the ancient classical times, Persia was a military power that exerted its theocratic strength and influence by bringing over to its fold those places it conquered and subjugated. Greece was the bedrock of a dual political system comprised of independent city-states typified by Athens and Sparta. Persia's official religion, Zoroastrianism, centered on the belief that the universe is constantly embattled by forces of good and evil. Humans engage in continual struggle choosing between right and wrong. This belief laid the groundwork for profound human ethics and, having made official state religion, provided ideological support for the expansionist ambitions of the great Persian kings.

Greek society, on the other hand, thrived on a polytheistic belief system where the gods were powerful and omnipresent and influential in daily life and protecting the "polis". Athenian society in particular promoted the good life and in many classical Greek city-states, women and slave-labor were in subordinate roles. Nevertheless, both the women in the household and

slavery contributed immensely to the preservation of the Athenian good life. The prevailing political thought in Persia during the ancient times was built around the centralized and absolute form of government that allowed the practice of religion and tradition in the conquered territory for as long as Persian political supremacy was recognized.

Greek political thought during the ancient times embodied many influences, including Persia, Phoenician and the ancients. Two schools of thought characterized by the political systems of the city-states of Sparta and Athens dominated. One may be called militarism and autocracy, of which Sparta is the role-model. The other is democracy and republicanism that characterized Athenian government and public life. Greek philosophy and the forays into rational inquiry and discussion gave impetus for the growth of liberal ideas that would influence much of contemporary Western political thought.

## References

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