

Persian wars: cause of the 499-404 b.c.e



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The Persian wars are often compared to the Trojan wars due to the effects they had on Greek history. Athenians who were cultural and politically superior to the Greek considered the wars against Persia as some of the defining and greatest moments in their history (McKay, Hill, Buckler, Buckley, & Wiesner-Hanks, 2008a). Despite the defining effects that the Persian wars had on the history of the Athenian and the Greek, their beginning was nothing big.

In mid sixth century BCE, Croesus who was the king of the Lydians took control of all Greek cities along the Asian Minor coast (McKay, Bennett, Beck, Crowston, & Wiesner-Hanks, 2008a). When the Persians conquered the Lydians around 545 BCE all states that were under the Lydians came under the rule of the Persians (McKay, Bennett, Beck, Crowston, & Wiesner-Hanks, 2008b). The Persian approach to leadership was defined by close control and they appointed officials who ruled states under a system that can only be defined as tyrannical.

Citizens under the system implemented by the Persians were required to pay extremely high taxes and serve in the Persian army (McKay, Bennett, & Buckler, 2003a). Many revolutions in history have generally been caused by oppressions and systems that are degenerate in terms of social development. The Persian approach to government bore all the classical signs of tyranny and close governance. Under such a system the mechanisms that will worst affect the weak are made as effective as possible and in the Persian case this was not different.

Their most effective system was the tax collection system which collected taxes in a manner that had no bearing on the earning made by individuals and the failure to submit returns could even result in hanging (McKay, Bennett, & Buckler, 2003b). The rulers were imposed on the Greeks, Lydians and Athenians and the kind of rule that such leaders used was oppressive. The rulers kept close contact with the events that happened on the ground which is a characteristic of an approach to leadership that is either oppressive or concerned with the welfare of its members; in this case the former was more relevant.

The pressure placed by the Persian government led to underground revolution which were propagated by the opportunism of Aristagoras. Aristagoras sought help from the Spartans and Athenians (McKay, Hill, Buckler, Buckley, & Wiesner-Hanks, 2008a). The latter helped him in though by 495 BCE all rebellious Greek cities has been restored under the Persian government. This did not spell the end of war due to the attention than the Athenians had gotten from Persia for the role they played in the destruction of Ardis.

The revenge mission and the expertise that the Athenians had in Hippias who had been a member of the Persian army led to what is referred to as the battle of Marathon (McKay, Hill, Buckler, Buckley, & Wiesner-Hanks, 2008b). By the end of the marathon Greece began an ambitious navy building project due to the influence of Themistocles which propagated the war into a war for supremacy. In summary, the war started by the need for freedom and independence catalyzed by a leader who was out to fulfill his personal agenda.

By gaining support from other states the Persians were defeated due to their lack of commitment to the war. The marathon which served to propagate the Persian war was mainly out of the need for revenge by the Persians and its 'marathon' stature is resultant of the resistance the Persians got from the well prepared Athenians and Spartans. Towards the end of the war the objective was more about gain of supremacy. In the end, the Athenians got all the glory though the role played by the Spartans in the Persian wars can never be underestimated.