

Part 4: Long Reading

Time Remaining: 19 minutes

NEXT

and glory, the population of the Persian Empire reached around 50 million people.

Cyrus is remembered for his unique political approaches to the conquered territories. He tried to manage multiple ethnicities, cultures, and religions all under one empire. Cyrus did not interfere with local customs, religions, trade, and business practices. The emperor presented himself as the “saviour” of the conquered territories. The most famous case of such liberation is the decree that released Jewish people from captivity in Babylon and allowed them to return to their homeland.

In 547 BCE, Cyrus conquered the Greek territories of Ionia and appointed Persian rulers. This conquest would lead to the future conflicts known as the Greco-Persian Wars. Even though Persians were very tolerant of other religions and cultures, they implemented strong vertical governmental control. Greeks, on the other hand, valued their independent city states and horizontal structure. This ultimately led to decades of rebellions and battles for control.

In 480 and 479 BCE the Greeks won decisive victories over the presiding emperor, Xerxes, pushing the Persians to retreat. Such conflicts were not unusual in ancient times. From the Persian perspective, it was just one of the events in the history of the empire. However, when Greece emerged as a cultural and philosophical centre of Europe, the conflict was given more significance in European history. It is not impossible to imagine that the strife between Europe and the Middle East in the Middle Ages was heavily influenced by earlier accounts and perceptions of the Greek historians.



1. According to the passage, Persians were viewed as “the other” in history because of _____.

2. Cyrus is regarded as the _____ of the First Persian Empire.

3. Which phrase best describes Cyrus’s political approach?

- ☐ treating the conquered with respect
- ☐ promoting Persian value systems
- ☐ securing borders with walls
- ☐ focusing on political development