

PERSIAN EMPIRE

The Persian Empire, also known as the Achaemenid Empire, was one of the greatest empires in ancient history. It was located in the Middle East, mostly in the country known today as Iran. It was a very large and powerful empire that ruled for over 200 years and stretched from the Balkan Peninsula in Europe to India's Indus Valley.

The first recorded dynasty in Ancient Persia was the Median Dynasty founded by Deioces. Persians called their kings 'Shahanshah' or 'Shah' which meant King of Kings. The Achaemenid Empire followed the Median Empire. Artaxerxes II was the longest reigning Persian King who ruled for 45 years.

Cyrus II became the king of Persia in 550 BC when he revolted against King Astyages of Media. He was a powerful king who conquered many lands and became known as Cyrus the Great. He conquered the Lydian Empire in 540 BC and the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 BC. He was known to be fair to those he conquered and allowed them to maintain their culture (way of life) if they worked and paid taxes. Persian religion was Zoroastrianism, which was the belief in one god named Zoroaster. Most other civilizations during his time worshipped hundreds of gods. Fire is the symbol of Zoroastrianism and places of worship were called fire temples. King Cyrus II however, did not force the Persian religion onto the people he conquered.

After Cyrus the Great's reign came the rule of his son Cambyses II. King Cambyses II conquered Egypt's ancient capital of Memphis in 525 B.C. The king that brought Persia to its greatest power was the fourth king, King Darius the Great. He dominated the surrounding lands and divided the Persian Empire into 20 territories or provinces called satrapies. Each one had a governor called a satrap who ruled over the territory. The satraps enforced the king's laws and taxes. The empire was governed from four

TEXT MARKING

YELLOW

What empire followed the Median Empire?

GREEN

Why was King Cyrus II considered fair?

BLUE

What was the first recorded dynasty in Ancient Persia?

PINK

Who was King Darius the Great?

WORDS TO KNOW

**UNDERLINE (IN PASSAGE)
THEN DEFINE**

reigning -

revolted -

capital cities. Darius unified the empire by introducing currency (money) and building roads that made communication and movement easier for business and trade. The Royal Road was the most famous road network, stretching 1,700 miles from the Persian capital of Susa. It took about 90 days to walk the length of the road or nine days on horseback.

In 490 BC, King Darius tried to attack Greece after they rebelled against Persian rule. When he attempted to take control of the city of Athens, he was defeated at the Battle of Marathon. This began the Persian Wars which lasted 20 years. The fight for Greece's power, however, was not an easy one like the Persians thought. When King Darius first tried to conquer the Greeks, he failed and lost many ships and soldiers. Before he could finish planning his next attack, he passed away. His son, King Xerxes, followed with his attempts at conquering Greece. Although the Greek Empire was much smaller than the great Persian Empire, the Greeks were able to win the war. Eventually, a peace treaty was signed between both sides.

The negative effects of King Darius and his son Xerxes's attempt to conquer even more land than they already had were extreme. After the Persian Wars, much of the empire's money had been depleted (used up) and King Xerxes continued with irresponsible spending. Soon, they were weaker than ever before. In 334 BC, the Persian Empire came to an end after Alexander the Great, the ruler of Greece, conquered Persia and defeated Darius III at the Battle of Granicus River. In 331 BC, Alexander burned the Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire built under the rule of Darius. The Persepolis was built from special cedar wood and was supported by 36 wooden pillars. The Persepolis was Greek for "Persian City". It was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

TEXT MARKING

YELLOW

What happened at the Battle of Marathon?

GREEN

Who defeated Darius III?

BLUE

What was the Persepolis?

PINK

What was the Royal Road?

WORDS TO KNOW

UNDERLINE (IN PASSAGE)
THEN DEFINE

unified -

irresponsible -

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Mesopotamia means "the land between rivers." Ancient Mesopotamia refers to the land in the Middle East (Southwest Asia) between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Because of its location between the rivers, the soil was very fertile. The two rivers flowed into the Persian Gulf which is also known as "The Fertile Crescent." Mesopotamia is often called the "Cradle of Civilization" because it is where the first civilization was born. A civilization is a group of people with their own systems and ways of life. Today, this land is located mostly in the country of Iraq and partly in Iran, Turkey, and Syria.

Early settlers set up their homes in villages and towns in Mesopotamia around the year 4000 BC. With the great soil for growing crops, they began to learn the process of farming. The towns grew bigger as more people came, and they soon became city-states, single cities that make up an entire state. To keep order in these cities, new ideas came about such as having a government, laws, and even writing.

The first known civilization were the Sumerians. They were divided into city-states, with each one having its own government and king. They had a different god for each city and a temple for that god. They created a religious circle called a ziggurat in the center of every town. Sumerian religion was polytheistic which means they worshipped multiple gods. Major gods included Anu (father of gods and the sky), Enlil (god of the air), Utu (god of sun, truth, and justice), Nanna (moon god), Inanna (goddess of love and war), Ninhursag (goddess of earth), and Enki (god of fresh water, wisdom, and magic). During this time, the Sumerians invented the wheel, wagon, calendar, and a number-based system.

The Akkadians came after the Sumerians. The Akkadian ruler named Sargon conquered the Sumer. He created the Akkadian Empire and brought all of the Sumerian cities under the rule of one leader. Their language also

TEXT MARKING

YELLOW

What were ziggurats?

GREEN

Who were the first humans to create a civilization?

BLUE

What is a civilization?

PINK

What does the word Mesopotamia mean?

WORDS TO KNOW

UNDERLINE (IN PASSAGE)
THEN DEFINE

fertile - good for growing crops

conquered - took over

became the primary one instead of the Sumerian language.

The city of Babylon was the most powerful city in Mesopotamian history. The Babylonians' success would come and go, sometimes ruling much of the Middle East. They were the first to write down their laws and systems. The Babylonian laws were created by King Hammurabi. **The laws became known as the Code of Hammurabi and included 282 laws.** The Babylonian Empire lasted for 260 years.

Assyrians were similar to the Babylonians, with their success rising and falling. This group came from the northern areas of Mesopotamia. They recorded Mesopotamia's history on clay tablets. These tablets are how historians know a lot about the history of Mesopotamia. The Assyrians were the dominant power in Mesopotamia for 300 years.

The Persians came later and took over a lot of the Middle East, including Mesopotamia. They defeated the Babylonians as well as the Assyrians and ended their rule. **The Persian Empire was also called the Achaemenid Empire and was founded by Cyrus the Great.**

Over the course of Ancient Mesopotamian history, power shifted from one group to another. Kingdoms rose and fell, and capital cities moved from one Mesopotamian city to another. **The largest and most powerful city-state of the Sumerians was Uruk.** When the Akkadians took control of the Sumerian cities and brought them under one rule, the city of Akkad was the center of the new Akkadian Empire. Another well-known city is Nineveh. This became the largest and greatest city in the world during the Assyrian Empire. It also had the library that was built by King Ashurbanipal. **Inside the library were tens of thousands of clay tablets with Mesopotamian history.**

Today, most Mesopotamian buildings and creations cannot be seen. Because statues and structures were built using sun-dried bricks, the material was not very strong, and they did not last. In 1921 Mesopotamia became the kingdom of Iraq.

TEXT MARKING

YELLOW

What was the Persian Empire also known as?

GREEN

How many laws was the Code of Hammurabi?

BLUE

What was Uruk?

PINK

What was in the library at Nineveh?

WORDS TO KNOW

**UNDERLINE (IN PASSAGE)
THEN DEFINE**

historians - people who study history

dominant - most powerful or influential

SPARK SOME *creativity*

ESCAPE
ROOMS

SCAVENGER
HUNTS

SPY
MYSTERY

THINKTIVITY

SECRET
MESSAGES

TEXT
DETECTIVE

BREAKOUTS

READING
CHALLENGE

INTERACTIVE
NOTEBOOK

COLOR BY
NUMBER

DIGITAL
ESCAPES

DIGITAL
BOARD
GAME

GOOGLE
SLIDES

TASK
CARDS
GAME

GOOGLE
FORMS

PUZZLE
STATIONS

BOOM
CARDS

READING
PASSAGES

LET'S CONNECT



BLOG



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GRAB A FREEBIE

Grab a FREE
Boston Tea
Party activity!

