

Before the Athenians had democracy, they lived under tyranny: the Peisistratids ruled Athens consecutively from 546/5 B.C. until 511/0 B.C. The sources concerning the Peisistratids, including Herodotus, Thucydides, the author of the *Ath. Pol.*, Aristotle, and Plato, all composed their works several decades or more after the end of the tyranny, and thus were all susceptible to the corrupting influence of later anti-tyranny attitudes. Not surprisingly then, the sources often contradict one another. In this paper, I will examine the various accounts for each of the points in the chronology of the Peisistratids after 528/7 B.C., and will demonstrate that the accounts of Herodotus and Thucydides, which coalesce satisfactorily, reveal the most comprehensive and credible sequence of events. I will then evaluate some of the key ramifications of the tyranny's demise on the political cognizance of the Athenian *dēmos*.

After Peisistratus died, his eldest son, Hippias, succeeded him, and continued to manage the city moderately, as Peisistratus himself had done (Thuc. 6.54). Hippias did not immediately instigate a more oppressive regime, and I will argue that his regime was not particularly harsh by contemporary standards. In regard to the various reasons put forth about the motives behind the murder of Hippias' brother Hipparchus, Thucydides' account is the most plausible. He reports that Harmodius and Aristogeiton murdered Hipparchus because he had stirred up their ill will through both sexual advances and personal affronts, but that the tyranny did not end until the Spartans intervened several years later. Furthermore, my paper will contend that although the period between the murder and Hippias' deposition did witness actions driven by the tyrant's fear and anxiety (Hdt. 5.55), it was not indeed a reign of terror.

Athenian attitudes toward tyranny remained complex throughout the fifth and fourth centuries. The pervasive abhorrence of tyranny that later existed was not achieved immediately after Hippias' deposition. It solidified when Hippias led the Persians to Marathon in 490 B.C., and the Athenians viewed the victory as an ideological triumph of their fledgling democracy over autocratic rule. Embarrassed at having lived under tyranny for so long, many Athenians sought to use falsehoods to cover up their complicity and/or complacency. A paradox existed in the fifth century, however, between the receptions of individuals as tyrants and of Athens herself as tyrant, in that the Athenians were not averse to the idea of wielding a collective and metaphorical tyranny over the Delian League (Thuc. 2.63). Nevertheless, the official stance toward formal tyranny remained firmly negative ([*Ath. Pol.*] 22), and the definition of tyranny in Athens slowly transformed to include anything at all that opposed democracy.

In sum, this paper will argue that Hippias' rule was overall a moderate one, and will from there illustrate that the legacy of the Peisistratid tyranny went on to complicate Athenian perceptions of tyranny for centuries to come.