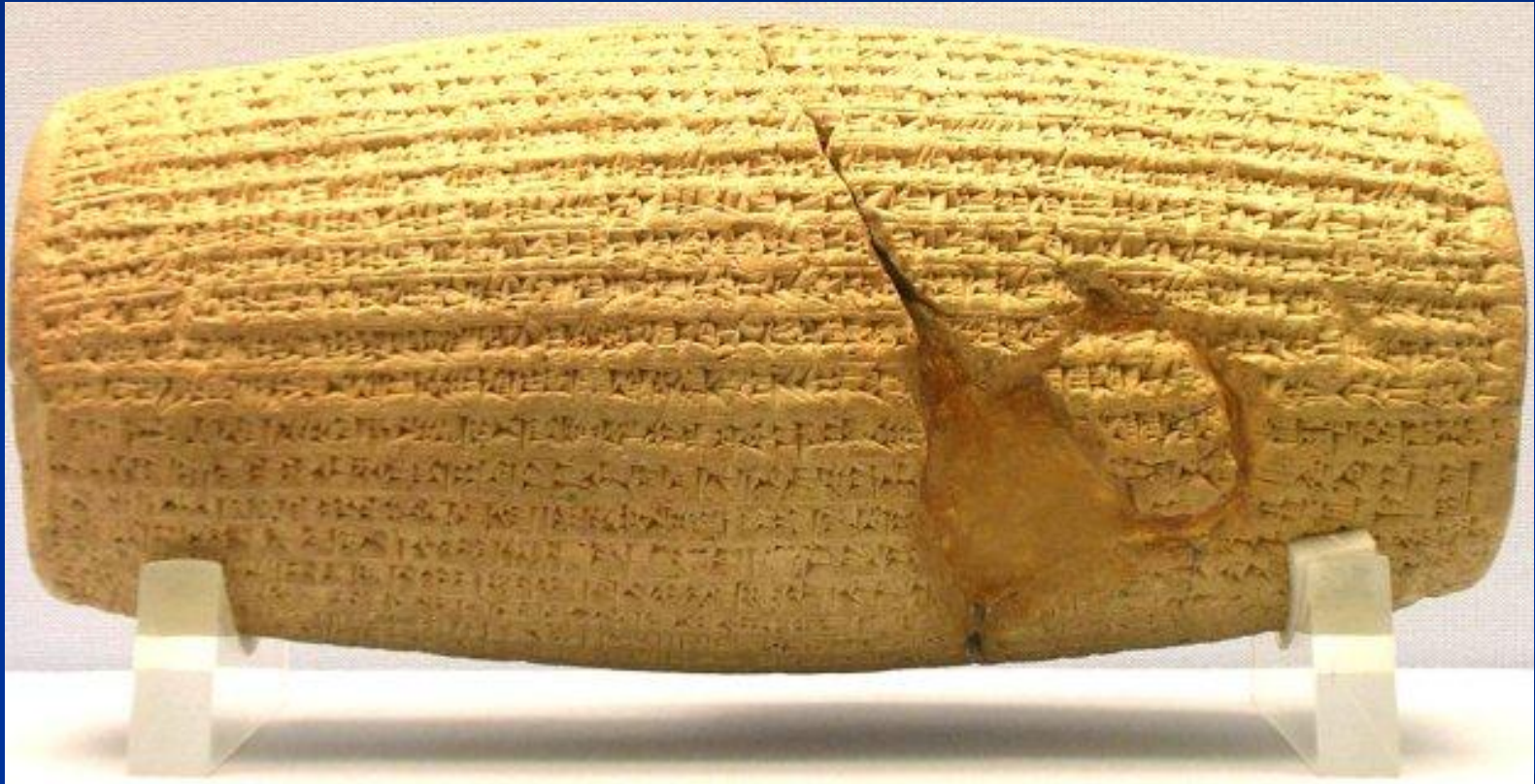# Ancient Greece

Greece and Persia

Cyrus Cylinder – Describes Cyrus the Great conquering Babylon
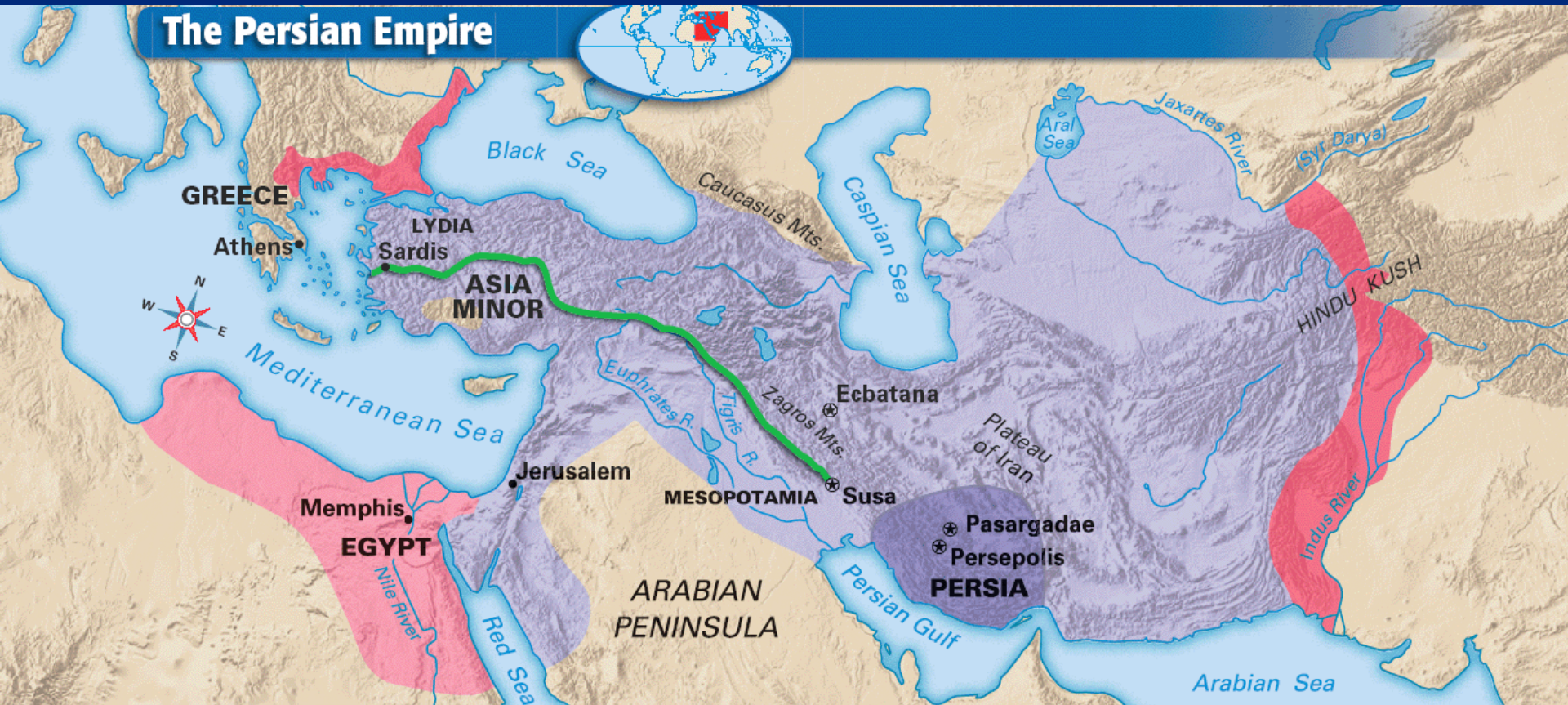
Persia – Modern Day Iran

- Persian Empire began around 550BCE
  - They were originally nomads
  - Banded together for protection and food
  - Began setting up villages and cities
  - Eventually became one of the world's largest empires ever
    - 127 nations!
- There were two main reasons the Persians were able to become and stay powerful:
  - They treated their conquered people well
  - They allowed the conquered to keep their customs and religions
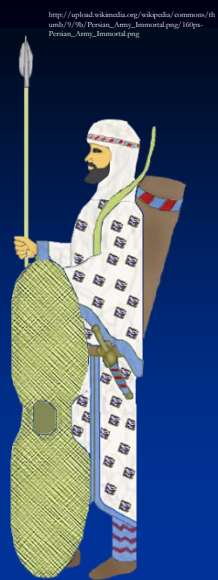
Cyrus the Great

- Persians were controlled by another group early on
  - Called Medes
- Cyrus II leads a revolt against the Medes and is successful
  - Marks the beginning of the Persian Empire
- Cyrus leads his army to conquer Mesopotamia, parts of India, and even some Greek colonies in Asia Minor
  - Cyrus forms the largest empire the world had ever seen
- Because of his great success, he is called Cyrus the Great

Persian Empire

The Persian Empire
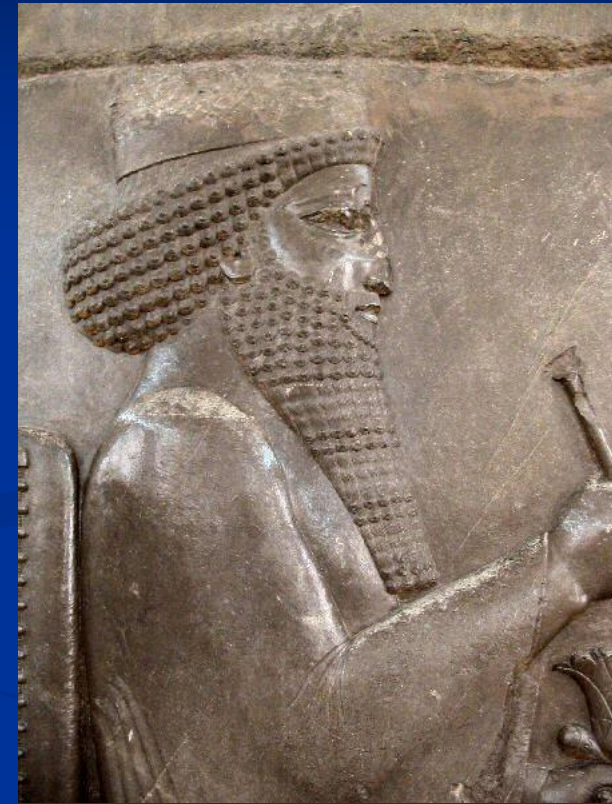
The Persian Army

- The Persian army was very strong
  - Very organized and loyal
- The Persian army's elite (best) were called Immortals
  - 10,000 of the best soldiers
- The army also had a very powerful cavalry
  - Cavalry – a unit of soldiers who ride horses
- Cavalry charged and weakened the enemy
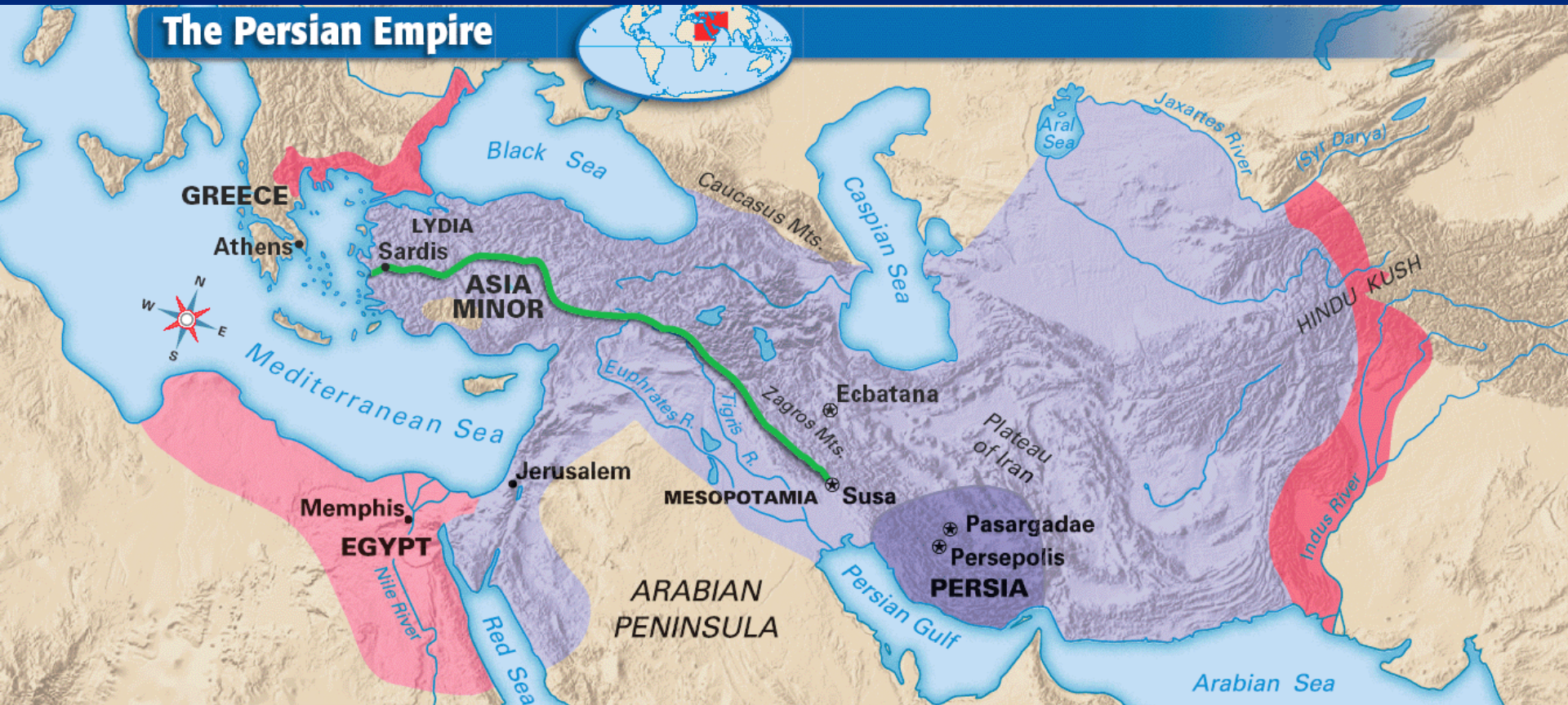 - Immortals finished them off
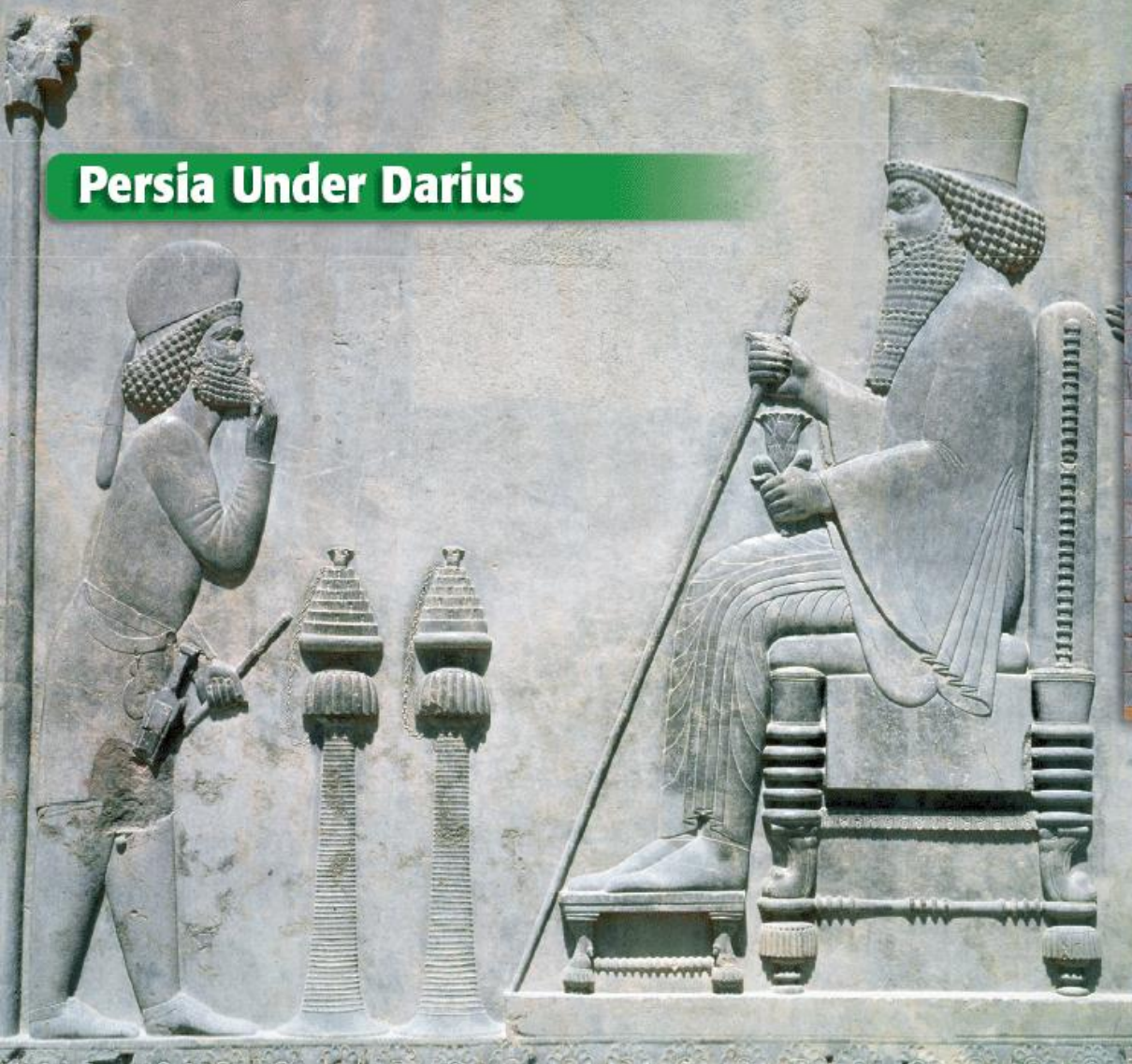
Persian Empire Grows Stronger

- After Cyrus, his son ruled for a short period
  - A rebellion began and many people fought for power
- Eventually, Darius I takes control and expands the empire even more
  - Into Egypt and the Indus Valley

Persian Empire

Persia Under Darius

Sitting on a throne, the emperor Darius meets with an officer of his empire. Darius restored order to the Persian Empire and then expanded it. His army included royal guards like the two shown here.

Why do you think Darius appears larger than the official he is meeting with?

Darius I

- Darius set up 20 provinces to help with organization
- Darius I also set up a vast road system
  - One of the world's best
  - Possibly the world's first Postal System
- Capital city = Persepolis
- Darius had more projects in mind, but he had to deal with a problem first

Brian B ake—Photo Researchers, Inc.

Persepolis

Hall of Hundred Columns

King's Palace
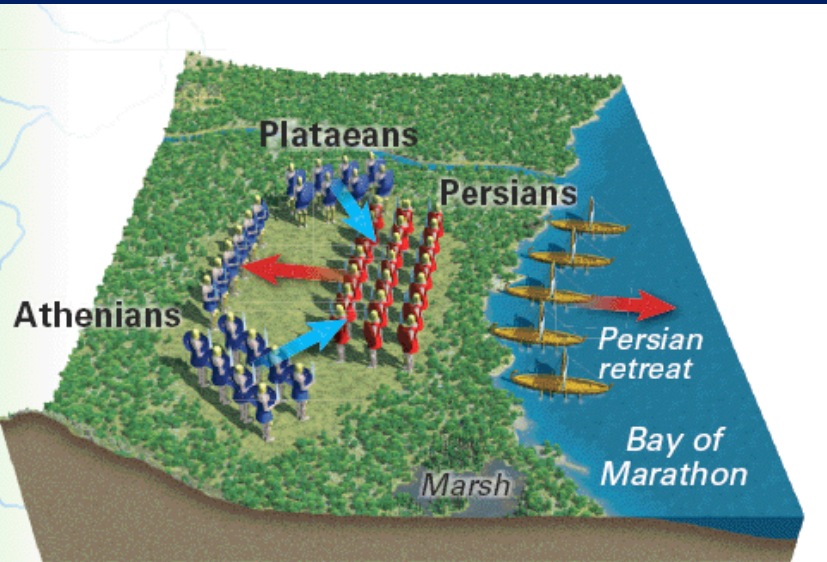
Persepolis

The Persians Fight the Greeks

- 499_{BCE} – Several Greek colonies rebel against Persians
  - Supported by Greeks on the mainland
- Persians put down revolt, but Darius wants revenge on the Greeks
  - For supporting the rebellion

The Persian Wars

- Darius I invades Greece in 490BCE
  - Invaded north of Athens on Plains of Marathon
- This battle began the Persian Wars
  - Persian Wars – A series of wars between Persia and Greece
- At Marathon, Athens fought the Persians
  - Athens had around 11,000 soldiers, Persia had around 25,000 (these estimates are widely debated)
  - Athens had better weapons and strategy
- Athens emerges victorious at Battle of Marathon

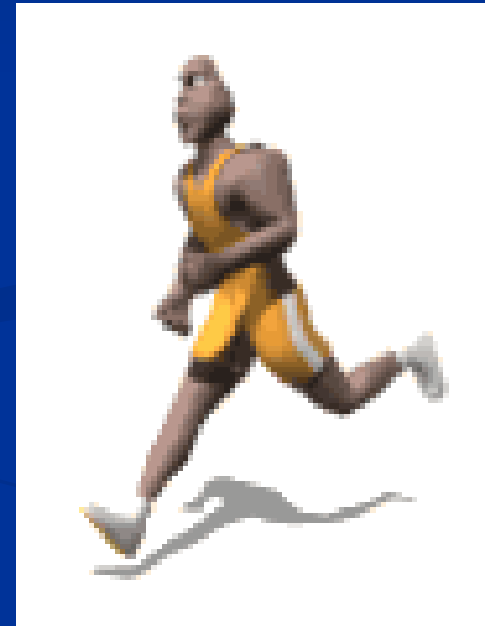# Greek Phalanx

Persian Boats

Marathon

At Marathon, the Greeks defeated a larger Persian force by luring the Persians into the middle of their forces. The Athenians then surrounded and defeated the Persians.

The Persian Wars

- Two legends emerge from the Battle of Marathon
  - Runner from Marathon to Sparta
    - Runs all the way to Sparta only to get rejected (140 miles in 36 hours)
  - Runner from Marathon to Athens
    - Runs to Athens – delivers news of victory, then dies
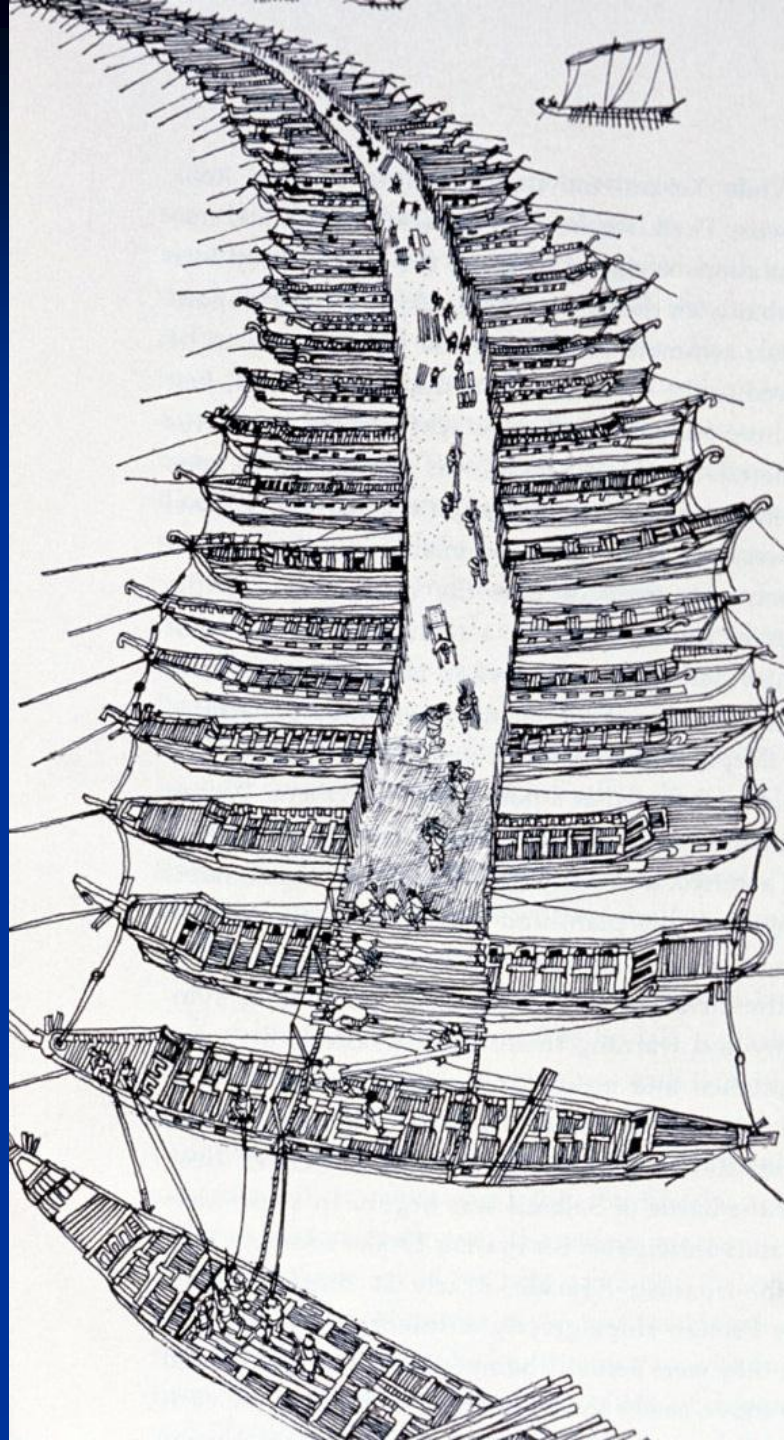- That's possibly where we get the marathon race from

The Persian Wars

- As a result of the Battle of Marathon, other groups try to rebel against the Persians
  - Takes several years for the Persians to regain control
- Ten years after Battle of Marathon, a new ruler is in charge of Persians – Xerxes
  - Son of Darius I
- Xerxes attempts to finish what his father started
  - Invades Greece in 480BCE
  - Brings both army and navy

The Bosporus Strait

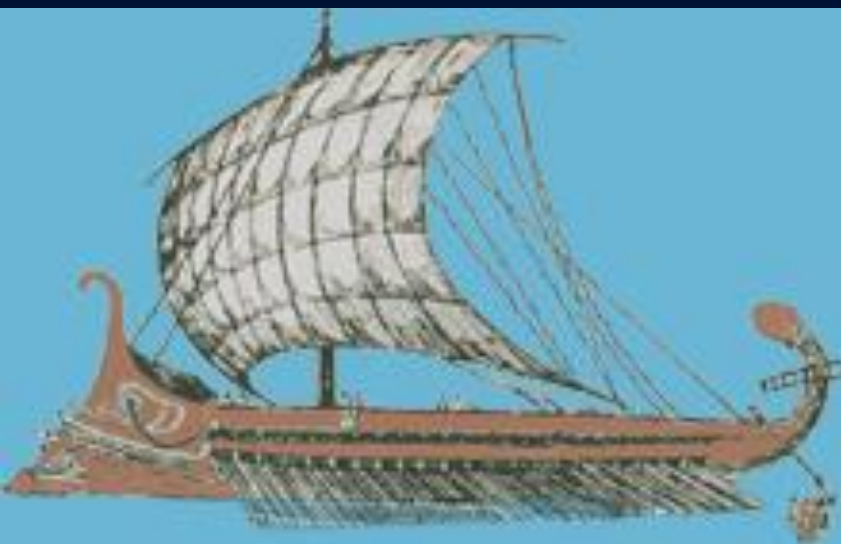# Xerxes's Bridge Over the Bosporus Strait

The Persian Wars

- Sparta joins with Athens this time to help out
  - Sparta supplies the army
  - Athens supplies the navy
- Three major battles:
  - Battle of Thermopylae – Persian victory
    - Athens is destroyed after the Battle of Thermopylae
  - Battle of Salamis – Greek Naval victory
  - Battle of Plataea – Final battle: Greek victory
- Persians leave Greece defeated again
  - They will never return

The Persian Wars

Byzantium

Wreck of
Darius's
Fleet

Aegean
Sea

Thermopylae

Plataea

Marathon

Athens

Salamis

Peloponnesus

Sparta

IONIA

ASIA
MINOR

Sardis

N
W E
S

GEOGRAPHY
SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

History Textbook

Greek Trireme

Salamis

At Salamis, the Greeks destroyed the Persian navy by attacking in a narrow strait where the Persian ships could not maneuver well.

What if the Greeks had lost to the Persians?