

**CHAPTER
EVENTS**

c. 550 BC
Cyrus the Great founds the Persian Empire.

**WORLD
EVENTS**

c. 551 BC
Confucius is born in China.

431 BC
The Peloponnesian War begins.



334–323 BC
Alexander the Great builds his empire.



30 BC
Rome conquers Egypt, ending the Hellenistic Age.

550 BC

450 BC

350 BC

250 BC

150 BC

50 BC

343 BC
The last Egyptian ruler of Egypt is overthrown.

c. 325 BC
The Mauryan Empire is founded in India.

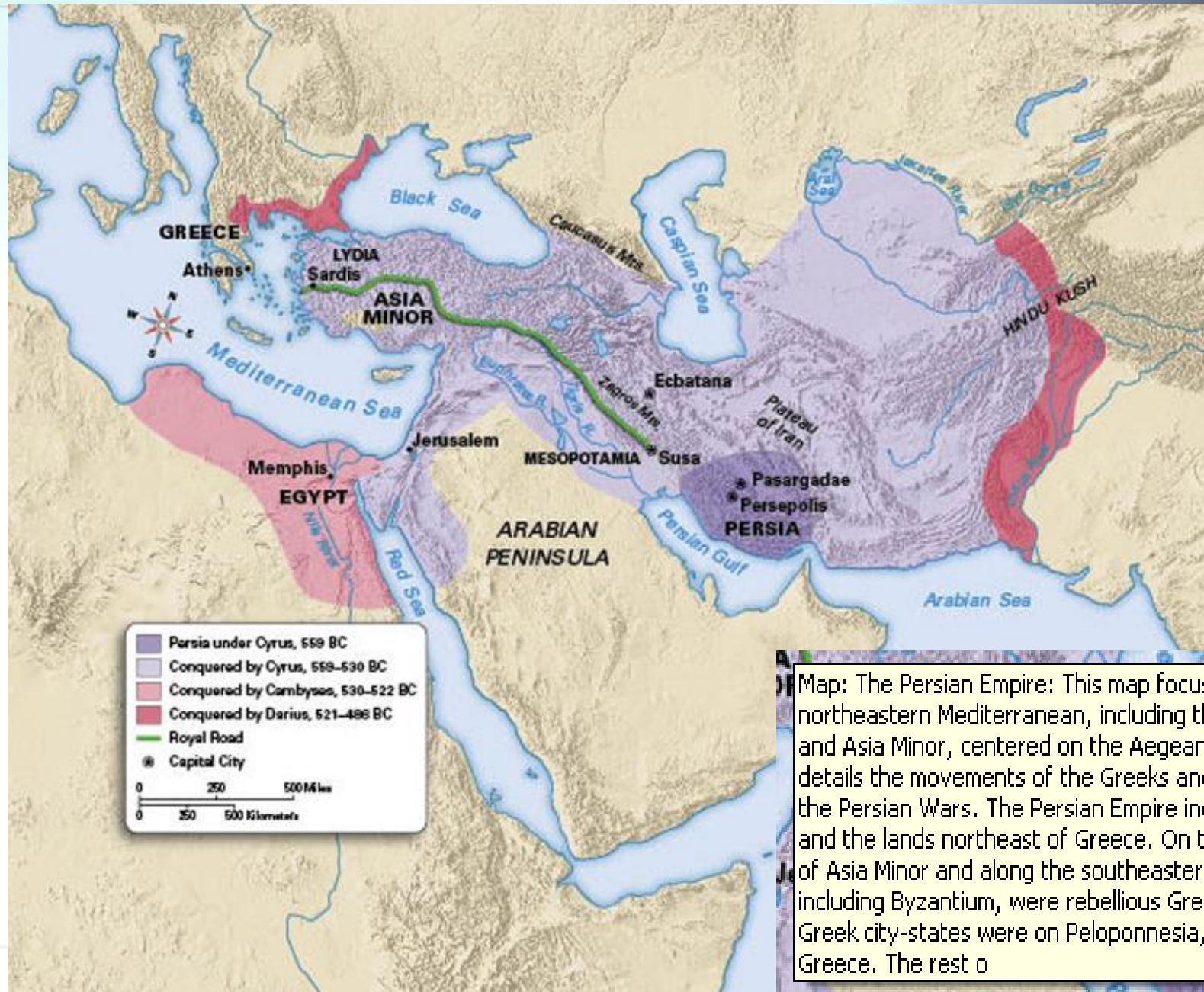


c. 160 BC
The Maccabees regain Jewish independence.



Greece and Persia

The Persian Empire



Map: The Persian Empire: This map focuses on the northeastern Mediterranean, including the areas of Greece and Asia Minor, centered on the Aegean Sea. The map details the movements of the Greeks and the Persians in the Persian Wars. The Persian Empire included Asia Minor and the lands northeast of Greece. On the western coast of Asia Minor and along the southeastern coast of Europe, including Byzantium, were rebellious Greek city-states. Greek city-states were on Peloponnesia, in southern Greece. The rest o

The Period of Disunion

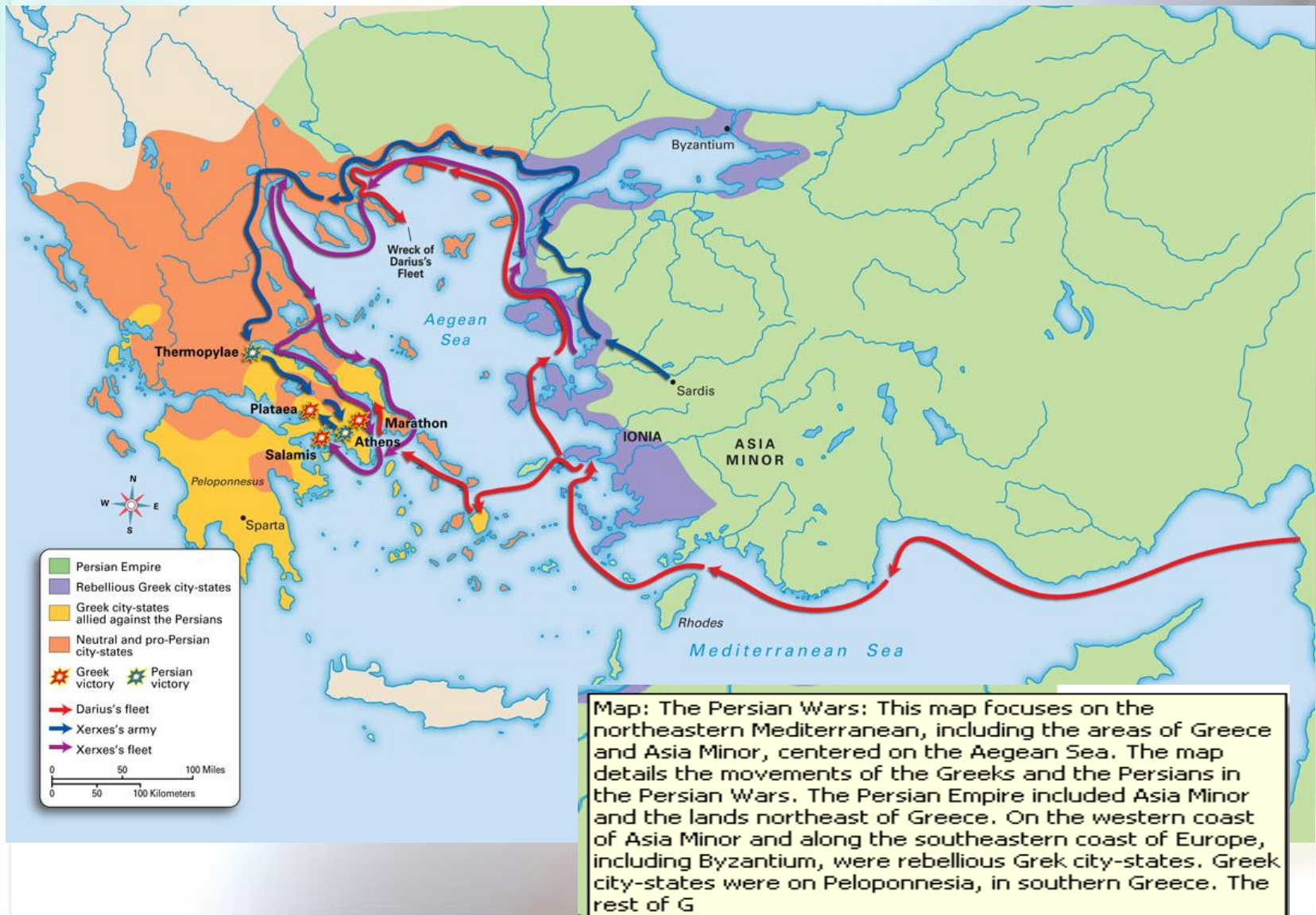
- **Early in their history, the Persians often fought other peoples of Southwest Asia.**
- **In 550 BC the Persian king Cyrus II won independence from a group called the Medes.**
- **He went on to conquer almost all of Southwest Asia. His well-organized army included many war chariots and a powerful cavalry.**



The Period of Disunion

- **His well-organized army included many war chariots and a powerful cavalry.**
- **Cyrus let the people he conquered keep their own customs. As a result, few people rebelled and the empire remained strong.**
- **By the time he died around 529 BC, Cyrus ruled the largest empire the world had ever seen. He became known in history as Cyrus the Great.**

The Persian Wars



The Persian Empire Grows Stronger

- **Darius I seized power when the death of Cyrus's son left Persia without a clear leader.**
- **Darius organized the empire by dividing it into 20 provinces. Then he chose governors called satraps to rule the provinces for him.**



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.

The Persian Empire Grows Stronger

- Darius expanded the Persian Empire eastward to the Indus Valley and westward into Southeastern Europe.
- He called himself king of kings to remind other rulers of his power.

This Greek vase shows a Persian soldier and a Greek soldier in a fight to the death. During the Persian Wars, the Greeks fiercely defended their homeland against massive invasions by the Persians.



Improvements

- **Darius's many improvements to Persian society included roads. Messengers used these roads to travel quickly throughout Persia.**
- **Darius also built a new capital called Persepolis.**

Ruins of Persepolis, an ancient ceremonial capital of the second Iranian dynasty.



Zoroastrianism

- During his reign a popular new religion called Zoroastrianism (zawr-uh-WAS-tree-uh-nih-zuhm) arose in Persia.
- This religion taught that the forces of good and evil were fighting for control of the universe.

An ancient Zoroastrian temple stands near Baku, Azerbaijan.



The Persians Fight Greece

- **In 499 BC several Greek cities in what is now Turkey rebelled against Persian rule.**
- **They were joined by a few city-states from mainland Greece.**
- **The Persians put down the revolt, but nine years later Darius invaded Greece and began the Persian Wars.**
- **The Greeks won the first battle, at Marathon, because they had better weapons and armor.**

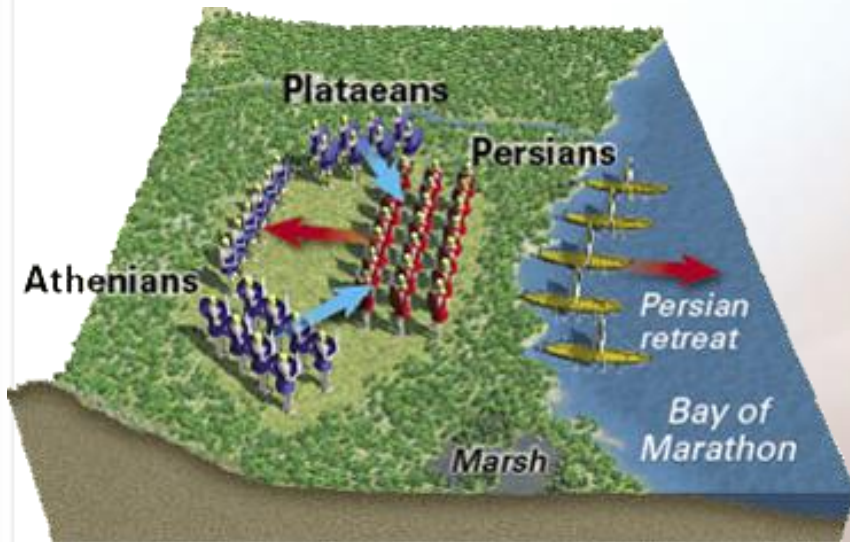
Emperor Xerxes I

- **Ten years later, Persian Emperor Xerxes I (ZUHRK-seez) sent another army into Greece.**
- **The city-states of Athens and Sparta joined forces to defend Greece. Despite a brave stand by the Spartans at Thermopylae (thuhr-MAH-puh-lee), the Persians succeeded in attacking and burning Athens.**
- **However in the subsequent battles of Salamis (SAH-luh-muhs) and Plataea (pluh-TEE-uh), the Greeks prevailed and brought an end to the wars. They had defeated a powerful foe and defended their homeland.**

The Persian Wars

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.



Salamis

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



The ruins shown in this photo are from the Parthenon, a beautiful temple built to celebrate a Greek victory in war.

