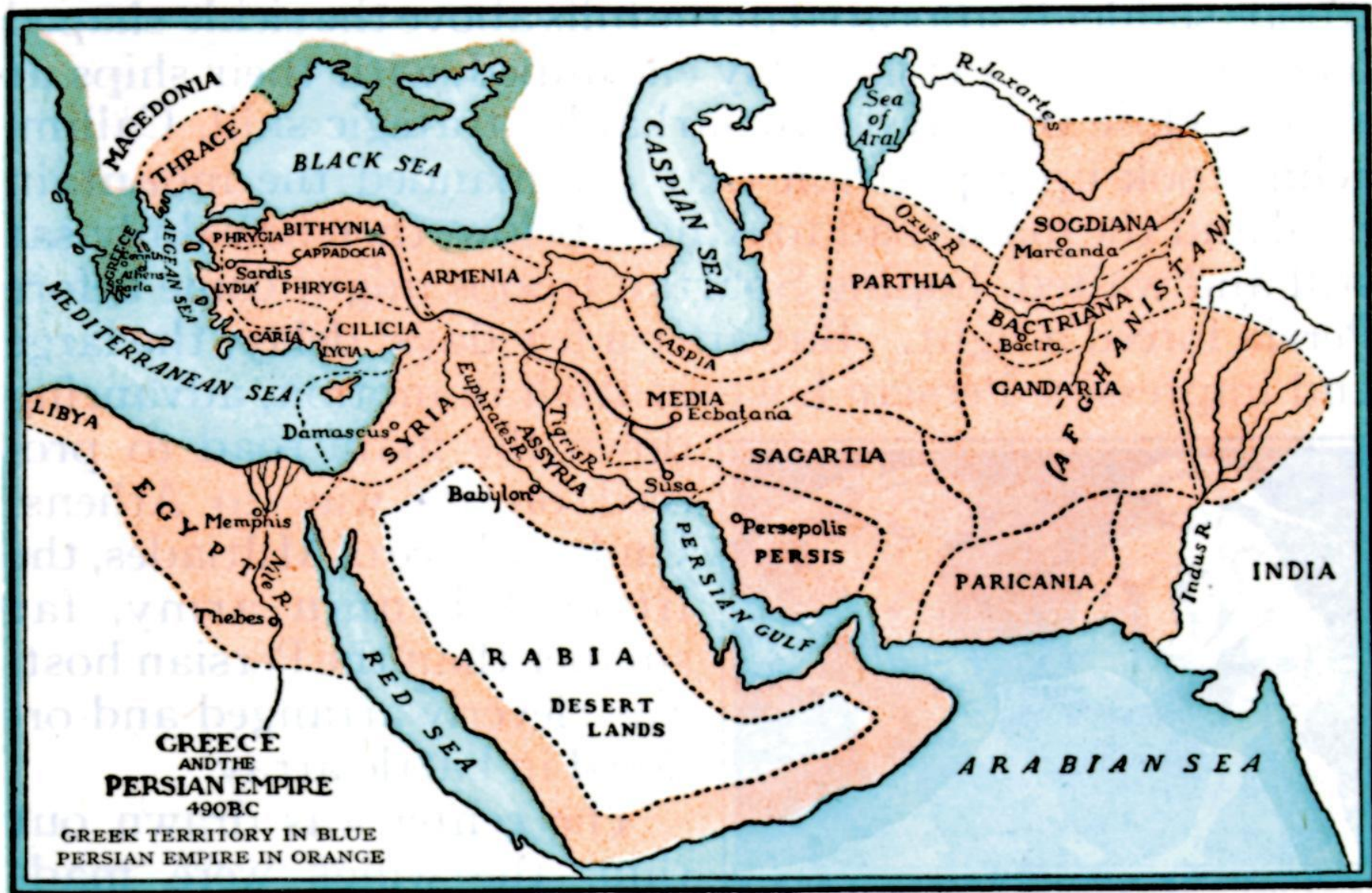


The Persian Wars

Greece's Finest Hours

Where is Persia?



Why Fight?

- Greeks had been settling on the west coast of Asia Minor (Persia)
- Persia conquered these colonies
- In 499 B.C. Greeks in these colonies revolted against Persian rule (they were used to ruling themselves—democracy)
- Athens sent troops to support the revolt

Crushing the Revolt

- Emperor Darius of Persia crushed the revolt rather quickly
- He decided to punish Athens for helping the colonies
- After training for a few years Darius sent troops to invade Greece
- Sailed on to the Bay of Marathon

The Battle of Marathon

- Athens asked Sparta to help, but Spartan troops would not arrive for 9 days (they were in the middle of religious festivals)
- Other jealous city-states decided not to help Athens against the Persian Empire
- So Athens took on the mighty Persian Empire by themselves

A Serious Mismatch

- Persian troops—100,000
- Athenian troops—20,000
- Did Athens really have any hope against these odds?

Victory

- The Athenian army was well-trained and did not break formation as they charged the Persian lines
- The organized charge surprised the large but scattered (and poorly organized) Persian army
- The Persian soldiers turned and ran from the oncoming Athenians



A Slaughter

- The Athenian army almost drove the Persians back to the sea
- Final tally
 - Persians—6, 400 dead
 - Athens—192 dead
 - Darius returned to Persia never to return

Connection to the Past

- The modern marathon has its roots in the Battle of Marathon
- A Greek soldier, Phidippides, ran from Marathon to Athens (26 miles) to tell the Athenians of the Greek victory and to warn them that the Persians may try to attack
- Phidippides died from exhaustion after delivering his message
- Today's 26 mile marathon races remember his heroic act of martyrdom

Back for Revenge

- The Persian Emperor Darius never returned, but his son Emperor Xerxes did
- In 480 B.C. the Persians returned to Greece
- They brought even more men this time around

The Battle of Thermopylae

- Persians met a force of Greeks at Thermopylae
- This was a small mountain pass that controlled access to all of Greece
- For two days 7,000 Greeks held the Persians back, but...



The Downfall

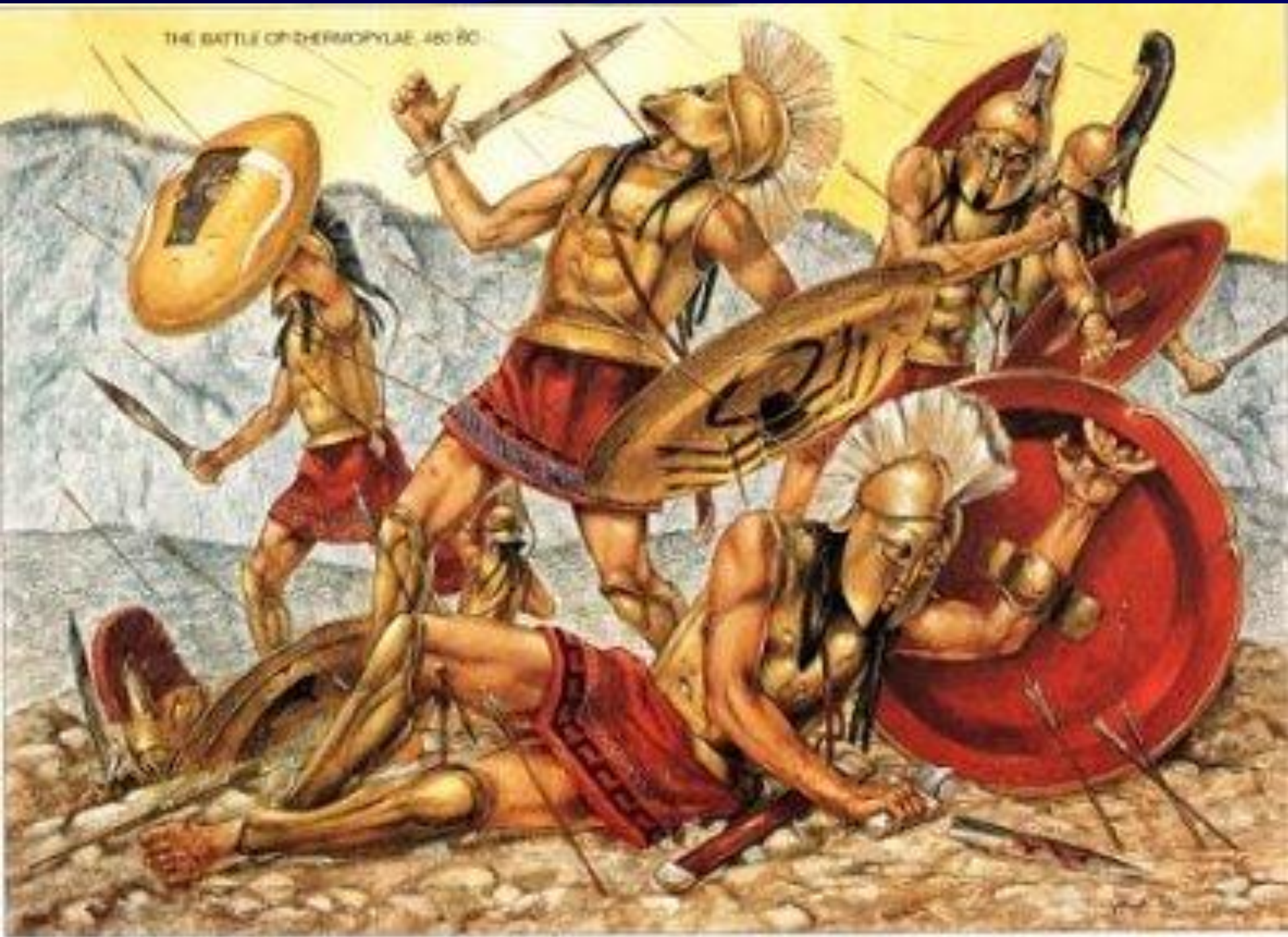
- A Greek traitor showed the Persians a secret passageway
- This allowed the Persians to sneak up from behind and attack the Greeks
- Most of the Greek defenders ran away

A Heroic Act

- About 300 Spartans stayed behind and fought to their deaths
- This allowed the other Greeks to escape capture or certain death



THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE, 480 BC



Here come the Persians

- The Persians poured into Greece
 - They got their revenge by wreaking havoc
 - They even burned Athens to the ground
-
- What were the Greeks to do?

The Battle of Salamis

- As their city-state burned the Athenian people and the army escaped to the island of Salamis
- The Persians were quick to follow the retreating Greeks to Salamis

Those Clever Athenians

- The Greek ships first sailed from shore like they were fleeing the island
- They then turned quickly around and began ramming the Persian ships
- Before the Persians knew what had happened half of their fleet was on the ocean floor
- The Persians once again retreated back to Persia



The Final Battle

- The Battle of Plataea
- The Greeks and Persians at equal strength
- Athens and Sparta fought side by side
- Greek military superiority won out and Persia retreated for good

How did the Greeks do it?

- Three reasons
 - Inherent advantage of the defender
 - They were better soldiers
 - They used the element of surprise

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