

Persian Empire



Rise of Persia

- Around 1000 B.C., Indo-Europeans migrated to present-day Iran
- Among having good farmland, the area was rich in minerals such as copper, lead, gold, and silver
- This allowed thriving trade with dozens of tiny kingdoms rising in the region

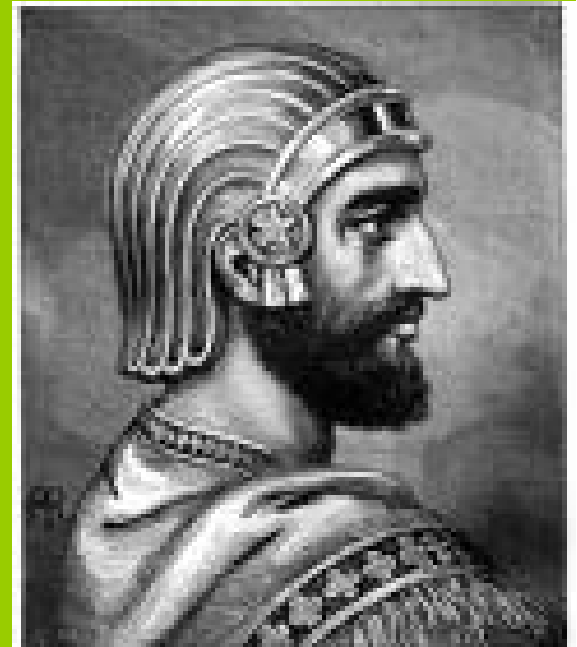
Rise of Persia

- With the fall of the Assyrian Empire (612 B.C) two powers emerged
- Persians and the Medes
- 550 B.C., Cyrus (Persia's King) began his conquest of several neighboring kingdoms in Iran.
- Cyrus dominated the Medes and the Persian Empire went on to extend rule from the Indus River in the east to Anatolia in the west.



Cyrus the Great

- Cyrus was a military genius and had a very strong army.
- They won victory after victory (550-539 B.C.) and conquered the entire Fertile Crescent and most of Anatolia



Cyrus the Great

- Cyrus's most enduring legacy was his method of governing.
- His kindness towards his conquered peoples revealed a tolerant ruler. (Very different than the Assyrians)
- When Cyrus's army marched into a city, there were strict laws against looting and burning.
- Cyrus also believed in honoring local customs and religions – Instead of destroying the local temple, Cyrus would kneel and pray there.

Cyrus the Great

- Under Persian rule, subjects enjoyed lots of freedom.
- Babylon peacefully opened its gates for Cyrus and inhabitants showed great love and respect for him.
- Cyrus also allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem.
(Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to Babylon to build the city and Hanging Gardens)



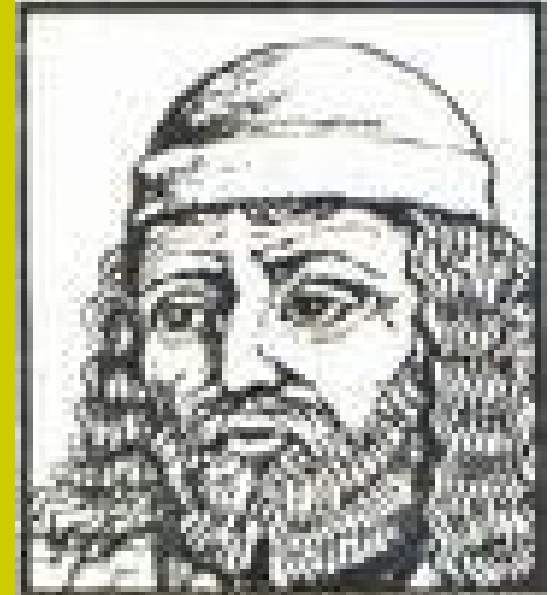
Cyrus the Great

- Cyrus lost his life in battle
- The tomb of Cyrus still stands
- It is notable for its simplicity when compared to other royal tombs of the ancient world



Persian Rule

- Cyrus's son Cambyses took the throne and extended the empire by conquering Egypt
- Cambyses did not follow Cyrus's example of tolerance, ordering all images of Egyptian Gods burned
- Cambyses died after 8 years of ruling



Persian Rule

- Cambyses successor was Darius
- He created the Ten Thousand Immortals, the elite force of the military
- He spent a few years putting down rebellions and revolts
- His next years he put together an efficient and well-organized administration



Persian Rule

- He extended Persian rule east down into India
- Darius's empire stretched 2,500 miles from east (India) to the west (Egypt, Anatolia, Fertile Crescent)
- His only failure, and his son, was he was not able to conquer Greece

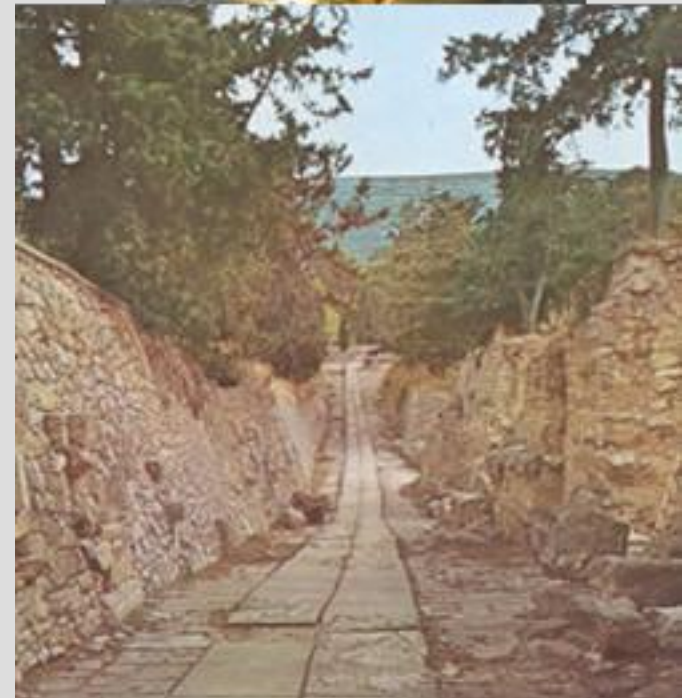


Provinces and Satraps

- Darius was a great military leader, but is most noted for his administration
- He split his empire into 20 provinces, roughly similar to homelands of conquered people
- In each province of the Persian Empire, Darius installed a governor called a satrap
- To ensure loyalty, Darius sent out inspectors “Kings Eyes and Ears”
- A tax collector and army leader was also appointed in each province

Persian Empire United

- An excellent road system and the use of standard money helped unite the empire
- The famous Royal Road of the Persian Empire covered almost 1700 miles
- Persian messengers worked nonstop on horse chariots sending royal commands quickly throughout the empire
- There was 111 posts or relay stations spaced about 15 miles apart



Persian Religion

- The Persian prophet Zoroaster came up with why chaos existed in the world
- He preached that two spiritual armies (good and evil) fought for your soul
- All souls would be judged according to which side they had chosen
- Followers of good would be lifted into paradise...followers of evil suffered in a fiery pit
- The Zoroastrian religion developed ideas of a heaven, hell, and final judgment that were similar to concepts in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism

