

# ANCIENT PERSIA: A TOUR THROUGH THE DYNASTIES



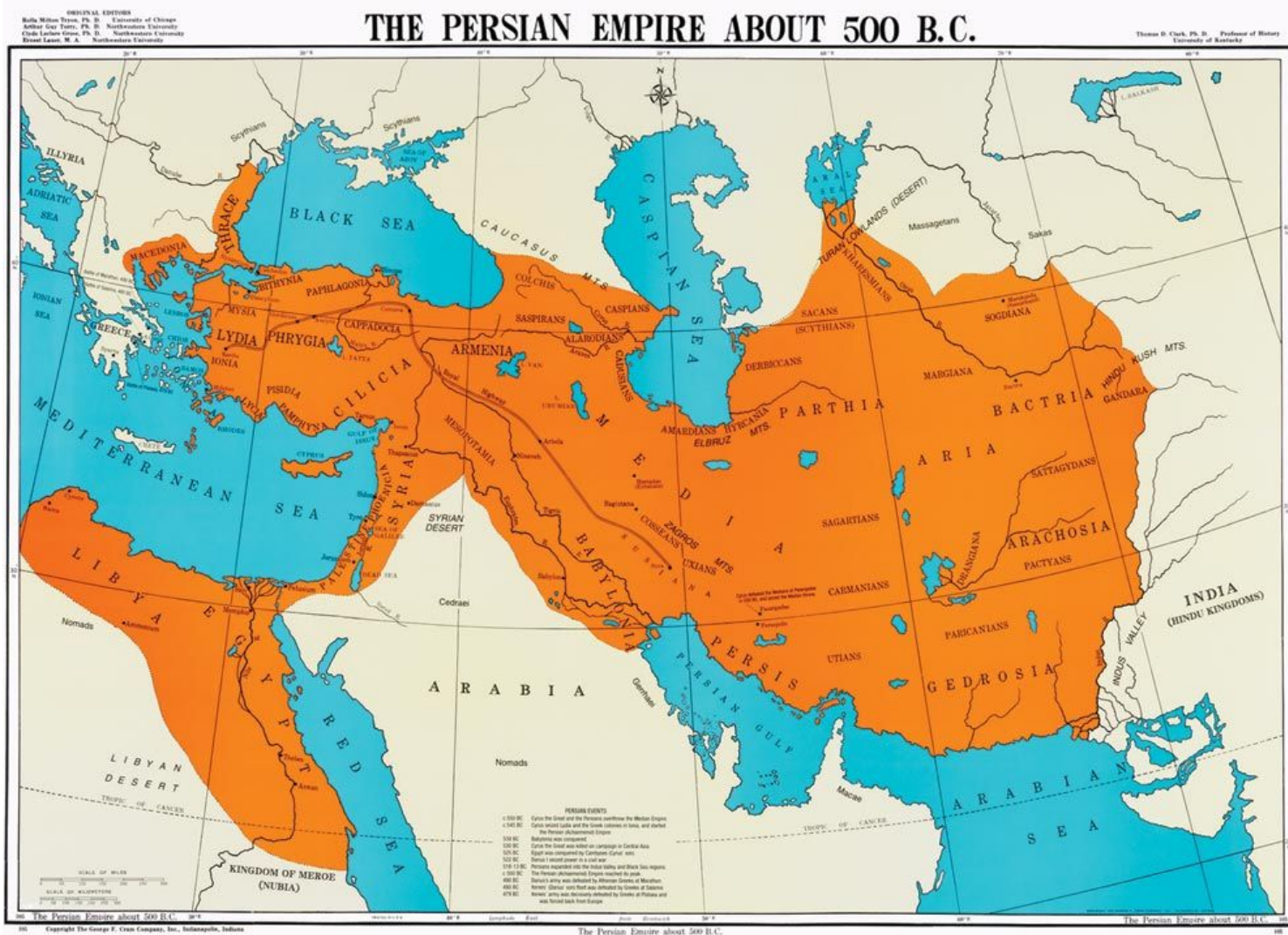
# Order of Persian Dynasties

1. Achaemenid Empire
2. Seleucid Empire
3. Parthian Empire
4. Sasanian (Sasanid) Empire

# 1. ACHAEMENID EMPIRE (550 BCE- 330 BCE)

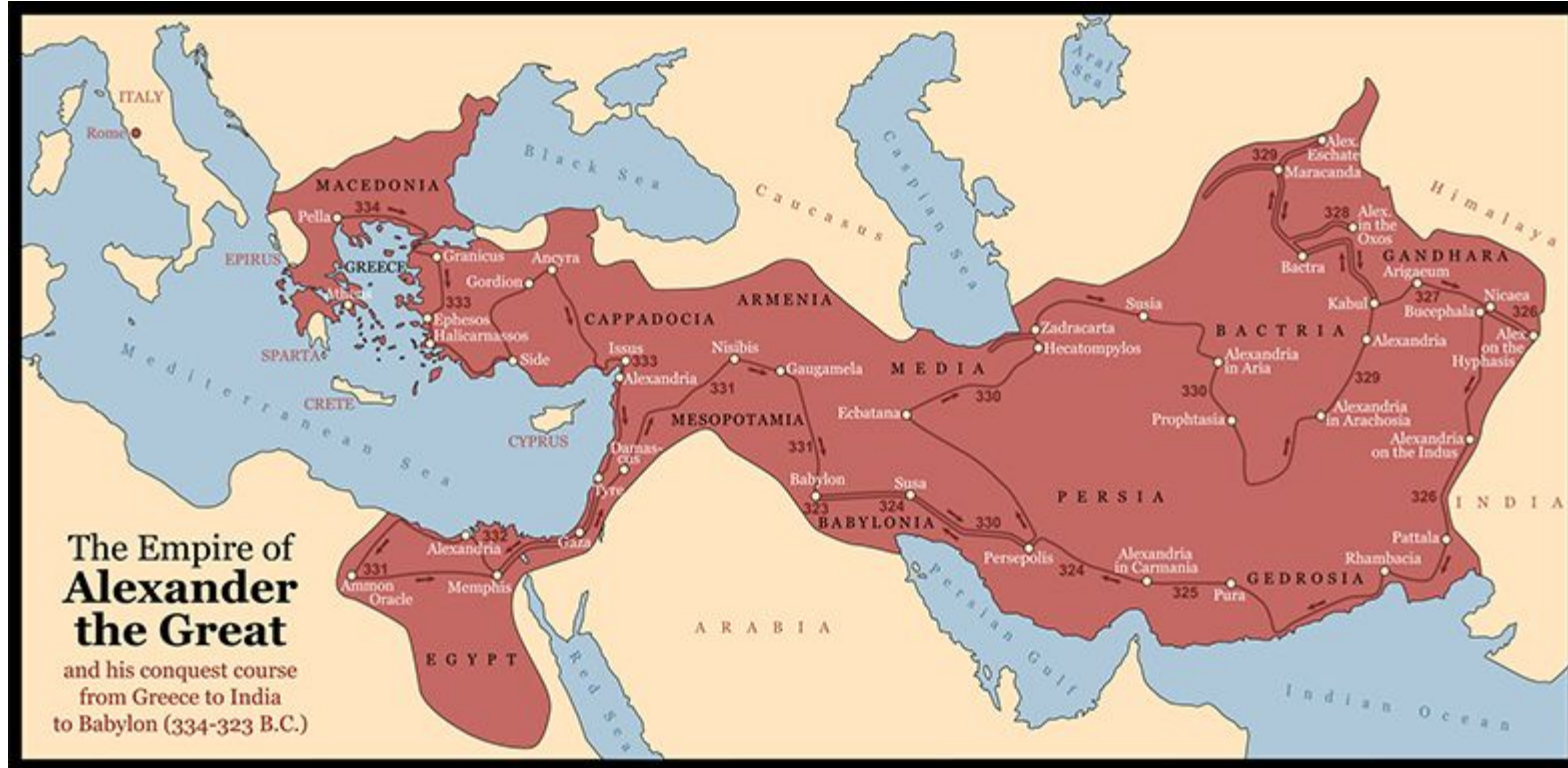
- This was the very first Persian dynasty.
- Named after a king called **Achaemenes**, whose name was used for the ruling dynasty.
- This is the dynasty that **Cyrus the Great** began and **Darius the Great** expanded.
- Rapid expansion (biggest empire of all time by 539 BCE), known for religious tolerance of conquered peoples
- Built the **qanat system** and **Persepolis**
- Methods of consolidation include the **Royal Road** and its renowned method of administration- the empire was divided into provinces with each province led by a **satrap** loyal to the king (who had all power)
- Weakened by the wars with Greece (including the **Battle of Marathon** and the **Battle of Thermopylae**)
- Conquered by **Alexander the Great** in 330 BCE (end of the first Persian Empire).

# The Achaemenid Empire



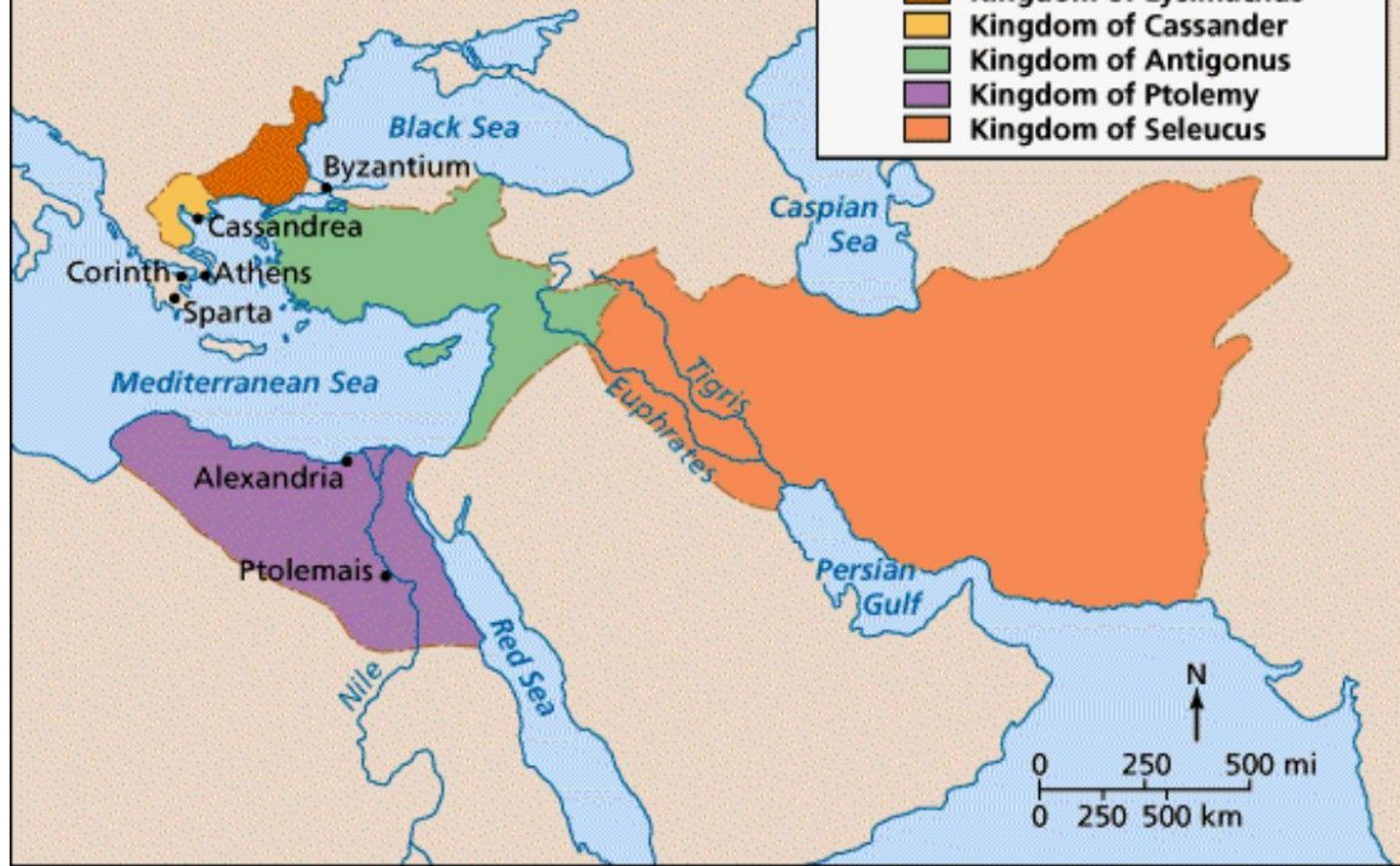


Alexander  
took over  
Persia,  
ending the  
Achaemenid  
Empire.



## Division of Alexander's Empire, 303 B.C.

- Kingdom of Lysimachus
- Kingdom of Cassander
- Kingdom of Antigonos
- Kingdom of Ptolemy
- Kingdom of Seleucus



## 2. SELEUCID EMPIRE (312 BCE-60 BCE)

- Period when Greeks ruled over Persia (during the **Hellenistic** period)
- After Alexander's death in 323 BCE, his empire fell apart- **Seleucus**, one of Alexander's best generals, seized control over the entire western part of the empire.
- Seleucus' heirs struggled to retain control of this area.
- Rival claimants to the throne fought for power (civil war) as **Rome** proceeded to take territory from the Seleucid Empire.
- Territory absorbed by the Romans in 60 BCE.





### 3. PARTHIAN EMPIRE (238 BCE-224 CE)

- The land called **Parthia** is in present-day Iran
- It was a satrapy (province) of the Achaemenid Empire until its conquest by **Alexander**, and became a province of the Seleucid Empire after Alexander's death.
- The **Parni** (a nomadic people from Central Asia) moved into Parthia and adopted its language and culture.
- The Parni had a king, who in 238 CE declared Parthia independent
- Parthia took advantage of weakened Seleucid power, winning back much of Persian territory
- The Romans launched frequent attacks against Parthia- the Parthians had the advantage of being better on horseback (archers).
- Not as focused on conquest and expansion as the Romans
- Wars against Romans took a heavy toll on the Parthians



## 4. SASANIAN EMPIRE (224 CE-637CE)

- 224 CE: Ardashir I, the vassal king of Persia, defeated the Parthian army, established the **Sasanian (Sasanid) dynasty**.
- Unlike the Parthians, pursued an expansionist policy
- Finally fell by overreaching themselves in their long-running conflict with the **Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire)**
- 637 CE: The Sasanian era ended as **Muslim Arab** armies took control of Persia.



**The Persian Empire**  
**in 600 AD**  
(under the Sassanid Dynasty)

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