



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Religion/Ceremony Celebration **History** Prayer
Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 **Grades 6-8** Grades 9-12

Lesson # (if applicable): The Achaemenid Empire- Lesson 5

Subject of the Lesson: Darius Enters Europe

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

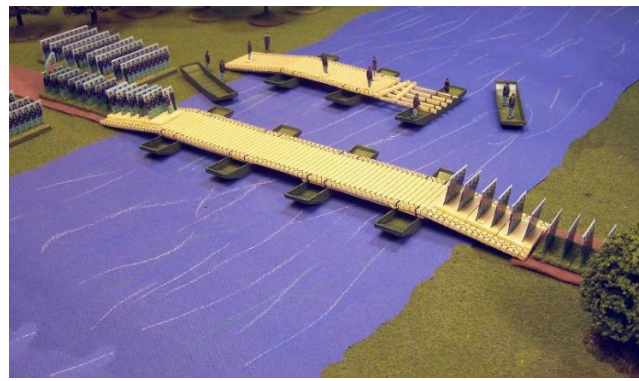
Background:

Darius I, (Dāryoush in Persian) became king after Cambyses II. Within one year, he united the empire and eliminated the multiple revolts across the empire. The following are some of his other contributions; he improved the socio-economic and political situation of the land by increasing security on roads, built multiple roads to connect the different parts of the empire, standardized the value of coin, measurement, and weight, and divided the empire into provinces or satrapies for central control.

Darius Enters Europe:



Above maps show Bosphorus Strait



Above Photos: Bridge of ships to cross Bosphorus Strait and Danube River



Photo Above: Green area shows land of the Scythians

The Scythians were seminomadic tribal people who made their living mainly by raising cattle and other livestock. They were linked in a loose political federation and the local craftspeople produced finely embroidered textiles, exquisitely decorated leather and numerous copper, bronze, and gold artifacts. Their warriors were expert horsemen-archers known for their tenacity and their custom of collecting as trophies the heads of their defeated enemies. They typically made the skulls into drinking cups that hung from their belts when not in use.

The Scythians from time to time would attack cities in the Persian Empire. To teach the Scythians a lesson and to expand his Empire, in 512 BCE, Darius I led an army to battle. As part of his preparation to enter Europe, he ordered military officials in his satrapy of Katpatuka (Cappadocia for Greeks) bordering the Black Sea in northern Asia Minor, to sail to the northern coast of the sea and raid the nearest Scythian villages. This expedition designed to secure prisoners was a complete success. Among



the captives was the brother of a local chief, who provided the Persians with much valuable information about the Scythians and their lands.

To reach the Scythian land north of the Black Sea, he had his army march through northern Asia Minor, crossing the Bosphorus Strait and entering Thrace (Greek region on the northern rim of the Aegean Sea). To cross the Bosphorus Strait, he ordered a Samian (someone from the Greek Island of Samos) engineer to build a pontoon bridge across the Bosphorus Strait. Most of the Thracian tribes submitted to Darius without a fight. Darius' army moved northward, crossing the Danube River, and at last, entering the vast steppes of Scythian occupied land.

The Scythians knew that they could not defeat Darius in an open battle, so they practiced a hit-and-run tactic. Traditionally mobile people, they easily fell back, forcing the Persians to waste time and effort pursuing them. By this technique they also harassed the Persian food-searching parties. In addition, they practiced the scorched earth policy by blocking up all the wells and springs which they passed and trampling the pasture to deprive the invaders of the use of their resources. The Persian army, formally trained, were not used to this kind of tactic, and were growing tired and out of supplies. Darius ordered the return of the army and marched back to Sardis to rest before returning to Persia.

The Ionian Rebellion:

Despite not being successful in adding the Scythian land to his Empire, Darius' campaign into Europe was a success. He gained the territories of Thrace becoming the new satrapy of Skudra giving him a firm hold in Europe for a future return. In addition, adding Thrace to the Empire gave him control of the trades around the perimeter of the Black Sea. During the campaign he had relied on soldiers from his subject cities in Ionia to build a bridge of boats across the Danube and to guard that bridgehead while he was in the steppes. They remained loyal in his absence, refusing to destroy the bridge under Scythian pressure. The Ionians saw Darius' retreat from the Scythian battle as a sign of weakness and they planned for regaining their freedom from the Persian rule. In 499 BCE Aristagoras, a distinguished citizen of Miletus, the most prosperous city of Ionia, inspired Ionians to organize against the Persian Empire. They did this by:

1. Replacing pro-Persian Greek leaders with those in favor of a rebellion
2. Approaching Greek city-states with strong armies to join forces. Sparta and Athens had the most formidable army. Sparta refused to help Aristagoras due to the large distance between Sparta and Persia. Athens and Eretria agreed to aid him with the promise of gold and riches.



Miletus and the Ionian land



Above map: The Ionian land, Mt. Athos and Greece

In early 498 BCE, the Ionians clashed openly with the Persian soldiers and forced Darius' local officials to flee to Sardis. The rebellion extended to the Greeks living in Thrace.

Attack on Sardis:

After the arrival of twenty ships from Athens and five from Eretria with troops and supplies on board, a small raiding party of Milesians and Athenians commanded by Aristagoras descended on Sardis and put it to flames. A nearby Persian garrison was alerted and unprepared to fight the Persians, and the raiding party retreated. The Persian garrison gave chase and cornered them near the seacoast. Overwhelmed, the Milesian survivors escaped to their city and the Athenian and Eretrian commanders saw it was in their best interest to return to Greece.



Photo Above: Ionian attack on Sardis



Darius was a proud, strong-willed ruler who on many occasions had demonstrated harsh punishment for rebellion. In the following four years, Darius surrounded and overcame the Ionian cities. The navy that Cambyses II formed about three decades before, now became fully realized as the Persian navy took control of the eastern Aegean, trapping the rebels between sea and Darius' armies. In 494 BCE Darius defeated the Ionians in their last attempt at rebellion by sailing to Miletus. Once at the walls of the city, the Persians surrounded Miletus, dug tunnels under the walls, and took the city. In the following months, the other Ionian cities fell to the Persian army. The cities that had rebelled against Darius such as Chios and Samos were dealt with harshly. This was to discourage any further rebellion against the Empire.

Fall of Eretria:

To teach Athenians and Eretrians a lesson for rebelling against the Persians and burning Sardis, he commanded Mardonius, a young nobleman who had recently wed Darius' daughter, Artostre, to launch an expedition. In 493 BCE Mardonius, led the Persian army into Asia Minor with the Persian naval fleet sailing along the Aegean coast to supply the army. The purpose was to retake Thrace, then march to Athens and Eretria along the mainland to conquer the two cities. If successful, this not only would teach Athenians, Eretrians and others a lesson not to meddle in Persian affairs, but it also would give Darius a strategic foothold in southern Greece.

Mardonius retook Thrace in only a few months, however, his descent southward was foiled due to a violent storm invading the Persian fleet near Mt. Athos, on the Mt. Athos peninsula. Without the supply-providing naval fleet, the Persian army could not get far, hence Mardonius, and his forces were recalled.

Darius immediately devised another plan, this time to avoid costly delays of an overland march, he assembled a strike force to sail directly across the Aegean to the target cities under the command of Datis, a capable Median general and Artaphernes, Darius' nephew. In the Spring of 490 BCE, Datis and Artaphernes set sail with hundreds of ships, troops, and sailors from southern Asia Minor crossing the island of Rhodes, Samos, and Naxos to the city of Eretria. The Persians in their uniforms of purple and other bright colors surrounded the city for six days, according to Herodotus, many were killed on both sides and on the 7th day two well-known Eretrians betrayed the town to the Persians. They believed that the Persians would reward them by putting their conservative political party in power, however, Persians burned the city and took inhabitants as prisoners.

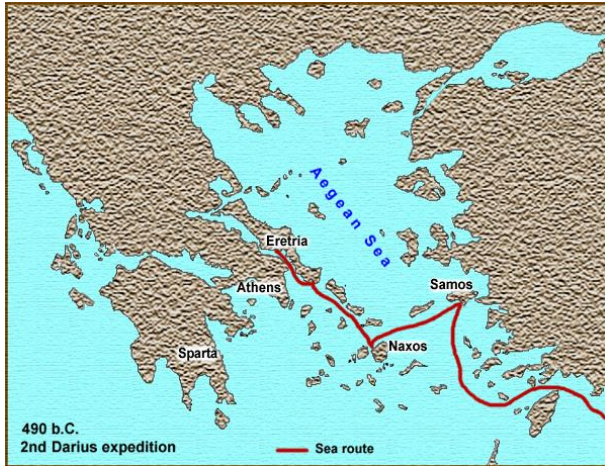


Photo Above: Attack on Eretria

Marathon:

After conquering Eretria, Datis and Artaphernes continued to Athens. In early September, they sailed from Euboea and made the short journey to the shores of the Athenian territory of Attica and set their camp on the eastern edge of the flat plain of Marathon. Their initial plan seems to have been to march the 26 miles to Athens, capture the city and make it a Persian base. To the Persians' surprise they found 9,000 hoplites, assembled on the western edge of the plain blocking the road to Athens. The Greek hoplites were heavily armored infantry soldiers who carried thrusting spears and short swords. They fought in a special formation called a phalanx, which was developed in mainland Greece in the 8-7th century BCE. A typical phalanx was composed of eight rows of hoplites in close order, their uplifted shields formed an unpassable barrier. As this formation moved forward the first row would aim their spears at the foe and the hoplites in the back would put force on the backs of the ones in front to make the spear blow to the enemy more lethal with tremendous forward momentum. This was the first time the Persians were facing a phalanx of hoplites and they lacked experience of how lethal they can be. On the morning of September 12th, the Greeks launched a forward attack. The Greek hoplites proved more disciplined and deadlier than the Persians who fell back and fled to the beaches. The Greeks followed and were able to capture seven ships before the rest escaped. Datis and Artaphernes returned to Asia Minor and sent news of the outcome of the battle to Darius.

The Greeks viewed this as a great victory against the mighty Persian fleet and the Persians considered it as just a minor dent in the invincible empire's armor.



Photo Above: Greek hoplites

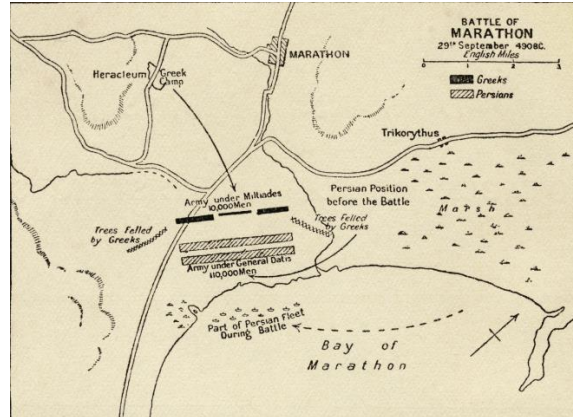
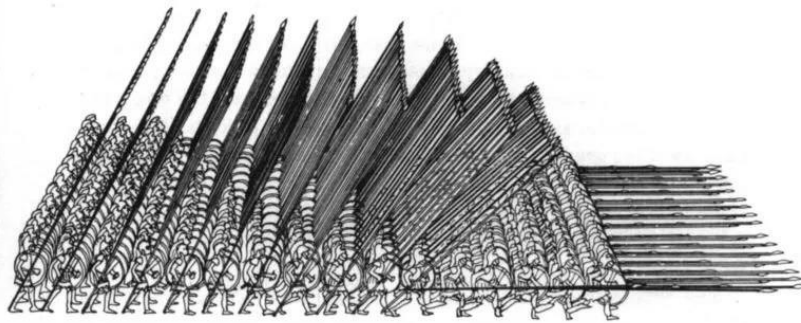


Photo Above: Marathon battle



The Macedonian phalanx, here shown in its fighting formation of 256 men, the syntagma.

Lesson for students:

1. Make the lesson into a PowerPoint with maps and photos to enhance the lesson and present to students. Important points to consider:
 - a. Review of previous lesson
 - b. Why did Darius decide to enter Europe
 - c. How did he pass the Bosphorus Strait
 - d. How did Darius view his first entry to Europe and how did the Ionians view it.
 - e. How was the control of the Black Sea a triumph for Darius
 - f. Greeks as an un-unified city state
 - g. Why did his second expedition fail
 - h. Hoplite formation as a strong force
2. Give each major section to a group of students and have them present their section to class.



Activity for Students:

1. Have students draw a Phalanx formation.
2. Discussion:
 - a. How did the Persian military discipline differ to that of the Scythians? What does this tell you about the Persian army and their leader Darius?
Sample answer: The Persian army was disciplined and mainly trained in open and frontal combat whereas the Scythians practiced non-conventional hit-and-run tactics. It tells us that Darius himself was an organized, disciplined man who had an organized plan of frontal attack.
 - b. Why did the Persians attack Greece?
In many school history books, students don't read about the reason behind the Persian invasion of Greece. It is important to emphasize that the Persians attacked the Greeks because the Greeks along with the Ionians helped attack and burn Sardis, a city in the Persian Empire. Darius could not ignore such an attack on Persian soil and on a Persian city because it would encourage the revolt of the other satraps and invasion by neighboring countries.
 - c. Darius is known to have been a Zoroastrian. Do his actions both in war and in peace reflect his Zoroastrian beliefs? Which parts do and which parts don't?
Sample answer: The actions of a Zoroastrian don't always reflect the principles of the religion. Darius was ruler, leader, and military man who needed to keep his Empire united and to gain more leverage. On the other hand, many of his beliefs were reflective of Zoroastrian beliefs. For example his strong sense of justice for all, the importance of truth, and defending ones country.
3. Give students a map of the Persian empire before Darius' entry to Europe and then ask them to add the areas he conquered by crossing Bosphorus. Have them indicate on their map how this conquest affected Persia's strength in trade. Have them name the modern countries that were once part of the Persian Empire under Darius.
4. Have students make a pontoon bridge.

Sources:

1. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Greco-Persian-Wars>
2. The Persian Empire by Don Nardo

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