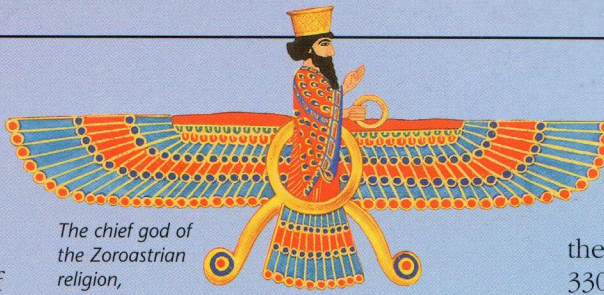


RELIGIONS

Through their vast empire, the Persians had an influence on ideas in many parts of the world. The worship of the Persian god Mithras spread as far as Europe. It was especially popular with the Romans. The Persian prophet Zarathustra (also known as Zoroaster) taught that life was a struggle between forces of good and evil. This belief has attracted followers, right down to the present day.

Part of the grand staircase at Persepolis



The chief god of the Zoroastrian religion, Ahuramazda

DECLINE AND FALL

Despite its long rule and great influence, the empire could not last forever. The Persians invaded Europe as far as Thrace and Macedonia, and even attacked Greece. But after a disastrous defeat at Marathon (see page 182), the Greeks fought them off.

The Persian empire was overthrown by Alexander the Great (see page 242) in 330BC. Then, around 171BC, the Parthians conquered Persia and Babylon, and set up a new empire of their own. Persian supremacy had finally ended.

The carvings show people from all over the Empire bringing gifts to the king.

