

II/24 Achaemenid Persian 560 BC –329 BC
All Reg Co; Hilly/Arid

<i>Huvakan asabâran</i> retinue	CvMe/CvHe	0-1	0-2	0-3
Convert the above to mounted archers	CvMAe/CvHAe		any	
<i>Huvakan asabâran</i>	CvMe	0-3	0-6	0-10
Convert the above to mounted archers	CvMAe		up to ½	
Persian, Median, Paphlagonian and Armenian <i>asabâran</i>	CvM	2-5	4-10	6-15
Convert the above to light cavalry	CvL		up to ½	
Convert the above to mounted archers	CvMA/CvLA		up to ½	
Bactrian and Arachosian <i>asabâran</i>	CvM/CvL	1-2	2-4	3-6
Convert the above to mounted archers	CvLA		any	
Bactrian and Arabian <i>ushabâran</i>	CmM/CmL	0-2	0-4	0-6
<i>Aš tibâran</i> retinue	SpMe	0-1	0-2	0-3
<i>Amrtakan</i>	SpMe/BwMe	0-2	0-4	0-6
<i>Thanuvabâran</i>	BwM	4-10	8-18	12-24
Convert the above to <i>Thanuvabâran</i> w/ <i>Sparabâran</i>	BwH		any	
<i>Kardakan</i> and <i>Takabaran</i> mercenaries	BwM/EdM/SpM	2-6	4-12	6-18
Downgrade the above to light infantry	SpL/BwL		any	
Assyrian, Egyptian and Ionian heavy infantry	SpHi	0-2	0-4	0-6
Phoenician, Saka, Median and African marines	SpM/EdM	0-2	0-4	0-6
Scythed chariots	Ex	0-1	0-2	0-3

a) from 3519 BC

Saka cavalry	CvL/CvLA	0-4	0-8	0-12
Convert the above to elite mounted archers	CvLAe		up to ¼	
Indian <i>Kshathriyas</i> warriors	SpM/EdM	0-2	0-4	0-6
Indian <i>Kshathriyas</i> bowmen	BwM/BwL	0-4	0-8	0-12

b) from 401 BC

Convert the <i>Huvakan</i> to <i>cataphract</i>	CvHe	0-1	0-2	0-4
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c) from 401 to 332 BC

Hellenic <i>hoplite</i> mercenaries	SpH	0-2	0-4	0-6
Hellenic <i>peltephoroi</i> mercenaries	SpM/SpL	0-2	0-4	0-6

d) from 375 to 370 BC

Convert the <i>peltephoroi</i> to “Iphikratean <i>peltephoroi</i> ”	PkM		any	
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This list covers the armies of the Achaemenid (or *Hakhâmaniš iya*) Dynasty beginning with the rule of Cyrus the Great, until the Empire’s conquest by Alexander and his Macedonian/Hellenic army. In spite of the weakness shown at the Thermopilai, Platea, Marathon, Issus and Gaugamela, to name just a few battles, the fact is that under the Achaemenid Dynasty Persia became the biggest and richest Empire on Earth, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Indus and from Bactria to Arabia.

One of the major problems when dealing with the Persians is that most of what we know has been given to us by foreigners, namely the Hellenes. And even though a foreign look may notice otherwise neglected details, it may be nonetheless misleading due to lack of information and wrong interpretation of certain facts. That is why we for example know best about the Applebearers and the Immortals, a noticeable minority, than we know about the rest of the army.

The Persians organized its military in a decimal structure by which a regiment of a thousand men (*hazarabam*) was divided into ten *satabam* of a hundred each, these corresponding to ten *databam*. Ten *hazarabam* would compose a *baivarabam*. Needless to say, the paper strength of each unit was not always maintained.

The Persians' tactics involved large masses of cavalry in order to press and break the enemy, every nobleman being expected to be both a good horseman and bowman. The option for converting the cavalry into mounted-archers reflects this training, even if in later years the bow was progressively substituted by the javelin. The *Xshâyatha Xshâyathiy's* (King of Kings) mounted retinue and the elite *baivarabam* were noble cavalry. After Cyrus' defeat at the hands of the Scythians, part of the cavalry seems to have adopted armor for both riders and horses.

The *Xshâyatha Xshâyathiy's* foot retinue was the *Aš tibâran*, or Applebearers, because their spear's butt resembled a golden apple. The *Amrtakan*, or Immortals, were an elite *baivaraban* that was always kept up to 10 000 men strong.

The majority of the foot was made of *thanuvabâran* (bow-bearers), who were employed en masse to deliver showers of arrows onto the enemy, thus weakening his defences against the Persian cavalry. Sometimes the *thanuvabâran* put themselves under the protection of the *sparabâran* (shield-bearers) armed with a short sword or falchion and a *spara*, a large pavise-like shield. Since there was only one *sparabâra* for every 10 men in an archer unit, we provide the option for converting the *thanuvabâran* into BwH.

The *Kardakan* were presumably non-Persian mercenary infantry recruited either to act as garrison troops or as part of the standing field army. Its origins were manifold: Assyrian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Indian, Lycian, Median, Phoenician, Semitic and Saka (although this designation might also have included Bactrians and Sogdians) among many others. They seem to have been armed with bows, spears, short swords, falchions, sickles and war axes and could also carry shields. The Egyptian and Assyrian are recorded to have used armor. After the "Persian Wars", progressive numbers of *takabâran* [taka (or pelte) bearers] were used.

The Hellenes started to be employed right after the conquest of Ionia by the Persians, but their widespread use as mercenaries only started after the First Persian War. These mercenaries became famous after the "Ten Thousand" led by Xenophon. By 379 BC, the Athenian general Iphikrates led a 20 000 strong contingent of Hellenes, most of whom seem to have been nothing more than *peltasts* (or *peltephoroi*). In order to remedy this situation, Iphikrates issued them with linen cuirasses, big round *peltai*, and 3,6m long spears, thus making them the first *sarissophoroi* known to History.

After the conquest of Bactria and the submission of the Sakas (a Scythian-like people) local contingents were widely employed. The Bactrians were famous for their horses and also used camels as war mounts. The Sakas fought both as horse-archers and as foot soldiers, although this later fighting style could point to a more sedentary kind of life typical of a Bactrian or Sogdian origin.

The last 50 years of the Achaemenid Empire saw it ravaged by internal strife in the way of satrapal rebellions, province secessions, dynastic struggles, regicides and constant palace conspiracies. At this stage, the Empire was "ready to pick" and Alexander III of Macedon took charge of this. Against the Hellenic wave Darius III trusted in his *asabâran*, his mercenaries and in sheer numbers. But to cope with this Alexander used to the best effect an outstanding army including a *sarissophoroi* "hedgehog" and formidable cavalry, plus his unparalleled genius.

Filipe Santos Martins

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