

## Little big heroes

Greek-Bactrians vs Pre-islamic Arabs  
50 AP game

In a small but fierce battle in Arachosia, the valour of the “weak” versus the “strong” was put into evidence.

The battle ground where the action took place was, from the Greek defenders perspective, a plain sided by a rough ground on the right and a gully on the left, both movement-impeditive for cavalry and close order troops alike.

The attacking Arabs put in the centre two warriors units (EdHi) plus two light camels at their right; the left flank had three cameleers, a light cavalry, a *asawira* (CvM), two archers and a javelinmen unit; the right flank, facing the gully, had two spearmen columns (3 SpM and a SpL) helped by a unit of slingers and another one of javelinmen.

The Greek-Bactrians put their usual defensive display: a strong centre (two *sarissophoroi* columns – PKH – with Indian warriors – EdM - on their left and two archers on their right, plus two slingers at their rear; on the right, the Greeks put three cavalries (with the *Basiliké Ilé* retinue in the middle) and two more Sakas (CvLA); the left flank was the weakest with just one unit of *thureophoroi* (SpM) and javelinmen (SpL).

The Arabs attacked, their right entering the gully and the left initiating a rotation near the rough terrain.

On their part, the Greek-Bactrians cautiously advanced the *thureophoroi* who occupied a slope of the gully. The *sarissophoroi* also advanced, leaving behind the Indians (both EdM and BwM) and the slingers, a wise decisions, as we shall see later on, because it created a small reserve. As for the cavalry, it turned a little to the right, preparing to sustain the full weight of the enemy strike.

To the Greek’s point of view the battle started disastrously. On their right the Arab’s accurate shots put a Bactrian cavalry out of action. On the left the *thureophoroi* held a little bit but then the unavoidable came to be: a flanking manouvre by an enemy slinger cutted the Bactrians’ retreat and these were destroyed.

It was at this serious moment that a steady pressure in the centre, a set of timely planned manouvres came and, of course, a little bit of luck, came at last to turn the tide and surprisingly change the outcome of the battle.

At the centre of the battle the Indian archers, unable to shoot at the enemy heavy infantry (who was fighting the *sarissophoroi*), shot at the cameleers instead, who stood a little behind, forcing them to recoil. The light cameleers, in their turn, runned away from the the *sarissas*’ sharped points, thus not only allowing the Indians to turn and face the Arab light troops who stormed their flanks, but also exposing the Arab warriors’ (EdHi) right flank.

The Greek’s cavalry on the right flank moved obliquously, coming shoulder to shoulder with the Arab mounted forces whitout, however, allowing contact. With this manouvre the Greeks got, at least, two turns without fighting in this flank while decisive combats were taking place elsewhere.

With the destruction of the *thureophoroi*, the Greek’s left seemed doomed. However, by sending the slingers reserve that had been left behind to the flank of a column of Arab spearmen (SpM), and with the support of the Indians (EdM), The Arab column was anihalated, along with an Arab light unit. In just one stroke the Arab’s right had lost about 50% of it’s men and, once and for all, it’s will to fight.

In the Greek’s right, the Sakae, who had destroyed an Arab light unit for the loss of one cavalry unit to the Arab archers, worked their revenge: by using their speed they moved themselves out of the archers’ shooting angle, shot at them and forced one of their foes to flee the field.

On the Arab’s left, the cameleers contacted the Greek-Bactrian cavalry’s front while the *asawira* charged the *basiliké ilé* thus cutting an eventual retreat. The situation was now desperate, but not serious: despite the defeat, the hellenes stood firm and held their ground.

At last came the decisive turn. The Sakae turned and attacked the Arab cavalry’s flank, allowing the Greek elite cavalry’s recoil. The Sakae subsequent victory and the incapacity showed by the Arabs to win over the morale test terminated the *asawira*’s role in this fight.

And in the centre, freed from the nuisance posed by the light cameleers, the *sarissophoroi* turned to face the Arab heavy infantry’s side. The result was the expected and the Arab forces finally became divided, mustering a broken centre, a depleted right flank and a left flank who had failed it’s objective and now faced a slow but unstoppable flanking manouvre.

In overall, his was a small confrontation with an unexpected result that proved, beyhond any doubt, the enourmous usefulness of the light forces: they caused more than 2/3 of the enemy’s casualties (11 AP).

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