



COMITATUS

Warfare in the Dark Ages

AD 250-1100

Game Scenario

Meshike

AD 244



Historical Background

Meshike was the final battle in the young Emperor Gordian's (Marcus Antonius Gordianus Pius) campaign against Sassanid Persia. He was only 19 at the time and had been on the throne for 6 years. Virtually nothing is known about the battle. It is only mentioned by name in Persian sources where it is portrayed as a great Persian victory. The battle itself is glossed over by the Romans. What is known is that Gordian lost his life. He either fell from his horse in battle and later died of his injuries or he was murdered by his troops at the instigation of Philip the Arab (Marcus Julius Philippus). Either way Gordian died and Philip became Emperor, making peace with the Persians.

The Game

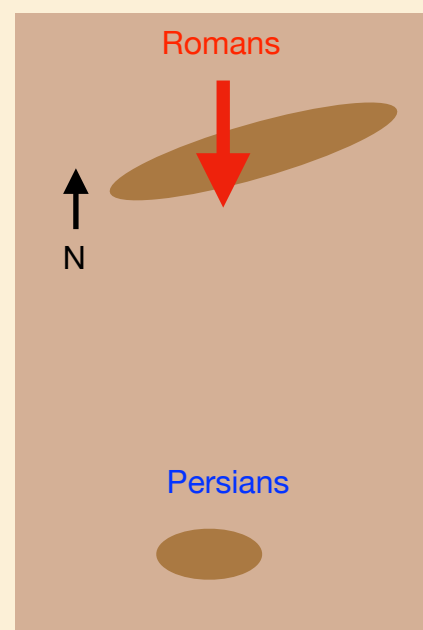
Despite their earlier victories, the Roman morale is not as high as it might be otherwise thanks to Philip the Arab's machinations. The Romans are now advancing from the north in Armenia on the Persian capital of Ctesiphon.

The Persian King of Kings, Shapur, has only been on the throne for 2 years and his position could become untenable if his nobles see him allowing the invaders to continue their advance. Therefore he has decided to make a stand. He is aware of the grumblings in the Roman ranks and the fact that the invading army has been reduced in numbers due to casualties and men being dropped off to garrison the newly captured cities.

He deploys his forces in a narrow flat plain suitable for his cavalry. The area is bounded by the Araxes river to the east and high ground to the west making it impossible for the Romans to bypass his position.

Advancing in column the Romans are unaware of the enemy blocking their advance. When the Vanguard crosses a ridge and they see the enemy light cavalry in front of them they begin to deploy themselves.

The game is lengthwise along the table with the Romans advancing in column from the north and the Persians deployed to the south. There is a low hill in the Persian deployment area and a low ridge running across the Roman side of the table (from east to west). Otherwise the table is flat and featureless.



Persian Order of Battle

The Persian army is divided into four commands: reserve, commanded by Shapur (5 CPs); right wing, left wing and centre each with a commander with 3 CPs.

The Persian player may choose up to 70 stands from the following options which he can organise into any number of units:

8-20 Vassal Cavalry - Heavy Horse Archers, B Grade, Average Morale

1 to 4 Royal Cavalry - Lance & Bow Cavalry, Armoured, A Grade, High Morale

3 to 8 Elite Cavalry - Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, High Morale

up to 6 Cataphracts - Shock Cavalry, Armoured, B Grade, Average Morale

8 to 20 Persian Light Cavalry - Light Horse Archers, C Grade, Average Morale

up to 12 Tribal Nomads - Light Horse Archers, B Grade, Low Morale

4 to 12 Foot Archers - C Grade, Average Morale

up to 8 Skirmishers - C Grade, Average Morale

up to 12 Peasant Infantry - C Grade, Low Morale

The player may upgrade some troops as follows, however for each stand upgraded, the total number of stands allowed in the army is reduced by 1:

upgrade up to 2 Royal Cavalry to Exceptional Morale for Shapur's Comitatus

upgrade any or all Elite Cavalry to Armoured

upgrade any or all Cataphracts to High Morale

upgrade up to half Tribal Nomads to Average Morale

Objective: To block the Romans and to prevent them advancing on Ctesiphon.

Deployment: Anywhere on the Southern side of the table 2 bow shots away from the centre line.

Scale

Each army has about 20,000 men on a scale of 1 Heavy Infantry stand representing approximately 500 men, 1 cavalry or light infantry stand representing around 300 men.

Roman Order of Battle

The Roman army is divided into four commands: right wing, commanded by Gordian (4 CPs); reserve, commanded by Philip, (2 CPs); left and right wings each with a commander with 3 CPs.

The Roman player may choose up to 60 stands from the following options which he can organise into any number of units:

up to 4 Praetorians - Roman Infantry, Armoured, A Grade, High Morale

8 to 16 Legionaries - Roman Infantry, Armoured, A Grade, Average Morale

4 to 16 Auxiliaries - Javelinmen, B Grade, Average Morale. Any or all of the Auxiliaries may instead be Roman Infantry

2 to 8 Foot Archers B Grade, Average Morale

up to 8 Lanciarii - Skirmishers, A Grade, High Morale. All or none of the Lanciarii may instead be Javelinmen

2-4 Goths - Shock Cavalry, B Grade, High Morale

up to 2 Equites Singulares - Heavy Javelin Cavalry, A Grade, Exceptional Morale

4-8 Heavy Javelin Cavalry, A Grade, Average Morale

2-4 Light Javelin Cavalry, B Grade, Average Morale

up to 4 Light Horse Archers, B Grade, Average Morale

The player may upgrade some troops as follows, however for each stand upgraded, the total number of stands allowed in the army is reduced by 1:

upgrade up to 3 Heavy Cavalry to High Morale if forming a leader's Comitatus

upgrade up to 4 ordinary Auxiliaries to Veteran, A Grade; upgrade any or all Veteran Auxiliaries to Armoured

upgrade up to 4 Light Cavalry to A Grade

Objective: To drive the Persians from the field so that they can continue their advance on Ctesiphon.

Deployment: Arriving in column from the northern table edge. Light cavalry may be deployed in front as a screen.