



COMITATUS

Warfare in the Dark Ages

3rd - 11th C AD

Game Scenario

Daras

AD 530

Historical Background

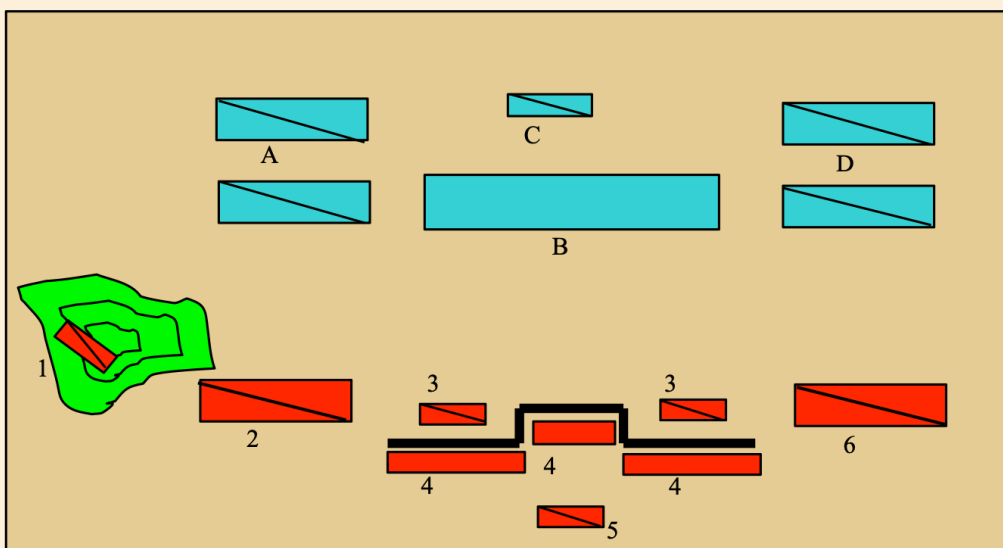
The young East Roman General Belisarius, in his first major command, was sent to defend the city of Daras from the Persians. His army of 25,000 men was demoralised as a result of a string of defeats against the Persians and they had come to view a Persian victory as inevitable. Belisarius dug a trench in front of the city to protect his unreliable infantry and deployed his cavalry on the two wings. The left wing was commanded by Bouzes, the right by 5 commanders (John, Cyril, Marcellus, Germanus and Dorotheus) while Belisarius and Hermogenes held the centre. Two groups of Massagetae (Huns) were deployed just in front of the trench to support the wings, and a group of 300 Heruls (Germans) under Pharas were concealed on a hill slope on the left, ready to charge down on the flank of the Persians.

The Persian army is said to have numbered 40,000 and was commanded by Perozes who had the title of Mirranes. The Persian right was under Pityaxes and the left under Baresmanas. After two days of inconclusive skirmishing, the Persians were reinforced by another 10,000 men and launched an attack on the Roman left. Prior to this, Persian champions issued two challenges to single combat, both of which were defeated by Andreas, one of Bouzes' personal attendants.

The Persians adopted a deep formation and attacked in two lines so as to keep up a constant rotation of fresh troops. Perozes kept the elite Immortals back as a reserve. The Persians got the best of the missile exchange, thanks to their line rotation and when arrows were exhausted they attacked. Pityaxes, leading a unit called the Cadiseni, drove back Bouzes' cavalry but was hit in the rear by Pharas who sprung his ambush from the hill. At the same time 600 Massagetae under Sunicas and Aigan moved in from the centre to attack the pursuing Persians. Pityaxes' men were routed with 3000 casualties and fell back to rally on their infantry centre.

Following the defeat of his right wing, Perozes sent his reserve to reinforce the left wing and attacked there. The Persians succeeded in routing the Roman right wing but Belisarius again sent in another contingent of Massagetae, and his own reserve, to save the day. The Romans surrounded the pursuing Persians and killed 5,000 of them, including their commander Baresmanas. When the Persian left wing cavalry fell back the infantry panicked and ran.

Historical Deployment



- A. Pityaxes' cavalry in two lines
- B. Persian infantry
- C. Perozes and the Immortals
- D. Baresmanas' cavalry in two lines
- 1. Pharas' Heruls
- 2. Bouzes' cavalry
- 3. Massagetae
- 4. Roman infantry behind trench
- 5. Belisarius' reserve
- 6. Roman right wing cavalry

The Game

This game recreates the Persian right wing attack. It is virtually an all-cavalry action in which the object is for the Persians to thoroughly defeat the Roman left, ideally without having to commit the reserves. It can be played with two players, taking on the roles of Bouzes and Pityaxes or with additional players for any of the other Leaders.



Belisarius deployed his infantry behind trenches with detachments of Massagetae in front.

Belisarius' Reserve. Belisarius 5 LPs

Belisarius' Comitatus: 2-4 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, Exceptional Morale

Bouzes' Contingent. Dice for Bouzes' LPs

Bouzes' Comitatus: 1-2 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, High Morale

Foederati: 2-6 Shock Cavalry, A Grade, Average Morale

Roman Cavalry: 6-10 Heavy Horse Archers, A Grade, Average Morale

Massagetae: 2-4 Light Horse Archers, B Grade, High Morale

Hermogenes' Contingent. Dice for Hermogenes' LPs

Hermogenes' Comitatus: 1-2 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, High Morale

Roman Infantry: 4-8 Roman Infantry, C Grade, Poor Morale

Roman Archers: 4-8 Foot Archers, C Grade, Poor Morale

Pharas' Contingent. Dice for Pharas' LPs, re-roll 2 once only.

Pharas' Comitatus: 1 Shock Cavalry, B Grade, Exceptional Morale

Heruls: 2-4 Shock Cavalry, B Grade, High Morale

Scale

1 Infantry Stand = 600 men

1 Cavalry Stand = 300 men

Roman Order of Battle

The Roman army must include:

Commander in Chief — Belisarius,

3 other leaders — Pharas, Bouzes and Hermogenes

24 cavalry stands and 8 -16 infantry stands chosen from the list below:



Persian Order of Battle

The Persian army must include:
Commander in Chief — Perozes.
First Line Leader — Baresmanas.
Second Line Leader — Pityaxes
40 cavalry stands chosen from the list below.

The Persians may add 1 more stand for each infantry stand above 8 in the Roman army.



Reserve. Perozes, Commander in Chief, dice for LPs

Perozes' Comitatus 1 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, Armoured. Exceptional Morale
Immortals 2-4 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, Armoured, High Morale

First and Second Lines from the following:

Pityaxes and Baresmanas, Dice for LPs

Pityaxes' Comitatus: 1-2 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, Armoured, High Morale

Baresmanas' Comitatus*: 1-2 Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, Armoured, High Morale

Cadiseni: up to 8 Cataphracts, B Grade, Armoured, Average Morale

Clibanarii: 16-20 Heavy Horse Archers, Average Morale

Elite Clibanarii: up to 4 Lance & Bow Cavalry, B Grade, High Morale

Light Cavalry: 10-16 Light Horse Archers, B Grade, Average Morale

* Baresmanas' Comitatus may instead be Light Javelin Cavalry, A Grade, High Morale.

Notes

The two Persian contingents represent the two lines with Pityaxes commanding the second line. Most or all of the light cavalry would be in Baresmanas' first line.

There is no evidence that the Cadiseni were cataphracts, players may choose to represent them by the elite clibanarii if they prefer. The Cadiseni should be in Pityaxes second line.



The Persian Clibanarii (heavy horse archers). Deployed in supported line, the rear ranks may shoot overhead at long range and provide support in combat.

Terrain and Deployment

The battle requires both breadth and depth to give sufficient room for manoeuvre, consequently it is probably best played in 15mm or smaller scale. 25/28mm is manageable but will require an 8' x 5' table or larger.

The Roman player sets up the terrain choosing from:

- up to 2 low hills which break line or sight but do not count as difficult terrain.
- up to 1 orchard or vineyard (providing concealment, passable for cavalry)

The Roman then chooses which side of the table he wishes to deploy on and sets up his troops according to the following guidelines:

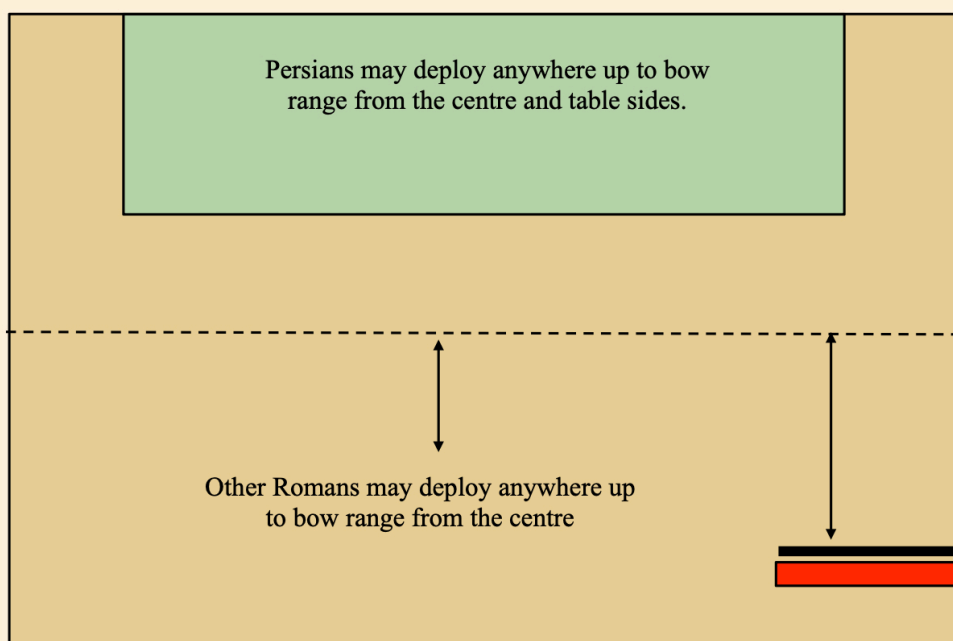
Belisarius and the Reserve are off table to the rear of the Roman deployment area.

Pharas' command does not need to be set up. It may be concealed in the orchard or behind a hill or off table on the Roman left table edge. These troops need not be placed on table unless they move or shoot or until the Persians are within one javelin throw of them.

The Roman Infantry must be deployed flush with their right hand table edge, no closer than 24" from the centre line of the table. They have a trench in front of them which counts as a major obstacle.

Other Roman troops may be deployed anywhere on the Roman half of the table up to 12" from the centre line (no restrictions to the sides).

Once the on-table Roman troops are deployed, the Persians set up anywhere on their half of the table, up to 12" from the centre line and table sides.



Persian and Roman reserves not initially deployed on-table.

They may choose to come on-table on any turn in their leadership phase, anywhere on their table edge. They may then move in the movement phase of the turn they came on-table.

Roman infantry deployed flush with their right hand table edge, up to 24" from the centre and behind a trench or fieldworks.

Special Rules

The Roman infantry may not initiate any charges.

No troops from Hermogenes' command are allowed to move from their initial deployment positions unless enemy troops are within 12" or Belisarius changes their orders. For the latter to happen, Bouzes must send a request for help to Belisarius (using 1 LP). Orders can either be passed by messenger or if the Leader figures are in base to base contact. If Belisarius is off table, the messenger is assumed to reach him as soon as he leaves the table. If Belisarius is within 4" of Hermogenes he may assume command and no change or orders will be required.