

TACTICAL FORUM

Persian Plan for Battle of Issus, 333 B.C.

BY ULRICH BLENNEMANN

Turning the tables on the Macedonian Army, thanks to the Free Deployment Variant offered in the Issus scenario in *The Great Battles of Alexander*.

IN MY EXPERIENCE

with *The Great Battles of Alexander*, I have found that the game system captures the essence of tactical ancient warfare, particularly as practiced by Alexander. The game appears so realistic, in fact, that the various scenarios cannot help but heavily favor the Macedonians. Perhaps only through poor judgement and careless mistakes can the Persians claim victory on the battlefield.

Having watched Alexander conquer at will, I decided it's high time to turn the tables on the Macedonian Army, thanks to the Free Deployment Variant offered in the Issus scenario. I believe I have formulated an initial deployment for the Persians that can't be cracked, even by Alexander and his phalanxes. Provided below is my proposed *Perfect Persian Plan*. Go ahead and try this set-up for yourselves. If anyone

comes up with a Macedonian plan to crack this set-up, I hope to see it set forth in these pages.

Persian Free Deployment for Issus

Pinarius River defense line:



Greek Mercenary 1 HO:

1418/1517 » abatis

Greek Mercenary 2 HO:

1617/1716 » abatis

Royal Guard 1 HO:

1816 » abatis

Royal Guard 2 HO:

1916 » abatis

Greek Mercenary 3 HO:

2016/2115 » abatis

Greek Mercenary 4 HO:

2215/2315



Royal Guard 3 HO:
2416

Cardacenes 1 LI:
2515/2615

Cardacenes 2 LI:
2714/2814

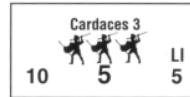
Royal Guard 1 HC:
2913

Archers 1 + 2 SK:
3014

Cardacenes 3 LI:
3013/3112

Cardacenes 4 LI:
3111/3211

Royal Guard 2 HC:
3310



Cardacenes 5 LI: 3309/3409

Cardacenes 6 LI: 3508/3608

Cardacenes 7 LI: 3708/3808

Cardacenes 8 LI: 3807/3806

Cardacenes 9 LI: 3905/4005

Cardacenes 10 LI: 4104/4204

Archers 3 + 4 SK: 4304

Archers 5 + 6 SK: 4405

Archers 7 + 8 SK: 4505

Archers 9 + 10 SK: 4606

Archers 11 + 12 SK: 4706

Archers 13 SK: 4807

Archers 14 SK: 4808

Javelinists 1 SK: 4908

Javelinists 2 SK: 5008

Rhodes 1 SK: 5207

Rhodes 2 SK: 5307

Rhodes 3 SK: 5407

South of the Pinarius:

Archers 15 + 16 SK: 5209

Archers 17 + 18 SK: 5309

Reserve line:

Median 1 LC: 1315

Median 2 LC: 1415

Royal Guard 3 HC: 1514

Bactrian 1 HC: 1614

Darius + Royal Bodyguard CH:
1613

Bactrian 2 HC: 1713

Median 3 LC: 1813



Nabarzanes: 1914

Median 5 LC: 2012

Hyrcanian 1 LC: 2512

Hyrcanian 2 LC: 2612

Hyrcanian 3 LC: 2711



Thymondas: 2812

Bactrian 3 HC: 2811

Bactrian 4 HC: 2810

Asian Levy 14 LI: 2809

Bactrian 5 HC: 2909

Hyrcanian 4 LC: 3009

Hyrcanian 5 LC: 3008



Persian 1 LC: 3107

Persian 2 LC: 3207

Asian Levy 1 LI: 3306

Asian Levy 2 LI: 3406

Asian Levy 3 LI: 3505

Asian Levy 4 LI: 3605

Asian Levy 5 LI: 3604

Asian Levy 6 LI: 3703

Asian Levy 7 LI: 3803

Asian Levy 8 LI: 3902

Asian Levy 9 LI: 4002



Aristomedes: 4004

Asian Levy 10 LI: 4101

Asian Levy 11 LI: 4201

Asian Levy 12 LI: 4301

Asian Levy 13 LI: 4402

Persian 3 LC: 4502

Persian 4 LC: 4603

Persian 5 LC: 5104



Reomithres: 5105

The Great Battles of Alexander

The Macedonian Art of War, 338 - 331 B.C.
The Great Battles of History Series, Volume I
Published: 1991

Game Design: Mark Herman & Richard Berg
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan

Grk Merc 2
LI
5 6 5

Alexander III
7
9 7 4

Elephant 3
EL
5 4 7

Contents: 600 die-cut Counters; Four 22x34 inch Maps; Rulebook; Charts & Tables; One 10-sided die; Bookcase Box
Time Scale: 15-20 minutes per game turn
Map Scale: 60-70 yards per hex
Unit Scale: Ancient battalion/brigade equivalent
Players: 1-2

The Great Battles of History Series: Issus

Initial Deployment Strategy Notes

A Macedonian attack on the Persian left flank is pretty much ruled out due to the Level 3 and 4 terrain in the area. Only infantry and skirmishers will be able to transverse this terrain, but only after absorbing several cohesion hits, thus weakening them before they are able to initiate shock combat. Should one or two Macedonian units actually slip across the Pinarius (having to absorb further cohesion hits), they will be easily overwhelmed by the Persian reserves.

The five Persian units deployed south of the Pinarius River should be withdrawn immediately to the northern side. One should not become overconfident; play conservatively. Advancing further to the south in strength robs the Persian player of his advantage and plays into the Macedonian's hands.

The most vulnerable part of the Persian line is the right flank, or upper Pinarius area, which consists solely of Level 1 terrain. Greek Mercenaries, with the help of abatis and supported by cavalry in the rear, should be able to counter any serious assault by Macedonian phalanx and hypaspists. Besides, enemy cavalry has no chance against them.

The same also holds true for the Persian center. Although only light infantry is defending this area, the inherent terrain advantage coupled with a strong cavalry and infantry reserve should be enough to stop any potential Macedonian breakthrough. Although the Persians may not hold every hex adjacent to the Pinarius, there certainly are sufficient reserves to

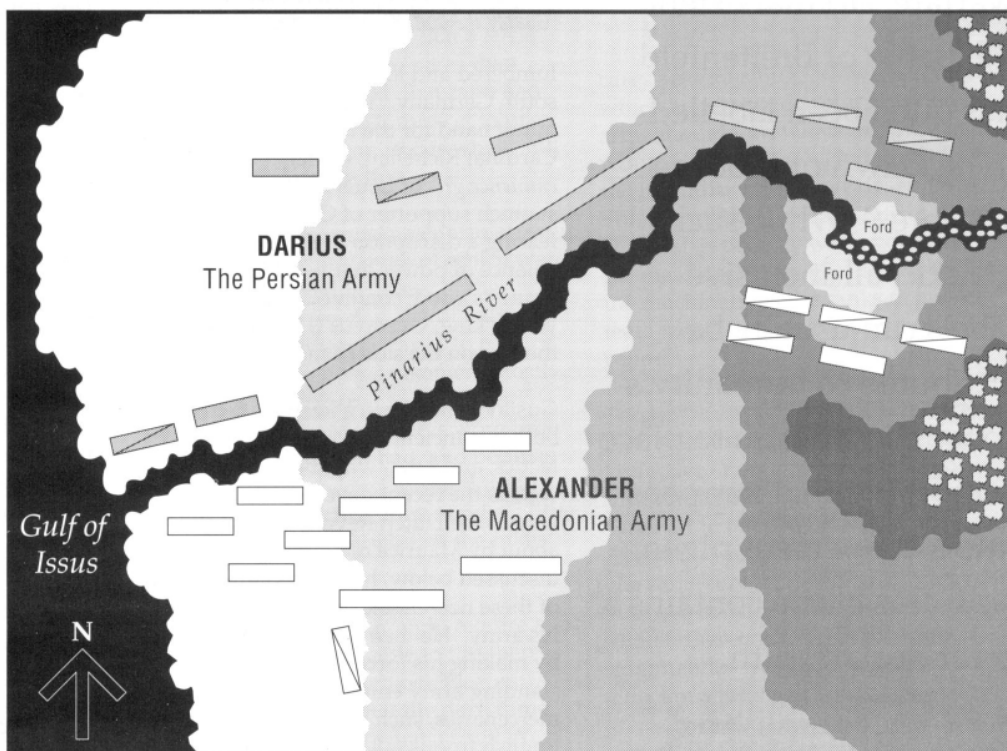
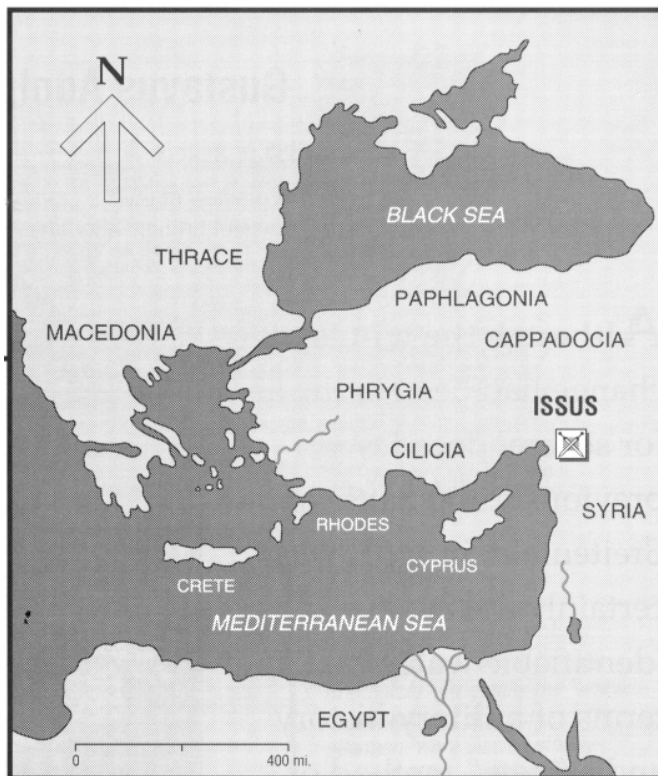
counterattack immediately when necessary.

One final and critical point. As soon as you realize where the Macedonians are forming their Schwerpunkt, deploy your best leaders to this sector. In the meantime, watch those flanks!



Strategic View:

Issus is the one major battle that Alexander came close to 'losing'. Darius placed the Persian army astride Alexander's lines of communication (right). He chose an excellent position for the battle: his flanks covered by the Mediterranean Sea and the unscalable heights of the Amanus Range (see GameMap below).



Battle of Issus GameMap

Order of Battle, November, 333 B.C.

The river is crossable (in a military sense) only downstream and at a narrow, upstream ford.

Macedonian
 Persian

Map Legend:

Ocean	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	River	Rocky Riverbed	Woods