

'First to Fight' in the 1st Mithridatic War: The Battle of the Amnias River—88BC

Scenario Historical Notes: This scenario is based on a fairly well described battle account in Appian's histories (well described that is for an action that happened over 2,000 years ago !!). The battle of the Amnias River in 88BC was the very first big fight of the 1st Mithridatic War, and it featured the army of a Roman client king (Nicomedes the IV) of Bithynia on one side versus the battalions of three Mithridatic generals led by Archelaus on the other side. Nicomedes was badly defeated despite the light troop/cavalry nature of the Mithridatic force. The victory by the Mithridatic host started a cascade of events that resulted in the temporary Roman loss of their holdings and Imperial influence in Asia Minor and portions of Greece to King Mithridates. Additionally, Mithridates organized a one-day massacre of local Romans and Italians resident in Asia, supposedly some 80,000 were killed in the so-called 'Day of the Vespers'. The Roman strategic situation in the East was not restored until Sulla intervened in Greece with a Roman army from Italy. Athens fell to Sulla after a long siege and two large Mithridatic armies were destroyed in central Greece in 86 and 85BC. King Mithridates, after these major land defeats, some Aegean naval set-backs, and the re-entry of Roman forces into Asia was forced into a peace (85 BC) in which he had to give back the vast bulk of his conquests and pay out 3,000 talents in tribute. Sulla, for his part, was also anxious to finish this foreign war so as to get back to Rome to address the here to fore unprecedented internal Roman political situation there where the Populares had seized state power and conducted a bloody proscription against Sulla's Optimates faction.

Historical Back ground: (From Appian's annals of the Mithridatic Wars Chapter 18)

“When (King) Nicomedes and the generals of Mithridates came in sight of each other in a wide plain bordered by the river Amnias, they drew up their forces for battle. Nicomedes (the IV) had his entire army in hand; Neoptolemus and Archelaus had only their light infantry and the cavalry of Arcathias and a few chariots; for the phalanx had not yet come up. “

“They sent forward a small force to seize a rocky hill in the plain lest they should be surrounded by the Bithynians, who were much more numerous. When Neoptolemus saw his men driven from the hill he was still more in fear of being surrounded. He advanced with haste to their assistance, at the same time calling on Arcathias for help. “

“When Nicomedes perceived the movement, he sought to meet it by a similar one. Thereupon a severe and bloody struggle ensued. Nicomedes prevailed and put the Mithridateans to flight until Archelaus, advancing from the right flank, fell upon the pursuers, who were compelled to turn their attention to him. He yielded little by little in order that the forces of Neoptolemus might have a chance to rally. When he judged that they had done so sufficiently, he advanced again. At the same time the scythe-bearing chariots made a charge on the Bithynians, cutting some of them in two, and tearing others to pieces. “

“The army of Nicomedes was terrified at seeing men cut in halves and still breathing, or mangled in fragments and their parts hanging on the scythes. Overcome rather by the hideousness of the spectacle than by loss of the fight, fear took possession of their ranks. While they were thus thrown into confusion, Archelaus attacked them in front, and Neoptolemus and Arcathias, who had turned about, assailed them in the rear. “

“They fought a long time facing both ways. After the greater part of his men had fallen, Nicomedes fled with the remainder into Paphlagonia, although the Mithridatean phalanx had not come into the engagement at all. His camp was captured, together with a large sum of money and many prisoners. All these Mithridates treated kindly and sent to their homes with supplies for the journey, thus gaining a reputation for clemency among his enemies. “

Terrain Setup: (See Terrain special rules below)

Impassable River: A12, B11, C11, D11, E12, F12, G13, H12, I13

Hills: D2, F7, E7, D7

Broken Ground: D6, C8, D8, G8

*Rough Ground: E9, E8

(*On Rough Ground tiles use the ‘rocky’ Terrain Tiles from “Battle Cry”, or use the regular C & C Ancients Broken Ground tiles and indicate with a marker—Rough Ground is treated as a harsher variant of Broken Ground—see Special Terrain rules)

Initial Setup:

Bithynian Army: (Eastern-style Asiatic Army see Special Rules): Use Greek, Roman, or Carthaginian Blocks---x19 units and x1 Leader Total

X2 Light Archers: H3, H9 X3 Light Infantry: G7, H7, G5 X2 Medium Cavalry: H11, G2

X6 Medium Infantry: H4, H5, H6, G10, H10, I7 X1 Light Cavalry: H1

X5 Auxillia (Levy Foot see special rules): I9, I6, I3, H2, H8 X1 Leader: I7 (Nicomedes)

Mithridatic Army: (Eastern-style Asiatic Army see Special Rules): Use Eastern Kingdom or Carthaginian Blocks—x16 units and x3 Leaders Total

X2 Heavy Cavalry (Cataphracts see special rules): A2, C2,

X2 Heavy Chariots (Scythe Chariots see special rules): C3, B2

X2 Medium Cavalry: B3, C10

X2 Light Cavalry: D1, B4

X3 Auxillia (All 5 Blocks Peltests see special rules): C6, B9, B10

X2 Light Archers: E8, C7

X3 Light Infantry: F7, B7, C9

X3 Leaders: C6 (Neoptolemus) B9 (Archelaus) B2 (Archathias)

War Council:

Bithynian Army:

Leader: King Nicomedes IV //4 Command Cards

Move First—Bithynian units may not conduct ordered moves onto broken ground or hills on the very first Bithynian Player-turn. They may attack, missile fire, and advance into such hexes however on the first turn.

Mithridatic Army:

Leader: General Archelaus//5 Command Cards

Note: Mithridatic Mounted units that start the game on the Mithridatic Left Flank may not be ordered to move via card play by the Mithridatic Player until the Mithridatic 3rd Player-turn—this restriction is removed if **any** of them are attacked **in any** way (close-combat or missile) in Bithynian Player-turns 1 & 2, or if a Bithynian unit moves adjacent to any of them.

Victory: 7 Banners

Special Scenario Rules:

Command Rules:

Units on both sides involved in close combat with the support of a Leader may only count one helmet hit amongst those rolled to inflict a hit on an opposing unit, unless the Leader is Archelaus then up to two helmet hits can be counted.

Units and the Rally Card:. No unit can be rallied to beyond five blocks or its strength at the start of the game whichever is less. If a Player rolls “swords” when attempting to rally he may freely chose which unit gets a block back.

Line Commands: Since this action is a kind of meeting engagement only a limited number of foot units can be moved via a line command card—in this scenario the limit is 5 units as the maximum that can be ordered via a Line Command Card.

Eastern Style Asiatic Armies Special Rules

Both opposing armies assumed to be a typical, but somewhat well trained Eastern Style Asiatic ‘hordes’, greatly inferior in equipment, discipline, skill, and fighting spirit in comparison to the premier first class fighting force of this era: the veteran Italian Legions of the Roman Republic---Therefore in Close Combat and Battle Back **both** armies units, save the Mithridatic Heavy Cavalry & **Heavy chariots** make **no hits** on their enemies if Swords are rolled—**always** consider Swords to be a ‘miss’ when rolled by either Player unless the unit is a Mithridatic Cataphract Heavy Cavalry or Mithridatic **Heavy chariots** involved in the close-combat or battle-back.

Mithridatic Cataphracts: **ALL** Mithridatic Heavy Cavalry are heavily armored—roll one normal six-sided dice for each red color hit inflicted upon them in close-combat, missile fire, or battle-back, if a “5-6” is rolled the hit is ignored. Mithridatic Heavy Cavalry may never evade battle, and unlike most other Mithridatic units hit on sword rolls as noted above.

Mithridatic Peltests: **All** Mithridatic Auxillia are considered to be Peltests—they may evade if attacked by Bithynian Auxillia or Medium Infantry. All have 5 Blocks as well.

Mithridatic Scythe Chariots: **All** Mithridatic Heavy Chariot units are considered to be Scythe Chariots. Use normal rules, but when the Mithridatic Player rolls “Swords” when attacking only (not battle-back) with these units re-roll any “Swords” hits rolled by the

Mithridatic Player to see if the unit hits again (just as you would for an elephant). When battling back the Chariots still hit on ‘swords’, but any sword results are not re-rolled.

Bithynian Levy Foot: **All** Bithynian Auxillia have no missile fire capability—their retreat distance is two hexes per Flag result taken or inflicted---In battle-back only their ‘normal’ battle-back dice is two dice instead of three dice.

Outflanking---*This is an easy way of introducing facing and flanks to the game with little fuss—it can be retrofitted to other scenarios where appropriate:*

A unit is said to be “Outflanked” if it is surrounded **in all** six adjacent hexes by either enemy units, or hexes adjacent to an enemy unit. The presence of friendly units or impassable terrain does not negate an “Outflanked” situation **in any way**. Units on the board edges (and not surrounded by six adjacent hexes) **cannot** be “Outflanked”.
Effects of being Outflanked: “Outflanked” units when battling back roll only half the normal number of dice they would be normally entitled to rounded up—to a maximum of only two dice—“Outflanked” units when battling back **never** hit on helmet rolls even if supported by a leader. A unit’s “Outflanked” situation is judged at the instant it battles back.

Special Terrain Rules:

Rough Ground Tiles: For Rough Ground **treat exactly as Broken Ground except:**

- a) Mounted units cannot enter or Close-Combat attack into Rough Ground//they can missile fire or battle-back into such hexes however. Rough Ground is totally impassable otherwise to mounted units including for retreats and evasion.
- b) Foot units & Leaders can only enter a Rough Ground in an ordered move if ordered initially from an adjacent hex.
- c) Foot units in Rough Ground **battle-back only** with one extra dice—making their ‘normal’ battle-back dice—3 dice rather than the 2 dice for Rough/Broken Ground.

Optional Rule: Arrival of the Mithridatic Phalanx:

Note: *In the historical battle, as Appian notes, the Mithridatic Phalanx had not yet come up. This optional rule allows for the possibility that they could have been available at some point to take part in this meeting engagement fight. Both sides will now have additional units/leader available and the victory conditions also change.*

Optional Rule Features:

- a) The Mithridatic Phalanx units (and the Phalanx Polemarch Leader) all start off map—The Mithridatic Phalanx consists of: x4 Medium Infantry, x1 Heavy Infantry and one Leader (the Polemarch)—all begin the scenario off-map—they are marching to the battle.
- b) Add the following units/leader to the initial on-map Bithynian set-up: x1 Medium Infantry, x1 Auxillia (Levy Foot), x1 Light Infantry, and one Leader (Bithynian General)—all begin the scenario on map in the “I” hexrow placed anywhere at the option of the Bithynian Player in that row where there is space for them.

- c) The Victory Level for **both sides** is now 9 Banners.
- d) The Mithridatic Polemarch and Bithynian General Leaders can only support/prevent the retreat of foot units involved in combat in the same hex they are in—they cannot support adjacent units or mounted units.
- e) The Mithridatic Phalanx units/Leader enter if the Mithridatic Player plays **any** Leadership Card at the start of his 5th or later Player-turn. The here to-fore off map units/leader are then placed immediately in any vacant hexes on hexrow “A” from A1 to A11.

The Leadership card is discarded and not replaced thereby reducing the Mithridatic hand to four command cards for the remainder of the scenario. The Mithridatic Player may play another card and conduct a normal player-turn (with redraw) in the same player-turn that the Phalanx units and the Polemarch Leader are placed on the map. That card could even be used to order the newly placed units/leader.