

The Final Battle of the Alexandrian War: Caesar in Egypt 47 BC: The Battle of the Nile

Historical Background *The following account of the final battle in Egypt, which took place in 47 BC, was written by an anonymous officer, maybe a man named Hirtius, one of Caesar's lieutenants. (Chapters 30-32 of [The Alexandrian War](#) below).*

Chapter 30

Caesar, upon this success, judging that his sudden approach must strike great terror into the Alexandrians, advanced toward their camp with his victorious army. But finding it well intrenched, strongly fortified by nature, and the ramparts covered with armed soldiers, he did not think proper that his troops, who were very much fatigued both by their march and the late battle, should attack it; and therefore encamped at a small distance from the enemy. Next day he attacked a fort, in a village not far off, which the king had fortified and joined to his camp by a line of communication, with a view to keep possession of the village. He attacked it with his whole army, and took it by storm; not because it would have been difficult to carry it with a few forces; but with the design of falling immediately upon the enemy's camp, during the alarm which the loss of this fort must give them. Accordingly, the Romans, in continuing the pursuit of those that fled from the fort, arrived at last before the Alexandrian camp, and commenced a most furious action at a distance. There were two approaches by which it might be attacked; one by the plain, of which we have spoken before, the other by a narrow pass, between their camp and the Nile. The first, which was much the easiest, was defended by a numerous body of their best troops; and the access on the side of the Nile gave the enemy great advantage in distressing and wounding our men; for they were exposed to a double shower of darts: in front from the rampart, behind from the river; where the enemy had stationed a great number of ships, furnished with archers and slingers, that kept up a continual discharge.

Chapter 31

Caesar, observing that his troops fought with the utmost ardor, and yet made no great progress, on account of the disadvantage of the ground; and perceiving they had left the highest part of their camp unguarded, because, it being sufficiently fortified by nature, they had all crowded to the other attacks, partly to have a share in the action, partly to be spectators of the issue; he ordered some cohorts to wheel round the camp, and gain that ascent: appointing Carfulenus to command them, a man distinguished for bravery and acquaintance with the service. When they had reached the place, as there were but very few to defend it, our men attacked them so briskly that the Alexandrians, terrified by the cries they heard behind them, and seeing themselves attacked both in front and rear, fled in the utmost consternation on all sides. Our men, animated by the confusion of the enemy, entered the camp in several places at the same time, and running down from the higher ground, put a great number of them to the sword. The Alexandrians, endeavoring to escape, threw themselves in crowds over the rampart in the quarter next the river. The foremost tumbling into the ditch, where they were crushed to death, furnished an easy passage for those that followed. It is ascertained that the king escaped from the camp, and was received on board a ship; but by the crowd that followed him, the ship in which he fled was overloaded and sunk.

Chapter 32

After this speedy and successful action, Caesar, in consequence of so great a victory, marched the nearest way by land to Alexandria with his cavalry, and entered triumphant into that part of the town which was possessed by the enemy's guards. He was not mistaken in thinking that the Alexandrians, upon hearing of the issue of the battle, would give over all thoughts of war. Accordingly, as soon as he arrived, he reaped the just fruit of his valor and magnanimity. For all the multitude of the inhabitants, throwing down their arms, abandoning their works, and assuming the habit of suppliants, preceded by all those sacred symbols of religion with which they were wont to mollify their offended kings, met Caesar on his arrival and surrendered. Caesar, accepting their submission, and encouraging them, advanced through the enemy's works into his own quarter of the town, where he was received with the universal congratulations of his party, who were no less overjoyed at his arrival and presence, than at the happy issue of the war.

Extended Map Setup:

The Nile scenario uses an extended two-section map to better allow for the maneuvers and movements of Caesar's army around the Egyptian fortifications. Take a second C & C Ancients map and cut or fold it over lengthwise along the entire center of the "E" hexrow. The two maps are then abutted so that D1 on the now "half-map" is adjacent to A1 and A2 on the main full map; similarly D12 will end up adjacent to A12 and A13 on the main map. The play area is now 13 hexrows deep and 12 or 13 hexes wide depending on the hexrow. The main or full map is referred to as "Map 1" and the four row or half map is called "Map 2" when charting the locations detailed below.

Terrain Setup: (See Terrain Special Rules):

Map 1:

X9 Riverbank (use Seacoast Tiles)—these are impassable: A11, B11, C12, D11, E11, F11, G12, H11, I12

X8 Marsh hexes: I1, I5, I6, I7, I8, I9, I10, I11

X3 Canal (use River Tiles—these are impassable): A2, B1, C1

X5 Hills: E2, F1, G1, G2, F2

X2 Broken Ground: H2, F3

X2 Village hexes (see Terrain Special Rules): A7, A8—Use Battle Cry Building tiles
Hex A7 on Map 1 is the Village Center hex.

X5 Egyptian Camp hexes (see Terrain Special Rules): G5, G6, G7, G8, H6

X13 Rampart Tiles: **H4:** face I4/H3 **G4:** face H3/G3/F3 **F4:** F3/E4/E5 **F5:** E5/E6

F6: E6/E7 **F7:** E7/E8 **F8:** E8/E9/F9 **G9:** F9/G10 **H9:** H10/G10 **E8:** D7/E7 **D8:** E8/D7
C8: D7/C7 **B7:** C7/B6

Map 2:

X3 Riverbank (use Seacoast Tiles)—these are impassable: B12, C12, D11

X4 Canal (use River Tiles—these are impassable): D1, C2, B2, A2

X2 Village hexes (see Special Terrain Rules): D6, D7-- Use Battle Cry Building tiles

Initial Setup:

Roman Army: Free Set-up Anywhere on hexrows A and B of Map 2—at least six units & the Caesar Leader block must start in hexes fully in the center **and** at least four units in hexes fully in the Roman right section. Set-up before drawing or looking at the initial cards.

Roman units may not set-up in impassable hexes or A1 or B1 on Map 2.

X1 Light Archers (Elite Cretan Mercenary Archers see Special Rules)

X1 6th Legion Heavy Infantry (6 Blocks see Special Legionary rules)

X2 Elite Heavy Infantry (5 Blocks see Special Legionary rules)

X2 Heavy Infantry (4 Blocks see Special Legionary rules)

X2 Medium Infantry (4 Blocks see Special Legionary rules)

X2 Medium Cavalry

X1 Light Cavalry (4 Blocks Arab horse-- see Special Rules)

X2 Auxillia

X1 Light Infantry

X3 Leaders (Caesar) (Carfulenus) (Mithridates, a Roman Client king)

Egyptian Army: (Oriental Style Army: See Special Rules use Carthaginian/Eastern Kingdom/Greek Blocks): ALL Egyptian units/leaders set-up on **Map 1** except where noted. Only 2 units setup on **Map 2** (x1 Light Infantry & x1 Medium Infantry)

X2 Light Archers: A8, F7

X1 Light Slings: C5

X5 Medium Infantry: G7, F6, F8, E9, and on **Map 2**: D7

X6 Auxillia (Levy troops, see special rules): H9, G5, G8, E8, C8, A7

X4 Light Infantry: F4, B9, D8, and on **Map 2**: D6

X1 Light Cavalry: G10

X2 Archers Aboard Ships on the Nile (see special rules): E12, C13

X1 Slings Aboard Ships on the Nile (see special rules): D12

X2 Leaders F8 (Ganymede) G7 (Ptolemy the boy-king)

War Council:

Roman Army:

Leader: Caesar

6 Cards

Move First

Egyptian Army:

Leader: Ganymede

4 Cards

Victory: Normal scoring, but opposing player gets 2 Banners for eliminating Caesar or Ptolemy the boy-king from play and 1 Banner if these same Leaders are forced to evade off-map. The Romans also receive and retain one banner if one of their units was the last to occupy the “village center” hex (Hex A7 on **Map 1**). The Romans also receive and retain one Banner if one of their units currently occupy one of the Egyptian camp hexes (to a maximum of one Banner which is also lost if this situation no longer is in effect).

Therefore the maximum the Romans can garner or retain for geographical objectives is two Banners at any one time.

Player Victory Levels: Romans: 10 Banners Egyptians: 5 Banners

Special Scenario Rules:

Command Rules:

Only Caesar and Ganymede can support a friendly unit in combat in an adjacent hex. The other Leaders only provide support in close-combat or battle-back if stacked with the unit in question. 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 Caesar is the supporting leader---then up to two helmet hits may be counted. The Roman client leader Mithridates may only provide support in combat (or prevent retreats) to Roman units that **are not** Heavy infantry.

Caesar when moving & ordered by himself without an attached unit normally may move up to four hexes instead of the regular three hexes for Leaders in the rulebook.

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. Units defending in village tiles **can never** be considered to be in an “Outflanked” situation.

Roman Legionary Infantry & other Special Roman Army Rules:

The following types of infantry units in the game on the Roman side are assumed to be for game purposes Roman Legionaries: ALL types of Roman Heavy & Medium Infantry.

Roman Pilum:

Each Roman Legionary Infantry unit starts with a Pilum Marker. The Pilum is a one-time use weapon that is generally fired right before a Roman Legionary unit attacks in close-combat or is itself attacked by the enemy in close-combat. Once the Pilum is fired the Pilum marker is removed from the Roman unit to indicate that the Pilum has been expended and the unit may not throw Pilum for the rest of the battle.

Just before a Roman unit with Pilum is attacked or is itself attacked by the enemy for the very first time in the battle in close-combat it throws its Pilum—roll one die and apply normal hits for swords, color, or a Flag/retreat hit Afterwards remove the Pilum marker. The act of throwing the Pilum **is not** considered to be part of the Close-Combat—so any result of the Pilum throw is resolved before the Close-combat. An attached Leader may

use his special ability to cancel a “swords” hit that was inflicted via a Pilum hit (see special Command rules) on the unit he is stacked with.

Roman units, adjacent to the enemy, that have not expended their Pilum may also be ordered to throw Pilum if the card “Darken the Sky” is played by their commanding player. The Player picks one adjacent enemy unit and throws two dice—apply the results just as one would before close combat—and remove the Pilum Marker.

Roman Relief Moves & Cohort Maneuvers:

Adjacent and on the same side Roman Legionary Infantry, instead of moving, may switch places in a “Relief/Cohort Maneuver”. Relief/Cohort Maneuvers may only be conducted through the play of Section cards ONLY. Instead of ordering one unit via a section card, the controlling Player may order a pair of adjacent Legionary Infantry units to switch hexes—at least one of the units switching places must not be adjacent to an enemy unit. A unit that switched places via the Relief/Cohort Maneuver into a hex adjacent to the enemy may close combat in the same player-turn.

Roman Veteran Initiative:

Up to Two Roman Legionary Heavy Infantry units per Roman Player-turn that are ordered by Line Commands or an “Order Heavy Troops” card may move two hexes and close combat at their option.

Roman Elite Cretan Mercenary Archers

The Roman Light Archer units hit on swords when executing missile fire at Light Egyptian Foot units that are not located aboard ships.

6th Legion & Elite Legions

Note that three Roman Heavy Infantry units start the game with five or six blocks rather than the normal four blocks. These are all crack veteran troops, they are treated as normal Heavy Legionary Infantry for all other purposes, but have the advantage of an extra block(s) and may rally back to a full five (or six block for the 6th Legion) strength through use of a rally card.

Julian Legions—Use the Julian Legions movement rules for Roman Legionary (Heavy & Medium Infantry) ordered Moves. Don’t use the Marius Legions rules.

Roman Client Arab Horse

The four-block Roman Light Cavalry unit is assumed to be made up of high-quality Arab-horsemen—the unit has four blocks instead of the normal cavalry three blocks as its initial strength. In battle-back (only) this unit hits on ‘swords’. The unit retreats only two hexes per Flag result taken or inflicted upon it.

The Egyptian Oriental-Style Army Special Rules

Oriental Army: The Egyptian Army is assumed to be a typical Oriental Army, at its core almost completely unable to meet the Roman and Roman client allied forces in an open battle due to generally inferior discipline, training, equipment, and fighting spirit when

compared to the Roman Republic's Legions---In Close Combat and Battle Back ALL Egyptian units, make **no hits** on their enemies if Swords are rolled—**always** consider Swords to be a 'miss' when rolled by the Egyptian Player **unless a)** the Egyptian unit is a type that **would normally** hit on swords, **b)** is not currently in an outflanked position, **and c) is also battling back (only) while protected by a Rampart.** Note that Egyptian Auxillia (Levy troops) and Medium Infantry are the only two Egyptian unit types that could qualify to hit on swords (see **a)**) given the existence of the other two conditions (**b)** & **c)**) in the individual combat.

Egyptian Levy: All Egyptian Auxillia units are assumed to be cobbled together Infantry Levy of the kingdom recruited from various sources—these units have no missile capability, when retreating they retreat two hexes per Flag result taken or inflicted upon them. For other purposes Egyptian Auxilla are treated as regular Auxillia Oriental-style units.

The Egyptian Ships with Slingers and Archers aboard on the Nile:

Ships carrying Archers or Slingers out on the Nile River are represented by three Egyptian units that initial start in hexes E12, C13, D12.

These naval-based forces caused Caesar's men some trouble when they tried to advance near the river. Each of these units is represented in the game by **two** blocks of the appropriate Type (foot archer or slingers) and a single ship model—"The Conquest of the Empire" game by MB/Eagle Games has some plastic models that could be used to represent the ships. Use the following rules for these units—in general, for game purposes, except where noted below, they are treated as, missile fire, and are ordered & move as Light Archer/Light Slinger units.

- a) The Ship Archer/Slinger units may not enter riverbank hexes.
- b) The Ship Archer/Slinger units may always move through each other.
- c) The Ship Archer/Slinger units may only be missile attacked by Caesar's (Elite Cretan) Foot Archer unit. A Color result inflicted on the targeted Ship results in the loss of one foot archer or slinger block—A Flag result causes the Ship Archer/Slinger unit to withdraw from the battle—it is removed from play, but doesn't count for a Banner. If **both** archers/slinger blocks are eliminated aboard the ship via color results the ship also withdraws from the battle, but doesn't count for a Banner. IF ALL three Ship Archer/Slinger units are forced to withdraw from the battle due to the Roman Foot Archer missile fire the Roman Player scores 1 Banner.
- d) The Ship Archer/Slinger units have a maximum range of four hexes, but roll only a maximum of one dice if firing at a target four hexes away.
- e) The Ship Archer/Slinger units cannot and do not support one another.

'A Reckoning for Kings': The Discard Option—A Card Option for Both Players

If a player's Army Leader is still on the map he may, at the start of his own player-turn, choose to discard three cards from his hand (if the Roman Player) and redraw three more cards in lieu of executing a regular player-turn –For the Egyptian Player the number of cards discarded and redrawn in this way as the discard option is two each only--this may only be done in place of taking a normal player-turn (the normal player-turn is skipped

over and the enemy player now has the option to conduct a normal player-turn or do a discard for his hand).

Terrain Special Rules:

Egyptian Camp Hexes: Units defending in Camp hexes gain no combat advantage/disadvantage whatsoever and cannot cancel any results by virtue of that terrain. Camp hexes only affect combat by blocking line of sight.

Village Hexes: The four village hex tiles represent the fortified village defended by the Egyptians a terrain feature which furnished a key arena in the opening of the battle. For Combat/Movement/Line of Sight purposes treat these tiles as Fortified Camp tiles except units battle when in a village tile with the usual number of dice (not the minus one in the rules). Units defending and battling-back in village tiles can never be considered to be in an “Outflanked” situation.

Canal/Riverbank Hextiles: **Both** of these terrain tile types are impassable to all types of units on both sides.

All other terrain tile types (including Ramparts) are treated per the rulebook.