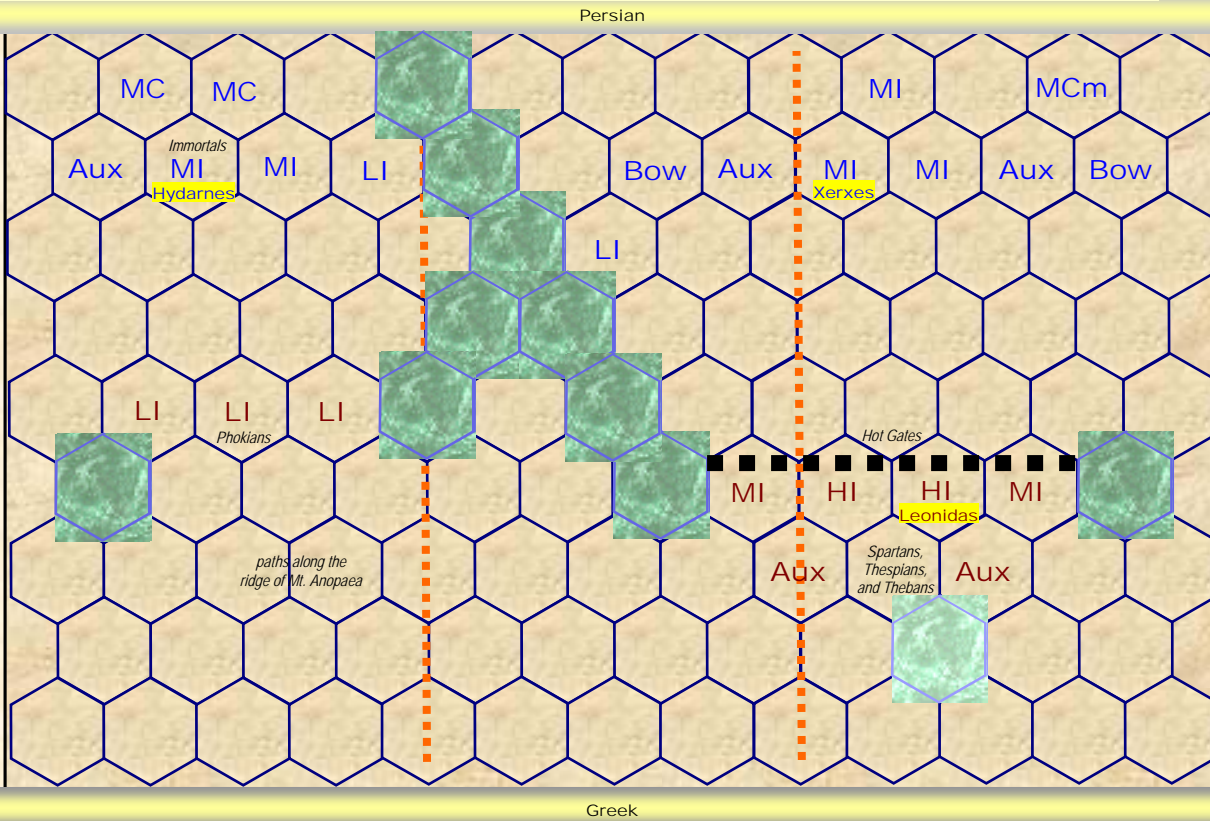


Thermopylae 480BC



War Council

Greek player:
Leonidas: take 4 cards. You move first.

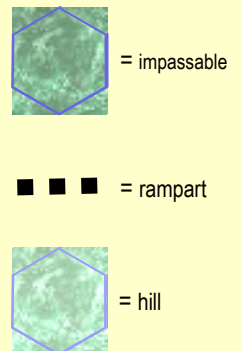
Persian player:
Xerxes: take 5 cards.

Victory
6 banners

Special Rules
Do not reshuffle the pack after 'I am Spartacus'. If the pack runs out the Greeks win.

The rampart hexsides represent the Phokian wall at the Hot Gates. If a Persian unit enters a rampart hex the wall section is destroyed.

The 'Immortals' special rule from Expansion 1 is in effect for the Immortals medium infantry unit led by Hydarnes.



Historical Background

In the Battle of Thermopylae of 480 BC an alliance of Greek city-states fought the invading Persian army in the pass of Thermopylae. Vastly outnumbered, the Greeks delayed the enemy in one of the most famous last stands of history. A small force led by King Leonidas of Sparta blocked the only road through which the massive army of Xerxes I could pass.

The legend of Thermopylae, as told by Herodotus, has it that Sparta consulted the Oracle at Delphi before setting out to meet the Persian army. The Oracle is said to have made the following prophecy in hexameter verse[2]:

O ye men who dwell in the streets of broad Lacedaemon!
Either your glorious town shall be sacked by the children of Perseus,
Or, in exchange, must all through the whole Laconian country
Mourn for the loss of a king, descendant of great Heracles.
He cannot be withstood by the courage of bulls nor of lions,
Strive as they may; he is mighty as Jove; there is naught that shall stay him,
Till he have got for his prey your king, or your glorious city.

In essence, the Oracle's warning was that either Sparta would be conquered and left in ruins, or one of her two hereditary kings must sacrifice his life to save her.

Greek morale was high. Herodotus wrote that when Dienekes, a Spartan soldier, was informed that Persian arrows were so numerous that they blotted out the sun, he remarked with characteristically laconic prose, "So much the better, we shall fight in the shade." Today Dienekes's phrase is the motto of the Greek 20th Armored Division

The Persians succeeded in defeating the Greeks but sustained heavy losses, disproportionate to those of the Greeks. A local resident named Ephialtes betrayed the Greeks, revealing a mountain path that led behind the Greek lines. Dismissing the rest of the army, King Leonidas stayed behind with 300 Spartans and some Thespian and Theban volunteers. Though they knew it meant their own deaths, they secured the retreat of the other Greek forces.

The losses of the Persian army alarmed Xerxes. When his navy was later defeated at Salamis he fled Greece leaving only part of his force to finish the conquest of Greece. It was defeated at the Battle of Plataea.

The performance of the defenders at the battle of Thermopylae is often used as an example of the advantages of training, equipment and good use of terrain to maximise an army's potential, as well as a symbol of courage against overwhelming odds. The heroic sacrifice of the Greeks has captured the minds of many throughout the ages and has given birth to many cultural references as a result.

Simonides composed a well-known epigram, which was engraved as an epitaph on a commemorative stone placed on top of the burial mound of the Spartans at Thermopylae. It read 'Go tell Sparta, passers-by, that here obedient to her laws we lie.' There is also a modern monument at the site of the battle, called the "Leonidas Monument" in honor of the Spartan king. It reads simply: "Μολὼν λαβέ": Molon Labe: "Come and take them." This was Leonidas' response to Xerxes' offer to spare the Greeks if they would give up their weapons.