

CHAPTER 4

Kassala: An Introductory Wargame

IT'S ALL very well to read about wargames, to have the common terms and procedures defined and explained, but there's no substitute for seeing and playing one. Hence, Kassala.

Kassala is a simulation—a re-creation of an actual, if obscure, sixteenth-century battle that took place between Moslem and Christian soldiers in northeastern Africa. The playing pieces represent the forces—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—believed to have been there. The wargame board is a modified map of the site of the battle.

This game is a short, enjoyable, and challenging contest for two people. The "Moslem" player must attack and try to take the towns of Kassala and Udaka before the game's ten-turn time limit runs out. The "Christian" player must try to prevent this. Although the luck of the die can be a factor, victory will tend to go to the person who outplans and outmaneuvers his opponent.

Finally, Kassala is an introduction to contemporary wargames. Wargaming fanatics who disdain anything less elaborate than *War in the East* may not recognize Kassala as belonging to the same genre. It isn't, ad-

mittedly, a highly refined version of the German invasion of Russia in World War II or Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. But you'll find all the basic wargaming elements discussed in the previous chapter: a mapboard divided into hexagonal spaces, cardboard playing pieces with printed combat and movement factors, different unit types, zones of control, terrain effects, a Combat Results Table for resolving battles, and so on. To be sure, Kassala has fewer pieces—and fewer kinds of pieces—than chess and takes less time to play—twenty minutes or so, with a bit of practice—and the rules have been written specifically to make them easy to understand, none of which is true of the games discussed in the rest of this book. And, once you have mastered the basic game, you can use some of the optional rules that have been provided to add further complexity to Kassala. After that, you'll be ready for *War at Sea*, *Stalingrad*, *Richthofen's War*, Metagaming's MicroGames, Series 120 games from Game Designers' Workshop, and Simulations Publications' folio and capsule games. Moving up to really complex games like *Squad Leader*, *Terrible*

Swift Sword, or—if you must—even Drang Nach Osten! just takes practice and a little effort.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE GAME

In 1527 the first Portuguese embassy to the Coptic Christian kingdom of Ethiopia concluded its visit and sailed for home. Not long thereafter, Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, called Ahmed Gran (the left-handed), led a mixed force of fanatic Moslem warriors on a religious jihad into Ethiopia. Due primarily to the presence within their ranks of two hundred Turkish infantrymen armed with matchlocks, the invading Moslems had little trouble crushing native resistance. Ethiopian Emperor Lebna Dengel scarcely had time to send a plea for aid to Portugal before fleeing to the highlands in the northwestern portion of the kingdom.

For more than a decade the Moslem occupation continued. As the Moslems spread from their homelands on the eastern coast of Africa throughout the kingdom, the Ethiopians were pressed farther back into the highlands. During this period Lebna Dengel died and, in 1540, was succeeded on the throne by his son Cladius, who became Emperor Galawdewos.

In 1541, Portuguese soldiers, armed with muskets and led by Christopher da Gama (son of the explorer Vasco da Gama), slipped into the port of Massawa. Marching to aid the emperor, the Portuguese survived some minor skirmishes against small Moslem bands but were finally attacked en masse by the bulk of the Imam's forces. The Moslem

army killed nearly half the Europeans, including Da Gama, but suffered heavy losses. While the Moslems regrouped, the remaining Portuguese hurried to join the Christian forces.

At the walled desert town of Kassala on the river Gash, in what is now Sudan, the forces of Emperor Galawdewos are believed to have made their climactic stand. Reinforced by the veteran Portuguese musketeers and armed from a secret cache of weapons hidden earlier, the Christians prepared their defenses. With reinforcements of their own in the form of troops from the Moslem Ottoman Empire, the army of Ahmed Gran camped less than half a mile away.

At dawn, the Moslem banners were raised; their cannon spouted thunder and lightning, and the assault began. When the clouds of battle finally cleared, the battered Christians had weathered the storm. Most of the Imam's infantry lay dead or dying, and the surviving Moslem forces withdrew to the safety of Khartoum, about two hundred fifty miles to the west.

For two years following the battle, the emperor recruited troops. Then, with a force of eight thousand infantry and five hundred cavalry, he attacked the Moslems at Waina Rega. After sixteen years in Ethiopia, Ahmed Gran fell to a Christian musket ball. Although Emperor Galawdewos died two years later in a minor engagement, he had turned the Moslem tide for good at Kassala.

Kassala: Rules of Play

I. COMPONENTS

- A. The mapboard (Fig. 4-1) depicts the area surrounding the town of Kassala, the

KASSALA

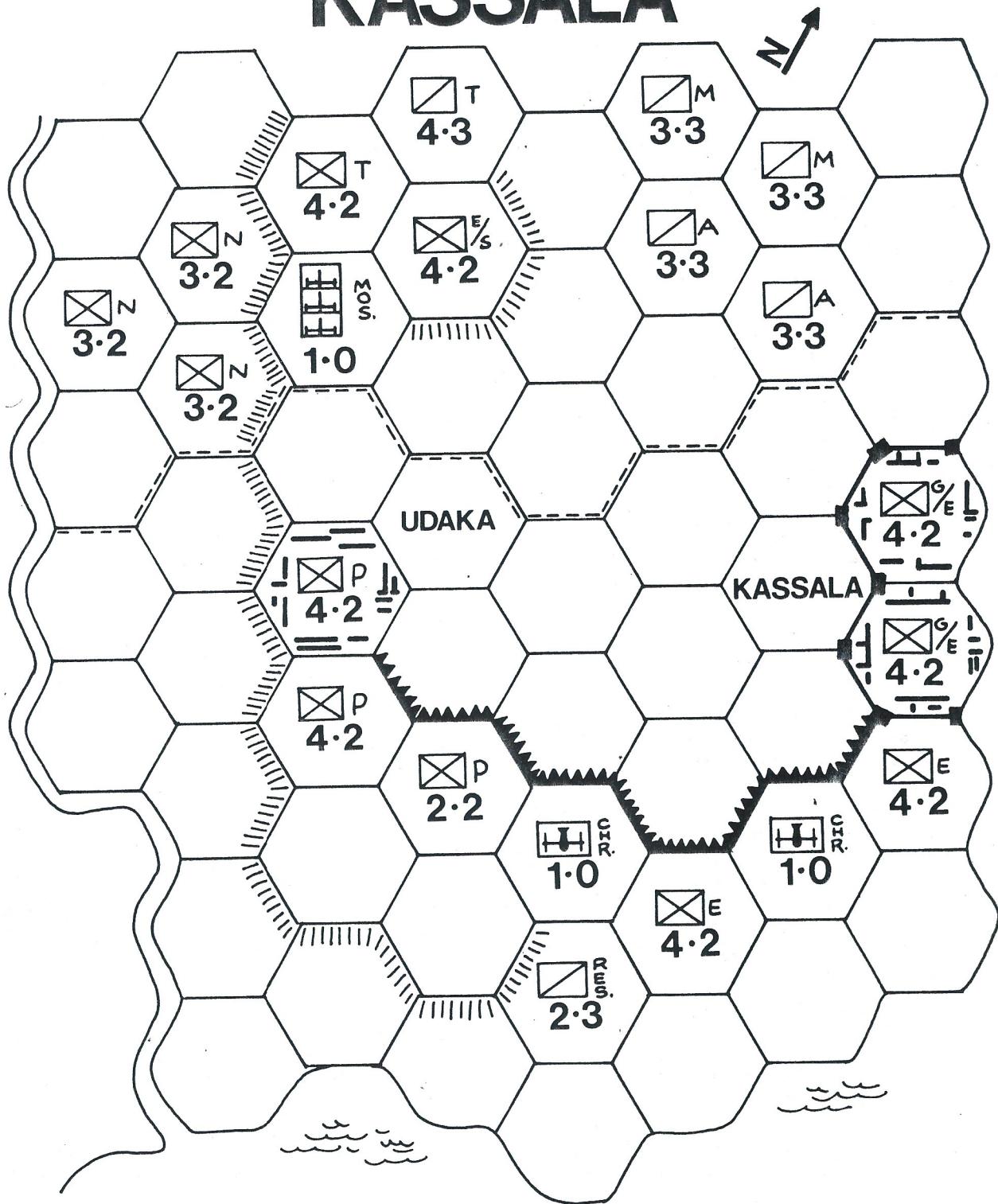
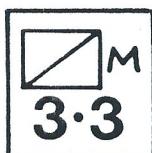


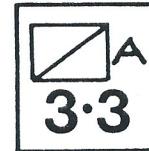
Fig. 4-1

scene of a crucial battle in 1541 between the Christian Ethiopians of Emperor Galawdewos and the invading Moslem army of Imam Ahmed Gram. The terrain has been altered to conform to the strictures of map size. The mapboard has been divided into hexagonal spaces—hexes—to regulate movement and combat. Each hex represents approximately one hundred yards from side to side, and each turn in the game corresponds very roughly to thirty minutes of real time.

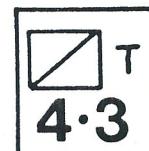
1. There are two types of special hexes that affect play.
 - a. Kassala Hexes
 - b. Udaka Hex
 2. There are two types of special hex-sides that affect play.
 - a. Wadi Hex-sides
 - b. Trench/Abatis Hex-sides
 3. The effects of these terrain features are fully explained in the rules for Movement (IID) and Combat (IIE), and are summarized in the Terrain Effects Key.
 - B. The playing pieces or units are cardboard tiles, often called "counters," which represent the groups of soldiers involved in the conflict. There are two sets of pieces, one for each player. The pieces are listed with their historical equivalents. The number to the left of each unit indicates the total number of each piece. The composition of forces is included for information purposes only; it is not involved in the play of the game.
1. The Moslem player's units consist of:



(Fig. 4-2) Approximately 300 Mamluke warriors armed primarily with lances and bows.



(Fig. 4-3) Approximately 200 Arab cavalry armed with assorted weapons.



(Fig. 4-4) Approximately 200 Turkish cavalry with chain-mail armor and assorted weapons.



(Fig. 4-5) Approximately 350 Nubian infantry armed with spears, swords, and bows.



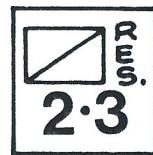
(Fig. 4-6) Approximately 200 Turkish infantry with firearms.



(Fig. 4-7) Approximately 200 Egyptian/Sudanese infantry with firearms.



(Fig. 4-8) One cannon.

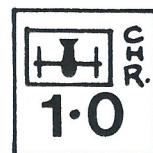


(Fig. 4-13) Approximately 150 native light cavalry armed with assorted weapons.

2. The Christian player's units consist of:



(Fig. 4-9) Approximately 200 Galla-Ethiopian warriors armed with muskets.



(Fig. 4-14) One cannon.



(Fig. 4-10) Approximately 400 Ethiopian warriors armed with spears, swords, and bows.



(Fig. 4-11) Approximately 200 Portuguese soldiers armed with muskets.

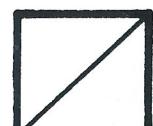


(Fig. 4-12) Approximately 100 black Portuguese slaves armed with muskets.

3. Among both sets of pieces are three types of units. They are distinguished by these symbols in their upper left-hand corner:



Infantry



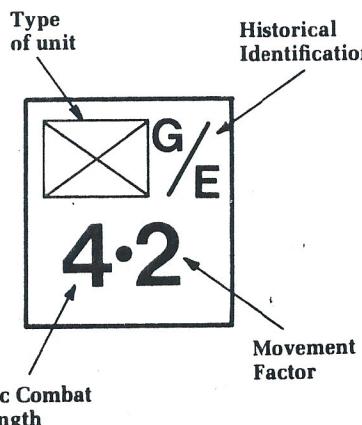
Cavalry



Cannon

Fig. 4-15

4. The abbreviation in the upper right-hand corner of each piece is used only for historical identification.



Anatomy of a playing unit or counter.

Fig. 4-16

5. The number in the lower left-hand corner of each piece indicates its *basic combat strength* or the *combat factor*—the relative strength of a unit when it is attacking or defending against other units. This is very important to the play of the game. In Kassala, these combat strengths range from a low of 1 (for cannon) to a high of 4.
 6. In the lower right-hand corner of each piece is its *movement factor* or the number of *movement points* it has. Since, generally, it takes one movement point to go from one hex to an adjoining hex, the movement factor is also the basic number of hexes a unit may move in one game turn (every turn). Terrain effects, however, may affect a unit's move, reducing it below this maximum. This, too, is very important. In Kassala, the movement factor is 0 for cannon (which can't move), 2 for infantry, and 3 for cavalry units.
- C. A die is required to play Kassala and must, therefore, be bought or borrowed from another game. Note that the die is used for the resolution of combat only and has no connection whatsoever with the movement of units.

- D. The *Combat Results Table* (Fig. 4-17) is used to resolve combat whenever opposing units are next to each other.

Fig. 4-17
Combat Results Table

SIMPLIFIED COMBAT ODDS							
DIE ROLL	1-4				5-1 or more		
	1-3	1-2	1-1	2-1	3-1	4-1	
1	C	EX	EX	C	DE	DE	DE
2	C	C	EX	EX	C	DE	DE
3	AE	C	C	EX	EX	C	DE
4	AE	AE	C	C	EX	C	DE
5	AE	AE	AE	C	C	EX	C
6	AE	AE	AE	AE	AE	EX	EX

EXPLANATION OF COMBAT RESULTS:

DE = Defender Eliminated. All defending units are removed from the mapboard. Any one attacking unit may advance into each hex vacated by an eliminated defending unit. (Important: These and all other results apply only to those units involved in the particular combat being resolved.)

AE = Attacker Eliminated. All units participating in this attack are removed from the mapboard.

EX = Exchange. All units of the smaller force (attacking or defending) involved in this combat are removed from the board. The owner of the larger force must then remove a number of units whose combined combat strength is at least equal to the total combat strength of the smaller force. The larger force's player may choose which units he wishes to eliminate, but those eliminated must be among those—and only among those—that were involved in the combat. These strengths are calculated at the "face value" of the units and, for this purpose, are not modified by terrain additions or subtractions. Note that an "Exchange" may result in the elimination of both forces. Any surviving attacking units (only) may occupy any hexes vacated by eliminated defending units (this, of course, does not apply if all the attacking units are removed and some defending units remain).

C = Contact. There is no effect to either the attacking or the defending units unless the defending hex is occupied solely by cannon units. In this case, treat the "Contact" result as "Defender Eliminated" in regard to the cannon. In all other cases, all involved units remain in place and must renew the battle in the combat portion of the other player's turn. Additional units may join the units in Contact, but no unit in Contact may move away.

Type of Hex	Effects on Movement	Effects on Combat
Plain Terrain Hex	1 Movement Point to enter.	No Effects.
Udaka Hex	1 Movement Point to enter; cavalry units prohibited.	+1 point to total defensive combat strength.
Kassala Hex	1 Movement Point to enter; cavalry units prohibited.	+2 points to total defensive combat strength.
Wadi Hex-side	+1 Movement Point to cross; cavalry units prohibited.	-1 point from each unit attacking up across.
Trench/Abatis Hex-side	+1 Movement point to cross.	-1 point from each unit attacking across from the barbed side.

Terrain Effects Key

Fig. 4-18

- E. The Terrain Effects Key (Fig. 4-18) summarizes the effects, on both the movement of units and combat, of the different hexes and hex-sides on the mapboard.

II. HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

A. Setting Up the Game

1. Put the mapboard on the table or other flat, solid surface, and place each playing piece on the hex bearing that unit's symbol and historical designation. Note that the three Moslem cannon are stacked in the same hex.

B. Sequence of Play

1. The player controlling the Moslem units moves any or all of his units within the limits of their movement factors and the rules for movement.
2. When he has moved all the units he wants to move that turn, the Moslem player then makes any attacks required by the rules for combat; that is,

his units must attack any Christian units to which they are adjacent.

3. When the Moslem player has completed all attacks for the turn, the Christian player moves any or all of his units within the limits of their movement factors and the rules for movement.
4. The Christian player then makes any attacks required by the rules for combat.
5. The players record the passage of one game turn.
6. This sequence of play is repeated exactly for ten game turns; at the end of the tenth turn, the outcome is determined.

C. Zones of Control

1. In addition to occupying the hex on which it rests, a unit in Kassala also exerts an influence on every adjacent

- hex. This is the unit's zone of control.
2. This influence affects the movement of enemy units and affects combat for all units. These effects are fully explained within the rules for Movement and Combat.
- D. Movement
1. During any turn, a player can move as many or as few of his units as he wishes.
 2. A player doesn't have to move a unit as far as its movement factor would allow. For example, a cavalry unit with a movement factor of 3 might, on any particular turn, move 1, 2, or 3 hexes—or not at all.
 3. Unused movement points cannot be saved for a later turn or transferred to another unit; not moving one unit does not allow you to move the one next to it twice as far as normal.
 4. A unit can be moved every turn; its movement factor is the same throughout the game, no matter how much or how little the unit is moved.
 5. Basically, it takes one point of a unit's movement factor to move it from one hex to an adjacent one, but note the exception in the following rule.
 6. Crossing a wadi or trench/abatis hex-side costs an additional movement point. Thus, it takes two movement points to go from one hex to another across a wadi/trench/abatis hex-side. (See Examples of Play.)
 7. No unit may enter a hex unless that unit has enough (unused) movement points to do so. For example, an infantry unit with 2 movement points cannot move one hex and then cross a wadi hex-side into a second hex; that would require 3 movement points, not 2. Instead, it must stop after one hex and, during the player's next turn, use its full movement factor to cross the wadi hex-side to the hex beyond.
 8. In the movement portion of any single game turn, no unit may be moved a number of hexes greater than its movement factor.
 9. Units may, at no extra cost in movement points, move through hexes that are occupied by friendly units, but no two units may occupy the same hex at the end of their movements. In other words, "stacking," which is allowed to some extent in other games, is not allowed. Note: The stack of three Moslem cannon units is the only exception to this rule. Units may never enter hexes occupied by enemy units.
 10. A unit must cease movement as soon as it moves adjacent to an enemy unit and may not move again—even in later turns—until all enemy units adjacent to it are destroyed in combat.
 11. Units beginning movement adjacent to an enemy unit may not move during that game turn. The only exception is detailed in the rules for combat (E13).
 12. Cavalry units may never be moved into or through any Kassala or Uduka hex at any point in the game.
 13. Cavalry units may never be moved across any wadi hex-side at any point in the game. They may, however, cross trench/abatis hex-sides in the same way that infantry units do—at the cost of an extra movement point.
 14. Cannon units may never be moved at any point in the game.
 15. Units may never be moved off the mapboard or onto any portion of the board that is not a hex (e.g., the river).
 16. Once a player has moved a unit and removed his hand from it, he cannot alter that unit's move without the consent of his opponent.
 17. Movement as a result of combat is a

special case and is described in combat (E13).

E. Combat

Combat is required whenever one or more Christian units are adjacent to one or more Moslem units. The player whose turn it is (normally, the one who just moved) is the attacker; the other player is the defender (for this portion of the turn only; in his turn, he will become the attacker). Combat is resolved by comparing the total combat strength of the attacking units (in each particular battle) to the total combat strength of the units defending against that attack. This comparison is simplified—rounded off in favor of the defender—and expressed as a ratio whose smaller number is 1 (one). This ratio is then used to determine which column of the Combat Results Table (CRT) to use for the battle.

Example: A unit with a combat strength of 4 attacks an enemy unit with a combat strength of 2. Simplifying the comparison of 4 to 2 yields a ratio (or odds) of 2 to 1. The attack is resolved on the 2-1 column of the Combat Results Table.

Example: Units with a total combat strength of 5 attack an enemy unit with a combat strength of 3. Since all ratios are rounded off in favor of the defender, this attack is resolved on the 1-1 column of the Combat Results Table; although the actual ratio is closer to 2-1.

After determining which column of the Combat Results Table to consult, the player attacking rolls a die and matches the number shown, with the correct column of the CRT. The result—AE, DE, EX, or C—is applied immediately to the battling units. (The results are explained in the CRT.)

1. A unit may only attack adjacent enemy units.
2. Each adjacent enemy unit may be attacked only once each turn, al-

though in the other player's turn the attacked unit may—and in some cases must—make its own attack.

3. All enemy units adjacent to friendly units at the beginning of the combat portion of your turn must be attacked that turn. All friendly units that begin combat adjacent to an enemy unit must participate in an attack that turn.
4. Each unit may attack only once each turn (the converse of Combat Rule No. 2).
5. A unit may, however, attack more than one adjacent enemy unit at the same time (i.e., in the same attack).
6. A unit's combat strength is an integral whole and may never be split and applied to more than one combat in the same game turn. (This is analogous to Movement Rule No. 3.)
7. A player may choose which of his units will attack each enemy as long as the preceding rules are followed.
8. When defending (only), the total combat strength of all units in each Kassala hex is increased by 2 points (e.g., from 4 to 6). For Udaka, the defensive bonus is one point. (Note: If the optional cannon rules are used, this bonus applies to the total strength of a stack, not to each unit in a stack.)
9. Each unit attacking up across a wadi hex-side loses one point from its combat strength for that attack. (Important: Note that this is a "one-way" effect and does not apply to units attacking from an unmarked hex down across a wadi hex-side. See the Terrain Effects Key.) This rule does not apply to cannon.
10. Each unit attacking across a trench/abatis hex-side from the barbed side (only) loses 1 point from its combat strength for that attack. (Rules No. 9 and 10 apply if a unit is making a combined attack against two or more units, some of which lie across

- trench/abatis hex-sides.) This rule does not apply to cannon.
11. Cavalry units may participate in attacks on units in Kassala or Udaka hexes and across wadi hex-sides but may not enter such hexes or cross such hex-sides at any point in the game.
 12. The attacking player may resolve combats in any order desired, but the result of each combat must be applied immediately.
 13. If, as a result of combat (i.e., DE or EX), a defending unit is eliminated, any (one) surviving attacker may immediately be moved into the hex vacated by the eliminated defender. This applies only to a unit which actually participated in the attack that eliminated the defender. Note that this move is over and above any normal movement allowed by a unit's movement factor. Note too, however, that cannon cannot move, and that cavalry still cannot enter Udaka or Kassala or cross wadi hex-sides.
 14. For further clarification, see the Combat Results Table and the Examples of Play.

III. WINNING THE GAME

- A. The outcome is determined at the end of ten complete turns of play.
- B. There are three possible results of a game of Kassala:
 1. The Moslem player wins if there are no Christian units in any Kassala or Udaka hex at the end of the game.
 2. The Christian player wins if he has units in both Udaka and Kassala at the end of the game.
 3. The game is a draw if either Kassala or Udaka (but not both) is vacant of Christian units at the end of the game.

IV. OPTIONAL RULES

If, after learning the basic version of Kassala described above, you wish to play a more challenging game, you may add any or all of the following optional rules. (All the basic

rules still apply unless they are specifically contradicted.)

A. Cannon

1. Cannon units are special units and function differently from other units.
2. Unlike other units, cannon may be stacked in a hex, either with other cannon or a different kind of unit or both. As many as three cannon and one other unit (cavalry or infantry) may occupy the same hex. (They would have to be all Moslem or all Christian units.)
3. Each cannon in a hex contributes one strength point to the defense of that hex.
4. Any "Contact" result against a hex defended solely by cannon is treated as though the result had been "Defender Eliminated" (DE).
5. Cannon units may attack enemy units up to two hexes away.
6. Cannon may only attack enemy units that are adjacent to friendly units. (Note this restriction well.)
7. Cannon can perform three types of attacks, but each unit may only participate in one attack during any game turn.
 - a. Combined Attacks are simply those in which one or more cannon combine with one or more other units to attack one or more enemy units. Any cannon participating in such combat must be within two hexes of at least one of the units being attacked. Each cannon may add its single point of combat strength to only one attack each turn. Cannon units never suffer any adverse effects from participating in combined attacks against nonadjacent enemy units (i.e., they cannot be eliminated as a result of AE or EX, and "Contact" results would not apply to them).
 - b. Bombardment is a solitary attack by a cannon against an enemy unit adjacent to another friendly unit.

Its purpose is to allow the friendly unit to concentrate its combat strength against other adjacent enemy units. (The cannon is making a "diversionary attack" or, in effect, "soaking off.") Remember, however, that every friendly unit that begins the combat portion of a turn adjacent to an enemy unit must participate in an attack that turn. Bombardment attacks never have any effect on the enemy units being attacked. The die is not rolled, and the CRT is not consulted.

- c. Cannon may occasionally be forced to make an Individual Attack against an adjacent enemy unit or units. Results of these attacks are always treated as "Contact" results (but note that this is not the same as Rule IV A4), and the die is not rolled. (Note, however, that due to the rule just cited, the next enemy attack will, presumably, eliminate the cannon.)
- 8. No terrain effects reduce, inhibit, interfere with, or eliminate the combat strength of a cannon or any attack made by one. But note that the normal defensive bonus of occupying a Kas-sala or Udaka hex applies to cannon or to any unit(s) being attacked by cannon.

B. Free Deployment

This allows players to vary the game setup from the basic positions printed on the mapboard.

1. The Christian player places his units in any hexes south of the dotted line on the mapboard.
2. The Moslem player then sets up his units in any hexes north of the same dotted line.

C. Mixed Attacks

Whenever one or more infantry units make a joint attack with one or more cavalry units against one or more enemy units, the attack is resolved on the Com-

bat Results Table one column higher than would normally be the case. For example, if the Turkish 4·3 cavalry and the Turkish 4·2 infantry were attacking one of the Christian 4·2 infantry units at 2-1, the attack would be resolved on the 3-1 (not the 2-1) column of the CRT. Note that this bonus applies only to attacking units and is not dependent on the composition of the defending units (which could be a mixture of infantry and cavalry units, also, without altering the attacking force's bonus).

V. EXAMPLES OF PLAY

A. Movement (Fig. 4-19)

The Nubian infantry may move to either hex (a) or (b) at a cost of two movement points (one for the hex entered and one for the type of hex-side crossed). The unit may, alternatively, move to hex (c) via hex (d) at a cost of one movement point for each hex entered.

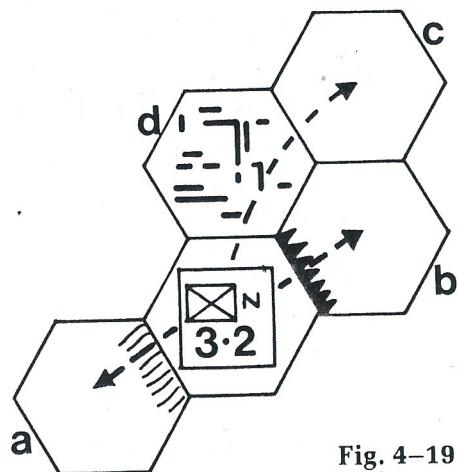


Fig. 4-19

B. Single Attack (Fig. 4-20)

The Turkish infantry attacks the enemy unit in hex (b). The Turkish unit (a) loses one strength point for attacking up across a wadi hex-side. The Portuguese unit gains one strength point for defending in the Udaka hex. The adjusted attack is thus 3-3 and is resolved at 1-1.

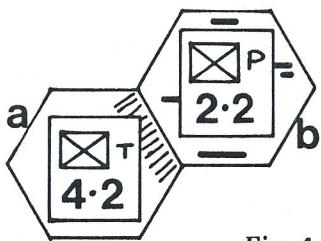


Fig. 4-20

C. Multiple Attack (Fig. 4-21)

The Egyptian infantry (a), the Turkish infantry (b), the Turkish cavalry (c), and the Arab cavalry (d) attack the Ethiopian infantry (f) and the cavalry reserve (e). The attack must be executed in one of the following ways:

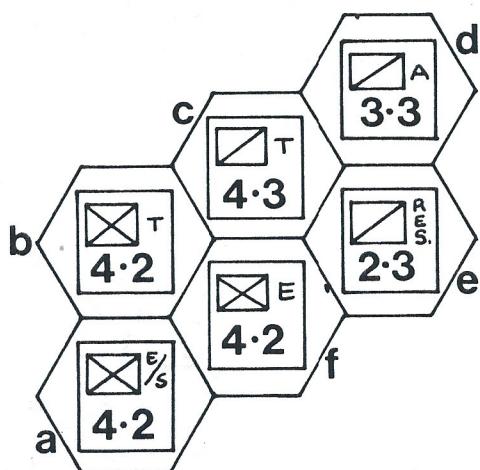


Fig. 4-21

1. The Turkish and Arab cavalry (c) and (d) may attack the reserve cavalry (e) at 3-1 (7-2) odds, while the remaining Moslem units (a) and (b) attack the Ethiopians (f) at 2-1 (8-4) odds.

2. Alternately, the Arab cavalry (d) may attack alone against the reserve cavalry (e) at 1-1 (3-2) odds, while the remaining Moslem units (a), (b), and (c) attack the Ethiopians (f) at 3-1 (12-4) odds (if the optional rules were being used, this second attack—but not the combat between the cavalry units—would be a *mixed attack*).

3. Note that the four Moslem units could not make one large joint (and mixed) attack against the two Christian units, since the Arab cavalry (d) is not adjacent to the Ethiopian infantry (f), and the two Moslem infantry units (a) and (b) are not adjacent to the Christian reserve cavalry (e). (Combat Rule No. 1.)

D. Bombardment (Fig. 4-22)

If the Moslem cannon (d) bombards the Portuguese infantry (b), the Turkish infantry (c) is free to attack the cavalry reserve (a) at 2-1 (4-2) odds. If the cannon does not bombard the Portuguese infantry, the Turkish infantry will be forced to attack both of the Christian units at 1-2 (4-6) odds.

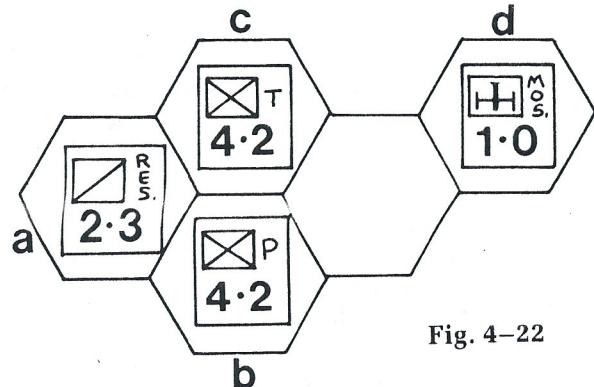


Fig. 4-22