A Solitaire Micro Wargame

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1.0 Introduction

In 492 BC, Darius The Great, the third king of the Persian Achaemenid Empire invaded Greece to expand his empire and punish the Greeks for supporting some of his rebellious subjects. His efforts were ended in 490 BC at the Battle of Marathon at the hands of Athenian soldiers.

10 years later, Darius' son, Xerxes I attempted to get revenge on the Greeks and complete the war that his father had started. He gathered a massive army of an estimated 200,000 men and marched them from modern day Iran to Greece.

Xerxes' army marched almost 600 miles through Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly. The best path to Athens led through a pass called Thermopylae. It was here that the Persians would meet an alliance of a few thousand Greek troops led by 300 Spartans and their king, Leonidas, blocking their path. Xerxes waited four days – expecting the Greeks to disperse at the mere site of his enormous army. When it became clear that the Greeks were not going to give up, Xerxes ordered his troops to attack.

The three days of fighting that ensued is one of the most famous and important battles in the history of Europe. The Greeks lost the fight, but their courage and ferocity inspired their fellow soldiers throughout the rest of the invasion and has continued to do so to this day.

300 Spartans: The 9 Card Thermopylae is a solitaire micro wargame. You will play the role of the Persians and try to eliminate the Greek blockade while losing as few of your troops as possible. You will order archers, infantry, and your elite immortal troops while spending command points to use additional strategy.

Each turn, you must carefully choose how to spend your limited command points. Some

actions can be used every turn and others only when luck allows it. Spend your command points too quickly and you will gain short term victories while missing out on larger benefits. Stockpile them and the Spartans will quickly destroy your troops. Your goal is to eliminate the Spartans from the board while trying to outperform the historic results.

2.0 Game Components

9 Card Thermopylae includes and requires the following game components.
1. Nine Cards
- Seven Activation Cards
- One Status Track Card
- One Map of Thermopylae

2. Two Cubes – although it is not required, it may be helpful to use different colors for different tracks on the board.
- One cube for Game Turns
- One cube for Tactics Points

3. 16 6-Sided Die (D6) – These dice should be in four different colors and approximately 10 mm.
- Four white battle dice for combat
- Three red dice for Spartans
- Three blue dice for Persian Immortals
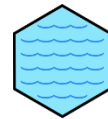- Six green dice for Persian Infantry

2.1 Map

The map card shows a simplified recreation of the battlefield at Thermopylae. It is divided into three sections: Left, Center, and Right by thick dotted lines. (If the dividing line crosses the middle of a hex, it can be used as either side.)
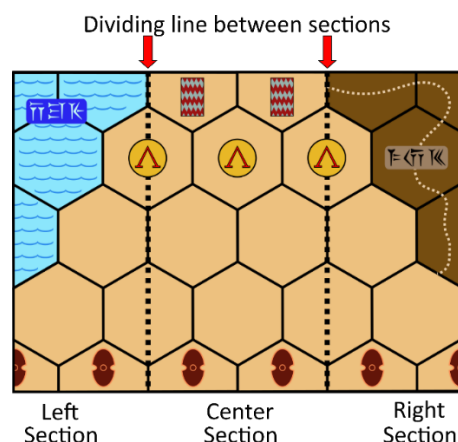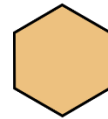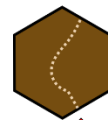

2.1.1 Map Terrain

The map shows three different types of terrain.

Sea Hex - No units may enter. These hexes show the Gulf of Malia.

Normal Hex - All units may use them. These hexes show the battlefield.

Mountain Hex - Only Immortal units may enter and they must move on the trail. These hexes show Mt. Kallidromo.

Trail

2.1.2 Map Symbols

The map uses three Shield Shaped symbols for various purposes.

Persian Footsoldier Shield
These indicate the starting location of the Persian Infantry.

Persian Immortal Shield
These indicate the flanking position of the Persian Elite Immortals.

Spartan Shield
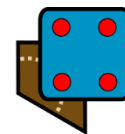These indicate the starting location of the Spartan Hoplites.

These symbols are also used for activation and other events throughout the game.

2.1.3 Partial Hexes

The game map features half hexes and quarter hexes on all sides. These hexes are fully playable. They may be played with the dice hanging over the edge of the map.
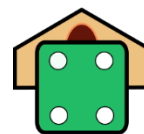
Half hex   Quarter hex

2.2 Units

Units in the game are represented by dice. The current strength of the unit is represented by the number of pips showing. A unit showing four pips is at full strength.

As units have their strength reduced or increased, rotate the die to the next higher or lower number. A unit that must reduce below a strength of one is eliminated. A unit may never increase in strength above four. Any action that would do so is ignored.
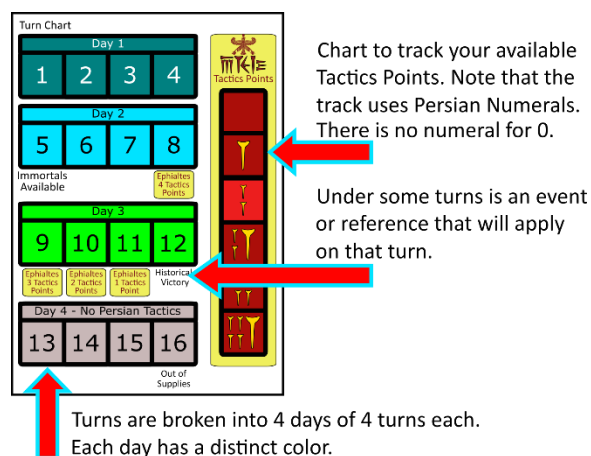
A Spartan Dice is reduced from four strength to three strength.

The game also includes archer units, but these are abstracted and not represented by physical game pieces.

2.3 Status Card

The status card contains the turn track and a chart for tracking your Tactics Points.

Chart to track your available Tactics Points. Note that the track uses Persian Numerals. There is no numeral for 0.

Under some turns is an event or reference that will apply on that turn.

Turns are broken into 4 days of 4 turns each. Each day has a distinct color.

Note that in the full art version of the game, the four days are indicated by symbols from Persian mosaic artwork and the individual turns are marked with a stages of a filling water clock.

2.3.1 Tactics Points

Use the Tactics Point Chart to keep track of your available Tactics Points. Move a cube up and down the chart as you use or earn points. The maximum number of Tactics Points in the game is 5. If you gain points that would put your total above 5, those excess points are lost. The minimum number of points is 0. You may never spend more points than you have (7.0)

2.4 Activation Cards

The activation cards are used throughout the game to activate your units, gain special commands, and determine the Spartan action.
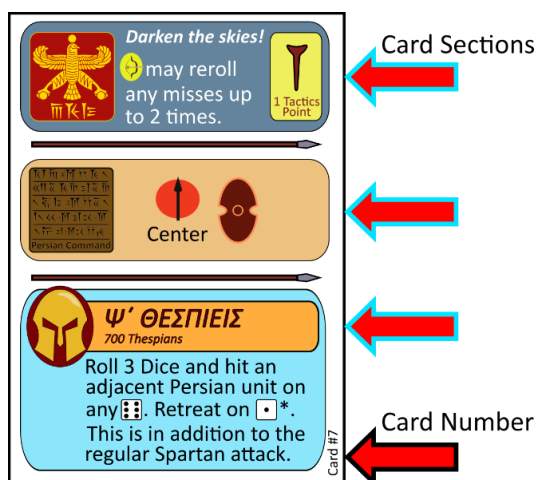
2.4.1 Card Number

Each card has a number on the bottom right corner. This number is for reference only and does not influence gameplay.

### 2.4.2 Card Sections

The cards are divided into three sections.

Persian Tactics - Top section of the card. Indicated with dark blue background and Shahbaz (golden bird).

Persian Command - Middle section of the card. Indicated with light brown background and Cuneiform tablet.

Spartan Event - Bottom section of the card. Indicated with light blue background and hoplite helmet.

Card sections are divided by a spear.

Each section performs a separate function in the game. You will refer to the different sections depending on the current phase of the game.

Note that in the full art version of the game, the Persian Tactics section is indicated by a mosaic pattern and not by an Shahbaz.

3.0 Game Setup

- Place the Map and Status Card next to each other.
- Place a cube on the starting space of the Tactics Point track (highlighted in light red).
- Place a cube on Turn 1.
- Place dice on the Starting Spaces – All dice showing the 4 side.
  - Three red dice on the Spartan starting spaces.
  - Six green dice on the Persian infantry starting spaces.
- Place the three blue dice for Persian immortals nearby.
- Shuffle the Seven Activation Cards and place them face down.
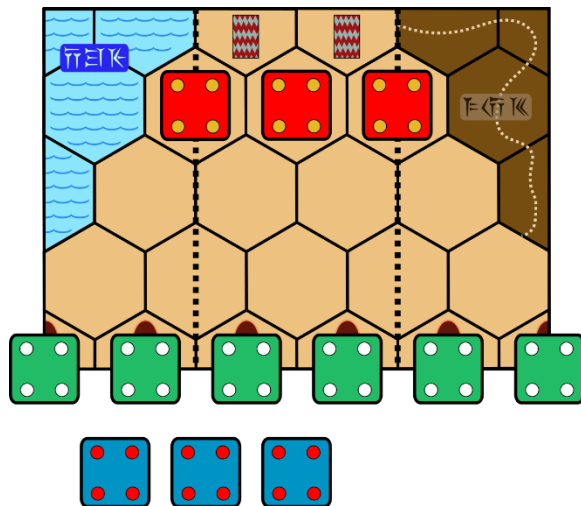
Note that archers are considered permanently off the map and are not represented by dice.

4.0 Sequence of Play

The game takes place over the course of four days. Each day is made up of four turns. You must expel the Spartans blocking your path by the end of the fourth day or you will risk running out of supplies and losing the game.

Each turn will follow this sequence:
1. Card Draw Phase (5.0)
2. Spartan Event Phase (6.0)
3. Persian Tactics Phase (7.0)
4. Command Phase (9.0)
5. Spartan Attack Phase (10.0)
6. End of Day Phase (11.0)
7. Victory or Loss Check Phase (12.0)

5.0 Card Draw Phase

At the start of each turn draw two cards. If there is only one card remaining in the draw pile, shuffle all cards (including the remaining card) to create a new draw pile. This means you will always have one card per draw pile that isn't used.

Choose one card to be used in the Tactics Phase (8.0) and the other to be used in the Command Phase (9.0).

> Special Note: Card #3 does not have a Tactics Section and **must** be used for the Command Phase. This means that you will have to use the other card for the Tactics Phase.

Place the cards below the map with the card that will be used for the Tactics Phase on the left side. Once you lay the cards down, you may not change you mind about which card will perform which action.

5.1 Determining Events by Day

Some events vary based on the day that they are used. In this case, the events are marked with a day number. The number matches the color of the day on the Turn Chart.

Turn 11 is in Day 3. Use the Day 3 event.
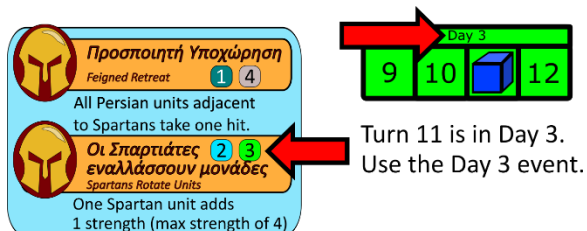
6.0 Spartan Event Phase

Draw the top card from the draw pile. Reference the Spartan Event section at the bottom of the card. The event is applied immediately and lasts through the duration of the turn.

Spartan Event

Event Title in Greek and English.

Event Description.
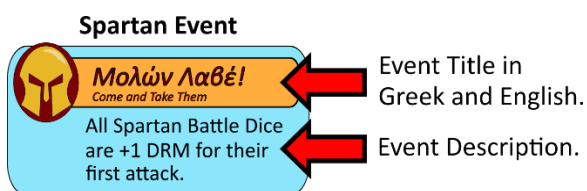
In the example above, the Spartans will get a +1 DRM on all their dice during the first attack of the Spartan Attack Phase (9.0).

7.0 Persian Tactics

Persian Tactics are special actions that can only be performed when purchased using your Tactics Points. Some Tactics are only available when activated in the Persian Tactics Phase (8.2) but others are available to purchase anytime in the Tactics or Command phase. These are called **Standard Persian Tactics**.

All Tactics will increase or decrease the available Tactics Points when used. Move the cube on the Tactics Point Chart to keep track of your available points.

7.1 Persian Standard Tactics

You may purchase as many Standard Persian Tactics as you can afford. However, you may only purchase individual tactics one time per turn (with the exception of Immortals, which may be activated twice per turn).

Standard Persian Tactics

Description	Cost
Intense Fighting +1 DRM to all dice in any one archer or infantry battle roll. You must decide to use this tactic before rolling. (Limit, one per attack.) Note: This tactic may not be used for Immortal battle rolls.	1
Archers Make an Archer Battle Roll - 🎲	1
Infantry Activate a random infantry unit ⚀⚁🔴🔴 ⚁⚄🔴🔴 ⚄⚄🔴🔴	2
Immortals Activate an Immortal Unit of your choice. If there is not an Immortal Unit on the map, place one in an empty Persian Infantry setup hex (you may not bring on the map if no space is available). You may purchase this tactic up to two times per turn. Note: This action is not available until Day 2.	2
Reinforcements Bring a dead Infantry Unit back to the board at a strength of 2. Place it on an available Persian Infantry setup hex. Reinforcements may be activated immediately without spending additional points.	3
Ephialtes You persuade Ephialtes to betray the Spartans and guide your Immortals on the trail that leads behind the Spartan position. Note: This action is not available until Turn 8 in Day 2. The cost goes down each turn, but the minimum cost is always 1 Tactics Point.	Cost varies by turn. (Min 1)

Standard Persian Tactics may be paid for and used at any point in the Persian Tactics Phase or the Persian Command Phase (8.0). You may spend points as soon as you earn them.

7.2 Dice Roll Modifiers
A Dice Roll Modifier (DRM) gives a modification to a rolled die value. i.e. A DRM of +1 means that dice will have 1 added to their rolled value. See (10.2) for an example.

- Appling a DRM is mandatory. This means that when a DRM is in effect, hits are more likely, but retreat results will be impossible. (Spartan units may potentially still get a retreat if the Spartan Event on Card 6 is in effect which allows them to retreat Persians when rolling a ⚀.)
- The max die roll is ⚅. A +1 DRM on a natural roll of ⚅ is ignored. Likewise, the minimum die roll is ⚀.
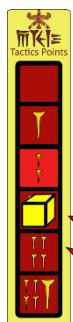
8.0 Persian Tactics Phase
The card chosen for the Tactics Phase (the one laid on the left) can be used in one of two ways:
- Discard the card for one Tactics Point (8.1)
- Play the Special Persian Tactic (8.2)

> Special Note: On Day 4, you may not use Special Persian Tactics so you must discard the card for one Tactics Point during those turns. (You may still use Standard Tactics Points on Day 4 turns.)

If you cannot afford to pay the Tactics Points to use the card, you must discard it.

8.1 Discard for Tactics Point
Place the card into the discard pile and increase your available Tactics Points by 1 point.

> Special Note: You may discard Card #1 for two Tactics Points.

8.2 Play Special Persian Tactics
Refer to the top section of the card chosen for the Tactics Phase (the one laid on the left). This section will show a Special Persian Tactic and the cost of using it. Pay for the tactic immediately. Special Persian Tactics must be purchased before proceeding to the Persian Command Phase (9.0).

All Special Persian Tactics go into effect immediately when played and last through the duration of the turn. Unlike Persian Standard Tactics, Special Persian Tactics are only available on the turn they are played.

Persian Tactics Event

In the above example, you may reroll any two dice from any chosen combat. This will cost 2 Tactics Points. Decrease your available tactics points by 2 points.

You may only use the Special Persian Tactic once per turn. If you were unable to use the Special Persian Tactic, you may not get the Tactics Points back.

9.0 Persian Command Phase
In this phase you will activate the units shown in the middle section of the card and command them to attack the Spartans. The Command determines the map section and unit that may be activated.

Persian Command Event
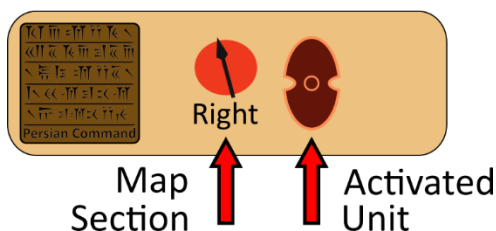
In the above example you must activate one infantry on the right side of the board (if one is available). You should activate a unit based on its current location regardless of where it started. (i.e. If a unit started on the right side but moved to the center on a prior turn, it may not be activated with the above card.)
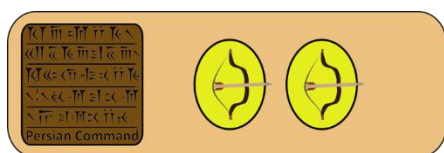
In the above example, two archers are activated and will attack the Spartans. Archers are not represented on the board so a location is not indicated.

> Note: Card #1 and Card #3 have random activation. Roll a die and activate the resulting unit. On Card #1 you may also choose to activate any one infantry regardless of location on the board.

If the indicated unit is not in the activated section of the board, no unit may be activated.

You may only activate the units shown on the card. For example, the symbol 🧔 only activates the Persian Infantry units. Immortals can only be activated with their symbol 🟥 (card #3) or with Persian Standard Tactics (7.1).

Units may potentially be activated twice if they are activated by both a Command and a Persian Standard Tactic (7.1).

9.1 Movement

When activating an Infantry or Immortal unit, it will move forward until it is adjacent to the Spartans. If an activated unit is already adjacent to the Spartans, it can not move. A unit already adjacent to the Spartans may not move away from them unless retreating as a result of Spartan combat (10.1.3) or during the End of Day Phase (11.0).

The max movement for any Persian unit is three hexes. This includes trail movement (9.1.1).

The stacking limit is one unit per hex. You may never have more than one unit per hex – including during movement. You may not move through another unit.

9.1.1 Trail Movement

Persian units may not enter the trail through the Kallidromo mountain hexes until the Ephialtes Standard Persian Tactic has been activated.

Only the Immortal units may use the trail. Infantry units may never enter the trail.

You only need to pay for Ephialtes once. Once it has been activated, Immortal units may freely access and use the trail for the rest of the game.

9.2 Persian Combat

All activated Persian units will now initiate combat against the Spartans. If a unit is adjacent to more than one Spartan, choose one to target. Each activated unit may attack once.

> Exception: If an activated Immortal Unit is on the trail it will not attack this turn.

Only units that were activated this turn will initiate combat. Units that are adjacent from previous turns but not activated on the current turn will not conduct combat.

Roll the number of Battle Dice for that unit and apply the result. Units always roll the same number of battle dice, even if reduced in strength.

Unit	Battle Dice	Retreat	Hit
Infantry	3	⚀⚀	⚄⚄, ⚄⚅ or ⚅⚅
Immortals	4	⚀⚀	⚅⚅
Archers	3	⚀⚀	⚅⚅
Archers friendly fire.	2	n/a	⚄⚄, ⚄⚅ or ⚅⚅

Combat Result Examples:
1. For the infantry to cause the Spartans to retreat, they must roll two ⚀s.
2. To hit the Spartans, the infantry must roll:
   a. two ⚄s
   b. two ⚅s
   c. a ⚄ and a ⚅
3. Immortals will hit the Spartans on each ⚅. The full requirement of a hit or retreat must be met. Additional matching dice (i.e. a 3rd ⚀) do not cause additional effect.

For each hit, reduce the targeted Spartan strength die by 1. Rotate the targeted Spartan die to the next smallest value. If a hit Spartan die is reduced below a strength of 1 it is eliminated from the game.

If a Spartan is required to retreat, it will move back one hex. If it cannot retreat because it is blocked by immortal or already on the back row, it will take a hit instead. Spartans will never retreat toward the Persians beyond their starting hexes. (i.e. If a Persian Immortal rolls a retreat result while on a Flanking hex (9.3) the Spartans will take a hit instead.)

9.2.1 Ground Combat Example
A Persian Unit with a strength of 2 is activated on the left section of the map. It moves adjacent to a Spartan Unit with a strength of 3. Persian Infantry roll 3 battle dice.
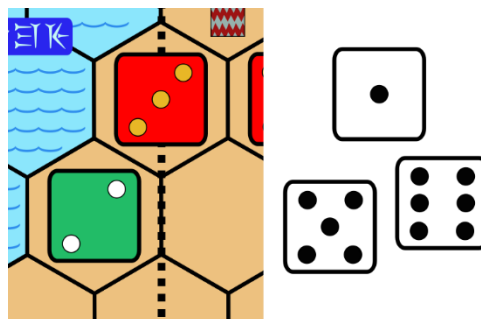
The result was a ⚀, ⚄, and a ⚅. The Spartan unit takes one hit (from the ⚄ and ⚅) and is reduced to a strength of 2. Note the Spartan does not retreat because the Persian only rolled one ⚀ and two are required for a retreat result.

9.2.2 Persian Advance After Combat
If the Spartan is forced to retreat or is eliminated, the Persian unit that rolled that result will advance into the hex the Spartans retreated from.
Exception: An Immortal Unit on a flanking hex (9.3) is not required to advance after combat.

9.2.3 Persian Archer Combat
Archers may target two adjacent Spartan units. For each archer attack, choose two Spartan units and roll separately for each of them. Any hits or retreats earned are only applied to the unit that is currently targeted. There is no advance after combat.

9.2.3.1 Archers Friendly Fire
Any Persian infantry or immortal units adjacent to the Spartans risk getting accidentally hit by archer fire as well. Roll separately for each Persian unit adjacent to Spartans (exception, units in the flanking hexes cannot be accidentally hit). If both dice show a result of ⚄ or ⚅, the Persian unit takes one hit.

9.3 Flanking Bonus
When an Immortal unit is on either flanking hex, all other Persian infantry and immortal units will get a flanking bonus – even those not on the Flanking hex. The Flanking Bonus only
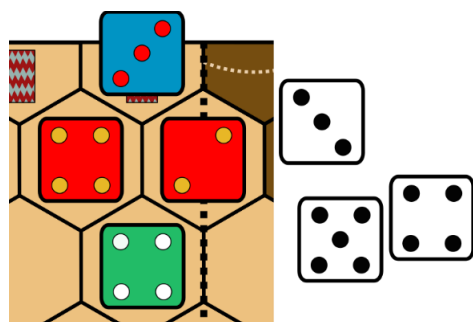
applies when an Immortal unit is on a Flanking icon and is lost if the unit is eliminated.

The combat results change to the following:

Unit	Retreat	Hit
Infantry and Immortals	⚀	⚄ or ⚅

9.3.1 Flanking Combat Example

A Persian Infantry Unit with a strength of 4 is activated and moves adjacent to a Spartan with a strength of 2. A Persian Immortal is on a Flanking Hex.

The Persian Infantry rolls a ⚂, ⚁, and ⚄. The Spartan unit takes a hit (⚄) and reduces its strength to 1.

9.4 Tactics Points Bonuses for Combat

You earn points for any success in combat against the Spartans. The points earned are immediately added to your available Tactics Points on the Status Card. Remember that the maximum number of points is 5 and any additional points earned are lost (2.3.1).

Points earned may be spent immediately. For example, you may earn a point for hitting a Spartan and then spent that point for a +1 DRM for next attack.

Combat Result	Tactics Points Earned
Hit	1
Retreat	2
Eliminated unit	3

You only earn the highest value of Tactics Points in a single combat. i.e. A hit that eliminates a Spartan unit only earns points for the elimination.

10.0 Spartan Attack Phase

In this phase, the Spartans will activate and attack any adjacent Persians.

Before combat begins, any Spartan that is behind an open starting hex (with the Spartan shield), will automatically move forward into that hex to reform the phalanx formation. If a Persian unit occupies the hex, the Spartan will not advance automatically.

All Persian units that are adjacent to the Spartans are attacked one time each. This is the case regardless of how many Spartans the Persian unit is adjacent to.

10.1 Spartan Combat

The Spartans always roll 4 Battle dice regardless of their current strength. They will cause the targeted Persian unit to retreat on a roll of ⚀ or ⚁. They will hit the targeted Persain unit on a roll of ⚄ or ⚅. Hits and retreats are cumulative.

10.1.1 Order of Spartan Attacks

During their combat, Spartans will focus first on Immortals and then on finishing off any weak enemy. The Spartans should target adjacent Persian units in the following priority:

1. Flanking Immortal units
2. Non-Flanking Immortal units
3. Weakest units to strongest units.

The Spartans will attack Persian units of equal strength in any order you choose. It may be helpful to rotate the dice slightly after they have been targeted as a reminder of which attacks are complete.

10.1.2 Spartan Misses

A die roll is considered a miss if it does not cause a hit or retreat on the targeted Persian unit. A miss result has no effect. Some Spartan Events allow misses to be rerolled (i.e. the Spartan event on card #1).

10.1.3 Regular Persian Retreats

The targeted Persian unit will retreat one hex away from the Spartans for each retreat result rolled. You may choose the direction of the retreat, but each hex moved into must be further away from the Spartans and toward the Persian setup hexes.

You may not retreat through another unit. If your retreat path is blocked, you must instead apply hit results (10.1.5) for each retreat result that the retreating unit was not able to complete.

The max retreat is 3 hexes. A Persian unit cannot be retreated off the map. In the rare case that 4 retreat results are rolled, the 4th retreat is treated as a hit.

If a retreating Persian unit cannot retreat the required number of hexes, the difference will be taken as hits instead. For example, the Spartans have rolled 3 hits against a Persian Infantry. The infantry unit can only retreat two hexes because its path is blocked by other units. It will take one hit.

10.1.4 Retreat Results in the Flanking Hexes

Immortal units never have to retreat from a Flanking Hex (9.3). Spartan retreat results against flanking Immortals are ignored.

10.1.5 Hits

Rotate a Persian unit to its next lowest strength value for each hit inflicted. If a Persian unit is reduced to strength 0 or below, it is eliminated. Any hits greater than needed for elimination are ignored. They may not be applied to another unit.

Before rolling the Spartan battle dice, apply any bonus from the current Spartan Event card.

Spartan Combat Results

Unit	Battle Dice	Retreat	Hit
Spartans	4	⚀	⚄ or ⚅

10.2 Spartan Combat Example

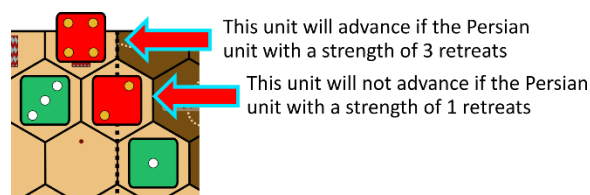The Spartans with a strength of 4 are attacking the Persian Infantry with a strength of 3.
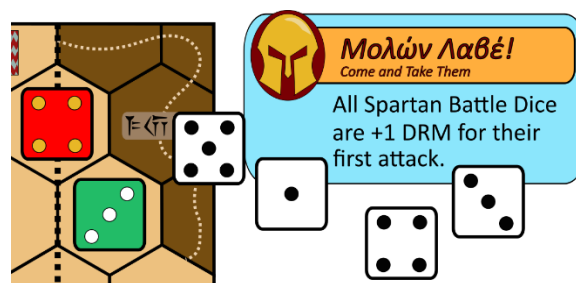
The Spartans roll ⚀, ⚁, ⚂ and ⚄. However, there is a Spartan event that applies a +1 DRM to all dice rolled, making the roll a ⚁, ⚂, ⚄, and ⚅. This results in the following: two hits (⚄ and ⚅). The Persian unit will change its strength to 1. Note that the Spartans lost their retreat result when the ⚀ changed to a ⚁.

10.3 Spartan Advance After Combat

If a Spartan unit eliminates a Persian unit or causes it to retreat, the Spartan will advance under certain circumstances.

If the Spartan is behind its starting hex due to an earlier retreat, it will advance into the vacated hex after the Persian moved out.

The Spartan units will never advance beyond their starting hexes toward the Persian starting hexes.

This unit will advance if the Persian unit with a strength of 3 retreats

This unit will not advance if the Persian unit with a strength of 1 retreats

11.0 End of Day Phase

Every four turns are a day. (Days are color coded on the turn track.)
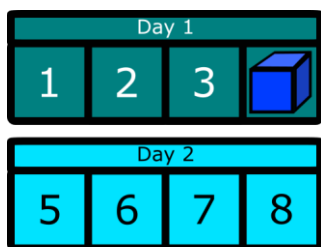
The end of Day 1

At the end of the last turn of the day, the troops end battle and move into their camps. Perform each step before proceeding to the start of the next turn.

- Retreat all Persian units to the starting hexes. If there are more Persians on the map than available hexes due to Immortals in the game, then some units may be placed in the hexes adjacent to the starting hexes.
  - You may retreat the units in any order and to any starting hex that you'd like.
  - Units already on a starting hex do not move.
- Immortal units on flanking hexes or the mountain trail do not retreat. They remain in their current positions during this phase.
- All Spartan units return to their starting hexes (if they had retreated).
- Spartans will redistribute hits from weaker to stronger units to make the strength of each unit as even as possible. For example, if a Spartan unit has a strength of 2 and its neighbor has a strength of 4, both units should be changed to 3. If the difference in strength is only 1, no hits are redistributed. (The total number of hits applied to Spartans will be the same, but they will be more evenly distributed throughout the units.)
- Do not adjust the strength values of any Persian unit.
- Increase the available Tactics Points by 2.

12.0 Victory or Loss Check Phase

At the end of each turn, check to see if any Spartans remain on the board. You win the game immediately if all three Spartan units are eliminated. If there are Spartans remaining on the board, proceed to the next turn.

Place the three cards (Persian Tactics, Persian Command, and Spartan Event) used this turn into the discard pile. If only one card remains in the draw pile, shuffle all cards to form a new draw pile.

12.1 Victory

You win the game if all the Spartans are eliminated before the end of Day 4.

12.1.1 Score

Count the total strength points of the surviving Persian units. You score is calculated as follows:

	Points
Each Infantry Strength Point	1
Each Immortal Strength Point[†]	2
12 – Final Turn Number x 2[‡]	varies

[†] You may count Immortals that have been brought onto the board. Unplayed Immortals do not count for the final score.
[‡] Note that this can result in a negative score for turns in Day 4.

Score Example:
Stefanos has eliminated all the Spartan units on turn 14. His surviving Persian units are:
- Three infantry units on the board with a total strength point value of 7.
- Two Immortal units with a total strength point value of 4.

Stefanos's final score is:

Infantry - 7	7
Immortals - 4	8
Turn 14 (12-14 = -2)	-4
Total	11

> Each Persian strength point represents approximately 1,000 Men. Each Spartan strength point represents 25 men.

12.1.2 Final Score Rank

Compare your final score to this chart to determine how you did:

Score	Rank
9 or less	**Pyrrhic victory** You have cleared the path into Greece, but your troops are demoralized and ill-prepared to conquer.
10 - 14	**Average Victory** Your invasion continues as planned but the Greeks know how easily your troops can be defeated and do not fear facing you in future combats.
15 - 19	**Historic Victory** The invasion continues with minimal losses to your total forces, but the tale of this battle inspires the Greeks in all your future battles.
20 or more	**Crushing Victory** You have destroyed the pitiful Greek forces that dared to block your path and the battle is remembered through history as little more than a footnote in the story of your success.

If you eliminate all Spartans by the end of Day 3 (turn 12), you have achieved the historic result.

12.2 Defeat

You lose the game immediately if all the Persian Infantry units are eliminated from the game. This does not include Immortals. It is possible to lose the game with Immortals still on the board. You lose the game if you have not eliminated the Spartans by the end of Day 4 (turn 16). At this point, the Spartans have delayed you long enough that your army begins to run very low on supplies.

13.0 Turn Example

Example turn coming soon.

14.0 Optional Game Variants

The game comes with two variants to make the game easier for new players or more difficult for advanced players.

14.1 Easy Variant

Set up the Spartans units on the ⚀ side. Their max strength is still ⚁ (in case one is increased due to the event on card 5).

14.2 Difficult Variant

All Spartan units will rest and recover during the End of Day Phase (12.0). Increase the strength of each Spartan on the board by 1 point (to a max of ⚃).

15.0 Historical Background

Lots of good stuff coming soon.

16.0 Note on Old Persian Text

The game uses Old Persian Cuneiform text and numerals for thematic purposes. I thought it might be interesting to provide some information about the language and the writing system for those who are interested.

16.1 History of Old Persian Cuneiform

Cuneiform is a Latin word meaning wedge-shaped. This is a reference to the distinctive shape of the symbols that were carved with a reed on wet clay. All cuneiform writing is comprised of two blunt symbols which combine in a variety of sizes and orientations to form the characters of the language: 𒀹 (the wedge) and 𒁹 (the winkelhaken - German for angular hook). The wedge can be written horizontally, vertically, or diagonally.

Cuneiform was invented by the Sumerians and is one of the earliest systems of writings. Other kingdoms saw the value of the characters and adopted them for their language – even if their

languages were from completely different families. In some cases, the characters for a Sumerian word were used for the same word in other languages such as Akkadian, Elamite, and Hittite. In many cases, this made the characters little more than complex pictograms since the pronunciation of the Sumarian characters did not remotely apply to the words in the languages. This would be the equivalent of writing the English word water using the Spanish word agua.

Old Persian was different. New characters were created specifically for the language. While it uses cuneiform characters similar to others from the region, it is not directly inspired by any of them. Darius I claimed to have created Old Persian as a means for recording his conquests in approximately 525 BC. Regardless of whether he actually invented it or someone in his employ did, Old Persian appears to be a wholly new syllabary that was used throughout the reign of Darius I and Xerxes I.

16.2 Old Persian Numerals

Numerals are written using the same cuneiform symbols as the rest of the language. The 𒁹 symbol is used for 1s and the 𒌋 symbol is used for 10s. To show large numbers, these symbols are grouped together.

Even numbers use columns of two small symbols stacked on top of each other and odd numbers end with a large symbol. By adding all the symbols, you will arrive at the number.

1	𒁹	10	𒌋	60	𒐕
2	𒐀	11	𒌋𒁹	100	𒐏
3	𒐖	17	𒌋𒐊	142	𒐏𒐏
4	𒐂	20	𒎙	300	𒐏𒐏
5	𒐊	33	𒌍𒐖	604	𒐏𒐏𒐏

I ended this chart with 604 because it is the highest known number ever written in Old Persian. (There was limited need for larger numbers in the ancient world, although Xerxes put this to the test by assembling hundreds of thousands of troops for his conquest.)

In the ancient Mesopotamian world, almost all the number systems at the time were Sexagesimal (Base 60). This is like the English Decimal method (Base 10) where we put a digit in the 10s place to indicate larger numbers. (i.e. 27 is (2 x 10) + 7). However, in Base 60 systems, the first digit is multiplied by 60 instead of 10 – so 61 would be written as 11 (ie. (1 x 60) + 1). Old Persian is unique among these languages for not using a Base 60 system. The reason for this divergence from their neighbors is unknown.

A comparison of the numbering system between Old Persian and Babylonian is shown below.

	Old Persian	Babylonian
33	𒌍𒐖	𒌍𒐖
61	𒌍𒌍𒁹	𒁹 𒁹
205	𒐏𒐏𒐊	𒐖 𒌍𒐖
	(2 x 100) + 5	(3 x 60) + 25

The Base 60 system extended beyond the Mesopotamian region and was even used in Greece during the Hellenistic period in certain astronomical texts.

Base 60 systems survive to this day in the way we measure time and angles. For example, there are 60 minutes in an hour and a circle being 360° or six 60° segments. When we say an hour and a half have passed, we are using Base 60 to explain that 1 hour (60 minutes) + 30 minutes = 90 minutes.

16.3 Old Persian Texts

Unlike modern Persian (Farsi), Old Persian is read left to right. This was the common orientation of most cuneiform scripts.

Old Persian did not have spaces to differentiate words. Rather, they used a slanted symbol (⟍) to indicate breaks between words. You'll notice on some cards that individual words are divided between lines. This is perfectly legible and common in Old Persian texts.

16.3.1 Pronunciation

While scholars are not 100% certain how to pronounce all characters in Old Persian, they have a good understanding of how most were spoken. I've used the Harvard standard for transcribing the characters.

English Transcription	Pronunciation
X	ch: Lo**ch** Ness Monster
Θ	th: **Th**ing
Š	sh: fi**sh**
A	ʌ: m**u**st

16.3.2 Translation

For the Persian text in the game, I have tried to follow the grammatical rules of the language and choose the best word for each situation. However, I am not an expert in the language and easily could have made errors. The text is primarily meant as to provide thematic elements rather than represent the way actual orders may have appeared.

Tactics Points in the game are represented by word 𒀀𒐊𒐊 (Pronunciation: ā-yasa) which means "to assume command".

The Command Section of each card shows a clay tablet engraved with Old Persian writing. These were created for the game with text as relevant to the commands and tactics as possible.

Each tablet begins with the following text:

𒀀𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊	Announces
𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊	Xerxes

Pronunciation: Θātiy Xšayaạršā

Typically, Old Persian grammar rules required the verb to be at the end of the sentence, but this particular phrase was an exception. It was given special emphasis at the start of the sentence to indicate a declaration from the king. I've included it in the game because Xerxes had direct control over the battle plan at Thermopylae.

Most of the commands in the game are focused on which units Xerxes can command that turn. In the most common commands, he orders either his infantry or archers to attack the Spartans units.

𒀀𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊	Announces	Cards #4, 5, 6, and 7
	Xerxes	
	Foot-Soldier	
	Battle	
	To Do	

Pronunciation: θātiy Xšayaạršā pastis hamaranam cartanaiy

𒀀𒐊𒐊𒐊𒐊	Announces	Card #2
	Xerxes	
	Archers	
	Battle	
	To Do	

Pronunciation: Θātiy Xšayaạršā θanuvaniya hamaranam cartanaiy

The Command on card #3 is outside of your control. You must roll a die and see which of the units will be activated based on the result. When this card is in play, Xerxes is hoping for a good fortune from Ahura Mazda.

𒀸𒊩𒈦𒐫𒀸	Announces
	Xerxes
	God's favor
Pronunciation: Ōātiy Xšayaạṛšā baga yāna	
Note that this text uses a logogram (a Persian character that represents an entire word rather than individual sounds). 𒀭 is pronounced baga and means God.	

Card 1 may be the most powerful command card available to you. With this card, you can activate multiple units to attack the Spartans. With this command, you are ordering your army to wipe out the Spartans. (They may not succeed, but that's not the point…)

𒀸𒊩𒈦𒐫𒀸	Announces
	Xerxes
	To Destory
Pronunciation: Ōātiy Xšayaạṛšā vi-marda	
Note that this text uses a logogram (a Persian character that represents an entire word rather than individual sounds). 𒀭 is pronounced baga and means God.	

On the map there are two Old Persian words. They are probably self-explanatory, based on their location. 𒀭𒈦𒐫 (Pronounced: drayah) which means sea or ocean. On the other side of the map is the word 𒀭𒈦𒐫 (Pronounced: kaufa) which means Mountain. There may have been Old Persian words specifically for Malian Gulf or Mount Kallidromo, but they have apparently not survived.

16.3.3 Phonetics of Xerxes
While I don't want to go into too much detail about Persian phonetics, it is interesting to learn about how the word Xerxes was developed over time.

Old Persian was a semi-syllabary writing system, meaning that most of the characters represented a vowel or a consonant combined with a vowel. It is similar in this way to modern syllabary languages such as Japanese. In most syllabaries, there are some vowel sounds that are not always pronounced or emphasized. For example, in Japanese, the U sound can be silent in some circumstances. (To write my name in Japanese, you would use the characters クリス (KU-RI-SU). However, you wouldn't pronounce the name with an U sound at the end, even though that is how it is written.)

Old Persian was no exception. In those characters, the A sound could be deemphasized. The name Xerxes was written 𒀸𒊩𒈦𒐫𒀸 (XA-SHA-YA-A-RA-SHA-A) but was pronounced as Khashayarsha. The Greeks phonetically translated this as Ξέρξης (Kserksēs), which was later phonetically transcribed into modern English as Xerxes. The name is still in use in modern Persian and is written خشایار. The modern version of the name is translated to English as Khashayar.

17.0 Water Clocks
In the full art version of the game, day lengths are indicated by a series of water clocks (clepsydra). These were one of the most common method of measuring time in time in the ancient world.

Water clocks came in a variety of sizes, but generally involved a bowl (often marked with lines) with a hole to either fill or empty the water. While not perfectly precise, the hole would control the flow of water and measure the passage of time.

These bowls would likely be part of a larger system where they were filled with a stead poor and then drizzled water from the hole into a lower container.

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19.0 Acknowledgements

20.0 Charts

Here are all the charts used in the game for easy reference.

Standard Persian Tactics Chart

| Description	Cost
Intense Fighting +1 DRM to all dice in any one archer or infantry battle roll. You must decide to use this Tactic before rolling. (Limit, one per attack.) Note: This tactic may not be used for Immortal battle rolls.	1
Archers Make an Archer Battle Roll - 🌀	1
Infantry Activate a random infantry unit ⚀⚀🏹🛡 ⚁⚁🏹🛡 ⚂⚃🏹🛡	2
Immortals Activate an Immortal Unit of your choice. If there is not an Immortal Unit on the map, place one in an available Persian Infantry setup hex. You may purchase this tactic up to two times per turn. Note: This action is not available until Day 2.	2
Reinforcements Bring a dead Infantry Unit back to the board at a strength of 2. Place it on an available Persian Infantry setup hex. Reinforcements may be activated immediately without spending additional points.	3
Ephialtes You persuade Ephialtes to betray the Spartans and guide your Immortals on the trail that leads behind the Spartan position. Note: This action is not available until Turn 8 in Day 2. The cost goes down each turn, but the minimum cost of always 1 Tactics Point.	Cost varies by turn. (Min 1)

Combat Results

Unit	Battle Dice	Retreat	Hit
Spartans	4	⚀	⚄ or ⚅
Infantry	3	⚀⚀	⚄⚄, ⚄⚅ or ⚅⚅
Immortals	4	⚀⚀	⚅⚅
Archers	3	⚀⚀	⚅⚅⚅
Archers friendly fire.	2	n/a	⚄⚄, ⚄⚅ or ⚅⚅
Flanking	n/a	⚀	⚄ or ⚅

Tactics Points Earned

Event	Tactics Points Earned
Hit against Spartans	1
Retreat the Spartans	2
Eliminated Spartan unit	3
Discard during Persian Tactics Phase	1
End of each Day	2

You only earn the highest value of Tactics Points in a single combat. i.e. A hit that eliminates a Spartan unit only earns points for the elimination.

Sequence of Play
1. Card Draw Phase (5.0)
2. Spartan Event Phase (6.0)
3. Persian Tactics Phase (7.0)
4. Command Phase (9.0)
5. Spartan Attack Phase (10.0)
6. End of Day Phase (11.0)
7. Victory or Loss Check Phase (12.0)

Final Score Calculation

	Points
Each Infantry Strength Point	1
Each Immortal Strength Point	2
12 – Final Turn Number x 2*	varies

* Note that this can result in a negative score for turns in Day 4.

Final Score Rank

Score	Rank
9 or less	**Pyrrhic victory** You have cleared the path into Greece, but your troops are demoralized and ill-prepared to conquer.
10 - 14	**Average Victory** Your invasion continues as planned but the Greeks know how easily your troops can be defeated and do not fear facing you in future combats.
15 - 19	**Historic Victory** The invasion continues with minimal losses to your total forces, but the tale of this battle inspires the Greeks in all your future battles.
20 or more	**Crushing Victory** You have destroyed the pitiful Greek forces that dared to block your path and the battle is remembered through history as little more than a footnote in the story of your success.