

Battle of Bokuz

A fictional battle between the Hungarian army of Mattias Convinus (around 1460 AD) and the Sassanid Persians (around 600 AD). The armies are mostly mounted, with the Hungarians having superior foot troops. The Hungarian mounted troops are all knights or skirmishers, while the majority of the Sassanid mounted troops are bow-armed heavy cavalry. The battle was fought on 27 July 2007.

Order of Battle

Hungarians (Skilled general, +1)

1 x Hungarian nobles (U), CO heavy horse, 3"
2 x German mercenary knights (K), CO heavy horse, 3"
2 x Szekelers (Z), SK light horse, javelin, missile, 5"
1 x Serbian Hussars (S), SK light horse, javelin, 5"
2 x Hungarian light horse (L), SK light horse, missile, 5"
2 x Hungarian spearmen (P), CO heavy infantry, trained, 2"
1 x Hussite flail-men (F), CO medium infantry, trained, 2"
2 x Hungarian archers (A), SK light infantry, missile, trained, 3"
1 x Bavarian crossbowmen (B), SK light infantry, missile, trained, 3"
1 x German handgunners (G), SK light infantry, missile, trained, 3"
Total 15 units

Sassanid Persians (Skilled general, +1)

6 x Cavalry (C), LO heavy horse, missile, trained, 4"
1 x Nomad horse archers (N), SK light horse, missile, 5"
2 x Hun horse archers (H), SK light horse, javelins, missile, 5"
1 x Elephants (E), LO heavy elephant, 3"
1 x Daylami (D), LO medium infantry, javelin, 3"
2 x Archers (R), SK light infantry, missile, 3"
2 x Levy (Y), CO medium infantry, poor, untrained, 2"
Total 15 units

Scenario rules

Any CO troops entering the river or woods are disordered. This cannot be cured until they have left the terrain.

Battlefield

The battle was fought on a 4' square table. It looked more or less like this:

```
----- Sassanids -----
.rfttYY.....
.rDHRRE.N...
.rC.C.CC.CCww
.r.....ww
.r.....
.r.....
.r.....
r...AA..ww...
r.SBPPLLGw.ZZ
r.KF.UK.ww...
---- Hungarians -----
```

Key:

r River (difficult going)
w Wood
f fields (difficult going)
t town (difficult going)

Turns 1-2

The Sassanids moved first. The first two turns were spent advancing:

.rftt.....
.rD..YY.....
.rH.HRRE..Nww
.rC.C.CC.CCww
.r.....
.r.....
.r..AALL.....
r.SBPP..Gw..Z
r.KF.UK.ww.Z.
r.....ww...

Turn 3

One unit of Hun horsemen starts to cross the river. The Hungarian light horse close to shooting range, but their opening salvos prove ineffective against the mailed Sassanid horsemen.

.rftt.....
.rf..YY.....
.HD.HRRE...ww
.r.....Nww
.rC.C.CC.CC..
.r....LL.....
.r..AA.....
r.SBPPK.Gw.ZZ
r.KF..U.ww...
r.....ww...

Turn 4

The Sassanid commander orders his cavalry units charge down the Hungarian light horse. One of the units charges successfully, but the Hungarians evade. The other Sassanid cavalry unit ignores the order and fires at the Hungarians instead, inflicting casualties and driving the light horse back. The Hungarian infantry advance, and the opening fire from the archers drives back the lead Sassanid cavalry unit.

.rftt.....
.rf..YY.....
.HD.....ww
.r..HRRE..Nww
.r.....C..C..
.rC.C.C..C...
.r..AALL....Z
r.SBPP.KGw.Z.
r.KF..U.ww...
r.....ww...

Turn 5

The Sassanid turn 5 was characterized by command problems, as most of their units failed to receive orders. The Hungarians moved their knights forward and attempted to outflank the left-most Sassanid cavalry unit.

```
.rftt.....  
.rf..Y.....  
.HD...Y....ww  
.r...RRE..Nww  
.r.H.....  
.rC.C.CC.CC..  
.r..AALL...ZZ  
r.SBPPUKGw...  
r.KF....ww...  
r.....ww...
```

Turn 6

Realizing they were leaving their infantry and elephants behind, the Sassanids slowed their advance and showered arrows on the Hungarian light horse and Serbian Hussars, inflicting serious casualties on both and even destroying one of the light horse units! On the Sassanid far left, the isolated cavalry unit charged the Szekelers, but was driven back by accurate missile fire and their charge faltered, even though the Szekelers fled before them (evaded). The Hungarians moved their knights forward and attempted to outflank the left-most Sassanid cavalry unit. In their turn, the Hungarians pushed forward their infantry and failed to withdraw the Serbian Hussars, leaving the German knights blocked at the rear. On the opposite flank, the orders to the Szekelers to charge into the flank of the Sassanid cavalry failed to arrive.

```
.rftt.....  
.rf..Y.....  
.HD...Y....ww  
.r...RRE..Nww  
.r.....  
.rCHC.CC.CC.Z  
.r..AALL...Z.  
r.SBPPUKGw...  
r.KF....ww...  
r.....ww...
```

Turn 7

The Huns finally cleared the river and began their flanking manoeuvre, albeit somewhat behind schedule. In the centre, the Sassanids manoevered their cavalry to bring two units against the exposed German knights, while the Sassanid cavalry on the far left changed its position slightly to avoid being flanked, and waited for the horses to recover. Meanwhile, the Szekelers siezed the initiative, sending one unit either side of the Sassanid cavalry! In the centre, the remaining Hungarian light horse withdrew, clearing the way for the Hungarian and German knights to charge the Sassanid cavalry, which they immediately did. The Hungarian knights charged home effectively, driving the Sassanid cavalry back in disorder, but the Germans were not so successful. Their charge was disrupted by the Sassanids' archery, and they were driven back in disarray, with the Sassanid horsemen pursuing hot on their heels.

```
.rftt.....  
.rf.....  
.rD..YY....ww  
Hr...RRE..Nww  
.r....C....Z.
```

.r.HC.U.C.C..
.rC.PP.C.Z..
rS.F..LKGw..
r.K.....ww..
r.....ww..

Note: The “A” and “B” units have been incorporated with the “P” and “F” units respectively to save space.

Turn 8

The Sassanid cavalry rode down the surviving German knights and eliminated them. The fleeing Sassanid cavalry managed to reform and reface to meet the pursuing Hungarian knights, whose charge ran out before they could make contact. The slow Sassanid elephants continued to advance, threatening the exposed flank of the Hungarian nobles.

The Hungarians withdrew their archers through the advancing spearmen, and withdrew the Szekeler unit in danger of being surrounded. The Nobles prepared their horses for another charge.

.rftt.....
.rf.....
.r...YY....ww
.r.D.R.R..Nww
.r.H..CE...Z.
Hr..C.U...C..
.rC.PPLCC..Z.
rS.F....Gw..
r.K.....ww..
r.....ww..

Turn 9

The Sassanid elephants charged into the Hungarian nobles to devastating effect, driving them back with heavy casualties. The Sassanid cavalry which had defeated the German knights pressed forward, threatening to encircle the Hungarian infantry. On their turn, the Hungarians reformed the mauled nobles and one of the spear units which had been disorganized by earlier shooting, and pressed forward with their infantry.

.rftt.....
.rf.....
.r...YY....ww
.r.D.....Nww
.r...RCR...Z.
.rCHC..E.....
Hr.FPPU.C..C..
rSK...LCGw.Z.
r.....ww..
r.....ww..

Turn 10

One of the Sassanid cavalry units charged into the flank of the Hungarian nobles and destroyed them, while the other pressed deeper behind the Hungarian lines. On the Sassanid far left, the cavalry managed to destroy its' opposing Szekeler unit with missile fire alone. In the Hungarian turn, they managed to charge one of the Sassanid cavalry with the Hussite flail-men, but they were pushed back and disorganized. The remaining German knight moved up to assist, but the situation was starting to look desperate for the Hungarians.

.rftt.....

.rf.....
.r...YY....ww
.r.D.....Nww
.r...RCR...Z.
.rCHC.E.....
HSKFPPC.G..C.
r....LC.ww...
r.....ww...
r.....ww...

Turn 11

The Sassanid elephants charged into the flank of the Hungarian spearmen, destroying them and following up into the Hungarian archers behind. The cavalry fighting the Hussite flail-men pushed them back again. In return, the Hungarians charged their remaining knights into the battle in support of their flail-men, which managed to push back the cavalry. The Hungarian archers fell back before the elephants, and Hungarian missile fire was ineffective elsewhere on the battlefield.

.rftt.....
.rf.....
.r...YY....ww
.r.D.....Nww
.r...RC....Z.
.rCHC.E.R....
HSKFPA.C.G..C.
r....LC.ww...
r.....ww...
r.....ww...

The End

At this point I decided to end the battle, as the Hungarians no longer had any chance of winning. They had lost five units to no loss on the Sassanid side, and their remaining units would not last long once they became encircled.

Lessons learned

The Sassanid archery was very effective, especially against the Hungarian light cavalry units. The Hungarian infantry, although powerful, was too slow to get into combat before the battle was decided elsewhere. The troop density for the battle was about right, not too crowded but with enough units for both sides to have reserves.

If I were to refight the battle, I would reduce the size of the Sassanid army, possibly by removing the two Hun skirmisher units. Although these did not have a major effect on this battle, their presence was significant and reduced the potential opportunities for the Hungarians to flank the less manoeuvrable Sassanid cavalry. Another option would be to take away one of the Sassanid cavalry units, which were possibly too effective.

This was an enjoyable game, with a believable outcome. I look forward to giving it another try, another day.