

# THE GREAT BATTLES OF EPAMINONDAS

GREAT BATTLES OF ALEXANDER MODULE

THE  
THEBAN  
ART OF WAR  
371-362 B.C.

LEUCTRA, 371 B.C.  
EPAMINONDAS VS. CLEOBROTUS

MANTINEA, 362 B.C.  
EPAMINONDAS VS. AGESILAUS



BY MARK HERMAN

GAME DESIGN:  
MARK HERMAN  
RICHARD BERG

ART DIRECTOR:  
RODGER MACGOWAN

## Introduction

This module covers the key battles of the famous Theban general Epaminondas: Leuctra and Mantinea, the swan songs for both Sparta and Thebes. At the conclusion of the Battle of Mantinea Sparta and Thebes would never again play dominant roles in Greek politics. More importantly, you will get to use the giant Hoplite unit that came with your copy of **Diadochoi**.

Several things will become evident after playing these scenarios. Because of the small number of leaders, usually one, there is little ability for either side to conduct subtle maneuvers. This was a characteristic of Hoplite warfare whereby, after a good harangue from the General in charge, the *Paeu* (battle song) was sung and the charge was sounded. This led to a swift outcome, which is the other critical feature of Hoplite warfare. This aspect of Hoplite battles is reinforced by using the set-ups as a means of limiting the player's maneuver options. Most of the Hoplites had day jobs, and they could

ill afford to drag the situation out. Hence, once the forces actually came to blows, the battles were over in about an hour. In the two scenarios in this module the game will usually be over within two game turns.

Lastly, the scenarios are not very balanced. Epaminondas had just invented the beginnings of an evolution in Hoplite warfare that would lead to the Macedonian Phalanx. The Spartans, although a professional army, were ill suited to deal with this new style of warfare and lost badly in both of these battles. Players may learn more from playing

these battles solitaire since competitive play is not very interesting.

## Important Note

In order to play this module you need to have a copy of the *Deluxe Edition* of the Great Battles of Alexander and the *Diadochoi* module.

## General Notes

Counters come from either *Deluxe Alexander* or the *Diadochoi* module. The *Counters From* column in the set ups indicates the origin of the counter; either A for *Deluxe Alexander* or D for *Diadochoi*.

## Module Special Rule

### *Theban Deep Echelon Unit*

You will have noticed a very large counter that came with *Diadochoi*. It is treated like a Hoplite unit in every way, with the following additional movement rules. The unit is oriented on the hexfield based on *Diagram A* (see page 8 for diagram).

The Theban Deep Echelon unit may only move into its front hexes as per the diagram. It cannot turn while moving forward. It can turn if it is not

# The Great Battles of Alexander: Official Designer Module

in an enemy ZOC, expends 4 movement points, and the physical shifting of the unit in the hexfield is uninterrupted by any other units (friendly or enemy). In other words, the unit cannot move through another unit's hex in any manner. Although, physically, the flank hexes at the waist of the unit are partially occupied by the Deep Echelon counter, these spaces are considered empty and friendly/enemy units may occupy those hexes as per the normal movement rules. In all other ways - I'm sure I'll regret saying this - the Deep Echelon unit acts like a normal hoplite counter.

## Leuctra (371 B.C.)

In 382 BC the Spartans continued to assert their leadership of the Greek world, established by their victory in

the Peloponnesian War. Using treachery the Spartans gained control of the Cadmeia, the citadel of Thebes, causing a violent Theban reaction. In 379 BC the garrison was ejected and Sparta declared war on Thebes. The Theban general Epaminondas drilled the populace into a first class military force and prepared to meet a Spartan invasion. In 371 BC the Spartans and their allies, under King Cleombrotus, invaded Bocotia and camped at Leuctra near Thebes. Epaminondas brought up his smaller army and engaged the Spartans in battle.

The battle is noteworthy for several key innovations that Epaminondas used against the Spartans. The Thebans for some time had experimented with deeper hoplite formations. They had used a 25 depth

phalanx at the battle of Delium during the Peloponnesian war to defeat the Athenians. However, the major tactic in hoplite warfare remained putting the main effort against the enemy's left flank. The key was to win on the right before losing on the left.

Epaminondas created three innovations which broke this tradition. Epaminondas saw the Spartan right flank as their center of gravity and shifted his main attack to his left flank to directly oppose the Spartan hoplites.

His second major innovation was to deploy his main attack force into a 50 deep phalanx. It has been suggested that this force may even have used pikes a *lei* the Macedonian phalanx,

## THE BATTLE OF LEUCTRA, 371 B.C.

### Initial Deployment

Spartan/Allied Deployment (All Units face S.)			Theban Deployment (All units face N.)		
Unit(s)	Hex(es)	Counter From	Unit(s)	Hex(es)	Counter From
<b>Cleobrotus (Overall)</b>	4823	D	<b>Epaminondas (Overall)</b>	5622	D
Mercenary LP (Red)	4824	A	<b>Pelopidas</b>	5424	A
Spartan 1 HO	4822/4823	D	Sacred Band HO	5424	A
Spartan 2 HO	4820/4821	D	Thebes 1 HO (Deep Ech.)	5422/5423	D
			Thebes 1 HO	5620/5621	A
Greek 1 HO	4818/4819	D	Thebes 2 HO	5717/5718	A
Greek 2 HO	4816/4817	D	Thebes 3 HO	5815/5816	A
Greek 3 HO	4814/4815	D	Thebes 4 HO	5912/5913	A
Greek 4 HO	4812/4813	D			
Greek 8 HO	4810/4811	D	Greek Merc. 1 LP (Purple)	5407	A
Greek 5 HO	4808/4809	D	Greek Merc. 1 LP (Purple)	5409	A
Greek 6 HO	4806/4807	D	Greek Merc. 2 LP (Purple)	5411	A
Thracian 1 (Red)	4805	A	Thebes 1 LC	5222	D
Thracian 2 (Red)	4804	A	Thebes 2 LC	5223	D
Greek 1 LC	5023	D	Thebes 3 LC	5224	D
Greek 1 LC	5024	D			

### Size and TQ Levels

Player	Size	TQ Points	Rout Ratio	Quality
<b>Sparta</b>	115	83	25%	.72
<b>Thebes</b>	112	73	30%	.65

# The Great Battles of Epaminondas

because of the unusual shape of Theban shields, but there is no direct evidence that this was the case. Lastly, the remainder of the Theban hoplite line was deployed en echelon, so as to delay the Spartan allies from engaging them before the Theban left had won the battle.

Xenophon, who is the main chronicler of this battle, wrote in a treatise on cavalry tactics, that horses could be used to screen infantry forces because of the height of the horse. Caesar used this tactic at the battle of Pharsalus. The deployment of the Theban cavalry suggests that this tactic may have prevented the Spartans from seeing the deep Theban phalanx before the dust of the cavalry engagement had settled.

The battle itself went according to plan. The Theban cavalry drove off the Spartan cavalry and then the Theban left smashed into the Spartan hoplites. The Sacred Band probably served the dual purpose of protecting the large open flank of the deep Theban phalanx and probably

executed a flank attack into the Spartan right flank. The results were the destruction of the Spartan hoplites, including the king, and the Spartan allies quit the field without actually coming into direct contact with the Thebans. The fall of Sparta had begun.

## Map

Use the Lyginus map from the *Deluxe* Edition of the Great Battles of Alexander. The long map edge where the terrain key is located is North. Note the following terrain modifications. Flexes 4614 to 4618 and all hexes north of them are level 2 hexes. The Spartan camp is in hex 3813 and all adjacent hexes. Use the Baggage train marker from **Alexander** to mark this location. The baggage train cannot move in this scenario.

## Historical Scenario

Set up all of the units in the indicated set up hexes.

## Special Rules

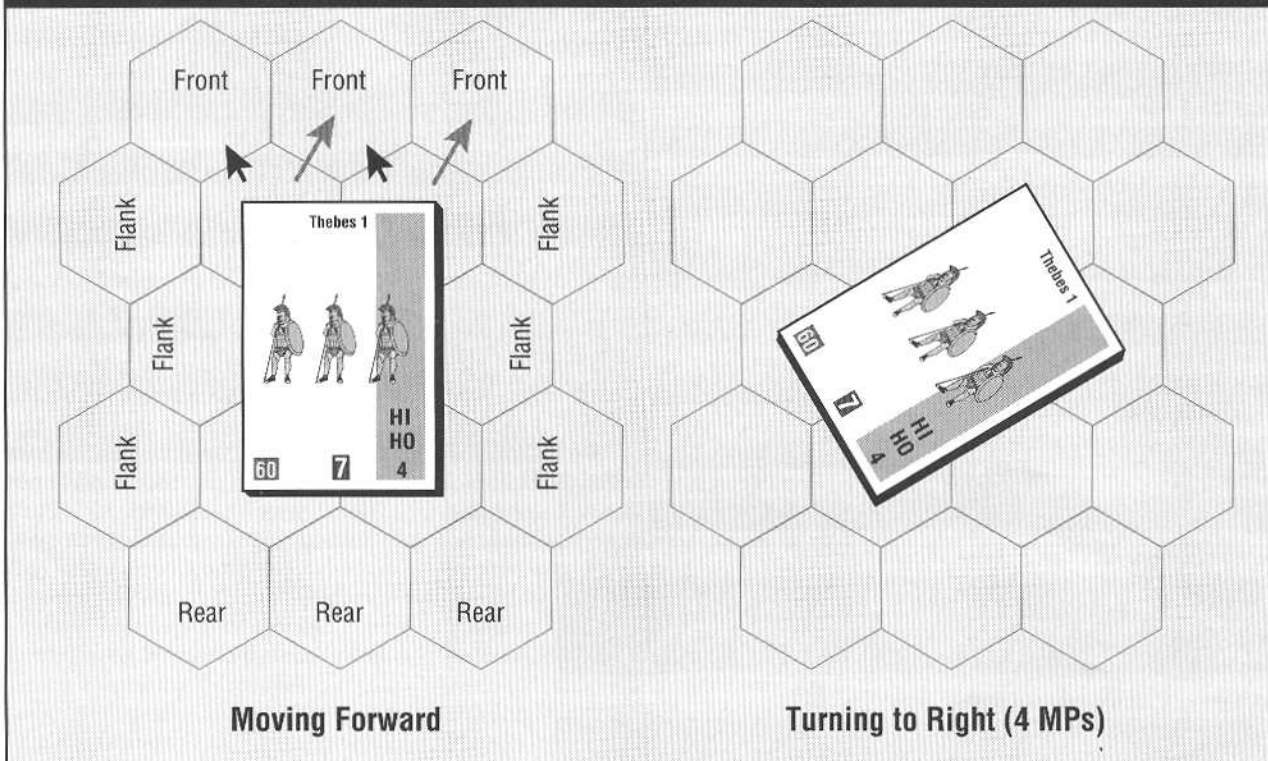
Lines - Hoplite units that are in line (flank to flank) and adjacent to each

other can be moved with one line command as per the Alexander rules.

Echelon Line Commands - One of the big maneuvers in this battle besides the deep echelon unit was the movement of the entire Hoplite line 'en echelon'. Only Epaminondas can issue an 'en echelon' line command. A unit is 'en echelon' if it has a front hex which is also the flank hex of another hoplite unit which is faced in the same direction. The intent here is that the entire Theban line including the Deep Echelon unit can move with one line command.

The Theban Sacred Band - This, the most famous individual combat unit in Greek city-state history - and the touchstone of Theban supremacy - was actually quite a small unit in numbers. Although composed of only 150 men, its importance to the Greek army in terms of morale was immeasurable. (However, Philistines that we are, we have measured it.) That is why their loss (worth 9 TQ points) is so much greater in proportion to its Size.

Diagram A: Theban Deep Echelon Unit



# The Great Battles of Alexander: Official Designer Module

**Epaminondas:** Epaminondas is the only elite commander in the scenario.

**Skirmish Orders:** Peltasts, the LP units, and cavalry can be given orders by the Overall commanders (Epaminondas or Cleobrotus) regardless of their range from the commander.

**Spartan Camp:** The Spartan camp is hex 3813 plus all adjacent hexes. Its location is designated by the baggage train unit which cannot move in this scenario. If at any time any of these hexes are entered by a Theban unit the Theban player gains 10 TQ points toward Spartan army rout.

## Victory Conditions

**Spartan:** The Theban Army must be routed.

**Theban:** The Spartan/Allied army must be routed.

## Retreat Edge

**Spartan:** Northern edge of the map

**Theban:** Southern edge of the map

## Army Rout

**Spartan:** Army Routs when units with TQ totaling 28 have been routed. Leaders as always are worth their activation rating when wounded and their activation rating times five when killed. Spartan Hoplite units count twice their TQ rating for army rout purposes.

**Theban:** Army routs when units with a TQ totaling 22 have been routed. Leaders as always are worth their activation rating when wounded and their activation rating

times when killed. The Deep Echelon unit counts 3 times its TQ rating for army rout purposes.

## Mantineia (362 B.C.)

With the Spartans driven into the Peloponnesus, the Thebans grew in strength and confidence. Epaminondas launched numerous expeditions into the Peloponnesus and probably would have captured Sparta itself if it weren't for the inspired defense put up by King Agesilaus.

In 363 BC, an allegation over Olympian temple funds found Mantineia (pro-Spartan) and Tegea (pro-Theban) at the head of rival coalitions. Epaminondas first attempted to intercept the Athenian contingent before it could join their Spartan

## THE BATTLE OF MANTINEA, 362 B.C.

### Initial Deployment

Spartan/Allied Deployment (All Units face NW.)			Theban Deployment (All units face SE.)			
Unit(s)	Hex(es)	Counter From	Unit(s)	Hex(es)	From	Comment
Agesilaus (Overall)	4617	D	Epaminondas (Overall)	5311	D	
Athens 1 LC	5320	D	Greek Merc. 1 LP (Purple)	5516	A	
Greek 5 HO	5119/5220	D	Greek Merc. 2 LP (Purple)	5315	A	
Greek 6 HO	4918/5019	D	Thebes 1 LC	5715	D	
Greek 8 HO	4717/4818	D	Thebes 2 LC	5514	D	
Spartan 1 HO	4516/4617	D	Thebes 1 HO (Deep Ech.)	5213/5313	D	
Spartan 2 HO	4315/4416	D	Thebes 1 HO	5012/5112	A	Thessalians
Athens 1 HO	4114/4215	D	Corinth HO	4811/4911	A	Sicyonese
Athens 2 HO	3913/4014	D	Leucra HO	4610/4710	A	Maliens
Athens 3 HO	3712/3813	D	Megara HO	4409/4509	A	Euboeans
Athens 2 LC	3612	D	Argos 3 HO	4208/4308	D	
			Argos 1 HO	4007/4107	D	
			Thebes 3 LC	3906	D	Thessalians
			Greek Merc. 1 LP (Red)	3807	A	Thessalians
			Greek Merc. 3 LP (Purple)	3706	A	Thessalians

### Size and TQ Levels

Player	Size	TQ Points	Rout Ratio	Quality
Sparta	90	82	25%	.91
Thebes	155	82	30%	.52

# The Great Battles of Epaminondas

allies, but failed when these troops were moved by sea. He then moved the Theban army to Tegea, which placed his forces between Sparta and Mantinea. Epaminondas allowed the Spartan army to join their Mantinean allies so he could pounce on Sparta itself; but a deserter alerted Agesilaus to his plight and he countermarched back to the city.

Epaminondas then threatened Mantinea. An unsuccessful cavalry skirmish prevented Epaminondas from getting his army between the Spartans and the allied army, forcing the Thebans into a classic hoplite battle.

It seems that all sides since Leuctra had decided that deeper formations were superior to their traditional 8 man depth formations. In this battle almost all of the formations were at least 12 men deep and some were 16 men deep. So, although Mantinea was a bigger battle than Leuctra, the respective widths of the battlelines were narrower than the numbers would suggest. For purposes of this scenario the depth advantage is canceled due to its widespread adoption by both sides.

Epaminondas again smashed the Spartans using tactics similar to those employed at Leuctra. Epaminondas

was mortally wounded during the battle. The similarities between Epaminondas and Gustavus Adolphus are interesting. Both commanders would re-invent warfare and see it revolutionize tactics. Both commanders would be killed just as their efforts were about to bear fruit.

The death of Epaminondas may have seized defeat from the jaws of victory. The Spartans and their allies were not pursued and Theban military fortunes swiftly declined. However, there was a young Macedonian hostage in Thebes by the name of Philip. Philip would become Philip II of Macedon and would have a son named Alexander. It would appear that the first seeds of the Persian empire's destruction began on the fields of Leuctra and Epaminondas was the architect.

## Map

Use the Pelium map from the *Deluxe Edition* of the **Great Battles of Alexander**. The North indicator on the map in hex 3926 used without modification. The town of Pelium and the Apses River are ignored. All other terrain is in effect.

## Historical Scenario

Set up all of the units in the indicated set up hexes.

## Special Rules

**Lines** - Hoplite units that are in line (flank to flank) and adjacent to each other can be moved with one line command as per the Alexander rules.

**Echelon Line Commands** - Use the same rule as in Leuctra.

**Epaminondas**: Epaminondas is the only elite commander in the scenario.

**Skirmish Orders**: Peltasts, the LP units, and cavalry can be given orders by the Overall commanders (Epaminondas or Agesilaus) regardless of their range from the commander.

## Victory Conditions

**Spartan**: The Theban Army must be routed.

**Theban**: The Spartan/ Allied army must be routed.

## Retreat Edge

**Spartan**: Eastern edge of the map  
**Theban**: Western edge of the map

## Army Rout

**Spartan**: Army Routs when units with TQ totaling 21 have been routed. Leaders as always are worth their activation rating when Wounded and their activation rating times five when killed. Spartan Hoplite units count twice their TQ rating for army rout purposes.

**Thebans**: Army routs when units with a TQ totaling 25 have been routed. Leaders as always are worth their activation rating when wounded and their activation rating times five when killed. The Deep Echelon unit counts 3 times its TQ rating for army rout purposes.

## Bibliography

Besides the books mentioned in the *Deluxe Edition* of Alexander the key reference was: Xenophon, *A History of My Times* (Middlesex England: Penguin Books), 1966.

