Vectree

Cavalry tactics and combined arms at the Battle of Megiddo

vectree.io/c/palestine-combined-arms-tactics

Cavalry tactics and combined arms at the Battle of Megiddo

vectree.io/c/palestine-combined-arms-tactics

The Aruna Pass Maneuver

In 1457 BCE, Thutmose III chose the most dangerous of three possible routes to Megiddo. The Aruna Pass was a narrow mountain track where soldiers had to march in single file, making them vulnerable to ambush.

This high-risk decision allowed the Egyptian army to emerge directly in the center of the Canaanite coalition's lines, catching them completely off-guard and forcing a hasty, disorganized defense.

The Chariot Wings (Combined Arms)

The Egyptian chariotry acted as the high-speed mobile 'hammer' of the pharaonic army. Unlike heavier Hittite chariots, Egyptian variants were light, constructed of wood and leather, and served as mobile archery platforms.

At Megiddo, they were deployed on the flanks to envelop the enemy. Their speed allowed them to harass the Canaanite forces with arrows while remaining out of range of infantry counter-attacks, creating the chaos needed for the main advance.

Infantry and Archery Support

The core of the Egyptian line consisted of 'Nakhtu-aa' (Strong-arm boys) armed with spears, shields, and the khopesh sickle-sword. They were supported by massed archers using the composite bow.

In the combined arms doctrine of Megiddo, the infantry maintained the pressure on the center while the chariots disrupted the wings. Their role was to exploit the gaps created by the chariot charges and push the enemy back toward the city walls.

Pharaoh's Command Structure

Thutmose III personally led the center of the army, standing in a 'chariot of electrum.' This provided high visibility for his troops, acting as a mobile command post and a focal point for morale.

His command style emphasized speed and psychological impact, as seen in his insistence on immediate pursuit after the initial rout, though the opportunity for a quick victory was lost when his troops paused to loot the Canaanite camp.

The Citadel and Siege

Megiddo was a formidable Canaanite city-state. After the Egyptian victory in the open field, the survivors fled inside the city walls. Because the Egyptians stopped to plunder the abandoned camp, they failed to take the city by storm.

This led to a seven-month siege, during which Thutmose III built a moat and a wooden wall around the city, eventually forcing a surrender through starvation. This represents one of the earliest recorded instances of complex siege warfare.