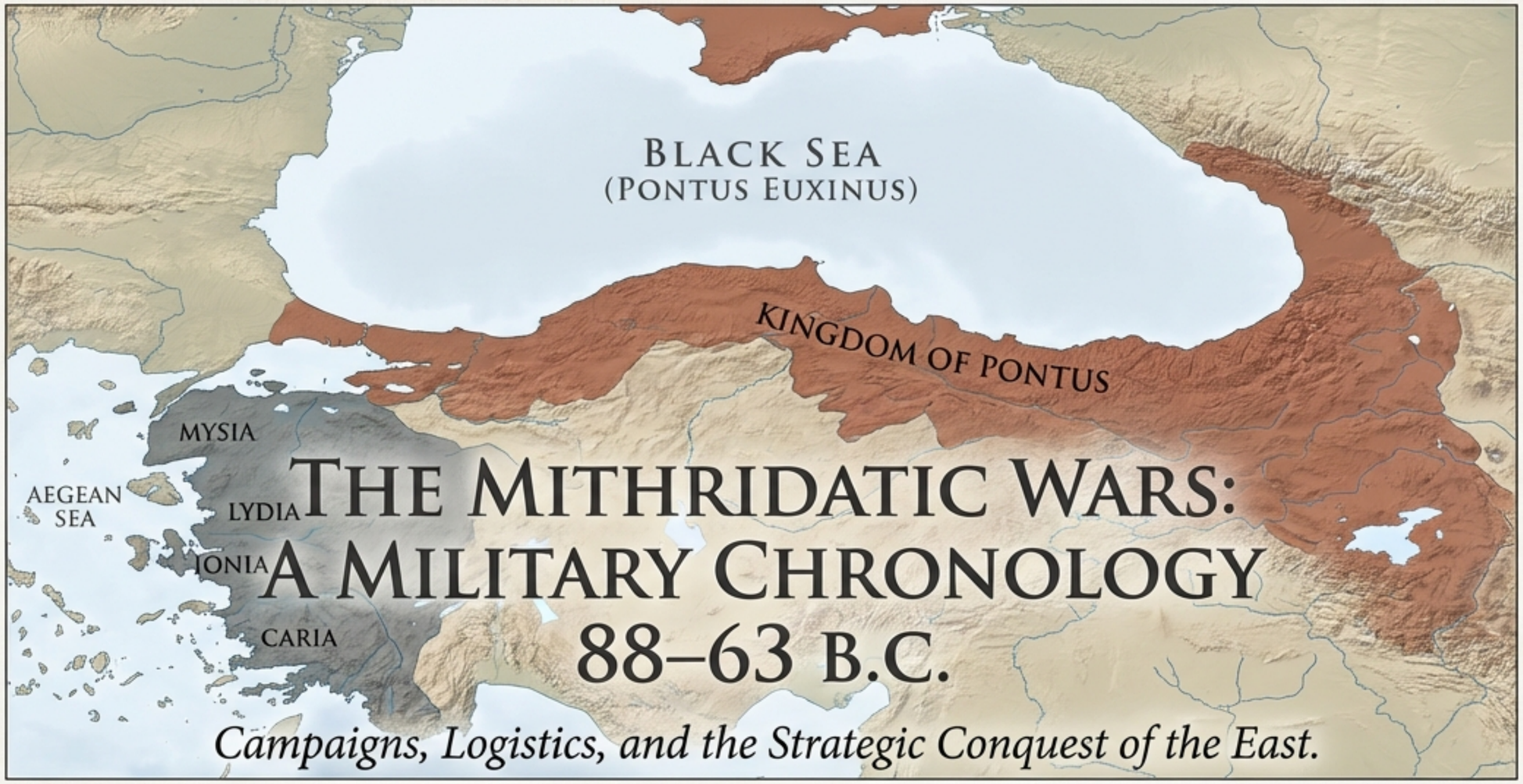


THE MITHRIDATIC WARS: A MILITARY CHRONOLOGY 88–63 B.C.

Campaigns, Logistics, and the Strategic Conquest of the East.

DURATION:
40 Years

THEATRES:
Greece, Asia Minor, Armenia, The Crimea

ADVERSARIES:
Roman Republic vs. Kingdom of Pontus

"MITHRIDATES RESISTED FOR FORTY YEARS... BROUGHT TO NOUGHT BY THE GOOD FORTUNE OF SULLA, THE VALOUR OF LUCULLUS AND THE MIGHT OF POMPEIUS." — FLORUS, EPITOME OF ROMAN HISTORY §1.40

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The Casus Belli: Debt, Provocation, and Retaliation (89-88 B.C.)

A Museum Archival Chronicle of Events Leading to Total War

The Debt Trap



Nicomedes of Bithynia, owing vast sums to Roman lenders, is pressured to raid Pontic territory to repay debts.

The Provocation



Mithridates retaliates, sweeping aside Nicomedes and occupying Cappadocia and Bithynia.

The Atrocity



Execution of Manius Aquillius. Molten gold poured down the Roman general's throat to "rebuke bribe-taking".

Total War



The Asiatic Vespers: Coordinated execution of 80,000 Romans and Italians in Asia Minor.

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Force Analysis: The Pontic Hegemony

Infantry



250,000 Foot Soldiers
(Phalanx, Thracian Peltasts, Imitation Legions)

Cavalry



40,000 Horse
(Armenian Cataphracts, Scythian Horse-Archers)

Naval Power



300 Decked Ships & 100 Biremes

Special Assets



130 Scythe-Bearing Chariots

Commanders: Neoptolemus, Archelaus, Arcathias

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The Roman Expeditionary Force (87 B.C.)

Order of Battle

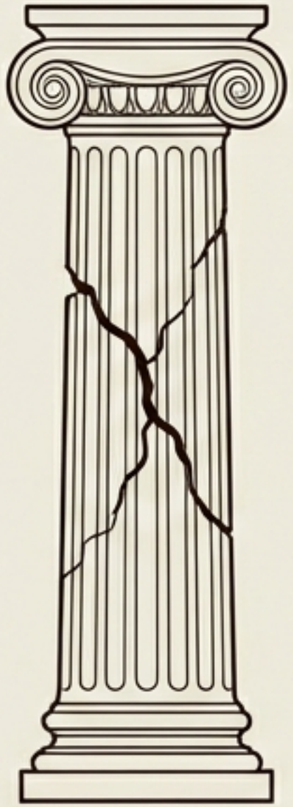
I. COMMANDER:
Lucius Cornelius Sulla

II. FORCE STRENGTH:
5 Legions (Approx. 30,000 men)

III. AUXILIARIES:
Cohorts from Aetolia and Thessaly

IV. DOCTRINE:
Maniple/Cohort flexibility vs. Phalanx rigidity

Financing the War



Political & Economic Constraints

Cut off from Rome by Civil War, Sulla loots the sacred treasuries to pay his troops:

- The Temple of Apollo (Delphi)
- The Sanctuary of Asclepius (Epidaurus)
- The Temple of Zeus (Olympia)

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Siegecraft: The Investment of Athens (87-86 B.C.)



Logistical Destruction

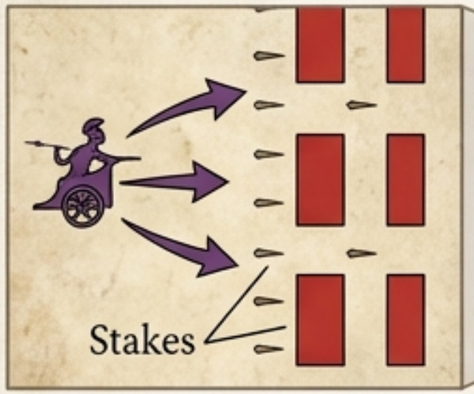
To build massive siege engines, Sulla ordered the deforestation of Attica's sacred groves.

- The Academy (Plato's Grove) leveled for timber.
- The Lyceum leveled for timber.
- Severe famine inside Athens.

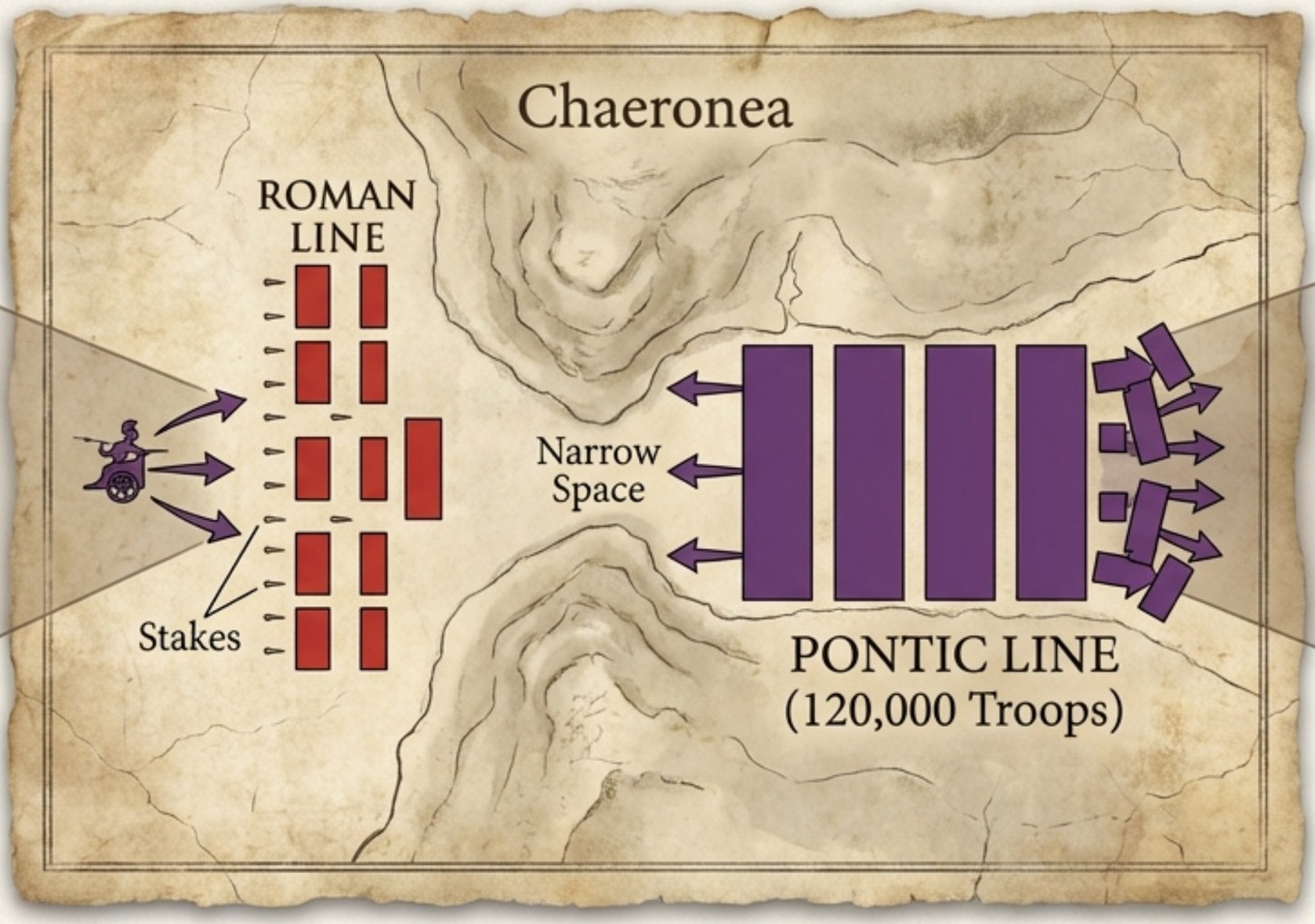
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Tactical Analysis: The Battle of Chaeronea (86 B.C.)

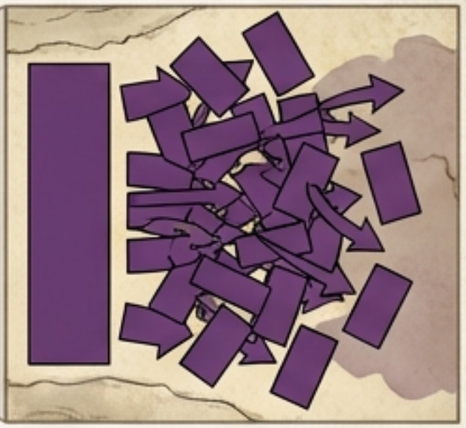
Neutralizing the Chariots



Roman ranks opened, creating lanes for chariots to pass harmlessly; stakes were emplaced to disable them.



The Trap



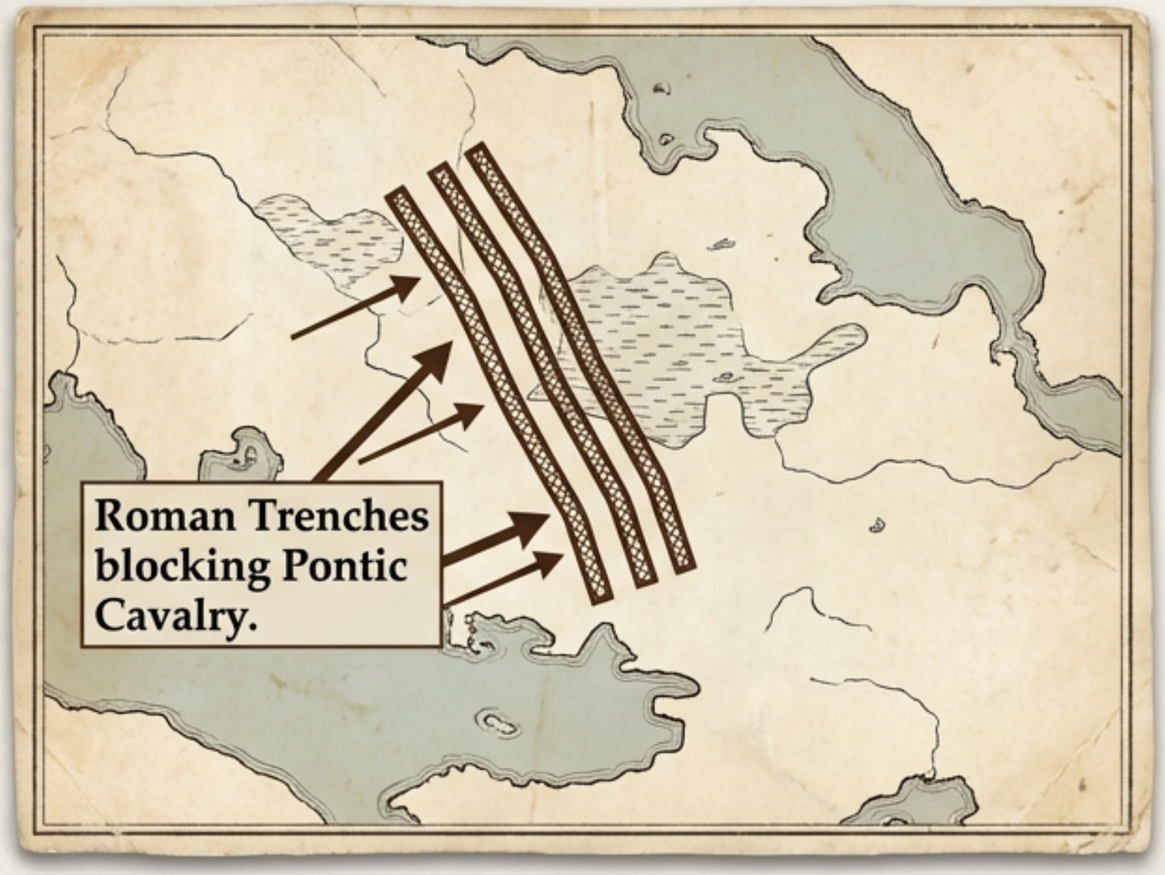
Piled Up, Unable to Maneuver

Outcome Text:
110,000 Casualties (Pontic) vs. 12 Roman Casualties (Claimed by Sulla)

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The Battle of Orchomenus & The Treaty of Dardanus (85 B.C.)

Tactical Engineering



The Treaty of Dardanus

1. Restoration of the Status Quo Ante Bellum.
2. Surrender of Paphlagonia and Cappadocia.
3. Payment of 2,000 Talents.
4. Surrender of 70 Bronze-Beaked Ships.

Bottom Note: Strategic Context: Sulla grants lenient terms to hasten his return to Rome for the Civil War.

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The Interlude: The Second Mithridatic War (83-81 B.C.)

83 B.C. — 82 B.C. — 81 B.C.



The Ambition of Murena

Roman General Murena invades Pontus seeking a triumph, claiming Mithridates is re-arming.





Battle of the Halys River

Mithridates defeats Murena in a tactical engagement.





Sulla's Intervention

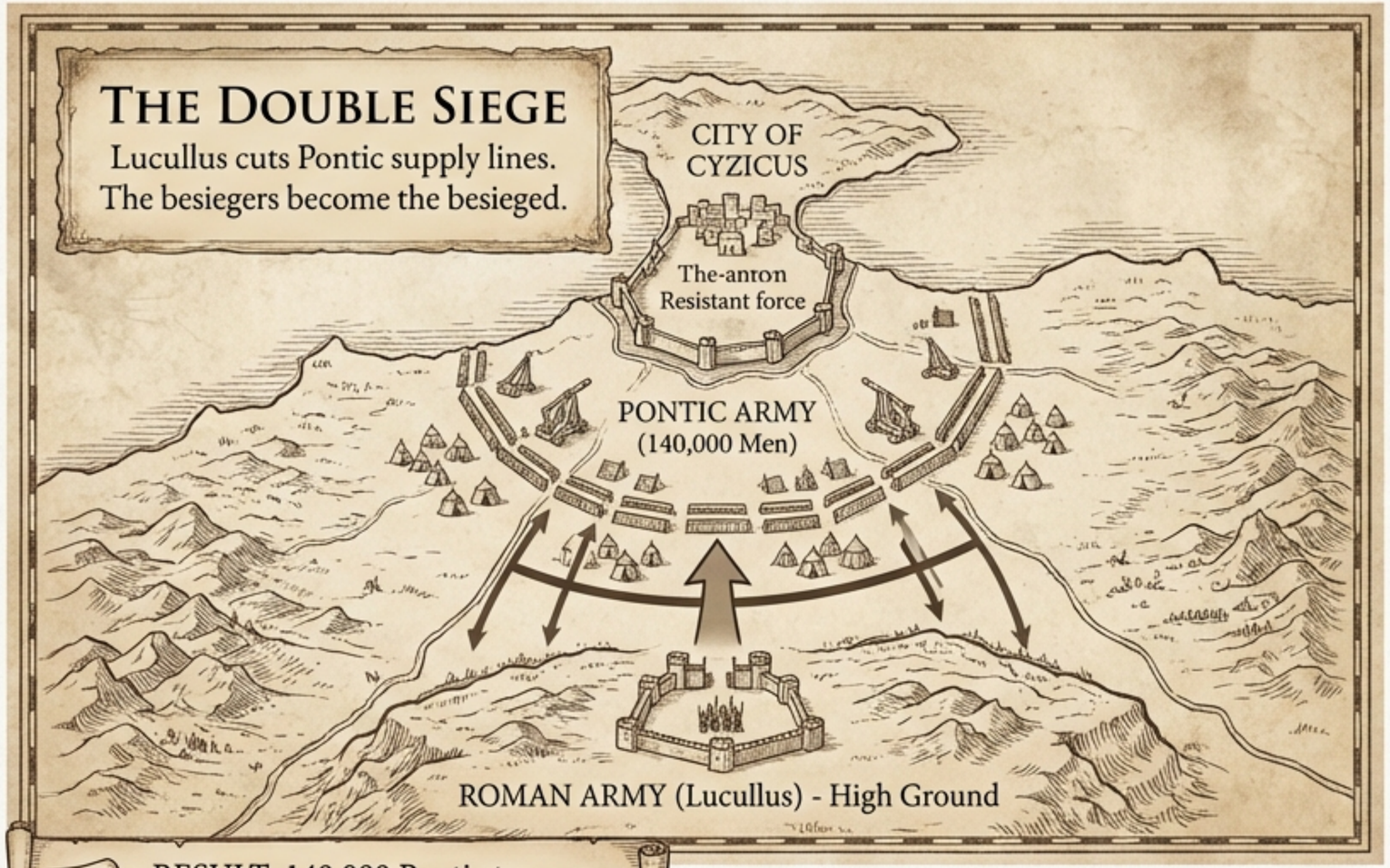
Sulla orders Murena to cease hostilities. Status Quo restored.

Result: A diplomatic stalemate that proved Mithridates' renewed military capability.

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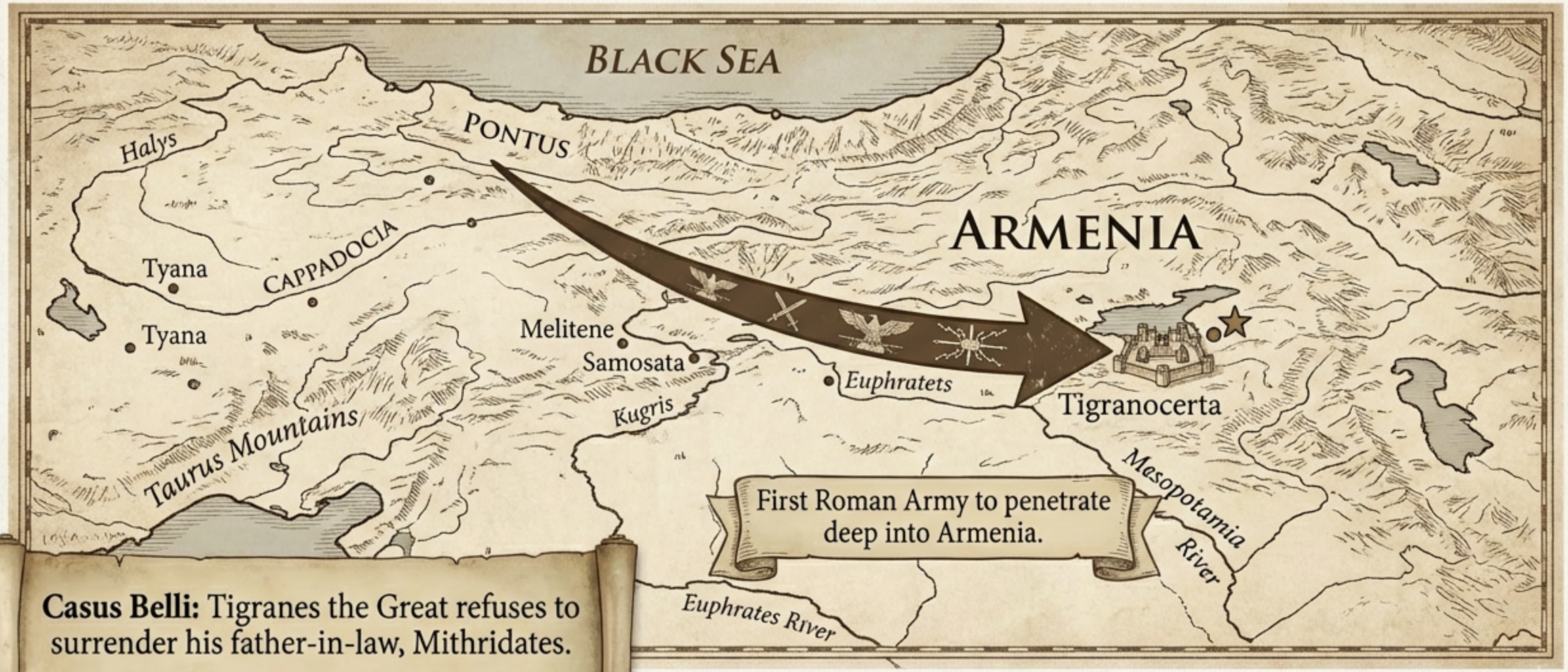
The Third War: Logistics as a Weapon (73 B.C.)

The Siege of Cyzicus



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The Invasion of Armenia



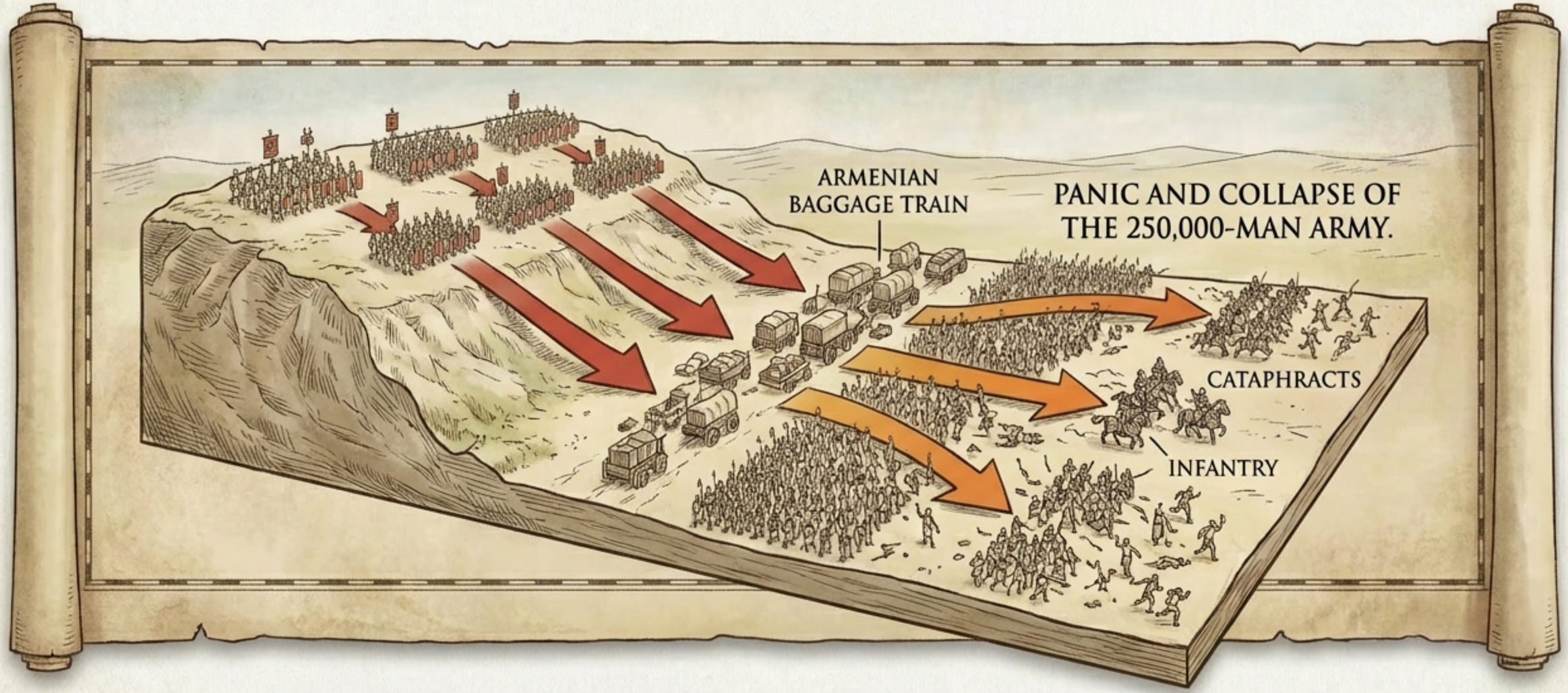
Casus Belli: Tigranes the Great refuses to surrender his father-in-law, Mithridates.

Objective: The new capital, Tigranocerta.

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Tactical Analysis: The Battle of Tigranocerta (69 B.C.)

"If they are here as ambassadors, they are too many; if as enemies, too few." — Tigranes the Great



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ROMAN REVERSAL: MUTINY AND DEFEAT (67 B.C.)

THE COMMAND CRISIS



Lucullus's troops, exhausted and unpaid, refuse to march further.

THE BATTLE OF ZELA



Mithridates counter-attacks the paralyzed Roman forces.

- 7,000 Romans Killed
- 150 Centurions Dead
- 24 Tribunes Dead

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The Pompeian Offensive: Battle of the Lycus (66 B.C.)



The Moonlit Ambush

Pompey attacks at night. The moon behind the Romans casts long shadows, confusing the Pontic archers.

Detail from source: Pontic cavalry, horseless and unprepared, rush back to camp causing chaos.

Outcome: 10,000 Pontic troops killed. Camp captured. Total Rout.

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THE DEATH OF A KING (63 B.C.)



The Grand Strategy: A desperate plan to march round the Black Sea and invade Italy through the Alps.

THE END OF MITHRIDATES

1. Betrayal: Revolt led by his son, Pharnaces.



2. Immunity: Attempted poison fails due to lifelong 'Mithridatism' (acquired immunity).



3. Execution: Ordered his Gallic mercenary, Bituitus, to slay him with a sword.



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Conclusion: The Roman East



Map A (89 B.C.): Independent Kingdoms

Map B (63 B.C.): Roman Provinces

The Spoils of War

Following trophies in Garamond Premier Pro:
- The Throne and Sceptre of Mithridates
- The Couch of Darius
- 480 Million Sesterces added to the Treasury

The end of the Hellenistic Era; the stage is set for Caesar and the Empire

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