

Tournament Report ITC 2015

This one needs to be in English to be used also for the DBMM group – please ignore any wrong spelling and expressions...

Thanks to Lorenzo and all his helpers for the organization of the ITC since 2012! It is a pleasure to see this tournament prospering, over 20 teams competing in 2015!



Team Barbarossa decided to join again and keep the pools as they were in 2014. Thomas is condemned to play Nikephorean Byzantines in eternity, Neil gave the Swiss pike another try. Jürgen was disappointed with the abilities of Babylon and tried to find an anti Assyrian army. And I had to change list too. In 2014 I played Chin Chinese, I lost against inert Romans (being shot to pieces) and I was unable to force a victory against Three Kingdom Chinese (fielding a wall of war wagons and artillery supported by some blades) and also against Alexander's experimental phalanx. After some trial games I opted for Middle Imperial Romans under Caracalla. This gives me the options to have the Palatina legion (Bd(S)), normal legions, Auxilia plus two Scorpio elements (Art(F)); I organized them in a massive 40 ME fighting command and a small support command; the mounted wing was very weak (5 cavalry ordinary, 3 cataphracts, 2 light horse). This should give me a chance against any infantry, elephant, knight combination. Difficult opponents are: warband armies supported by large numbers of cavalry; large light horse/knight combinations like Alans and massive Pk(S) or Blade S attacks (e.g. consul Sulla). Thanks to the organization of Neil, Kai and Carlos I had three opportunities to refine the final list.

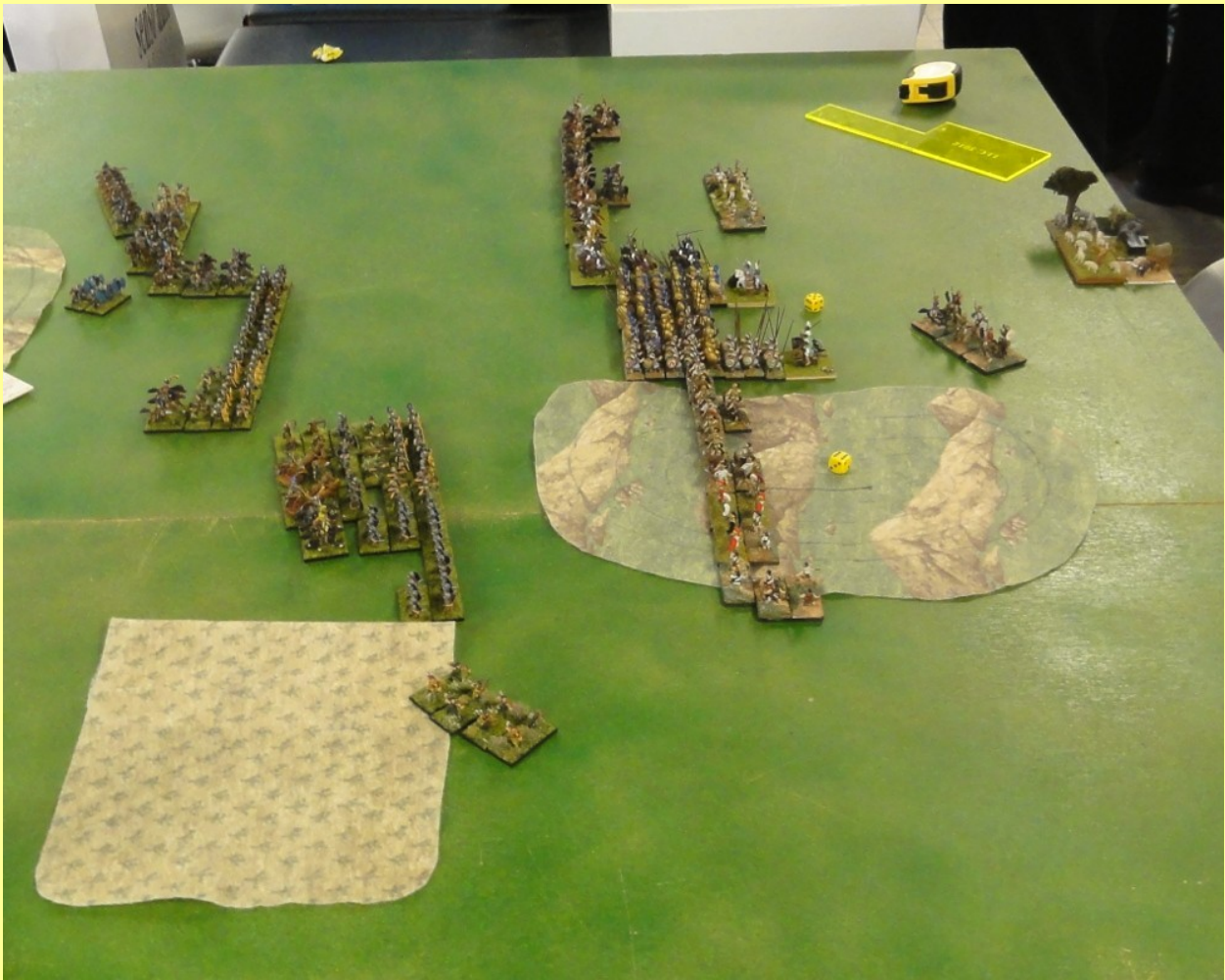
When Lorenzo published the runners and rider ... only some Alexander Imperial entries were actually announced. Very few Romans and the dreaded Three Kingdoms were not present at all. Ah so what, let's go to Milano and hope for the best!

Game 1 : Eugenio Megale from Team Megaleon playing Philipp of Macedonia

Eugenio is a very young gentleman, I had never played him before. So maybe I started a bit over-confident as I saw his whole team infuse him with hints how to play Romans before the game. I had to find out that the only 2 things missing to Eugenio is probably a bit of self-confidence and that fine "killer instinct" of the Italian top players. Overall he is a good player who will punish sloppy play immediately.

Philipp of Macedonia invaded Rome in autumn, armies met on 10:00 of a beautiful day. I had to deploy first: My idea was that Macedonians will have a few Auxilia on the Hill. I would shoot them with combined bow and artillery to force the rest of the Macedonians to attack before losses add up dangerously. Then fight the Auxilia with Roman Auxilia plus ordinary legionaries, fight pikes with palatina legions and keep the companions away with Roman cavalry and the Macedonian cavalry... aaah threaten them with 3 cataphracts and hope they do not advance too aggressively.

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At the start of the battle the plan look like a good idea. Just sending psiloi around the flank was maybe a bit too arrogant. The trick shooting Macedonian auxilia with artillery and bow worked fine, Macedonians were provoked to advance with the wing and the center. My little flank movement was countered by light horse.

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The picture shows the situation before the big clash - I had gotten the match-ups I wanted, except my psiloi had to run back from the riders. I could break the Macedonian left and kill enough companions and pike from the center command to win the battle. The Macedonians have never tried to test my weak left flank.

Team Barbarossa made a good entry statement scoring 93 points out of 100 in round 1. We got to pay for this in round 2.

Game 2 : James Cheung from Team Yellow Dragons playing Seleucos

James invaded Rome in Summer - of course I had to deploy first (rubbish against Seleucos, I did not see the army during the first game and Seleucos can field a great variety of troops). Armies met at 09:00 on a beautiful day.

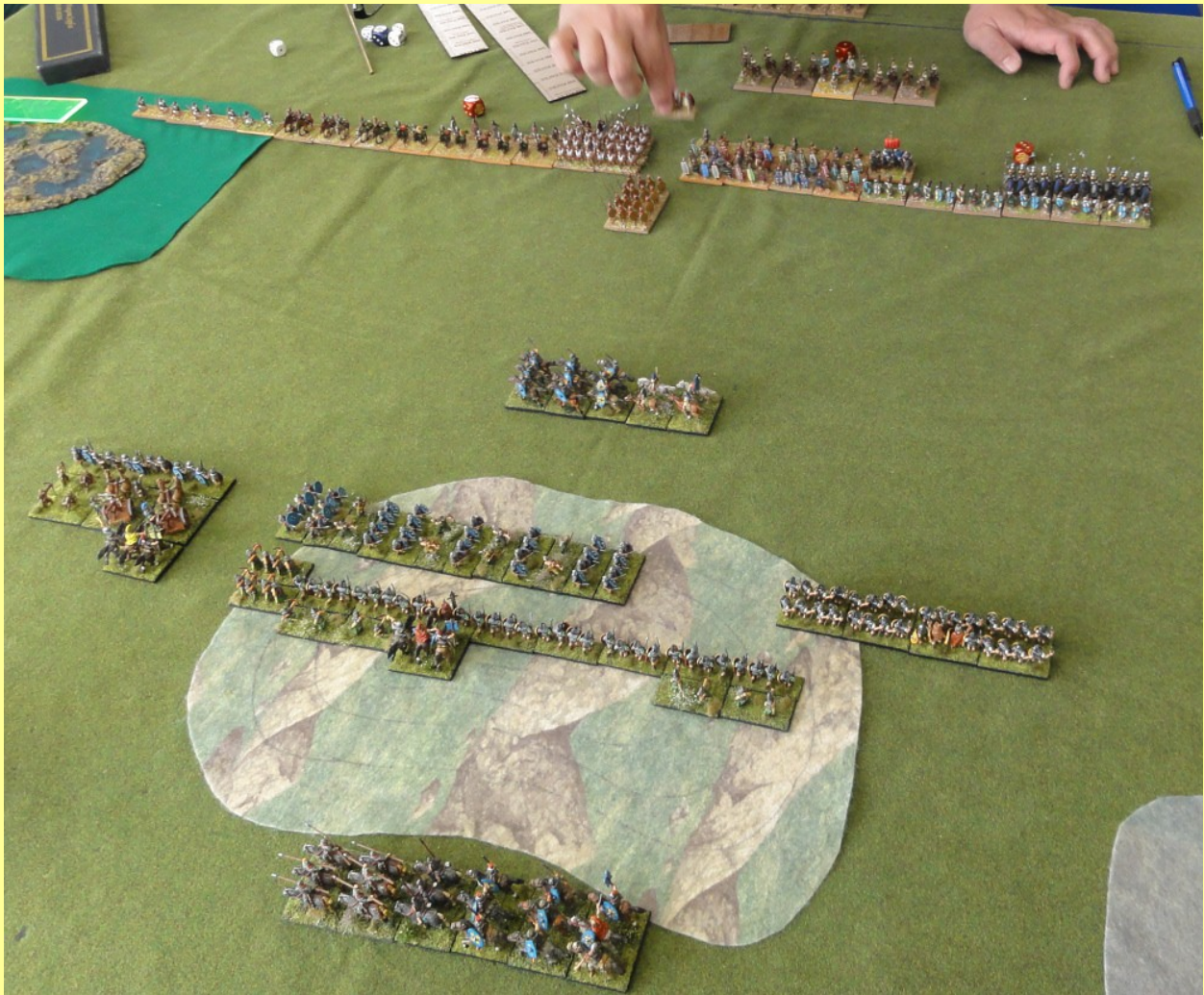
I decided for a good defensive position occupying a rough hill in my center (good old Roman trick). You can see my deployment on the picture. Cavalry wing on the right, ready to go out or retreat depending on the Macedonian deployment; legions in the center on the hill, Auxilia on the left, support command with artillery behind the left flank.

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Of course I had guessed the Seleucos' deployment wrong, the companions were up against my auxilia, auxilia and cataphracts against my cavalry, warband superior plus pikes against the legions. Apart from the fact that I needed to change left and right wing. It would be nice to see Seleucos attack my position.... but James is a very cautious player. So I redeployed very openly and slowly ... obviously spending too many PIPs by moving the cavalry in two groups pretty close to his line into position....

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But no success, James was not taking the bait. He re-inforced his right wing with Kn(X) (, send the light horse to his left and moved forward very cautiously. Even when he could attack two of my cataphracts with companions (kn(F) in wedge) he opted for secured flanks... See my re-deployment in the next picture

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OK if you cannot lure him into attack, let's use the new deployment to attack myself. Everything seemed ok, apart from the part against the warband. Three lines of Warband against Auxilia S plus supporting psiloi and only two reserve elements behind. AND the Artillery was targeted against the pike and did not support the auxilia. (that was maybe a more idiotic mistake that I thought at that moment - putting the complete support command on the rough hill to support the auxilia against the warband).

So did it work out? No, I killed three companions but I failed to exploit the situation, unable to kill light horse with cavalry. I never managed to kill any pikes, instead loosing 4 palatina legion elements in my attacks. And my auxilia suffered badly against the warband, only my normal legions killed some macedonian auxilia. Loosing the 4 palatina plus the auxilia broke my big fighting command and I got into bad trouble.

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Lost 4:21, other games mostly draw; The Yellow Dragons showed clearly that they are not afraid of Barbarossa!

Game 3 : Mick Hession from Team Wild Geese playing Palmyra

Game three was very important to me. I actually considered playing the Palmyra list myself but could not finish the miniatures in time. I had heard rumors that Palmyra fielded four commands, hence I thought it was a very agile opponent. I invaded Palmyra in Winter. Armies met at 07:00, strong winds blowing from the South (actually forgotten during the game).

The plan was to select a weak flank and attack that full force in order to avoid knights dancing around me. I had to deploy first and the plan was still there... not perfect though. My big fighting command started opposite a medium sized infantry command (blades and bow). But instead of charging over the field and nailing them to this position ... I switched off my brain and maneuvered more slowly to make the attack hit better. The most idiotic first bound I played in a long time.

OK and of course I spent the whole game chasing the Palmyrans while they danced around me. The infantry command I had targeted actually had the highest (or second highest) PIP dice and got away.

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The image shows the Palmyran knights arriving at my table edge. They confront my cavalry wing. My center (turned 90° to the right) is a big mess. And (you do not see this in the picture) I have three light horse in my back.

The actually second big mistake was: I did not draw the consequences out of my failed attack. I should have seen that I had failed and pulled back the troops to the starting position.

Strangely this attack was not too massively. Optically it looked very bleak for me, but I managed to hold on. I had some chances to kill some more Palmyran cataphracts but only two were destroyed. In the same time I was loosing elements pretty constantly.

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That was a lesson to remember, lucky to keep it at 11:14 VP

Fortunately the Irish had brought some gifts: A mini-bottle of whisky was the right way to forget about this battle. Sometimes I get taught lessons that I should have learned already....

Game 4 : Jonathan Martin from Team Mercenaries playing Hannibal of Cathago

Before game four, the tournament classification made strategic advice very easy: we had lost all of our initial advantage and were at place 5 or 6. Hence it was: We MUST win the games in order to come back into positions 1-3. Draws won't help. Early it became clear that Thomas and Gael were fighting a difficult knight battle on muddy ground and that Neil was chasing Mongols with Swiss pike.... something that often ends with a draw. So Jürgen and myself had a clear perspective to force victory even at some cost.

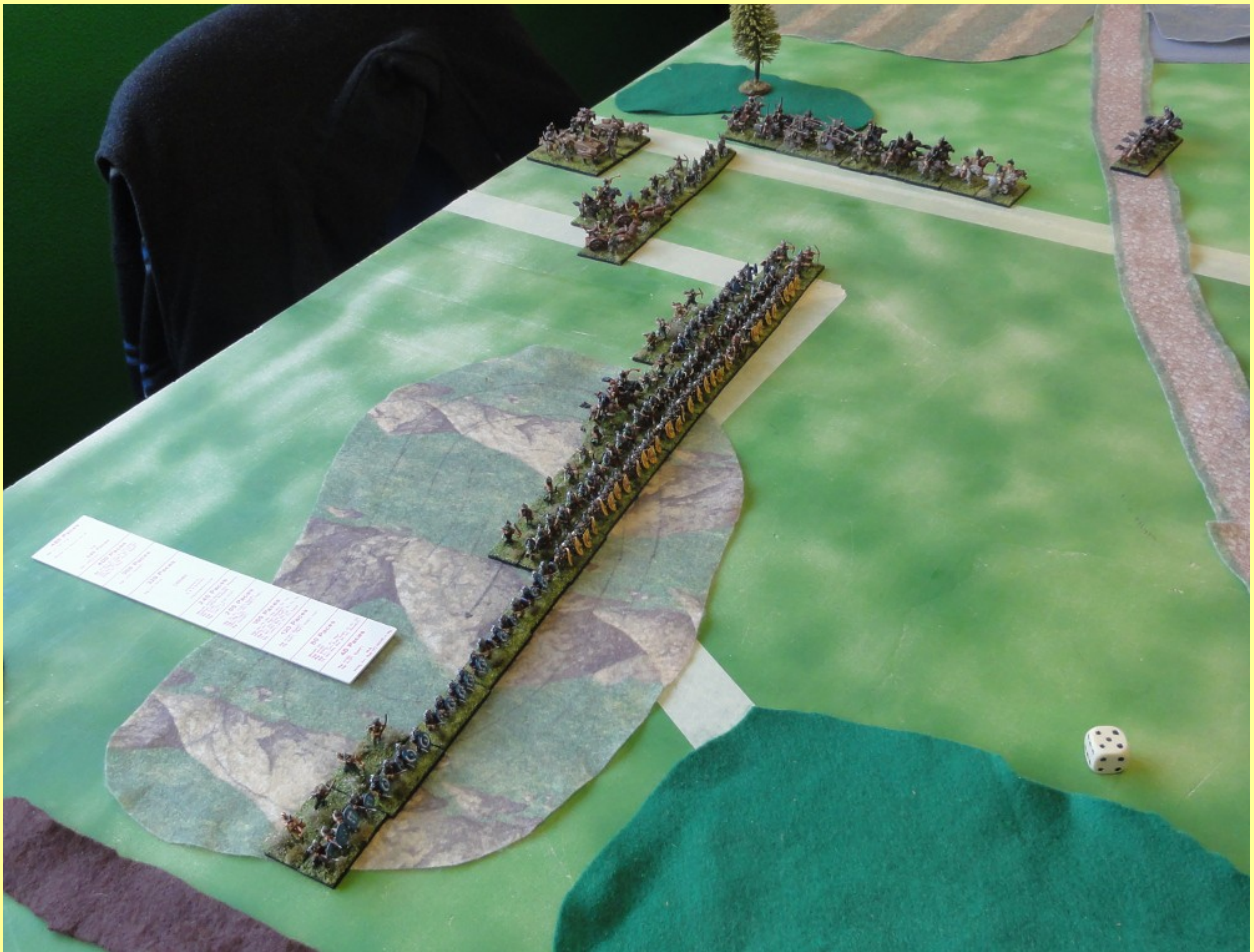
Carthago invaded Rome in Spring (damn I read that before in some history book. Hope it is not a bad omen!). Armies met at 10:00, no significant weather effects. The table gave a clear central killing ground flanked by difficult terrain on both sides. So Jonathan and I tried to find out, what a "clever" plan might look like.

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The brilliant result was a Cannae like situation. Rome opted to overrun the Carthaginian center by weight of number plus more expensive troops; Hannibal opted to eat away the Roman flanks and try not to lose battle in the center. So legions went to the center, right flank protected by Auxilia, left flank protected by cavalry. Support command behind and left of the legions.

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To the attack! Just auxilia try to pin the Numidian light horse.



Luckily I was able to shoot the carthaginian elephant. I tried to impress the phalanx but apart from recoiling a few times the phalanx ignored the Scorpions' shooting. My bow shot one or two psiloi and....

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the Numidians massacred the auxilia (frontally, despite superior grading and rear support), Legions took some bounds but finally won the upper hand against the Iberian auxilia and the Carthaginian phalanx. A truly risky situation arose when two legions were flanked thanks to their comrades on one being destroyed by the Iberians.



In a last furious charge I threw everything on these two commands: cataphracts, legions, auxilia of the support command and broke Hannibal's army. A bit of a brute-force approach but enough to win 22:3 for Rome.

Retrospective

Magically this last round has brought us up on top, because Dragons and Condottieri did not have a really decisive result.

I found several armies painted to truly high standard. It was a pleasure to play against and observe other games. My own Romans could not challenge Herbert Wong from his yearly title for "best painted" army. But they do not need to hide either!



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Thanks to all teams that kept up the tradition of small presents! Dragons, Geese and others! I love the tradition, it just motivates to travel for the hobby!

Barbarossa will be back in 2016! We hope everybody had an enjoyable weekend. Thanks to Lorenzo and the players from Milano to organize the event. Applause!!!