

International Team Challenge, Milano 2018

My way to Milano

for the first time in the history of team Barbarossa I wanted to play pool 4. I had just completed a European medieval collection, mostly focusing on 13th/14th century but with extras to cover 12th and 15th fairly plausible.

After studying the book I opted for Navarra with English free company allies. It looked good on paper: irr Kn(S), Irr Kn(O) with the option to dismount, Ax(S), Ps(S), Bw(S), Bd(S), cool enough. I practiced a bit against Teutonic Order, later Hungarians and Swiss.... it seemed a very solid defensive army. January 2018 came our „start of the year tournament“ in Gomaringen (just a bit south of Stuttgart). I tried to play a bit more aggressively because in Milano often one has to seize the initiative to get win a game – some players rather try 'not to loose'. I failed miserably and ended last.

So looking for a solution I tried medieval Portuguese including the artillery now possible. Both lists are not too different but the regular Kn(S) give the Portuguese a big plus and LH give them more reach. So I send a Portuguese list to Lorenzo:

1. CinC irr Kn(S), 4 irr Kn(O), 4 irr LH(O)
2. SG reg kn(S), 3 reg Kn(S), 4 reg Bw(O), 1 reg Art(O), 6 irr Ps(O)
3. SG irr Kn(O), 3 irr Ax(O), 5 irr Ps(S), 1 irr LH(O)
4. AG reg Kn(I), 5 reg Kn(I), 8 reg Bw(S), 2 Cmd Bge (I)
5. 6 Army Baggage

Teams Barbarossa and Conan had a beer on late Friday to gain courage and spirit for Saturday.



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Game 1 versus Alberto Velez of team Gepanta

of all lists entered I get to play early crusader... that could be anything from many irr Kn(O) to regular Kn(O) to Byzantine LH(S), it could have a brilliant general. So there is no standard plan available. Of course I need to deploy first so I deploy with little knowledge on the opponent's army. I have also never ever played Alberto before.

There was a bit of a clue when he put down a sea... so he wants to narrow the table and prevent flank marches. I distribute a craggy hill to my right, some rough hills and flats, a road and a settlement. I deploy my troops very cautiously - the bad weakness of the Portuguese is the reliability of the English Ally: the Ally is regular BUT my CinC will always give the highest PIPs to his regular military order sub. So restoring reliability in case the English ally is unreliable can take some time. Just to say that: in Milano the English Ally was reliable in all four games, so I will do some whining on bad dice only for the sake of continuing the tradition of complaining on dice instead of improving game play. It is just so much easier.

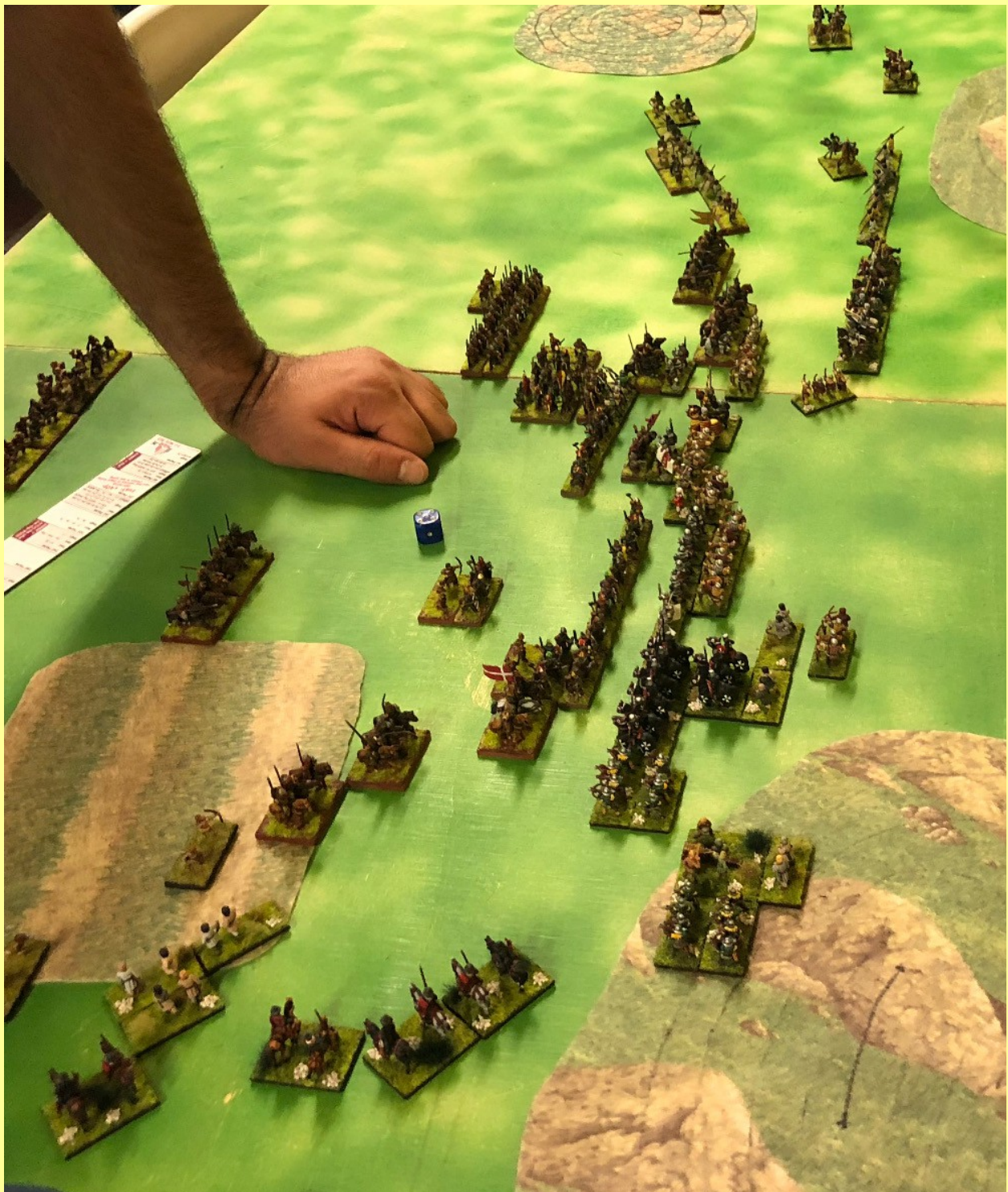


On the right you can see the craggy hill occupied by Psiloi and Auxilia, in the gap between the hills my CinC with irregular knights and Light Horse, center left the English Ally and to the left the military order (Maltesians in my case). My first dice roll of the weekend is VERY encouraging!

Alberto's army was composed of regular Kn(O), many regular Bd(S), supported by Ps(O), a huge block of Spearmen (I), also with Psiloi and some Psiloi on his far left wing. His knights facing my right had the highest dice. They rushed to the front and partially screened the Spear command - which was his largest but weakest command.

Initially I held back my right and attacked on the left with the military order plus the English. The idea was to shoot the spear (I) in order to gain both flanks on the knights/blades command. His idea was to smash my center where the irregular knights were the weakest point in my line. After a few bounds when he had moved his left wing knights and blades to the center, I came forward with my light troops. This was the situation:

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Simply said: his spears had a bad time, but Alberto's knights/blades were absolutely up to the task and started to become really dangerous to my attack. What is not shown on the picture is one lonely light horse from my light command that had raced in the back of his lines. Instead of threatening his lines from the rear I attacked the hordes and baggage in his rear. This ensured that all of his commands had already lost some elements. Also my dice motivated this tactics. I had hoped the command structure would give HIGH PIPs to the military order, but if a 1 is the highest PIP of two... look to the yellow dice: that is the irregular sub commanding the guerrilla light horse:

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In the center my knights failed to kill his Blades, but my English blades did kill a few. His spears became disheartened. And my own irregular knights partially dismounted to reduce the risk of losing some.



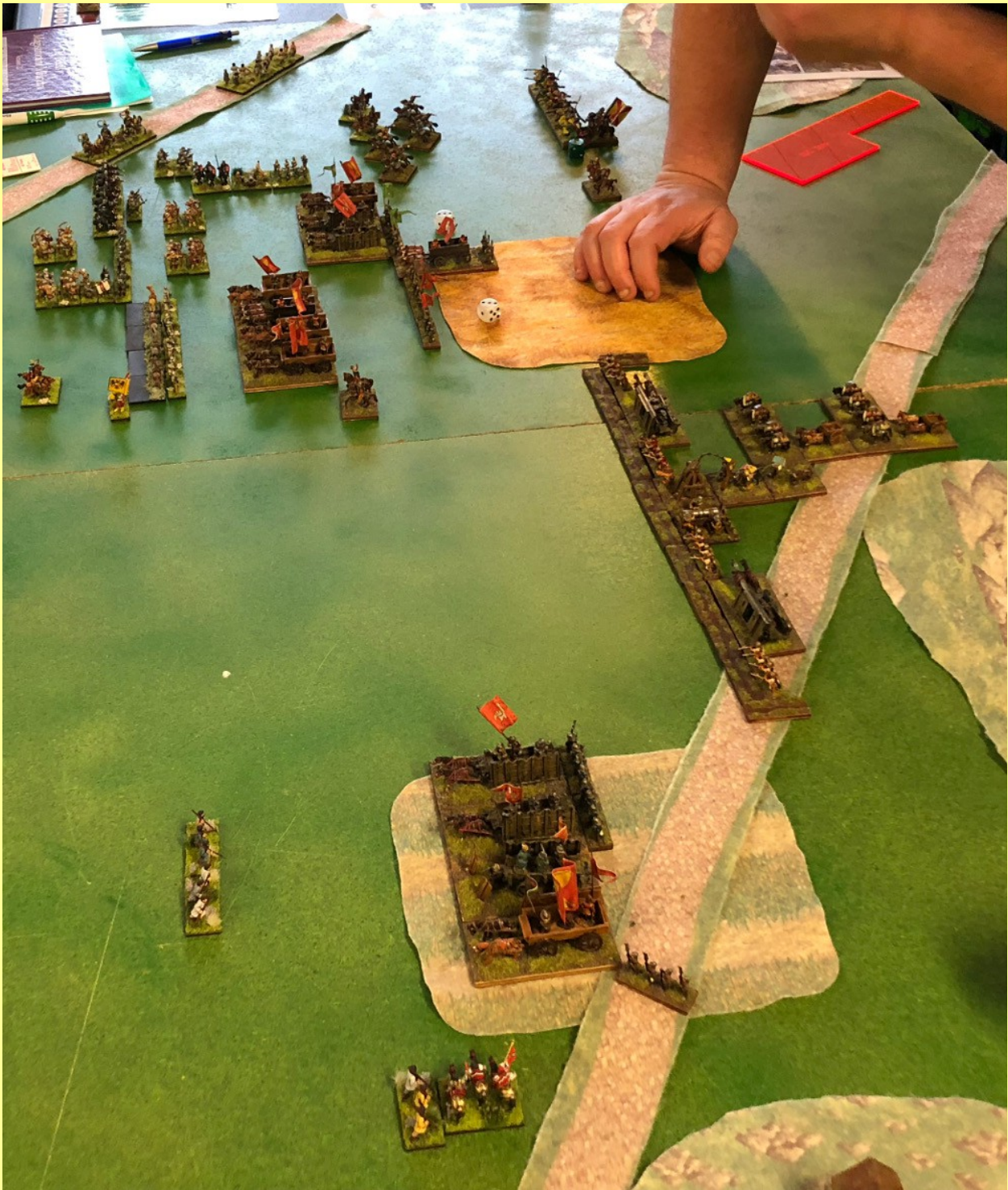
The game was decided when the crusader baggage broke, took with it the spears and both knight commands had to take extra morale penalty due to having losses themselves.

A 23:2 win is a fortunate start in the tournament.

Game 2 versus Richard Ainsley of team Wild Geese

now onto the most embarrassing game of the weekend. I had never practiced against Hussites, actually I was much surprised when the army showed up on the runners and riders. To me I perceived it as slow poorly maneuverable and not very hard hitting. I knew of the shooting quality. So my bit of a plan was to attack the polish CinC kill the knights run around the rear of the Hussites while The English and dismounted Portuguese knights should hold the War Wagons where they are. On the right flank I tried to sneak my light troops around the flank of the Hussites.

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The plan was a disaster and the execution was worse. I did not have the initial PIPs to unfold my left flank, I had placed the Artillery/Bow combination in the Military Order command on the flank (hoping to wheel it inwards, in order to shoot without being shot at). Instead my left was threatened by the attack of the Polish CinC, his Light Horse(O) killing three of mine in no time...On my right, the super smart movement around the Hussite flank died with low PIPs. And of course the War Wagons made many bows flee in strange directions.

I had to save the day by moving my dismounted knights to the attack on the War Wagons. Not quite sure but I recall I killed only two in the whole game. At least I forced Richard to

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bring forward his Blade (O) because his War wagons could not kill my Blades (S). The game was decided by me just hanging on – at a certain point I had given up and just tried to get a few more kills to raise my % score. This allowed Richard to hard-flank two of my generals (three times at least). But hey, they are Bd(S) generals, right? Against all odds they survived until a fleeing Polish knight allowed me to seriously attack on my left flank with my Military Order knights. The thing I should have been doing from bound 1 on.



What shall I say. I have not deserved it but Richard lost that battle (more true than saying I won it) by simply losing several blades and two war wagons and the CinC command - so when the CinC broke, the army went home.

It was cool to see how the Hussites moved clear from the Rough Going and were able to really occupy solid a big part of the table. Also how quickly these formations could maneuver into shooting range - then shooting to front and sides. A rare opponent, but worth looking at how to fight War Wagon.

22:3 for me

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The art of having a good time....



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We all needed a good dinner to cover up for the exciting day.



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Game 3 versus Greg Mann of Old Beardies team

So far my record against Greg is short but 100% loss. We both opted for spring and after one year delay (probably logistics) and five aggression dice rolls we started the game in Spring of the following year. I am not so sure about the rules, maybe we should have gone home and resume play in 2019 then.

Timurid can clearly re-organise their army much faster than Portuguese, so we did a bit of dancing right and left at the beginning. The mongols had two expendables that put on a great show, surviving Bw(S) fire twice and when the last one dies he took away two English bowmen. But on we go, Mongols race LH(S) versus my left/center and threaten to march some Cv around my left. I have to stay put and slowly march in my reserves as fast as PIPs allow until the Mongols retreat.



As he moves his Elephants slowly in direction of my center I pull up a second line of Psiloi, just in case he attacks with the ellies.

Instead Greg opts to move all his cavalry plus one Elephant versus my right flank. I redeploy my English bow plus some light troops to counter them. The elephant is shot. The Cavalry charges my Bow(S) with no respect at all and kills many Bow (I believe I shot on Cv, not more). Obviously also Mongol Psiloi are a better fighters than Portuguese Auxilia, my right flank is a bit shaky. I push some Blade into the center to lure the second elephant into the fight. But Greg does not risk that element. Seeing that my English Ally is disheartened I attack the elephant with Psiloi and Blades... but the Elly wins and starts attacking back.

Second picture shows the battle about 4 bounds to the end. Result was 11:14 or 12:13, I do not remember which. Maybe I was a bit too cautious but the battle mostly allowed the Timurid to pick the fights so I choose not to expose troops beyond a point where I could support them.

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Game 4 versus Alberto Pavia of team Giglio et Leone 2

Alberto played Ottoman. I was not particularly afraid of the list. It is one of those lists that raise and fall with the players using them. I cut off a part of the battlefield by placing a craggy hill in one flank of his sector and some Rough in the middle. He responded with a very defensive deployment: a long infantry line covered his right and the center, Psiloi versus the craggy hill, then Blades (O), then Bw(S). Serbian knights behind in reserve and also a mini Cv(S) command. Cv(O) and LH(F) covered his left. But he placed them IN the rough going (which eliminates the quick kill of knights versus Cv and makes the whole thing much of a lottery).

I concentrate my attack on the edge between rough and good going, shooting LH with English bow, attack with kn(O) in the open and with Kn(S) plus LH in the Rough. The idea worked partially, I could break the mounted command, BUT the cost was too high! One knight dies in the rough, several LH too and still from his mini-command the general survived and caused a lot of havoc in my rear then. I should have pinned his line and redeploy the English foot either radically to the left or to the right and only support their charge instead of having them support a risky knight charge.

The first picture shows the battle after my charge against his cavalry in the rough on the right. Note : his Sub general has already broken through the open position on the very far right table edge.

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On the far left I played a bit too arrogantly and then suffered some rounds with low PIP that cost me extra elements. Not very smart play here.



An 11:14 at the end. Well played by Alberto.

Thanks to Lorenzo and team for a fantastic weekend. Well organized! Good fortune in the struggle for the ludoteca building!!!! Hope to see so many fantastic player in 2019!