

## **Kublai Khan goes to Paris to learn DBMM rules**

Arnim Lück, 2010-10-20

Following Gael's invitation to visit the first French DBMM 2.0 tournament I browsed through the book 4 draft army book. I wanted to use my 2009 Asiatic miniatures, so I looked at Chinese and Korean lists. Expecting many knight armies I wanted to use a sort of anti-knight army, but still something flexible enough to fend off Pike blocks (simply because I expected Swiss Pikes to show up on a tournament where many knight armies are expected).

Finally I settled for Yuan Chinese:

- I. Kublai Khan as CinC on an irr Elephant O  
Feigned Flight Stratagem  
2 reg Cavalry S double based with Auxilia I, 4 reg Blade O, 6 reg Blade I, 6 reg Psiloi S, 6 reg Psiloi O
- II. Chinese Sub General rCvS  
8 irr Cavalry O, 4 reg Light Horse S, 2 reg Artillery O, 6 reg Bow O
- III. Tammachi Light Horse Sub General  
6 reg Light Horse S
- IV. Army Baggage with 5 regular Baggage F elements

Kublai Khan's plan was:

- disrupt Knight attacks with Light Horse and Feigned Flight
- attack the disrupted knights with the Elephant + CvS combination
- Use Artillery to shoot superior knights or things that this army does not like (Warwagons etc). Bows aid Artillery shooting on closer distance.
- hold or charge terrain with Psiloi to have a base for the Blades to act
- Cavalry can hold heavy foot (spear, Pike, Blade) long enough to win against knights

The plan was actually crap and was never executed because the true problem of this army is heavy foot, not knights. And in Paris my opponents did field some knights but all had a core of heavy infantry, most having either Bow S or even Bow X/S combinations. But definitively I had great fun with this army!

So let's recall the games...

### **First game against Jim Gibson playing later Hungarians**

This was exactly the type of army I expected to see in Paris. The Yuan Chinese invaded Hungary in Winter. The terrain in Hungary is not too attractive, I tried to work for a open table with a few small patches of difficult and scrubby goings. I believe we both had the same idea so it worked out rather fine. At 11:00 the armies met, fine sunny winter weather in Hungary saw Jim Gibson move his Hungarians to the attack.



This image shows the Hungarian line ready to attack. You can nicely see my deployment and plan: attack on the left with Cavalry and Light Horse supported by Bow, shoot the center War Wagons with Artillery to slow them down and exploit his weak left flank with Psiloi.

And here comes the first rule that Kublai Khan learned in Paris. My artillery is a group entirely of train and thus does **not** stop march

moves! So Jim exploited my mistake and moved his central light horse command quickly forward, ending only few centimeters before my Artillery!



His center looked grim, but did not move really during the first bounds. Kublai Khan was shocked and needed to redeploy forces to avoid that the Light Horse just ran over his (weak) center. Bowmen raced to cover the retreat of the artillery, Blades ran over from the right to help.

So my attack on the left had to wait for some bounds. On the right you see my effort to "repair" the light horse attack. You can see Jim reinforcing the hill that stiffens his position on my left.



But the first action was in the center. The Hungarians tried to get rid of my Artillery and Bows. And I needed to spend many many PIPs to save them. Still I lost an Artillery element to this attack. But my Blades threaten to attack the riders from my right. Jim feels confident that he can fend me off but now we both spend PIPs to save our a\*\* instead of spending them to attack.





To ease the situation the Hungarian center now moves forward, trying to catch my relief force in the flank. I choose to ignore that and finally attack on my left flank.

This saves the day! I never had any PIPs left to attack on my right but my rescue force kills many Hungarian light horse and I manage to disrupt the knight line and get into a hard fight with my cavalry against his light horse. We both loose some elements, but the Hungarians start loosing this flank.

At the end I was just lucky to have enough PIPs to save my center, while Jim did not have the PIPs to move his center in order to free the light horse from my blades. He did shoot one or two blades but not enough to save his light horse command.



## Second game against Dave "inert" Thompson with Burgundian Ordonnance

This game was sort of a shock for me. I have never tried out inert generals as my gameplay needs lots of PIPs to correct my miserable deployments. And maybe my plans need to be more "cunning" too. So I was really worried when Dave took out his army. You can see Dave enjoying taking many many elements out of the box and explaining that these are all super and regular and what ever...

So being inert does not mean that you do not enjoy frightening your opponents. He placed a





whole wall of Bow X/S elements from my right over to my left and added a big knight command on my far left. But what the \*\*\*, being Mongols (well Chinese Mongols...) we should win by movement!



I was quite pleased with the terrain: a nice scrubby hill in my center gave me a place for Bow and Artillery. Enough Rough and difficult going to play for my Psiloi. On my left I intended that my Tammachi command should play hide and seek with the knights, while I wanted to attack on my right flank. To make a long battle short: Kubilai forgot about his plan during battle!

As Charles commanded the Bow opposite my right I opted to attack him, as I thought he would have difficulties to maneuver. Optically it looked quite nice but I delayed the attack trying to give time to my Psiloi and Cavalry to support the blade attack. What a truly pants idea to give Charles extra time to shoot with Bow X/S against Blades and Psiloi! My troops where



shot to pieces and what had looked like an attack ended as a fly's sting. Here goes Charles the bold, holding his trophy for outmaneuvering mongols.

On the left flank I even had to learn another rule: While my Light Horse attacked his knights downhill from the central hill I did not get an +1

tactical factor, because it was a scrubby hill. Mounted troops do only get this bonus in good going... Makes sense but it was the first time I recognized this in the rules. Who knows since how many years it is there undiscovered (by me).

### **Third game against David Mather with Italian Condotta**

David won the "best painted" award, so it is a true shame that I did not take pictures (I gave my own vote for him but did not take photos, fairly stupid, isn't it?).

I managed to invade Italy in Autumn, hoping for mud that should help me against the knights. It was not to be, the armies clashed at 9:00, Italian weather being most beautiful.

This time I really had a plan! And I executed the plan (well at least I tried). He presented a fairly bare flank on my left, that I intended to smash with my Psiloi and exploit with my blades. On the right I wanted my Cavalry to retreat, buying time and the light horse to pick out single knights sticking their noses (or lances) out too far. The drawback of this plan is that it needs at least 2 PIPs per round on the second highest dice in the critical first 2 bounds.

Shamefully my dice were so miserable that we will never know if this plan was good or bad. On my right flank I had no PIPs and no Combat dice. Thus Dave just killed my riders one after the other with his knights and Pikes. I did not dice high enough to kill single overlapped pikes with blades or to kill an overlapped Pike attacked from the rear.

On my left I had plenty PIPs so I managed to threaten his wing. But my combat dice were bad enough that my Psiloi could not kill Hordes in Difficult attacked in the rear (2 versus -1 with Quickkill). So I just made a few lucky kills until I attacked an Artillery I with a Blade, my General overlapping – the Blade was recoiled and the Artillery shot Kublai Khan off his elephant.

Game Over.

### **Fourth game against Mick Hession with War of the Roses/Tudor English**

(no pictures)

This game was fought in England in Winter, with fine weather starting at sunrise. The English had the sun in their eyes, so they deployed in a strong defensive position. I did not opt to flank march into this position, because my flank marches tend to not arrive ever.

There was a rough flat at the right table edge, a big rough hill in the center of the English deployment and some more terrain at Mick's table edge. Basically a fortress that would be most difficult to storm... As I had three bounds with the advantage because of the dazzle effect I tried to storm the fortress through the rough flat.

On the far right flank my Light Horse command pressed through the rough, opposed by Light Horse O behind the terrain. Next to that Light Horse and Cavalry pressed against the link between the English light horse and the superior English monster-archers. My Blades tried to protect the flank of the

cavalry by advancing toward the central hill, while my Psiloi tried to hold the left flank. Mick had awesome PIP dice. Without any difficulty he deployed his army to receive the charge. Mostly by single element moves... Given my experience from game no. 3 this was a clear act of psychological warfare.

Before I even arrived the English had killed 2 Cavalry, but on arrival I started killing some English longbow elements and after some bounds also some of the light horse that were not protected by the rough going. Attacking from the rough I just died, I think I never even pushed back an element from that position. So on my right we had a bloody exchange of bowshots and Cavalry charges.

In the center I advanced towards the bow and Mick cunningly exchanged the bow for Blade superior in the front rank. Promptly he killed three Chinese Blade O on his first charge (ouch).

On my left I slowly retreated the Psiloi away from the advancing longbow men. I lost some but not more than 6 in the whole game.

So while on my right we played a game of attrition it looked grim in the center. And here Kublai Khan remembered suddenly a rule that he had read some time ago: Artillery on a hill may shoot over foot! So after many bounds with no artillery support they woke up and shot a blade. Motivated by this performance Kublai charged his elephant into a column of blade superior, his flank protected by the Cavalry general. Now I had committed everything I had – I avoided some critical losses on my right flank by performing a feigned flight there. The English had a Knight general in a position that I could not protect myself from. The feigned flight did not produce the geometrical result I desired but I was saved by the fact that the only English command in a position to exploit this fact was already disheartened. The feigned flight bought enough time for Kublai Khan to kill another few blade superior and win the battle! Apart from the attack with the elephant I won the battle because many of the cavalry attacks against the superior English Bowmen were successful, killing many of the longbow elements to dishearten a bow command rather quickly.

## And the Conclusion?

I had a wonderful weekend overall. The Saturday evening in Paris was nice – a running sight seeing tour by Gaél on the Isle de la cité followed by a Gallic meal until 01:00 in the night. Red wine was free to refill – I was reminded on the Asterix Comic where he travels to Britain...

Neil Fox won the competition





with a Ptolemaic Phalanx. I still wonder why he was not shot to pieces. My own army is composed of slightly too many distinct groups. That makes it just bit too slow to act under pressure. Especially as I do have baggage that needs to be protected. And the Regular Blade I have proven to be very vulnerable to Bows. Several PIPs were wasted to save Blade I from shooting instead of pressing home my own attack. But Kublai Khan is happy to have finished place six. I think that is a good result for me.



Merci beaucoup to Carl and Gaél for organizing this event. I met many people whom I never met before (because I am too lazy/busy to travel to Britain for competitions). All was well organized, food and drinks more than we could handle. Sad that our Italian friends were not there due to the strike. Head up to the French – things like this happen to all organizers.

My best wishes go to the French wargaming community that they can recruit more players after this event!!!