Battle of Adys 256 BC

A Scenario for Rome at War: Hannibal at Bay
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The early years of the 1st Punic War saw the Romans frustrated in their strategy due to the unquestioned superiority of the Carthaginian Navy. A fleet was created through construction and acquisition of ships from other Italian states, but the Romans still needed a way for their green fleet to overcome the experienced Carthaginians. In typical Roman fashion, they decided that since Romans were generally superior on land, they would turn sea battles into land battles. Tactics such as maneuver and ramming were to be avoided in favor of boarding actions. Under the direction of Consul Gaius Duilius, Roman ships were fitted with a device called the *corvus* (crow). This was a gang-plank on a pivot with a spike on the outer downward side. When the ships closed, the Romans would drop the *corvus* so that the spike would pierce the enemy deck and hold the ships together. Roman troops would then board the Carthaginian ships, which were typically light on marines. Duilius crushed a Carthaginian fleet at Mylae in 260 BC, serving notice that Carthaginian naval supremacy was no longer a given. Three years later, the Senate decreed that the war be carried to Africa. The Consuls Lucius Manlius Vulso Longus and Marcus Atilius Regulus brought a consular army across the Mediterranean, defeating another Carthaginian fleet in a difficult battle at Cape Ecnomus. The Romans lost twenty-four ships while the Carthaginians lost around a hundred. The Romans landed and quickly took the small town of Aspis. The Consuls then began a systematic plundering of the entire area. After receiving orders from the Senate, Manlius returned to Rome with the fleet and twenty-thousand newly taken slaves. Regulus remained with the army and forty ships.

Following the defeat at Cape Ecnomus, Carthage concentrated on the defense of their city. The army consisted of a mixed bag of mercenaries, African light infantry, militia, cavalry, and elephants. The *Gerousia* appointed three Generals for the Army, each apparently with equal authority. These were Hasdrubal son of Hanno, Bostar , and Hamilcar. The lack of training and decentralized command structure spoke poorly for the effectiveness of the army. The Carthaginians determined to not allow the Romans to conduct further destruction without resistance. They marched towards Regulus while the latter was besieging the town of Adys. Camping on some high ground nearby, the three Generals presumably planned to offer battle the following day on level ground where their cavalry and elephants would deploy to maximum effect. Regulus didn't give them the chance, but conducted a surprise attack on the Carthaginian camp at dawn from two directions.

Note: All components are from Hannibal at Bay except for the map, laagers, and the Roman leaders Severus, Marcellus, and Lupicinus, which are from Fading Legions. Rule reference numbers are from the 2nd Edition Series Rulebook.

1.0 Map

Use Map II from Fading Legions. The map has the following Terrain Effects:

Woods – It costs an extra movement point to enter a woods area. A charge may not be made against or through a woods area. Units assaulting a woods area suffer a 25% decrease in their combat strength.

Rise - The brown hill area on this map represents a rise. Units on a rise conducting an assault against units on an non rise area gain a 25% increase to their combat strength. A charge may not be made against or through a rise area.

Broken Ground – The brown hill area is also broken ground. Cavalry and elephants which start their movement on broken ground have a –2 penalty to their movement allowance. A charge cannot be made from, against, or through broken ground.

2.0 Victory

The Players gain points in the following fashion:

4 - If Regulus is eliminated.
2 - Per other leader eliminated.
2 - Per Roman step eliminated.
2 – Per Carthaginian cavalry step eliminated.
1 - Per Carthaginian infantry step eliminated.
0 – Per Elephant step eliminated.

2.1 The Romans do NOT receive any VP for Carthaginian units which exit the map. The side with the higher VP total at the end of play wins.

3.0 Set-Up

3.1 The Carthaginian Player sets up first. Place laager counters in the following areas: 333, 334, 335, 346, 350, 360, 364, 374, 378, 389, 390, 391. Then place the following units in any rise area:

Formation: Contingent under Hamilcar
Leader Hamilcar (Army Commander)
Ligurian Barbarian Inf (Lg 1a)
Celtic Barbarian Inf (Ce 1a)
Carthaginian Hvy Cav Step B (Ca 1b)

Formation: Contingent under Hasdrubal
Leader Hasdrubal G (Army Commander)
Punic Lt Inf 1-4 (Pu 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a)
Moorish Lt Inf 1 (Mo 1a)
Carthaginian Elephant 1-3 Step B (Ca 1b, 2b, 3b)

Formation: Contingent under Bostar
Leader Bostar (Army Commander)
Numidia1 Lt Inf 1-4 (Nu1 1a, 2a, 3a, 4a)
Numidia1 Lt Cav 1-2 (Nu1 1a, 2a)
Numidia1 Lt Cav 3 Step B (Nu1 3b)

3.2 The Roman Player sets up second. One formation must set up in any area from 414 to 330, and the other from 422 to 338.

Formation: V Legion under Severus
Leader Severus (Army Commander)
V/1 Legion Inf Step B (V 1b)
V/2 Legion Inf Step B (V 2b)
V/3 Legion Inf Step B (V 3b)
Roman Hvy Cav 1 Step B (Rm 1b)

Formation: VI Legion under Regulus
Leader Regulus (Army Commander)
VI/1 Legion Inf Step B (VI 1b)
VI/2 Legion Inf Step B (VI 2b)
VI/3 Legion Inf Step B (VI 3b)
Italia Hvy Cav 1 Step B (It 1b)

4.0 Command

4.1 Each Carthaginian leader is the Army Commander for and can only activate his particular contingent.

4.2 Hanno may replace any eliminated Carthaginian leader. If any additional Carthaginian leaders are eliminated, they are not replaced and that leader's formation is added to that of any surviving leader (owning player's choice) during the subsequent Recovery Phase.

4.3 The Romans planned to assault from different directions, so Regulus' un-named legate had full authority to act on his own. As a result, Severus is considered to be an Army Commander in his own right and is always in command.

4.4 If Regulus or Severus are eliminated the other becomes Commander of the entire army (and vice versa). Any leader replacing Severus or Regulus is only a formation leader (i.e. he must check initiative to be in command if out of the Army Commander's range, see 5.1 below).

4.5 Roman leader replacements are limited to Sergius, Cotta, Marcellus, and Lupicinus.

5.0 Special Scenario Rules

5.1 Carthaginian Camp: We don't know how the Carthaginians built their camp. The laager counters from Fading Legions represent the stockade of the Carthaginian camp, which may have been made using the baggage train. The following rules are used for the stockade

    a. Laager counters may not move.
    b. Laager counters take up two stacking points in their area.
    b. Units must expend one extra movement point to enter an area with a Laager counter.
    c. Units attacking an area with a Laager counter suffer a 25% penalty to their combat strength.

5.2 Firing the Stockade: The Roman player may set laager counters on fire in either of the following ways.

    a. If a Roman unit occupies an area with a laager counter for the entire turn, and makes no attack during the assault segment (it may defend against attacks), the Roman player may declare the laager counter to be fired.
    b. If Roman units assault an area with a laager counter and inflict two or more hits on the units in the area, the Roman player may declare the laager counter to be fired. The Carthaginian player does not take two of the hits obtained. A single 'hit' on a laager does nothing and may not be combined with a later hit to fire the laager.

5.21 Flaming stockade: A flaming laager counter no longer causes a 25% penalty to the combat strength of assaulting units (case 5.1.d above).

5.3 The Roman player automatically wins the initiative determination roll (5.0) on turn 1.

5.4 Detachments: Roman Legion Infantry 1 and 2 of both legions may detach (14.5) their Velites (marked with a V pennant) during set-up.

5.5 Army Collapse: Carthaginian Army Collapse (12.3) is triggered by the loss of all long counters, *or* the firing of any five laager counters.

6.0 Historical Result

In the congested and uneven ground of the hurriedly alerted camp the Carthaginian cavalry and elephants could not maneuver and panic set in. One of the legions was repulsed by a determined counter-assault by the mercenary heavy infantry, but the other legion broke through the fortifications on the other side of the camp, starting a rout. Once the cavalry and elephants picked their way down to level ground, they made their escape without loss. The fleeing infantry were pursued for a ways but many escaped due to the small number of Roman cavalry. Regulus soon captured Adys, then went on to overrun the entire region, including the strategic port of Tunes. His victory at Adys undoubtedly contributed to his overconfidence in subsequent negotiations and at the Battle of Tunes.