

Chaeronea 86BC: Lucius Cornelius Sulla vs. the Army of Mithridates Act I

Historical Background

“Sulla with about 30,000 men moved to Boeotia, seeking battle with Archelaus (the Mithridatic Army commander), who had assembled an army of 110,000 men and 90 chariots. In the first known offensive use of field fortifications, Sulla built entrenchments to protect his flanks against envelopment by the Mithridatic-Greek cavalry, and erected palisades along the front of his position, to provide protection against chariots. The battle opened with a charge by the Mithridatic cavalry, some of whom were able to avoid the entrenchments and the palisades. Sulla, his legions formed into squares, easily repulsed the charge. The chariot attack was handled according to plan; the maddened horses that survived the Roman arrows and javelins dashed back through the phalanx, throwing it into confusion. Sulla immediately launched a combined infantry and cavalry counterattack, and swept the foe from the field.”

(the above was lifted largely, with some additions, from The Encyclopedia of Military History by R.E. and T.N. Dupuy)

Terrain Setup:

X12 Ditch (use River Tiles see special rules) E3, E11, D2, D11, C2, C12, B2, B11, A3, A4, A10, A11

X8 Hill (Mainly impassable Mountainous Terrain see special rules except for the Roman Allied Men of Chaeronea): I1, I3, I12, I13, H1, H12, G1, E1

X3 Broken Ground Tiles: F1, G2, G12

X6 Palisade (use Rampart Tiles see special rules) E6 faces F5/F6, E8 faces F7/F8, D4 faces E4/E5, D9 faces E9/E10, A9 faces B9/A10

X3 Roman Camp: A6, A7, A8 (see Special Rules)

Order of Battle & Initial Setup:

Scenario Note: This particular scenario probably requires the use of at least two C & C sets, however folks with access to miniatures can probably improvise something.

Sulla's Roman Army (Use Roman Blocks): x19 units (two start off-map) & 4 Leaders

X10 Heavy Infantry (all have 5 blocks see special Roman Legionary rules): C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, B4, B5, B6, B8, B9

X2 Light Slingers (see special slinger rules) D4, D9

X2 Light Archers E6, E8

X3 Medium Cavalry C4, C10, B7

X4 Leaders C9 (Sulla) C5 (Murena) C7 (Galba) B6 (Hortensius)(Special Command Rules)

X1 Medium Infantry (3 Blocks only, Men of Chaeronea see special rules) off map

X1 Auxillia (3 Blocks only, Men of Chaeronea see special rules) off map

Mithridatic-Greek Army (Use Carthaginian Blocks—See Special Rules on Asiatic Forces): x34 units (four start off map) & 3 Leaders

X8 Medium Infantry (Phalanx Infantry see special rules): I5, I6, H5, H6, H7, H8, I8, I9

X1 Heavy Infantry (Phalanx Infantry see special rules) H4

X6 Auxillia (Mithridatic Levy Infantry-- see special rules) I4, I10, I11, H9, H2, and one unit starts off-map

X3 Warriors—All start off-map—(see special rules)
X2 Light Archers—I7, G7
X3 Light Infantry: G5, H10, I2
X3 Heavy Chariots (see special Pontic Scythe Chariot rules) G8, G9, G10
X2 Heavy Cavalry G3, G4 (Cataphracts see special rules)
X4 Medium Cavalry H3, G11, H11, F2
X2 Light Cavalry G12, G13
X3 Leaders G3 (Archelaus) H4 (Taxiles) H9 (Pontic General) (Special Command Rules)

War Council:

Roman Army:

Leader: Sulla

6 Command Cards (one is a Line Command—the rest are randomly drawn)

Mithridatic-Greek Army

Leader: Archelaus

5 Command Cards

Move First

Victory:

Roman Victory: Eliminate 15 Banners—however the first Mithridatic Chariot unit eliminated does not count for Banner/Victory purposes.

Mithridatic-Greek Victory: Eliminate 10 Banners—each Roman Camp Hex tile removed counts as one Banner see Terrain rules---The first Roman Light Archer or Light Slinger unit eliminated does not count however for Banner/Victory purposes.

Special Scenario Rules:

Command Rules:

All Mithridatic Leaders may cancel a retreat **or** a sword hit if present with the unit.

All Leaders, save the army commanders: Sulla and Archelaus ,may only support units involved in close-combat or Battle-back if they are directly stacked with the unit. Sulla and Archelaus **are the only leaders** in the game that can project such support one hex away from their location per the normal rules.

Units on both sides involved in close combat with the support of a Leader may only count one helmet hit amongst those rolled to inflict a hit on an opposing unit, unless Sulla is the supporting leader---then up to two helmet hits may be counted.

Units and the Rally Card: No unit can be rallied to beyond five blocks or its strength at the start of the game whichever is less. If a Player rolls “swords” when attempting to rally he may freely chose which unit gets a block back.

Special Terrain Rules:

Hills: All Hill tiles in the game are completely impassable to both sides (Exception see Men of Chaeronea special rules).

Ditch Hex tiles: Ordered Units moving must cease movement in the first ditch hex they enter. Pontic Scythe Chariots may not move/evade/retreat/momentum advance through or into ditch terrain. Units located in ditches close combat attack at one dice less than normal, but with a minimum of 2 dice normally. Units in ditch terrain battle-back normally. Ditches do not block line of sight.

Palisade Tiles: Mithridatic-Greek Chariot and Cavalry units may not enter/evade/retreat/momentum advance into or through Palisade hex tiles—they may close combat such hexes only through non-front hexsides into the Palisade tiles. Mithridatic-Greek Infantry may close combat attack through Palisade front hexsides at one dice less than normal, but with a minimum of 2 dice normally. Palisades do not block line of sight. Once a Mithridatic Infantry occupies a Palisade hex tile, the tile is removed and the hex reverts to Clear Terrain.

Roman Camp Tiles: The three fortified Roman Camp hexes only benefit the Roman player—if these hexes are entered by Mithridatic units the first Mithridatic unit to enter the hex loses one block (as men split off to loot) immediately, and the fortified camp tile is removed from the map—thereby converting the hex to clear. Each camp tile so removed scores the Mithridatic Player one banner towards victory.

Broken Ground Tiles: Use normal original rulebook rules, however the Pontic Scythe Chariots may not move/evade/retreat through such terrain.

Roman Legionary Infantry & other Special Roman Army Rules:

The following types of infantry units in the game the Roman side are assumed to be Roman Legionaries: ALL Roman Heavy Infantry.

Roman Pilum:

Each Roman Legionary Infantry unit starts with a Pilum Marker. The Pilum is a one-time use weapon that is generally fired right before a Roman Legionary unit attacks in close-combat or is itself attacked by the enemy in close-combat. Once the Pilum is fired the Pilum marker is removed from the Roman unit to indicate that the Pilum has been expended and the unit may not throw Pilum for the rest of the battle.

Just before a Roman unit with Pilum is attacked or is itself attacked by the enemy for the very first time in the battle in close-combat it throws its Pilum—roll one die and apply normal hits for swords, color, or a Flag/retreat hit Afterwards remove the Pilum marker. The act of throwing the Pilum **is not** considered to be part of the Close-Combat—so any result of the Pilum throw is resolved before the Close-combat. An attached Leader may use his special ability to cancel a “swords” hit that was inflicted via a Pilum hit (see special Command rules) on the unit he is stacked with.

Roman units, adjacent to the enemy, that have not expended their Pilum may also be ordered to throw Pilum if the card “Darken the Sky” is played by their commanding player. The Player picks one adjacent enemy unit and throws two dice—apply the results just as one would before close combat—and remove the Pilum Marker.

Roman Relief Moves & Cohort Maneuvers:

Adjacent and on the same side Roman Legionary Infantry, instead of moving, may switch places in a “Relief/Cohort Maneuver”. Relief/Cohort Maneuvers may only be conducted through the play of Section cards ONLY. Instead of ordering one unit via a section card, the controlling Player may order a pair of adjacent Legionary Infantry units to switch hexes—at least one of the units switching places must not be adjacent to an enemy unit. A unit that switched places via the Relief/Cohort Maneuver into a hex adjacent to the enemy may close combat in the same player-turn.

Roman Veteran Initiative:

Up to Four Roman Legionary Heavy Infantry units per Roman Player-turn that are ordered by Line Commands or an “Order Heavy Troops” card may move two hexes and close combat at their option.

Roman Elite Mercenary Slingers

The Roman Slinger units hit on swords when executing missile fire & battle-back.

Sulla’s Elite Legions

Note that all of the initial Roman Heavy Infantry units start the game with five blocks rather than the normal four blocks. These are Sulla’s crack troops, they are treated as normal Heavy Infantry for all other purposes, but have the advantage of an extra block and may rally back to a full five block strength through use of a rally card

The Men of Chaeronea:

The two Roman units that start the game off-map are in reality local Greeks (see Plutarch’s Life of Sulla for details) who offered their armed support to Sulla before battle. Their forces are one Medium Infantry and one Auxillia unit in game terms—both start the game with only three blocks each. The two units are referred to as The Men of Chaeronea. They managed to perform a nasty ambush against a part of the Mithridatic host.

Off Map Men of Chaeronea Roman Allied units: The Two Roman-allied units, The Men of Chaeronea, start the game off-map...these may enter in any of these vacant hexes: I1, H1, G1, F1 .. Starting with the very first Roman Player-turn & later the Roman Player may choose to bring them onto the map. Before playing his card for the Player-turn he may chose to place the eligible to enter off-map units in any vacant map-edge hex. I1, H1, G1, F1. They may than be ordered by the card the Roman is about to play as appropriate. Once on the map they may withdraw permanently from the map at the Roman Player’s option if ordered while occupying an entry. The Men of Chaeronea **are the only** units that may enter Hill Terrain in the game. Men of Chaeronea units may not be close-combated by the enemy if located on a hill hex, however the enemy may battle-back or missile fire into hill hexes occupied by the Men of Chaeronea.

The Mithridatic-Greek-Pontic Asiatic Army Special Rules

Asiatic Army: The **Mithridatic-Greek** Army is assumed to be a typical Asiatic ‘horde’, greatly outnumbering, but inferior in both equipment and fighting spirit to the forces of the Roman Republic’s Legions---In Close Combat and Battle Back ALL Mithridatic-Greek units make **no hits** on their enemies if Swords are rolled—always consider Swords to be a ‘miss’ when rolled by the Mithridatic-Greek Player.

Mithridatic Phalanx: All Mithridatic-Greek Heavy Infantry and Medium Infantry are considered to be Phalanx Infantry.

Phalanx Infantry **may not** engage in Close Combat if they have just moved before combat their maximum of one hex, (or two hexes if doing double time), **unless** the move was into the two hexes toward their “front” (i.e.: “front” as in towards the initial setup position of the opposing army) the moving Phalanx Infantry unit, **and** that moving Phalanx unit then proceeds to engage in close combat with an enemy unit in one of its “front” two hexes in the new hex it moved to. **Exception:** A Phalanx unit may **always** conduct combat **into a ditch hex** after moving—regardless of direction moved or “front”.

Phalanx Infantry may engage in normal Momentum Movement and Momentum Combat regardless of the direction of the combat. Note: Non-moving Ordered Phalanx units may always engage in Close Combat in any direction.

Example of Front: A Mithridatic Phalanx unit in E9 has ‘front’ hexes in D8 and D9. Mithridatic Phalanx units that have three blocks or more **and** are located in a clear terrain hex may ignore one sword hit inflicted on them by a Roman unit attacking or battling back from one of their front hexes.

Mithridatic Asiatic Levy: All Mithridatic Auxillia units are assumed to be the standard Asia Minor Infantry Levy of the Mithridatic Empire—these units have no missile capability. If attacked by Roman Heavy infantry the Mithridatic Auxillia may attempt to evade. For all other purposes Mithridatic Auxilla are treated as regular Auxilla units

Mithridatic Cataphracti: Mithridatic Heavy Cavalry is heavily armored—therefore they always ignore the first sword hit inflicted upon them in close-combat or battle-back.

Pontic Scythe Chariots:

Pontic Chariots must retreat two hexes per Flag result inflicted upon them, **however no more than one** Pontic Chariot Block per close-combat battle or missile fire/battleback can be lost due to a Chariot unit’s inability to retreat.

If a Pontic Chariot unit is forced to retreat, and there are friendly units in one or both of the rear hexes in back of the unit that a possible retreat route could pass through, each such friendly unit (up to two units if both rear hexes are occupied) immediately loses one block—this loss occurs regardless of whether or not the chariot retreat is successfully completed and such losses occur regardless of any losses inflicted on the chariot due to an inability to retreat.

Pontic Scythe Chariot units **may never** attempt to evade close combat.

Initial Off-map Mithridatic Units:

Four (4) of the initial units of the Mithridatic-Greek Army (three Warrior units & one Auxillia) start off of the map. Starting with the second Mithridatic-Greek Player-turn & later the Mithridatic Player may choose to bring them onto the map. Before playing his card for a Player-turn he may chose to place the off-map units in any vacant map-edge hex from I4 through I11 inclusive. They may than be ordered by the card the Mithridatic Player is about to play as appropriate. Once on the map they cannot leave it again save by elimination

Outflanking---*This is an easy way of introducing facing and flanks to the game with little fuss—it can be retrofitted to other scenarios where appropriate:*

A unit is said to be “Outflanked” if it is surrounded **in all** six adjacent hexes by either enemy units, or hexes adjacent to an enemy unit. The presence of friendly units or impassable terrain does not negate an “Outflanked” situation **in any way**. Units on the board edges (and not surrounded by six adjacent hexes) **cannot** be “Outflanked”. Effects of being Outflanked: “Outflanked” units when battling back roll only half the normal number of dice they would be normally entitled to rounded up—to a maximum of only two dice—“Outflanked” units when battling back **never** hit on helmet rolls even if supported by a leader. A unit’s “Outflanked” situation is judged at the instant it battles back.

Order of Battle Notes:

Sulla had by some accounts 30,000 men in his army (but some sources say he had only 15,000) which probably included five legions in addition to the usual Roman mercenaries and allies: the archers, the slingers, and cavalry. The Mithridatic host by all accounts was vast (a hundred thousand plus) and included a large rather low quality Phalanx made up mainly of freed slaves.