

The Battle of Ardros Field: Historicon 2008, Lancaster, PA

This battle, which is the climactic moment in [The Siege of Tarr-Hostigos](#), was recreated at this largest of all Historical wargaming conventions in the world. There were over 1500 28mm figures and 10 players involved in the game, played not all that far from Otherwhen equivalent site itself.

After suffering a series of stunning reverses, Styphon's House has pulled out all the stops. They have recruited, bribed, and otherwise assembled the biggest army ever seen in Otherwhen North America, the "Grand Host of Styphon", in order to defeat the "usurper" Kalvan once and for all. Composed of troops using a great variety of combat styles, and driven by Roxhar, Chief Investigator and High Priest of Styphon, the stage is set for a battle of epic proportions.



Roxhar bearing a burning brand to assist in motivating the subjects of his "investigation", and a typical High Priest of Styphon, living off the fat of the land!



Here my Band of Brothers 2nd edition co-author, Ken Baggaley considers his deployment.

He and his son, Brian, had the Styphoni right wing. This consisted of Ros Zarthani mercenaries (think Late Romans or Byzantines) and the very tough Ros Zarthani Knights (think Teutonic Knights, in this case a Military Order that is part of the military arm of Styphon, the other part being the Temple Guards). Joe and Barry can be seen looking on as the Sacred Squares of Hos Ketmos (think Spanish Tercios) complete their deployment, supported by the Halberd armed Temple Guards on the ridgeline



View of the Right wing of the Grand Host of Styphon



Here is a long view of the table, with the Styphoni Left flank also completing final deployment. The walled Villa to the front of Kalvan's line is fortified and crammed with heavy guns, destined

to take a heavy toll from the enormous but densely packed Sacred Squares opposite them, which advanced upon the Villa with ponderous slowness.



The Left wing of Kalvan's army, including half of his Royal army (represented by English Civil War type troops) as well as the Pricely army of old Hostigos and the relatively primitively armed Uthori infantry (mostly crossbows and halberds). The generals of the Left wing appear confident in their deployment, designed to maximize their considerable advantage in firepower, don't they? An earlier playtest suggested that Kalvan's forces needed fewer numbers but better firepower, so I tweaked the stats a bit for this game.



Here is Kalvan's Center, Reserves, and right wing, with their Generals. These guys don't look nearly as confident of their situation, do they? More Royal Infantry, the afore mentioned guns, and assorted mercenaries comprise the Center, while Queen Rylla and Sarask of Sask hold their forces in reserve on the ridge. On the far right is the Uthori Cavalry "Iron hats" plus the princely infantry and cavalry of Nostor and Kyblos. The numerous small cards seen on the table have the statistics for each unit and leader. The color of the base is the same for all units of a command group, as well as the leaders. While a bit less scenic, these cards greatly facilitated play.

Hostile Realms, which is now in layout for publication soon, uses (essentially) the Initiative system of Brent Oman's **Field of Battle**. That is, the opposing Commanders in Chief (in this case Great King Kalvan and Captain General Phidestros, commander of the Grand Host) dice off against each other using their Leadership Die (LD). Kalvan was rated the best possible, D12+1, while Phidestros merited a competent D10. The difference in scores is the number of cards that each side will be allowed to turn and act on for that phase, with the high scorer choosing to go first or second.

As a rule, the Hostigos forces tended to have better Command Group and Wing Leaders, although this was not universally true. Again like **FoB**, each time a MOVE card is turned, ALL the Command group leaders for that side roll their individual Leadership Die against an opposing six sided die. A LD roll of 1 means no movement for that Command Group on that card. Otherwise, a difference of up to 3 means one Move segment for that command, a difference of 4, 5, 6, or 7 results in 2 move segments, and a difference of 8 or more grants 3 segments. If a Command Group wins 2 or more segments, they can use one of them to change facing or formation, and some types (like Pike Blocks and most Cavalry) can use such a segment to

resolve Melee (hand to hand combat) immediately. The Wing Leaders were permitted to re-roll for ONE of their command Groups on each card at the discretion of the player.

The battle opened with Kalvan winning the first die roll (actually, I think he won almost all of the rolls the entire game). With his main strength being firepower, and the enemy being mostly out of range, he opted to let the Grand Host of Styphon (GHS) go first, rather than risk turning RELOAD cards that would be wasted with the enemy out of range. The right wing, under the command of Brian and Ken Baggaley, had very good leaders and excellent LD rolls. It stepped off to the attack with alacrity, while the Sacred Squares in the center lumbered slowly forward. On the left of the GHS, the leaders were rather poor and rolled many “1’s”, and were thus unable to take effective action. When the initiative passed on to Kalvan’s forces, they were fortunate to turn a number of RELOAD cards, both artillery and small arms, and, the enemy now coming in range, their fire caused devastation among the serried ranks of the Sacred squares, as well as the perhaps over boldly handled Ros Zathanai cavalry.



Insult was heaped upon injury when the forces of Hos Hostigos turned the one BRILLIANT LEADER card in their deck, declaring it another Infantry Reload card, thus allowing the Royal foot of their Left to mow down more of the Ros Zarhanai cavalry, their bows proving a poor response to the highly accurate Musket fire of the enemy. A MOVE card followed, and the infantry of the Left formed a salient to enfilade the hapless Ros Zarhanai. Seizing the moment, the Kalvan’s elite Royal Cavalry galloped forth in a hell for leather charge upon the weakened Zarhanai Kataphractoi, firing their pistols as they closed. Although their ranks had been thinned by the earlier musketry, the Kataphractoi seemed delighted to finally have an enemy that they could actually fight. Their heavier armor (and superior die rolling) promptly routed the Royal

Horse, and they went streaming for the rear. Indeed, in this game each time an (on paper, excellent) Royal cavalry regiment charged enemy horse, it was soundly defeated. Maybe the Lance isn't obsolete yet after all! Despite the failure of their Cavalry, the continued deadly firepower (and hot dice for firing) lead to the Left Wing of the Hostigos army soundly defeating the forces of Styphon, the entire wing eventually retreating off the board after it ran out of Morale chips and then flubbed an Army (wing) morale check by a large margin.



Meanwhile, the Hostigi Right wing got off to an initial fast start, winning a number of cavalry melees against the princely forces of Ketemos and its supporting troops. Kalvan's right wing actually advanced rather aggressively, in part because the quality of the Leaders on the Styphoni left left almost as much to be desired as there poor die rolls! Then, realizing that the friendly troops were getting awfully close to the Enemy, the high priest of Priest of Dralm cast the powerful Level 4 spell, "Lightening Storm" upon the opposition. It did a moderate amount of damage to the troops within its 12 inch radius, but was not decisive. This spell represents a stratagem used by Kalvan in the book. He had selected the battlefield carefully, and dammed up a substantial stream, the water of the resultant lake being hidden behind the ridge line he occupied. At the right moment, the dam was to be blown, releasing a torrent of water, trees, rocks, and mud upon the enemy.



Not a great photo, but to the left is a priest of Galzar, the War god, in his wolf headdress. To the right is a Priest of Dralm, the All-father.

Despite this artifice (and a few lesser "Hailstorm" spells subsequently, which had very little effect upon the minions of the Gunpowder God), the forces of Styphon gradually rose to the occasion. Their own Priest of Galzar "Blessed" several of their remaining cavalry units, and this seemed to have a most salutary effect, gaining the upper hand in a series of hotly contested melees.



Before long, they had soundly trounced the troops of Hos Hostigos, there being none of the crack Royal Infantry to hold it all together. That left the center...



The nearly unstoppable Sacred Squares of Hos Ketemos (Tercios) took a heavy pounding as they slowly advanced across the field, one Tercio suffering 14 stands loss and STILL passing a Morale Challenge! Fortunately for the forces of King Kalvan, the Center command ran out of Morale chips just before the Sacred Squares came within range of Kalvan's battle line (the commanding general couldn't manage to win more than 1 move segment on a Move card). With the victorious Hostigos left flank sweeping down upon them (after the Styphoni right wing failed their Army (Wing) Morale check big time, the game was declared a victory for the forces of the former uptime Pennsylvania State trooper. All hail Great King Kalvan... and Down Styphon!



. I thought the Hostile Realms rules worked very well, especially for a game with about 70 units a side (and about 1500 figures total). Huge thanks once again to Joe Fish and Barry Frandsen for all their hard work setting up and taking down the game, as well as assisting the players with the rules. Both of you were indispensable!

Peter Anderson