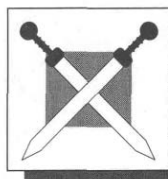


The Battle of Castulo, 211 B.C.

BY DAN FOURNIE

Carthage Strikes Back – following the defeat of Hasdrubal Barca at Dertosa in 215 BC, Carthage sends reinforcements to Spain.



Introduction

After seven years of successful campaigning in Spain, Publius Cornelius Scipio and his brother Gnaeus were both killed and had their armies destroyed in separate battles at Castulo and Ilorca in 211 BC. These battles are significant as the only major field battles won by Carthage during the Second Punic War that were not directed by Hannibal. The Castulo-Ilorca Campaign was atypical for the period, as we find Hasdrubal Barca (Hannibal's brother) maneuvering five separate bodies of Carthaginian troops against two Roman armies.

Historical Background

Following the defeat of Hasdrubal Barca at Dertosa (see issue Nr. 4 of *C3i* for Dertosa Battle Module) by the Scipio brothers in 215 BC, Carthage responded by sending reinforcements. Two armies were dispatched, one under Hasdrubal's younger brother Mago, and another under a political rival of the Barca clan, Hasdrubal Gisco. For the next three years (214-212 BC), the three Carthaginian armies battled the two Roman armies under Publius and Gnaeus. The results were indecisive, especially as Carthage had to recall troops to Africa to suppress a rebellion of the Numidian King Syphax and Rome was unable to spare any reinforcements for the Scipios. Both sides had reason to hope for more decisive results in 211 BC.

Hasdrubal Barca could count on the return of his troops from Africa, as Syphax's rebellion had been crushed. In addition, the Numidian Prince Masinissa was bringing over a large body of light cavalry. And an allied Iberian Prince, Indibilis, was recruiting forces from the Suessetani, an Iberian tribe of the interior. The Scipio brothers

were unable to obtain more troops from Italy, due to the threat there from Hannibal. Instead, the Scipios hired on a large body of 20,000 Celt-Iberian mercenaries. The Celt-Iberians were a mix of those two peoples, found mainly in the wilds of central Spain. They had a reputation for ferocity and fighting skill. Both sides confidently planned to take the offensive in 211 BC.

Publius and Gnaeus Scipio knew that Hasdrubal Barca was encamped north of New Carthage near Amtorgis with about 15,000 men. Mago and Hasdrubal Gisco, with about 10,000 troops each, were some distance away in the Baetis River valley. The Scipios decided to split their forces and defeat both Carthaginian bodies simultaneously. Publius would take 20,000 men (two-thirds of the original army) against Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisco. Gnaeus would confront Hasdrubal Barca with a double legion (10,000 men) and the 20,000 Celt-Iberians. It was a bold plan, even rash. Their motivation appears to have been based on three factors:

- The numerical superiority they enjoyed with their new mercenaries;
- The superior quality of their legions, probably the finest in the Roman army; and,
- Overconfidence bred from seven years of campaigning without a serious defeat.

Had the Scipios actually faced only 35,000 Carthaginians with over 50,000 legionnaires and mercenaries as they believed, their chances for success would have been good. But Hasdrubal Barca had two additional detachments: 3,000 Numidian cavalry under Masinissa and 7,500 warriors under Indibilis. And Hasdrubal Barca also had a trick up his sleeve that was to throw the entire balance over in the favor of Carthage.

While Hasdrubal Barca observed the Romans from his position at Amtorgis, he ordered the forces of Hasdrubal Gisco, Masinissa and Indibilis to concentrate at Mago Barca's camp near Castulo. Once these forces were united, it appears he intended to move north against the Romans with his combined forces.

But the Romans struck first. Their entire force moved up to confront Hasdrubal Barca, and then Publius split off with his army to advance into the interior. Hasdrubal, through heavily outnumbered by Gnaeus' Romans and Celt-Iberians, held his ground. Hasdrubal Barca had been raised on the battlefields of Spain and he knew the Celt-Iberians very well. Having some of these warriors in his own army, he was able to arrange secret conferences with the mercenary commanders from Gnaeus' army. For a large sum of silver, Hasdrubal Barca persuaded the Celt-Iberians to abandon the Romans and return to their homeland. The Romans, outnumbered two-to-one by their

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mercenaries, could do nothing to prevent their departure. With this bribe, Hasdrubal Barca eliminated two fifths of the Roman forces without striking a blow.

Meanwhile, Publius Scipio had run into difficulty soon after separating from his brother. Hasdrubal Gisgo and Masinissa had already arrived at Castulo to join Mago Barca. Masinissa and his light cavalry were unleashed to harass the Roman column on the march. As Publius advanced towards Castulo, foragers were ambushed and stragglers were cut off. The Numidians struck without warning, by day and by night. As he neared Castulo, Publius feared that his column would soon be under a complete blockade. Then his scouts brought word that Indibilis with a band of Iberians was across his line of retreat and advancing on his rear. Publius realized that his entire command was in danger of annihilation.

The Battle of Castulo

Publius Scipio decided to take action before it was too late. He planned to steal a night march on Masinissa and to crush Indibilis' detachment before the other Carthaginian armies could react. If successful, he could then retreat to join Gnaeus or engage Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisgo under more favorable circumstances. Scipio left some 2,000 men, mostly his wounded, behind to guard his camp under the legate Tiberius Fonteius. The Roman army departed in silence at midnight. Marching all night, the Romans collided with Indibilis' men in the early morning. Neither side had time to deploy fully into line, and a confused melee ensued. Publius, with over twice as many troops as Indibilis, began to gain the advantage. However, the Iberians fought surprisingly well. And they held on just long enough for help to arrive.

Masinissa had discovered the absence of the Roman army from their camp during the night. Pressing a vigorous pursuit, his horsemen crashed into the



Roman flank just as the Iberians were about to break. Scipio still had the advantage in numbers, and was able to change front to counter the Numidian attack. But his assault against the Iberians slackened. Unable to come to grips with the elusive Numidians, Scipio could not force a decision before Mago Barca and then Hasdrubal Gisgo arrived with the two main Carthaginian armies.

The Romans, now completely surrounded, fought on. But when Publius Scipio was stabbed with a lance and fell dying from his horse, the Roman army broke. Small bands and individuals cut their way through the cordon of Carthaginian troops, but most were hunted down by the Numidians and light infantry. Only a handful of survivors managed to join Fonteius at the Roman camp after darkness fell.

The Battle of Ilorca

With one Roman general slain and his army destroyed, Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisgo paused only long enough to loot the dead. They then force marched to join Hasdrubal Barca and trap a second Roman army. Gnaeus Scipio, who had received no word of his brother's fate, assumed the worst when

the two Carthaginian armies arrived. Leaving his tents standing and his fires burning, Gnaeus led his forces in retreat after dark. But as his brother had already discovered, a night's head start was insufficient to outdistance Numidian cavalry.

Masinissa's horsemen caught up with the Romans on the following day. Constant attacks that continued into the night forced Gnaeus to halt on a small hill near Ilorca. The Romans struggled vainly to fortify their camp, but found the ground too stony and hard for digging and the hill barren of any timber. Gnaeus finally had his men improvise a barricade from saddles and baggage as a new day dawned.

That morning, Hasdrubal Barca, Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisgo looked scornfully upon the Roman "wall." Sending in their troops from all sides, the rampart was quickly torn down, and the legionnaires huddled together for a desperate last stand. Nearly the entire Roman army was slaughtered. Gnaeus was either killed on the hill with his army or, according to a different version, broke out with a small body of troops and took refuge in a nearby watch tower. The Carthaginian soldiers,

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unable to break into the tower, set it afire and immolated the Roman general.

Aftermath

Although the three Carthaginian generals cooperated throughout this campaign, they fell to bickering once they had achieved success. With the Carthaginian forces paralyzed by dissension, there was no immediate pursuit. Tiberius Fonteius led Publius' camp guard back to the Roman base north of the Ebro River at Tarraco. He was joined by the remnants of Gnaeus' army under the command of a cavalryman, Marcus Septimus. By gathering in garrisons, commissariat troops and naval personnel, Fonteius and Marcus built up a force of some 8,000 men. When the Carthaginians finally advanced across the Ebro, the Romans were able to hold on to their base until reinforcements arrived from Italy. Vengeance would be had later, by Publius Scipio's son, the great Scipio Africanus.

Castulo as a Game

The ancient accounts of the Battle of Castulo provide the general scheme of action, but few specifics. For example, only the strength of the Iberian (Suessetani) and Celt-Iberian detachments are recorded. The number for all other armies are estimates, but these are fairly educated guesses. We know the strengths of these forces in earlier and later campaigns, and a little interpolation does the trick. The exact site of the battlefield is also unknown. While this lack of detail may be frustrating for the historian, it makes it easier to design a war game scenario. The Beneventum map from SPQR was selected as most typical of the general area. And the SPQR counter mix provided all the forces needed. But players should feel free to adjust the forces as play balance or your own opinions on the matter dictate.

In this scenario, the Roman player is in a race against time. He must crush the Iberian detachment as rapidly as possible, while holding out a strong rear guard to hold off the cascade of Carthaginian troops coming up from behind. If the Iberians can be routed, the player must choose between trying to execute a withdrawal under heavy enemy pressure, or facing about to try and defeat the Carthaginian forces as

they arrive in succession. The separate rout levels for the Carthaginian armies/detachments make it possible to win successive victories, but it won't be easy.

The Carthaginian player is in a more reactive role. He must block the Romans with the Iberians long enough for his cavalry to arrive. Then he must either race to prevent a Roman withdrawal or arrange his forces for a set piece battle. Having four separate commands allows great freedom of maneuver, but carries the danger of separate defeats. Both players will have plenty of opportunity for offensive and defensive action. Have fun, and watch your flanks!

Map

Use the Beneventum map from SPQR. The Roman camp does not exist, treat all camp hexes as wooded terrain. All other terrain features and directions are as depicted on the map.

Counters



You can find all the counters you need in SPQR except for Publius Scipio, whose counter (a duplicate of the one from

War Elephant) is included in C3i Nr.4's countersheet. NOTE: Do not use the Scipio Africanus counter from SPQR.

Old dad was a good general, but he wasn't in Africanus' league.

The Roman Army

The two double legions commanded by the Scipio brothers in Spain in 211 BC were the cream of the crop of the Roman Army. No other legions had served as long (seven years) or with a comparable record of victories. (Hannibal had annihilated all the other legions raised at the beginning of the Second Punic War). Therefore, the veteran X Double Legion forms the core of Publius Scipio's army. To represent the additional troops, which included replacement cohorts as well as marines and rowers pressed into service as infantry, the recruit XIX Ala Sociorum is added. Finally, the Romans had a force of Iberian allies serving as auxiliaries. Celtic counters are used, to avoid confusion with the Iberian units in the Carthaginian Army.

Roman Command

Publius Scipio is the Roman Overall Commander. The two tribunes may operate under the provisions of Rule 4.46

(Proconsuls); i.e., they may attempt LCs outside the OC's range, extend the range of the OC, and replace the OC if killed.

The Carthaginian Army

There is not "a" Carthaginian army. Instead, there are two armies and two detachments. The Carthaginian army commanders, Mago Barca and Hasdrubal Gisco, represented rival political factions and did not get along very well. To reflect this command relationship, each army has its own OC who may give orders only to his own units. Each detachment also has an independent commander who may give orders only to his own units. In addition, each army and detachments has its own rout level, and losses must be calculated separately.

Carthaginian Command

Leaders may issue orders/LCs only to units of their own army.

1. Mago Barca—OC for all red (and orange) units. Strategy rating is '5.' Subordinate is Hanno. Mago may give orders to Masinissa and Indibilis, but not to their units.

2. Hasdrubal Gisco—OC for all the dark blue units (and 3 Balearic SK that are light blue). Strategy rating is '4.' Subordinate is Bostar. Hasdrubal may give orders to Masinissa and Indibilis, but not to their units.

3. Masinissa—Commander of Numidian cavalry (brown units). As one of the great cavalry commanders of all time, Masinissa may give Line Commands automatically, without being within range of an OC and/or resorting to a Strategy Rating die roll, as per rule 4.6, Carthaginian Command.

4. Indibilis—Commander of all the light blue Iberian units. Indibilis does not benefit from rule 4.6; he must be within range of one of the OCs and make a Strategy Rating die roll in order to issue a Line Command.

5. Hanno and Bostar—These two leaders do not represent any particular historical figures, rather they embody the subordinate staffs of the two Carthaginian armies. Hanno and Bostar do not benefit from rule 4.6; each must be within range of his respective OC and make a Strategy

Initial Deployment

<i>The Carthaginian Forces – Iberian Detachment (Light Blue)</i>	
Unit(s)	Hex(es)
<i>Indibilis (use Tychaeus)</i>	3526
<i>Iberian Cavalry LN (2)</i>	3427, 3625
<i>Iberian Infantry (13)</i>	3225, 3324-25, 3425-26, 3525-26, 3626-27, 3726-27, 3827-28

<i>The Roman Army</i>	
Unit(s)	Hex(es)
<i>Publius Scipio</i>	2211
<i>Tribunes (2)</i>	2107, 2414
<i>Praefects Soc (2)</i>	2307, 2411
<i>Praefects Eqt (2)</i>	1912, 2607
<i>X Legion Cavalry (1)</i>	1911
<i>AS/X EX Cavalry (1)</i>	1912
<i>AS/X Cavalry (1)</i>	1812
<i>AS/XIX Cavalry (2)</i>	2508, 2609
<i>X Velites (3)</i>	2316, 2525, 2714
<i>AS/X Velites (2)</i>	2206, 2405
<i>AS/XIX Velites (2)</i>	1808, 2007
<i>X Hastati (4)</i>	2414, 2513 (2 per hex)
<i>X Principes (4)</i>	2312, 2412 (2 per hex)
<i>X Triarii (3)</i>	2410 (2 per hex), 2309
<i>AS/X Cohort Extraordinaires</i>	2514
<i>AS/X Cohort (8)</i>	2311, 2411, 2413, 2512 (2 per hex)
<i>AS/X Triarii (2)</i>	2310 (2 per hex)
<i>AS/XIX Cohort Extraordinaires</i>	2414
<i>AS/XIX Cohort (8)</i>	2208, 2209, 2307, 2308 (2 per hex)
<i>AS/XIX Triarii (2)</i>	2210 (2 per hex)
<i>Iberian Cav (use Celtic LN) (1)</i>	2507
<i>Iberian Inf (use Celtic MI) (4)</i>	2008, 2107, 2207, 2306

Carthaginian Reinforcements

Carthaginian Pre-deployment Option Phase

Prior to the start of play, the Carthaginian player must choose entry hexes from the options listed below. He must write down an order specifying the entry hexes for each of his reinforcements. When the appropriate turn of entry arrives, he must enter by the hexes selected and reveal the order to the Roman player.

1. Numidian Detachment (brown)

Arrives on **Turn 3**; hexes 1026-29; or hexes 4220-22.

Masinissa

Numidian Light Cavalry LC (8) (use brown counters)

2. Mago's Army (red)

Arrives on **Turn 5**; hexes 1016-17; or hexes 1700-2100.

Mago Barca (OC)

Leader Elephant Surus

Hanno

African Phalanxes (use Macedonian PH) (5)

North African Infantry (use Macedonian LI) (4)

Balearic Slingers (use Epirote SK) (3)

Carthaginian Cavalry (use Macedonian HC) (2)

African Elephants (2)

3. Hasdrubal's Army (dark blue)

Arrives on **Turn 6**; hexes 1700-2100; or 4211-15.

Hasdrubal Gisgo (OC)

Bostar

African Phalanx (5)

North African Infantry LI (5)

Balearic Slingers SK (3)

Carthaginian Cavalry HC (2)

African Elephants (2)

Note: Hasdrubal's army is virtually identical to Mago's. In order to allow the players to easily differentiate between them, Macedonian/Epirote units that are equivalent to the Carthaginian units are used for Mago's Army.

Line Eligibility Table

Roman	Carthaginian
1. Velites*	1. Iberian LI
2. Hastati & Cohorts	2. Numidian LC
3. Principes & Cohorts	3. Elephants, Cavalry & Skirmishers*
4. Triarii	4. Phalanx & Light Infantry
5. Celtic MI	
6. All Cavalry	

* These units may form a Two-Space Line; Cavalry may **not** be adjacent to Elephants.

Note:

- Cohorts Extraordinaires may join any line 1-4.
- Units from different Carthaginian armies/detachments may not combine to form lines.

Size and TQ Levels

Force	Size	TQ Points	Rout Ratio	Quality Ratio
Roman Army	159	292	40%	1.84
Iberians	73	92	35%	1.26
Numidians	32	64	40%	2.00
Mago's Army	81*	91	40%	1.12
Hasdrubal's Army	81*	85	40%	1.05
Total Carthage	275	350	–	1.27

* = Elephants counted as 2 TQ points for victory/army rout purposes. Their size is not included.

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Rating die roll in order to issue a Line Command. If either OC, Mago or Hasdrubal, is killed, replace him with his subordinate, Hanno or Bostar, with a Strategy Rating of '1'

Retreat Edges

For Carthage, the Iberian detachment uses the East edge; the Numidian detachment uses the North or South, whichever it entered from; and Mago's and Hasdrubal's armies use the West edge. Things are a bit more complicated for the Romans. Their camp is to West, the other Roman army and the Roman base area are to the East, and the Carthaginians are everywhere. The Roman player may choose the East or West edge as the retreat edge whenever a unit routs.

Errata

The following rule changes/clarifications are based on Errata dated December 20, 1992, as published in the Consul for Rome Module, and are important for play in *Castulo*.

(5.2/Play Note) Change: The flank-to-flank, linear requirements for foot do NOT apply to lines entering as reinforcements (Beneventum and Cynoscephalae). Foot reinforcements may "clump" as long as 4.24 is obeyed. This exception to the flank-to-flank requirement ends as soon as the arriving

line moves within movement allowance distance (and LOS) of an enemy combat unit. Also, treat elephants as cavalry for this purpose.

(6.46) Clarification: Units may change to/from Column only at the conclusion of movement.

(6.47-48) Change: Phalanxes in Column may not attack or fire. The only thing they can do is move. If attacked by any enemy unit (except skirmishers), the attacking unit is automatically Attack Superior.

(6.46-48) Clarification: Any HI, MI, LI or LGN may use column—and take advantage of its reduced Movement costs—the same as PH.

(9.4) Addition: Numidian Light Cavalry and Mounted Archers: The Numidian LC, and any Mounted Archers, have the same ability as velites to enter and leave an enemy ZOC, as per the last paragraph of 9.2. This ability, however, can be used only against enemy infantry. It may NOT be used against "pure" skirmisher (SK) units.

Rule Changes

1. Rule (5.2/Play Note) above, applies to the Roman Army and the Iberian Detachment, in addition to all reinforcements in *Castulo*. That is, all bodies of

troops may "clump" to form lines during approach marches.

2. Cavalry Pursuit, rule 10.4, is not used.

3. Army Rout, rule 10.5 remains in effect for the Roman Army. However, it is modified for the Carthaginians as follows:

TQ unit and leader losses are calculated separately for each of the four armies and detachments. When an army/detachment reaches or exceeds its Army Rout Level, the game does not end. Instead, all surviving units of that army/detachment undergo Unit Rout, as per rule 10.3. These routed units may be rallied normally, and are no longer subject to Army Rout.

Victory Conditions

1. Rome wins by routing BOTH of the Carthaginian armies AND at least ONE detachment.

2. Rome can also win by exiting at least 165 TQ points from the east edge of the map, from hexes 2244-3543. Only Roman and Alae Sociorum units count toward this total (which doesn't bode well for the Iberian (Celtic) auxiliaries in the rear guard.) Routed units do not count towards the 165 point total. Units that exit the map may not return to play.

Carthage wins by routing the Roman army.

Army/Detachment Rout Levels Rome:

Army routs when TQ totaling '120' have been eliminated.

Carthage:

1. Iberian Detachment routs when TQ totaling 34 have been eliminated.
2. Numidian Detachment routs when TQ totaling 28 have been eliminated.
3. Mago's Army routs when TQ totaling 40 have been eliminated.
4. Hasdrubal's Army routs when TQ totaling 38 have been eliminated.

Sources:

Livy provides the only account of the campaign of Castulo and Ilorca, but he appears to have followed the more reliable Polybius. H.H. Scullard, in "Scipio Africanus: Soldier and Politician", 1970, provides some important geographic clarification.

