

Basileus

Extension for CRY HAVOC, SIEGE, CROISADES & VIKINGS

This extension is based on a game aid created by Christian Delabos, from the Claymore fanzine, and which was published in Vae Victis Nr 7 of March / April 1996. I participated in the development by adding rules of morale and leadership, because I was working at the time on similar rules. I changed the look of many counters from the proposals Christian in the light of illustrations of many Byzantine soldiers, especially the excellent Osprey / Men At Arms booklet about the Byzantine armies. Adding Norman counters led me to reconsider some rules to adapt them to combat in the eleventh century.

1 Counter Description

6 new classes of characters are used in Basileus :

1.1 Klibanophoroi

These ultra-heavy horsemen wear a chain mail and a scale armor, and horses are protected with leather scales. This type of soldier was used for the last time during the campaign of Manzikert (1071). They can be used for tactical scenarios and can not be used as part of a CROISADES strategic campaign.

Note: Christian Delabos proposed to use Royal Mamluks to represent the Klibanophoroï but I preferred the Syrian Heavy cavalry.



1.2 Kataphraktoi

These members of the Byzantine aristocracy also wear a scale armor and a chain mail. Westerners held these cavalymen in low esteem, considering that their military value was closer to that of sergeants than knights.

Note: Christian Delabos proposed the use of the heavy Syrian cavalry to represent the Kataphraktoi but I preferred a combination of Saxon and Viking mounted warriors for their shields and their beards.



1.3 Trapezittoi

This light cavalry was made of men from all over the empire. They were not wearing armor and were armed with 2 or 3 spears, a sword and a kontarion (shield). Some were also equipped with bows.



1.4 Skutatoi

The name of this heavy infantry lies in their oval shield, the Skuta. From the 11th century, Skutatoï adopt the kite shield of the Normans. They wore a coat of mail and pointed helmet. Their main weapon was the kontarion, a long pike (3 to 4 meters) with a sharp blade. The sword was also widely used.



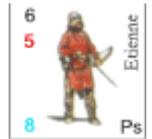
1.5 Peltastoi

The use of Peltastoi increased in the 11th century as the empire could no longer afford large regiments of Skutatoï that were much more expensive. They used the kontarion, javelins and a sword called paramerion.



1.6 Les Psiloi

The light infantry consisted of archers who used a composite bow drawn to the chest. They carried 40 arrows in their quiver. They defended with a small ax called tzikourion.



1.7 Varangian Guards

Originally composed of Swedish Vikings established in Russia (the Varegs), the bodyguard of the Basileus replaced the old Byzantine regiments of the guard in the second half of the eleventh century. After 1066, these guards are no longer recruited in Russia but mostly in England, among the Anglo-Saxons fleeing the Norman yoke.

1.8 Les Normands

Among the many mercenaries in the pay of the empire, the Normans (from Sicily) were the best. However, their main goal was more to carve their own lordship in Anatolia than serve the Basileus.

The Normans are also bitter enemies of Byzantium in southern Italy and Sicily, where their knights led successively by Robert Guiscard, Roger of Sicily and Bohemond of Antioch cast both the Byzantines and Saracens to create their own kingdom.



2 Rules & Tactics For The Normans

2.1 The Lance-Javelin

Most of the mounted knights on the Bayeux Tapestry are represented with their lance held over the head, ready to be thrown as a javelin (one of them effectively throws it in this way). The lance could also be used to jab, by amplifying the movement with the arm. The use of the couched lance (the weapon firmly blocked under the arm so that the rider, the frame and the lance form only one missile) will become widespread only at the end of the 12th century.

For all the scenarios taking place in the 11th century, we shall consider that the mounted Norman knights can throw their lance before using their sword for close combat. Only Onfroy and Sarlon are represented with a lance-javelin, but the rule can be spread to all the characters.



2.2 The Lance Charge

This form of attack was developed in the end of the 11th century and would become the distinctive trait of the Western knights in the 12th and 13th centuries. It might have been invented in Southern Italy. Initial strength was generated by the lance firmly held under the right arm, but the tight formation of a group of mounted knights made it even stronger.

Any group of 3 adjacent knights or more charging in a straight line combine the benefits of the charge rules of CROISADES and of the die roll result shifted one column to the right. Counter charging this formation towards its front face is impossible.

2.3 Le combat à pied

In the eleventh century, the Norman knight does not mind fighting on foot, like his Viking ancestors. In many battles, we see the Normans divided between knights on foot and mounted knights, as in Bremule in 1119. Although seeming contrary to the chivalric ideals that began to develop at that time, this tactic had two advantages: it pointed to the attacker that men would not retreat, having no horse to flee the battlefield, and above all it galvanized the other troops in the midst of which the dismounted knights fought. This tactic would be lost after the mid-twelfth century (probably because the lance charge became irresistible) and it would take 200 years to see the knights on foot again during the Hundred Years War.

Any friendly character within a radius of 6 hexes of any Norman knight fighting on foot since the beginning of the game enjoys a bonus of 2 in the Morale modification table (see CROISADES or the MAGNA CARTA)

3 Morale & Leadership

Morale rules are very important to simulate the Byzantine army: Indeed, the plethoric armies were often offset by a relatively low level of morale. Next, the mercenaries (Varangian Guard, Normans, Trapezitos, Patzinaks) had a much better morale than the Greek troops. Yet this morale was directly related to the settlement of their pay. Be it deferred and morale of mercenaries could collapse very quickly.

BYZANTINES	Classes of characters	Leadership range	Leadership value	Morale level
Basileus	1 Supreme commander	12 hexes	25 High Rank Dignitaries or Officers	11
Strategos	2 High Rank dignitaries	10 hexes	15 Officers or Sub-Officers	9
Klibanophoroi	3 Officers	8 hexes	10 Sub-Officers or regular Men-at-arms	9
Varangian Guard	4 Sub-Officer	6 hexes	8 infantrymen	10
Norman Mercenaries	4 Sub-Officer	6 hexes	8 infantrymen or 5 light cavalry	10
Kataphractoi	4 Sub-Officer	6 hexes	8 infantrymen or 5 light cavalry	8
Heavy Armenian Cavalry	4 Sub-Officer	6 hexes	8 infantrymen or 5 light cavalry s	7
Trapezitoi	5 Regular			5
Patzinak	5 Regular			6
Skutatoi	5 Regular			5
Psiloi	5 Regular			4
Engineer				3
Woman				1

Sources :

Byzantine Armies 886/1118 – Ian Heath –Osprey/Men-At-Arms Collection
 Brémule – Christian Delabos –Historic’One/Les batailles oubliées Collection