

# SLINGSHOT

The Official Magazine of the Society of Ancients

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## EDITORIAL

Well, here we are with the first edition of the new magazine. Sorry it's a little later than intended, but when a new venture starts up there is quite a bit of organising to be done, as you can imagine, and so we got a little behind. From now on SLINGSHOT will be mailed out in the middle of alternate months - i.e. your next issue will be appearing in mid-November.

First of all may I thank all members for their support and hope that you will find this first edition of some interest. It is a bit of a hodge-podge as I couldn't wait for articles and in the main therefore it is the work of myself and my wife. Now that I have some idea from the answers to the questionnaires just what you want in the magazine, I can plan ahead, and ask members for articles well in advance.

Strangely enough, when I first thought of 16 foolscap pages to fill it seemed that there would be room for pretty well anything; but it is amazing how quickly the pages fill up. At all events, I think most of you will find the excellent articles by Deryck Guyler on painting and Alan Nickels on the Horse of great interest. I regret that there is no battle report in this issue, since a good 50% of you have asked for them to be included; by the time I had realised this from the questionnaires, the issue was already full. This will be a regular feature in the future.

The other most popular items, according to the questionnaires, are uniform details, military history, and articles on rules. Regarding the latter, it is interesting to note that 90% of the members either have adapted rules from my original ones in "War Games", or use my up to date

rules. This would appear to indicate that we have a basis for relatively standard rules in any competitions etc. It has also been suggested that the magazine should set tactical problems and have a sale and wants section - the latter will certainly be used as and when anyone wants to advertise anything. There is of no course no charge for any such advert.

Another suggestion is that the Society should sponsor a Postal War Game, something I fully favour. I will be endeavouring to set up a Committee to deal with this later. Naturally it isn't possible to pack into each issue all that everyone wants, but I hope there will be enough of interest for everyone.

I was particularly pleased at the enthusiasm shown in the answers to the questionnaire. Judging by these there will be no lack of articles. I hope that all of you will drop me a line from time to time commenting on the contents of the magazine. SLINGSHOT differs from the Wargamers Newsletter in that it is the voice of the Society, in other words of you members, and it is therefore you who will shape its policy, not the Editor. Therefore if you have ideas or complaints, do please let me have them.

One other point. Several people have suggested that the magazine and the Society should encourage visits between members, and once again I am in complete agreement. More will be done about this later, but may I here and now extend a very hearty welcome to any member who can visit the Southampton area to come and see me. If you can come for a week-end, so much the better.

Well, that's it. Next issue I won't take up so much space with the Editorial, I hope. I list below the names and addresses of those who have actually sent in their subscriptions to date. If I haven't already replied personally, please take this as formal acknowledgement. I will try and write to as many as I can of you, but my time is limited so please don't be offended if you don't get a regular letter from me.

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PAINTING FLATS by DERYCK GUYLER

The purpose of this article is the art of painting flats and to pass on a few interesting and, I hope, useful hints to those who are interested in doing so.

It is important to remember, I think, that when painting flats the use of highlights and shadows is essential if the figure is really to look its best. I know that it takes much longer to paint this way and when a whole cohort or troop of horse is to be painted it certainly adds on extra painting time, but I am sure it is worth while, as carefully and beautifully painted flats are a joy to behold and one goes into battle with much more confidence with a well painted regiment.

The first consideration is the choice of oil colours and the correct number to have ~~one's~~ one's use. A gifted painter will make do with five basic colours plus black and white, but colour mixing is a skilled business so, if you are like I am, you will certainly need more than these. May I offer the following list of colours (which I use) as a guide. Before enumerating the different colours, however, there is a very good colour mixing chart compiled by Winsor & Newton, priced one shilling, which is very useful to have and which can be obtained from any art shop. You may easily find that with the help of this chart you will not need as many colours as I have listed.

Here is my suggested list of colours:-

IVORY BLACK TITANIUM WHITE TERRA ROSA ( this mixed with white gives an excellent flesh colour) BURNT UMBER, RAW UMBER, YELLOW OCHRE, RAW SIENNA, BURNT SIENNA, VANDYKE BROWN, CADMIUM RED, CADMIUM SCARLET, VERMILION, PRUSSIAN BLUE, PRUSSIAN GREEN, CHROME GREEN DEEP, CADMIUM GREEN PALE, VIRIDIAN, CADMIUM YELLOW, INDIAN YELLOW and BROWN/PINK (a new colour and a very useful one,) made by ROWNEY & CO.

Before painting I always use an undercoat on my figures. The small tins of matt white made by Humbrol are excellent for this purpose. Flesh colours are much easier to apply if the figure has first been given a MATT surface and the fact all colours will look much better if this method is adopted. After painting, of-course, the figure can be varnished with either a matt or shiny varnish, or a mixture of both - matt on flesh and clothes etc. Shiny on all metal parts helmets, sword blades or armour. When applying the undercoat I leave unpainted all the metal parts which I then give a "wash " of colour allowing the metal to show through. Indian yellow gives a good gold or brass effect, Burnt Sienna gives a bronze and Prussian Blue can be used for all silver work with the addition of a touch of green for iron. There is also a series of transparent French varnish paints called VERNIS GRAS made by LEFRANCE - which really provide the answer to all metal painting. The most useful colours are yellow, blue and green. They can be obtained from LECHERTIER BARBE LTD. 95 JERMYN STREET LONDON S.W.1. These coloured varnishes should be applied to the metal parts of the figure direct with no undercoat. The idea is that the metal should still show through the paint. There are, of-course, many colours in metallic powder paints, but personally I find these difficult to use on figures as small as flats, although excellent results can be obtained.

A little linseed oil (for thinning) and turps are the only painting mediums I use, but opal medium is very useful

if you require a really dead matt finish. ALSO if you wish to use a medium that will give a shiny finish without using varnish after the figure has been painted GOLDSIZE will answer this purpose. It is, of-course, necessary to finish off a figure with either matt or shiny varnish if the figure is going to be handled, as the War Games are hard on figures. The paint will quickly wear off if this is neglected.

Brushes are most important and I find that the ones made by Winsor & Newton Ltd (Series 12) are by far the best as they have a short head and a good fine and firm point. One No. 000 brush for fine work and one No. 1. brush for ordinary work are sufficient, but I also keep two others which I use only for undercoating and varnishing. Small snips of Balsa wood are useful as stands upon which the figures can be stuck whilst painting and cow adhesive is best for this purpose as it is a rubber solution. The figure can easily be pulled from the stand after painting.

Much of what I have written will, I am sure, be familiar to most members, but I would like in a further article to suggest some colour mixes for armour, leather, wood for siege engines and also the flesh colours for different ancient peoples and suggested colours for horses and animals.

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## THE BATTLE AND CAMPAIGN OF CHAERONEA, 338 B.C.

### 1) The Campaign

In 359 B.C. a certain Philip mounted the throne of Macedon. The event caused no stir in the civilised world of Greece: Macedon was a barbarous country, little better than Persia, and of very little interest to the Greeks. But it was in fact the first step which was to lead to the establishment of Greek hegemony over Persia and the Middle East.

For several hundred years Greece had been a conglomeration of small city states, some of them kingdoms, some republics; and for most of that length of time they had quarrelled and fought for supremacy. The Persian menace had brought about a short-lived alliance against the common foe - but even on this occasion jealousy caused Thebes to side with the invaders rather than assist the rest of the Greeks. Once the Persians had been dealt with, the alliance swiftly broke up, and was followed by the struggle for power between the main naval state, Athens, and the main military state, Sparta. This finally ended with the complete victory of Sparta.

Sparta, however, was not the power to unite Greece. Her leaders were narrow and bigoted, her methods tyrannical; and very soon Thebes led a revolt against her. The Spartans marched down confidently to crush the rebels, but at Leuctra their veteran army was completely shattered by the revolutionary tactics of Epaminondas of Thebes - one of the greatest and least-known of military tacticians.

Thebes broke the power of Sparta, but after the death of Epaminondas her power waned, and Greece fell apart once more. The lesson was obvious: Greece could only be united by a foreign power. Now it so happened that at the height of Epaminondas' career, Philip, now King of Macedon, had

been living in Thebes as a hostage, and was thus able to study at first-hand the methods of the master. Philip was a good pupil, and he was inordinately ambitious, besides being an astute politician. On becoming King of Macedon he set about not only civilising his rough country, but in building an army the like of which the world had never seen before. We will deal with this in part two.

Philip's first objective was to rally Greece under his banner, and but for the efforts of Athens he might possibly have succeeded in doing this by political means alone. Athens, however, under the aegis of the great orator Demosthenes, opposed him tooth and nail. Finally, in 340 B.C., the hour struck. Philip, as head of the Amphictyonic Council, was invited into Greece to chastise the city of Amphissa which had transgressed against the Temple of Delphi; Athens and Thebes, fearing that once he came he would come to stay, resolved to oppose him, called out their armies and sent them north to hold the passes into Boeotia.

On receipt of this news Philip, who had been marching on Amphissa, at once changed direction to the east and seized and fortified the city of Elatea, from which he menaced the direct route on Thebes. The Allied forces had barred both the western route from Cytinium to Amphissa, and the eastern pass of Parapotamii, between Elatea and Chaeronea. The first route may be likened to the upper stroke of an L, the route from Cytinium to Elatea as the lower stroke, and the prolongation across the pass to Chaeronea as the upward finish of the lower stroke.

Philip now paused till the spring of 338 B.C. Having, by occupying Elatea, made the eastern route the most obvious line, and thus lulled the defenders of the western route, he suddenly marched rapidly west through Cytinium, carried the pass by the very rapidity of his movement, and debouched into Boeotia at Amphissa, from whence he pushed on to the coast at Naupactus and opened up his sea communications. Since he was now well behind the flank of the defenders of the eastern route at Parapotamii, these fell back on Chaeronea since, apart from any threat to their rear, there didn't seem much point in staying there. The crafty Macedonian, however, instead of pressing on through difficult hilly country, had already retraced his steps, and now blithely marched unopposed through Parapotamii into the open plain of Chaeronea, where the Allies perforce drew up to give him battle.

#### ii) The Macedonian Army.

Philip, by reflection and practical experience, had considerably added to and modified the Theban methods. His most striking innovations were two-fold; firstly, the new Macedonian soldier was not a citizen who drilled in his spare time and fought when needed, but a long service professional who fought for pay, and could be subjected to training and discipline far beyond that of the citizen-soldier; secondly, the new Macedonian phalanx was armed with the sarissa, a pike twenty feet long as opposed to the standard fourteen feet of the old Spartan pike. When the new phalanx was ready to receive a charge, these pikes formed a hedge of points many tiers deep. The longer and heavier pikes were often managed by two men - they were too heavy for one. The weight and rigidity of this phalanx exceeded anything hitherto known. To ride it down or disrupt it by direct assault were practical impossibilities. It could be used defensively to "hold" a much larger number of the enemy, and that is what Philip wanted it for. It represented Philip's improvement on the defensive section of

Epaminondas' line of battle.

The "punch" of Epaminondas Philip provided for by specialising another body of men in a contrary direction. His Hypaspists were light-armed infantry, more mobile than the Spartan phalanx though equipped for close combat. Attack was their business. For cavalry Philip retained the backbone of the old Macedonian army, the "Companions of the King", land-owning gentry, of much the same type as those who formed the bulk of Rupert's Cavaliers. They were provided with long lances and heavy swords, and horse as well as man was armoured.

But he did not stop at these careful extensions of the Theban practice. He had archers to break up impregnable formations, and engineers for siege work. The war machines made for Dionysius of Syracuse were copied and perhaps improved by Philip. Just as gunpowder, centuries afterward, rendered stone-wall fortifications obsolete, so now these engines of Philip made useless the old brick and timber walls of the Greek cities. How the quarrying and building trades of ancient Greece must have blessed his name!

### iii) The Battle

The Allies drew up their line of battle on the plain of Chaeronea in the standard formation of the day, with the Athenian contingent (among whom was Demosthenes) on the left, a mixture of lesser allies, Euboeans, Achaians, Corinthians, Megarans etc, in the centre, and the Thebans, including the flower of the army, the Sacred Band, on the right. The army was almost entirely infantry, and a high proportion of it hoplites. On the Macedonian side, Philip with the bulk of the phalanx faced the Athenians; the left, with the hypaspists and the cavalry, was entrusted to young Alexander, fighting in his first major battle. Both armies numbered around 35,000 men.

The attack was delivered by the Allies along the whole line. On his wing, Philip gave ground steadily but in excellent order before the Athenians, who pressed forward exultantly, their leader, Stratocles, shouting "Onward to Macedonia!" On the other flank, however, Alexander met the Theban charge with a wall of iron, halted it, swung in his cavalry and hypaspists on its flank, and crumpled it like rotten timber. The Thebans fought hard - the Sacred Band stood and died to a man in its tracks - but their wing was routed with considerable slaughter.

As soon as Philip received news of Alexander's success, he halted his retreat. The Athenian attack broke hopelessly upon the wall of sarissas, Alexander's victorious wing wheeled down upon their flank, and in a few minutes the remnants of the allied army were in frantic flight, with Demosthenes setting a good example. For a battle of this type casualties were heavy, the Athenian losses in hoplites alone being 2,000 and the Thebans very much greater. The victory gave the whole of Greece to Philip.

### iv) Chaeronea as a War Game

As a campaign Chaeronea can be worked very simply. Any reasonably scaled map of Greece will show you the positioning of the towns mentioned above, and all you have to assume is that the only practical routes are via Amphissa and Parapotamii. Philip's objective is to reach Chaeronea without fighting, that of the allies to prevent him. An attack by Philip's whole army will carry either route if it is defended by less than two-thirds of the

allied army.

For the troops needed, the Macedonians should have say six regiments of phalangites, two of hypaspists, the Agema or royal bodyguard, three regiments of archers and javelin men, and three regiments of Companion Cavalry. The Allies would probably have two regiments of light troops, with either bows or javelins, the Sacred Band, and four regiments each of Athenian, Theban and lesser city hoplites - the latter being of rather lesser value.

The terrain would be an open plain, with a few small features perhaps. Any reasonable set of Ancient rules would cover the operation, but it must be remembered that in an open battle the Macedonian phalanx would be definitely superior to the Allied hoplites, and that at that period the Companion Cavalry would have great difficulty in charging unbroken hoplites from the front, whereas against broken troops, or from the flank, their charge would be very formidable.

#### MEDIAEVALS TOO ?

Alan Nickels writes: "You haven't told me yet whether it is intended to include the mediaeval period, but may I put in a plea for it? Firstly, there is no hard-and-fast line separating the ancient and mediaeval worlds where war is concerned. The same arms and tactics apply to both - the real break comes about 1500 A.D. when gunpowder takes over the battlefield. Secondly, about 30, I understand, have so far written in expressing an interest in the ancient period. Don't you think quite a few more might be roped in if it were made plain that the Middle Ages are not excluded? I think quite a number may have an interest in, say, English and French at Crecy and Poitiers who feel Greece and Rome, not to mention Assyria, a bit too far off and alien. Maybe a note to that effect in the Wargamers Newsletter (and Table Top Talk) might rally a few more supporters?"

Now this is a very good point. I for one agree with Nick entirely, and, since we are trying to cover several thousand years in the Ancient period, the addition of two or three hundred more wouldn't seem to add to much to our coverage. I've always had difficulty in deciding just where Ancients stopped and Mediaevals began - for instance, into which period do Saxons, Danes and Normans fit?

But the decision isn't mine to make. As I said in the Editorial, this is YOUR magazine, and you, the members, must make a policy decision such as this. So will you please write in and let me have your views on the subject. If there is a majority in favour of adding Mediaevals, then I will do as Nick suggests and give it as much publicity as possible in other journals. If I don't hear from a person on the subject then I shall take it that he is neutral and doesn't much mind either way.

T. A. B.

## A POINTS SYSTEM IN WAR GAMES

by

Tony Bath

Some people may not agree with this, but I personally find that some of the most interesting war games are those in which the two opposing armies, though of perhaps equal value, are of a different composition. The differences may be only small - rather more cavalry on one side, more infantry on the other - or they may be great, such as a completely cavalry army fighting one containing cavalry, infantry and elephants.

However, if you accept this idea, and you also accept one of my basic premises in war gaming, that, as a general rule, you get a better game if both sides have reasonably equal strength, then you must obviously set up some sort of system whereby different types of troops are graded for value, so that you can evaluate the strength of an army and see whether two opposing armies are well matched.

Now I'm not claiming to be highly original on this subject. Other people may have come to exactly the same conclusions or I may have borrowed ideas from others - frankly I wouldn't like to say how many of the ideas I use today I dreamed up myself and how many I borrowed from other people years ago. But as its a system that we in the Southampton area have used for years with great success, it may be of use to some of you at least.

I started out with the basic premise that an infantryman was worth one point and a cavalryman two. Then, since I work in regimental units rather than individuals, and since my regiments are standardised at 20 men for infantry and 15 for cavalry, plus officers, I settled for an infantry regiment being worth 20 points and a cavalry regiment 30. Now here we run up against a snag at once. In our period we can get a great variety among our infantry or cavalry regiments; one may be composed of heavily armed troops, another of practically naked men just armed with a bow. Can we, then, give both regiments the same points value?

This is where I expect a lot of you to disagree with me, because I do give them the same value. My argument is this: they are worth the same value under certain circumstances, and to get that full value they must be used in the proper circumstances and with the proper tactics. On the face of it a regiment of fully armed and armoured hoplite infantry should be worth more than a regiment of half-naked bowmen, and in close combat this would be so. But if the bowmen use their superior mobility to keep out of close action while they shoot the hoplites down, then in fact the bowmen are probably worth more than the hoplites. In the same way a regiment of light spearmen in broken country may be more valuable than one of hoplites, whereas in open country the hoplites would be the best bet.

Of course, you could if you wished have a sliding scale of values, according to the sort of country you were operating in, but I do not favour this idea. If you are foolish enough to take an unsuitable army into a terrain then you must take the consequences and try to redress the balance by superior tactics.



So, having settled upon the value of an infantry regiment at 20 points and a cavalry regiment at 30 points, I then had to assess the values of other items. For instance, Guard units should obviously have extra value if your rules give them extra virtue - as mine do. I thus value a Guard infantry regiment at 30 and Guard cavalry at 40, which is an expression of their superior morale and fighting power.

Next in line was the chariot. Since I don't use chariots in specific squadrons they have to be valued separately. This makes life a little difficult since obviously chariots are increasingly valuable in relation to their mass; but I have assumed for my purpose that reasonable numbers are available. Here again I have not differentiated between heavy and light chariots for points value, but have given each an arbitrary value of 5 points - the equivalent of 5 infantry or 2½ cavalry. The value obviously depends to a great deal on your rules for chariots and how effective you have made them. In my rules, which really are set in about the Greek period rather than the Egyptian or Assyrian, the chariot is not too effective a weapon and therefore a value of 5 is about right. (I might add that I have never been satisfied with my chariot rules, which I have changed completely about 4 times, and that I hope shortly to set up a committee to draft some better ones.)

From chariots we move to elephants, around whom many arguments have raged. Now I freely admit that I personally am an elephant lover and as such it's possible that my rules are biased in their favour. I have looked at this from the viewpoint that I like elephants, they give variety to an army, and they were used for quite a long period. So, if you are going to use them, they must be an effective weapon; at the same time, the rules must cover their considerable unreliability - they often did as much damage to their own army as to the enemy. Thus under my rules they stand a good chance of being killed or stampeded during the approach, but if they once break into an infantry formation they are devastating.

My estimate of their points value at 10 apiece reflects this. To be effective you need at least 3 elephants - I personally try to have a minimum of 5 - and this means a points total of 30. The loss of all three without achieving anything is therefore a bitter blow but not necessarily a completely disastrous one, while if they do succeed they will certainly do that amount of damage to the enemy. To reduce the points value would make them too expendable and too easy to mass, to increase it would make them an expensive luxury.

We come now to what are loosely classed as siege engines or war engines, namely, catapults, ballistae, onagers etc. I have simply divided these into heavy and light weapons, valuing the heavy at 10 and the light at 5 points apiece. I personally do not encourage their use in the open field, except in an occasional defensive action, so the value is largely for siege operations.

The system can be extended to cover baggage trains, supplies, terrain features etc if required but I only use it for one other item - the camel. I use mine in squadrons of 5 and these are valued at 20 points.

It can now be seen that with such a points system most interesting battles can be fought on even terms. This is especially true when you have a visitor with whom you are fighting an odd battle rather than a campaign. You can let him pick whatever he likes up to a certain points value - and find yourself facing some very wild mixtures!

## THE HORSE

by

A. L. Nickels

## 1. THE ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

On the bookshelves of the author and the Editor alike there reposes a History of Cavalry which treats of that arm from earliest antiquity to the 1870 war - and in all its 468 pages not one is devoted to the animal ridden by the trooper, while the stirrup gets one mention - "not in use till the 6th century." On the one hand, misinformation; on the other, a blank which would lead the unwary reader to wonder how the ancient civilisations came to neglect the presumeably ubiquitous herds of magnificent equines, or, later, to mis-use them.

As the actual situation seldom seems to be made plain, let us try to reconstruct it from the bits and pieces of information that are now known to be correct, and a few (let us hope) intelligent guesses.

There is no need to go into the palaeontology of the genus *Equus*, which is sufficiently well known. A reasonable hypothesis is that the original breeding ground comprised roughly Mongolia, Turkestan, North India, Persia, Syria, and Arabia, and that at the dawn of recorded history it had diverged into two main types, the Northern or cold-blooded, and the Southern, or hot-blooded.

Wide-open plains and uplands, whether well-grassed or semi-arid, especially with a limestone soil for bone formation, are favourable for the wild horse. A cold climate produces a compact body and short legs for heat-conservation, a hot, dry climate a lean, rangy build with high surface/volume ratio for heat shedding. A hot, moist climate inhibiting sweating is most unsuitable. A heavy build is produced (even by artificial breeding) only in cool, moist climates where the feed is rich and succulent.

As regards temperature range, the horse reaches its greatest height and size in temperate climes, excessive cold or heat reducing it in one or other of the above ways. Stock which has been "up-graded" by cross breeding to a type which cannot normally be supported by a locality tends always to revert to a type which can, and has to be maintained by constant imports of breeding stallions, frequently every other generation.

Now perhaps we can construct a picture of the equine population of antiquity. North of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus, and stretching across the plains of north Asia are vast herds of the Northern horse, from the "tarpan" of Europe, which only became extinct in 1880, to the surviving wild horse of Mongolia (Przevalski's Horse) share the same characteristics, the short, stocky body and short legs, massive necks and heads, frequently with a Roman nose, thick coat and mane (often upstanding), heavy bone for their size, extremely hardy and enduring, self-reliant and phlegmatic in temperament. In Arabia and Syria is the archetype of the Southern Horse, the Arab, probably totally domesticated by 3000 B.C. The purity of the breed has been so jealously guarded that any picture of an Arab today will show its appearance then: the graceful build, arched neck and small, concave-profiled

head are well-known. Soundness of wind and limb and great endurance and hardiness are outstanding virtues of the breed, and (before the days of the English Thoroughbred) comparatively high speed. In North Africa, including Nubia (Dongola) is its cousin, the Barb, only slightly less spirited, and with a straighter profile. It must be remembered that the climate of the entire Mediterranean basin has changed for the worse with the destruction of woods by man (and his goats), and nowhere more than in North Africa, whose forests were felled for shipbuilding and fuel and grasslands converted to dustbowls to provide corn for Rome.

In Turkestan and especially in Persia there has been interbreeding and the uplands there have produced tall, strong, speedy horses later to be admired and envied, especially by enemies.

And Egypt and Mesopotamia? Horses there are none. Climate and conditions - hot, moist, with dense irrigation-cultivation forbid it. Horses have never been successfully bred in Egypt, but have had continually to be imported. In Sumeria the most that the kings of the little city-states can rise to is a small cart drawn by a couple of asses. Such is the position circa 3000 B.C., with the dynastic wars of the two centres of civilisation carried on by almost naked archers and tight phalanxes of spearmen with big wooden or leather shields, when upon the mountainous borderlands of Mesopotamia arrive those arch-disturbers of peaceful and settled cultivators, the Indo-Europeans, with their flocks and herds, their families in primitive "covered wagons" (no-one knows when or by whom the wheel was invented), and their horses.

By about 2700 the Hittites had reached Asia Minor, and we know they had horses with them, for their King Anittas said so in an inscription carved near the modern Angora, though not until 1360 B.C. would his fellow-countrymen produce the first surviving literature on the subject, six clay tablets in cuneiform entitled "Handbook for the Treatment of the Horse", dealing with its care for racing chariots and for war. Much raiding by Hittites and other probably Indo-European barbarians punctuated the ensuing centuries, culminating in the conquest and rule of Babylon by the Kassites from 1746 to 1169 B.C. There can be no doubt that long before then the horse had been effectively introduced to Mesopotamia, nor that its possibilities had been noted by the kings of Assyria, which had its humble beginnings about 2400 B.C.

About 1788 B.C. Egypt began to suffer invasion, culminating in the conquest of most of the land by the Hyksos, a Semitic-speaking confederacy, probably of Syrians and/or Bedouin nomads; it is well-known that they brought the horse to Egypt. As used henceforward by Egypt's armies the type has been clearly depicted: the well-arched neck, the concave nose, the graceful form and eager, fiery air point, as one would expect, unmistakably to the Arab. Now for hundreds of years, pairs of them draw light chariots with six-spoked wheels containing driver and archer, whose steady and impeccable manoeuvring combine with the power of the Egyptian longbow to found and hold their Syrian empire and beat off the challenge of the Hittites.

The Hittite chariot is built high and heavy with solid sides, and holds three men; two horses suffice, which, if they come from the mixed breed of the Persian limestone uplands, is not surprising. There is, too, a line relief on a Luxor temple depicting a Hittite riding a horse, which appears to be well up to his weight. Unfortunately no details are shown of reins or saddlecloth, and presumably horses were cut free from disabled chariots and ridden on occasion; certainly this cannot be taken as evidence of any organised cavalry in

1296 B.C. The seat adopted is the usual early one, with the knees drawn well up.

When we come to the Assyrians, however, the progression of the cavalry arm is documented in greater detail. Firstly, the chariots are massive, with eight-spoked wheels, pulled by two horses of the same type as the Hittites' with sometimes a spare horse fastened alongside, frequently barded with thick cloth on head, neck, chest and back. There is a three-man crew, driver, shieldman, and warrior with bow and spear. The next stage apparently occurs in hilly and broken country inaccessible to chariots; their horses are unhitched and ridden, bareback and with the large ornamental collar still worn; the driver (presumably) acting as groom and guiding the warrior's horse by its reins as well as his own, to leave the warrior's hands free to ply the bow. Soon the art of riding progresses to the point where riders can guide their mounts by pressure of the knees and archers can shoot at the gallop with reins flying; the horses equipped with saddlecloths and some of them barded. The cavalry are divided, and though all wear helmets and cuirasses, half bear short sword and eight-foot spear, the other half sword and short bow. The chariotry remains with undiminished prestige (the king and nobles serve in it) but diminished numbers.

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#### JULIUS CAESAR - MAN, SOLDIER AND TYRANT.

Not the title of an article, but the title of the latest book by the well-known military historian, Major-General J.F.C. Fuller, published by Eyre and Spottiswoode at 42/-.

Having just finished reading this volume, I can most sincerely state that no-one interested in Ancient history should miss the book. Those who can afford it will no doubt buy it - others, like me, can obtain it from their local library. Personally I found the whole book fascinating, but those whose interests are exclusively military may skip the first 73 pages and start off with the most excellent chapter on the Roman army. From here the book traces Caesar's exploits through the conquest of Gaul to the civil wars.

For his sources Fuller has gone right back to the classical writers, but many of his interpretations are new and refreshing. He classes Caesar lower than many as a general: "to have to spend over half a long war extricating oneself from difficulties created by the enemy may or may not be good generalship; but to have to do so because they are due to one's own mistakes is incontestably bad generalship, even when the extrications are brilliant." As a man, he says "It is reasonable to suspect that, at times, Caesar was not responsible for his actions, and toward the end of his life not altogether sane."

Those of you who are pro-Roman may take exception to Fuller's statement that the Roman army "cannot compare with those of Philip or Alexander of Macedon, or with those of Alexander's immediate successors.... any one of those armies would have annihilated a numerically equal force of Romans in a brief morning's engagement." But nevertheless you will enjoy the book.

## A VISIT TO MAIDEN CASTLE

by

Tony Bath

The name of Maiden Castle may not mean much to some readers. If you look it up in an encyclopaedia, you might find the entry I've just found in mine: Maiden Castle - Earthwork just outside Dorchester, Dorset. It was formed in the neolithic age and covers 160 acres, being perhaps the largest of its kind in the country. The hill is 430 feet high and is protected by concentric ramparts of earth." Which doesn't really convey all that much, does it?

In point of fact, up till 1934, this is about all that was known about Maiden Castle. In that year, inspired by aerial surveys, the archaeologists moved in, and soon it was evident that this was a real find. The spade made it very apparent that here was the scene of a violent battle, the storm of a well-defended fortress and the slaughter of its garrison. Moreover, it was evident that the attackers had been Romans, which was fairly effective in fixing the approximate date of the action. In A.D. 43-4 Vespasian marched into South-West England at the head of the 2nd Legion. We read that he "reduced two very formidable tribes and over twenty fortified native towns", and it is a good guess that one of the two tribes was the Durotriges of Dorset.

The archaeologists soon reconstructed the main outlines of the earthworks, which were very formidable indeed. To the West, the hill was guarded by no less than seven ramparts, while on the East there were similar defences and two gateways which opened on to a crescentic forecourt. The road wound up the hillside from the outer court and lower defences, and here the diggers found the iron heads of Roman catapult quarrels. Continuing their search, they found a series of crude graves, with every evidence of hasty burial. From the skeletons it was obvious that their owners had met a violent end. The skulls of many were hacked about, one having no less than nine deep cuts. One skeleton showed the square piercing of a quadrangular Roman ballista-shot, while another had an iron head embedded deeply in its vertebrae. This unhappy warrior, as he lay grievously wounded, had been finally despatched by a cut on the head. However, hasty though the burials were, some measure of propriety had been observed; bowls were found which had held meat and drink to be used in the after-life, together with arrows and spears. The dead had therefore been buried by their friends, not by the Romans.

Writing on the subject, the eminent British archaeologist, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, attempted to reconstruct the affair:

"Before the close fighting began, the regiment of catapults or ballistae, which habitually accompanied a legion on campaign, put down a barrage across the gateway, causing casualties at the outset. Following the barrage, the Roman infantry advanced up the slope, cutting its way from rampart to rampart, tower to tower. In the innermost bay of the entrance, a number of huts had recently been built; these were set alight, and under the rising smoke, the gates were stormed. Resistance was obstinate and the attack was pushed home with every sort of savagery. The scene became that of a massacre in which the wounded were not spared. Finally the gates were demolished and the stone works reduced to ruins.

The sequel is easy to imagine. By night, the survivors crept forth from their broken stronghold and in the darkness buried their dead as best they could. It was done hastily and without order. Some were thrust into graves in a great hurry without any funeral rites. Some were buried with bowls of food and weapons. Perhaps these were the leaders of the defenders or the bravest fighters. Who knows?"

So much for the history of Maiden Castle. During my holidays this year I resolved to visit the site and see just what it was like. So, bright and early one day, five of us - myself, my wife, our daughter Rosemary, my wife's sister and my mother-in-law - set off by car for the west. The drive down from Southampton is very pleasant, so we took our time, and arrived in Dorchester just on 1 p.m. As it was raining at the time we resolved to lunch there, explore the town and proceed on to Maiden Castle in the afternoon.

Dorchester will go down in my memory as the dump that dies at one o'clock. The town contains two interesting-looking second-hand bookshops, a Town Museum and a Military Museum. Despite the fact that it was market day, on the stroke of one o'clock all of these promptly shut their doors, so I am unable to tell you anything about them except that the Town Museum charges 2/- admission!

Fortunately the weather then cleared up and we went on. From Dorchester you take the Weymouth road, and almost at once fork right for Maiden Castle. The fork is signposted to the Castle, but is easily missed unless you are expecting it. After about 1½ miles the road peters out into a cart track, and that's as far as you can take a car. The rest of the trip must be done on Shanks pony. It's no walk for the elderly - we left my mother-in-law sitting in the car and even my wife and sister-in-law found the trip tiring though well worth the effort.

From the lane where you leave your car you look west and see the 430 feet of the hill frowning down on you with its tiers of ramparts. The track leads you around the eastern face of the hill, over the meadows, for about half a mile or so, and then starts up the slope, which gradually gets steeper as you climb towards what you expect to be the summit. After crossing a stile you are confronted by a wooden hut and a notice that the site is under the care of the Ministry of Works and that when the hut is closed the superintendant may be found on the hill. The hut was closed and unfortunately we found no trace of the superintendant so we had to explore for ourselves.

Above the hut you pass through what must have been the gateway and thankfully reach the crest of the ridge - to find yourself faced by a deep fosse and an even steeper slope beyond. For the less agile the pathway winds on around this toward the summit; my daughter and I scrambled down into the fosse and up the other side, to find ourselves confronted by yet another deep ditch and rampart. This process was repeated again and again until at last we found ourselves at the top, on a huge plateau of more or less level ground. Here presumably the township itself was situated, and from here the view was glorious. A fresh breeze had sprung up, and the air was like wine. To the east, the houses of Dorchester lay spread out like a toy village; the cars parked in the lane looked like matchbox models; to the west the land rolled away for miles. It was easy to see what an ideal site this was for a commanding fortress.

We spent an hour or so strolling about the top of the hill, enjoying the view and taking photographs. Then my wife and sister-in-law went back the way we had come, while Rosemary and I set off straight down the eastern face. The descent was not as difficult as it looked, a series of hummocks and small paths making a sort of crude staircase; but it must be remembered that we were not burdened by any encumbrances other than a camera. To mount the slope in full equipment, carrying shield, spear and possibly pack, under a hail of missiles, would have been a fearsome undertaking and one that I at least would hesitate at!

The amount of work that went into Maiden Castle must have been immense. Of course the hill was there to start with, but the labour of digging the ditches and piling up the ramparts was no easy task. When we reached the car my mother-in-law told us that someone had driven up, looked up at the hill, said disgustedly "That - a castle?" and driven away again. Well, the name may be slightly misleading, but in my book Maiden Castle is well worth a visit, and if I get the chance of a second trip I shall take it.

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ROUND AND ABOUT by the SCOUT  
T.V. THE MILLION POUND GRAVE - B.B.C. August 1965

Excellent account of the discovery in 1939 of the Viking Ship burials at Sutton Hoo Suffolk England. When excavated the eleven low mounds yielded wonderful gold ornaments, jewellery including a heavy clasp or buckel, also a magnificent helmet which must have belonged to a great king. He is thought to be Anna one of the earliest Viking kings who invaded England. A thoroughly enjoyable programme.

MAPS Readers might be interested to learn of various maps which can be obtained quite cheaply and which are a great help in campaign fighting. They also make very elegant and impressive wall coverings.

A selection is as follows:-

SCOTLAND OF OLD By Sir Iain Moncreiffe and Don Pottinger. Map showing areas in vivid colour of 330 different highland clans and lowland families. Together with crests and coats of arms.  
 Size : 40 ins x 30 ins Coloured 7/6d Plain 5/-  
 Obtainable from: JOHN BARTHOLOMEW & SON LTD  
 12 Duncan Street.  
 EDINBURGH.9.

IRELAND HISTORICAL MAP by L.G.Bullock  
 Brightly coloured pictorial map illustrating places and characters in history. sites of battles castles etc. Coats of arms etc.

Size: 39 ins x 26 ins. Coloured 6s Plain 4s  
 Obtainable from JOHN BATHOLOMEW & SON LTD  
 12 Duncan Street  
 EDINBURGH.9.

ROMAN BRITAIN 3rd EDITION - Text 4/6s or dearer according to paper. Obtainable from any bookseller (Ordnance Survey Map)

A further selection of maps will be given at a later date.

BOOK REVIEW

THE ANCIENT ENGINEERS - L. Sprague De Camp  
published by Doubleday - 408 pages

The author describes the methods used by early irrigators, architects, and military engineers to build and maintain structures ranging from early obelisks to the clock. Amongst the illustrations are Heron's crossbow, Roman crossbowmen, Caesar's bridge across the Rhine, the Castle of Coucy and a hand-gunner of about 1400 firing his piece by means of a heated iron bar. Excellent reading and reference book.

T.V. THE SEVEN SAMURAI B.B.C. Screening of film July 65

Story of small village in ancient Japan about to be raided by bandits and who send for seven Samurai warriors to defend them. The battle scenes particularly good. Excellent attention to detail as far as armour is concerned.

RUSSEL COATES MUSEUM BOURNEMOUTH Amongst a large exhibition of all kinds is a small but authentic display of ancient armour of Japan including swords helmets shields etc. Open during normal hours.

The Scout would welcome any reviews of books, plays or visitsmade or other items of interest.

Coming shortly - THE ANCIENT CROSSWORD

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BOOK REVIEW

A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO THE BATTLEFIELDS  
OF EUROPE edited by David Chandler Vol.1 .  
W.Europe. 30/-

Covers: Belgium - Eire - France - Gibraltar - Great  
Britain - Holland - Portugal - Spain

Aimed at battlefields which are readily reached but not necessarily those which are the most interesting.

Not a lot of ancient battles are covered in this book but Vol. II. covering Eastern Europe will be more interesting in this respect.

It is quite puzzling about the choice of battle described and the importance given to them. For instance, St. Albans is given the full treatment whereas Towton although given the same rating for reachability is dismissed in a few words.

Ancient battles are largely dispatched under the heading that information on them is practically unobtainable - which means that the book is only a rehash of easily obtained facts. Description of several battles is misleading and inaccurate.

Nevertheless worth obtaining for general reference.

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ROME Traditionally the city was founded in 753 B.C. and the first inhabitants were people of a Latin race. A few years later they united themselves with the Sabines and a series of wars made them famed in the region where they lived. Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber was built and the authority of the state was extended in other directions. In 529 Tarquin the last of the seven kings was exiled and the city became a republic.

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