

# Commands & Colors: Ancients

## Hexless Variant Rules for Battles with Miniature Soldiers.

Adapted by Aaron Bell from the boardgame by Richard Borg and GMT games.

This is pretty much a straight conversion from the board game to a hexless, tabletop version. Use the normal unit stats and rules as written unless there is anything here that supersedes them.

These rules are intended to keep the flexibility of the boardgame while making it look and play a little more like a classic tabletop rule set.

For play you will need appropriate figures based on DBx-standard elements. Units should be four elements in double-line if foot, three elements in wedge formation if cavalry, and two elements side by side if elephants, chariots or war-machines. Elements are *not* removed as casualties. Use markers to keep track of losses.

### **Movement and shooting distances.**

Instead of using hexes, use 'moves' (M). A Move is equivalent to the width of a unit (8cm in 15mm scale; 12cm in 25/28mm scale), so when calculating movement and shooting distance, think in Ms instead of hexes. In 15mm scale, a light infantry unit would be capable of moving 2M (8cm + 8cm) with a shooting range of 2M (16cm). In 28mm, a medium cavalry unit capable of moving 3M would be moving 12cm + 12cm + 12cm.

To ease play it's a good idea to make up measuring sticks in 1/2M, 2/3M, 1M and 2M denominations.

### **Facing.**

Unlike in the boardgame, each unit can only move, shoot or initiate close combat in the direction it is facing. To change facing, units are allowed to freely pivot on their centre point up to 45 degrees left or right of their current facing before any forward movement takes place. This process may be repeated for each M of movement. If the unit needs to pivot more than 45 degrees, it may do so, but cannot use that M for any forward movement. If it has more M left, it may of course use that to move as usual.

### **Movement.**

Units may use each of their Ms to do one of the following:

- \* Pivot on the unit's centre point up to 45 degrees and move up to 1M directly forward.
- \* Move up to 1M directly forward.
- \* Pivot on the unit's centre point more than 45 degrees (Light troops except for auxiliary infantry can do this for free).
- \* Shuffle two-thirds of an M sideways, maintaining current facing.
- \* Withdraw from combat by moving 1M directly backwards without changing facing.
- \* Change facing to allow frontal contact with an enemy already touching their flank or rear edge.

**Support and support range.**

Units count as supported for combat purposes if there are two units within support range. A unit is in support range if any part of it is within a rectangle extending  $2/3M$  (6cm in 15mm scale) from the unit's front and rear edges and  $1/2M$  (4cm in 15mm scale) of the unit's side edges.

**Adjacency I.**

Units must be in contact (touching) to engage in hand to hand combat. Units can only attack enemies they have contacted with their front edge, but this restriction does not apply to battle back.

**Adjacency II.**

Units count as adjacent for tracing command card routes if they are within support range (Line Command & Double Time use this definition of adjacency, and Leader's hex cards too if you prefer this option).

**Command range.**

Leaders have a command range measured in M instead of using hexes. Leader's combat bonuses extend to friendly units in support range, while for Leadership card purposes a simple measurement is required: Leader's hex + 3/+4 cards activate all units within  $2.5M$  of the centre of the Leader's unit.

If you prefer, you can just activate units connected by support for leader +3/+4 cards as in the boardgame rules.

**Momentum advance and retreats.**

Units advance into the vacated space and then get 1M and a free pivot for momentum attack if eligible and

desired. Cavalry get an extra 1M and a second free pivot for momentum advance.

**Movement through gaps.**

Units need at least  $2/3M$  gap to move between friendly units, and at least  $1 \& 1/2M$  gap to move between enemy units unless using momentum advance, evade or retreat. In the last three cases units only need a 1M gap to move through.

**Optional charge move.**

If you want to better maintain the ratio between the boardgame's missile and movement ranges and to encourage units to close for hand to hand combat, all units may add  $1/2M$  to their move when charging into contact.

### **Special rules used for Punic War battles.**

These are beginning to diverge from the simplicity of the boardgame, but I've had reasonable results with these special rules so I'll include them in case you wish to experiment.

### **Formations.**

Units may be in one of four formations: standard (double line), single line, march column and fighting column.

It costs an M to change formation unless light infantry or light cavalry, which may do it for free before or after movement, including evades and retreats. Stands always form up on the centre of the unit.

### **Single line.**

Units take up a wider frontage but close combat with one fewer combat die. There is no negative combat effect for cavalry in single line. Skirmishers in single line may fire, retreat or evade using any of their stands as the measuring point.

### **March column.**

Medium and heavy infantry in column may move at double speed provided that they do not come within 2M of any enemy units. If contacted while in column, units fight with 2 fewer combat dice to a maximum of 2 and cannot ignore banners even if supported or accompanied by a leader.

### **Fighting Column.**

Manipular legions can form a fighting column, which does not move at double speed but will only lose 1 die in combat.

### **Special Units.**

#### **Light javelin or bow-armed cavalry.**

May move part of its move distance, fire, and then move the remainder of its move distance.

#### **Skirmishers.**

Foot skirmishers may pass through friendly troops as part of normal movement, and may be passed through by friendly troops as part of normal movement. Mounted skirmishers may pass through or be passed through by friendly mounted as part of normal movement.

Skirmishers may fire before or after movement, but may not fire on units in contact with friendly troops.

#### **Veteran units.**

Leaderless veteran units that specialise in close combat may count one helmet roll as a hit.

Veteran units specialising in ranged combat may roll a bonus die when shooting and take the best two results.

*If you have any comments, queries, or suggestions, I can be contacted at [prufrock.japan@gmail.com](mailto:prufrock.japan@gmail.com) Aaron Bell, 2009*