

The Scenario

My Armenian army of Tigranes the Lesser was now complete and needed an opponent. Their first outing (Battle 85), in an embryonic form and supported by the Parthians, had been against the Trinovantes. The Trinovantes were also due an outing. So it made sense to see if Tigranes, now with his full army, could do any better than last time.

Both sides were roughly the same size in terms of number of men and overall fighting potential. However, the Trinovantes had the far better infantry but not the armoured cavalry that the Armenians and their allies could field. With nearly all the troops on both sides being either Barbarian or Irregular, maintaining control and sticking to the battle plan would be difficult. So, both generals had some challenges to deal with even before I put the terrain out!

A standard encounter battle was planned.

The Pitch



As it had been raining heavily lately, I decided there ought to be some damp patches on the battlefield. In the near left corner there was some high ground. A road threaded its way across that avoiding the dense wood and the crag before descending across the battlefield. Another crag on the far side and some gentle hills surrounded an area of marsh. On the right side, a patch of boggy ground was contained by some more gentle hills. Apart from some open woods scattered towards the right flank, the rest of the pitch was open and good going. The Armenians would deploy on the far side.

The Teams

Tigranes the Lesser was king of Armenia and had, with the support of some allies, gathered a force of nearly 18,000 men.

Tigranes led the Armenian contingent of his army. This consisted of 4,500 poor quality Armenian infantry, including some camp servants, and nearly 1,000 good cavalry – a mix of lancers and horse archers. He had also inherited nearly 3,000 trained Pontic infantry, but again they were severely lacking in quality and armour.

He was supported by four allies.

Zanticus of Hiberia and Oroeze of Albania were both willing allies and each provided 1,000 good quality armoured cavalry and 2,000 reasonable infantry.

Zarbienus the Unfaithful of Gordyene and Monobazus of Adiabene were less enthusiastic, but had some reasonable troops. Zarbienus fielded 1,000 cavalry and 1,500 infantry and Monobazus led 1,000 cavalry including some armoured lancers.

Cunobeline was the chieftain of the Trinovantes and had mobilised just over 18,000 men from the tribe, including two sub-clans.

Cunobeline, with his escort of chariot borne nobles, led the warbands of the main clan. These totalled about 9,500 men evenly split between warriors and peasants.

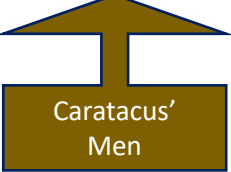
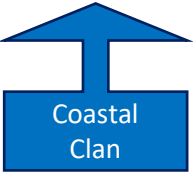
Togodumnus, one of Cunobeline's sons, led a mixed force of about 3,500 men. This included a strong grouping of slingers as well as other infantry and a few chariots and cavalry.

Caratacus, another son, led a smaller force of just under 2,000 men split between light cavalry and light infantry.

The two sub-clans were each led by their own chieftain – Cartivelios of the Coastal Clan and Dumnovellanunos of the Canonium Clan. Each clan provided a warband of 1,000 men supported by about 500 lighter types of infantry and cavalry.

For more details on the compositions of both forces visit the armies page on this site.

The Deployments



The Tactics

Tigranes was worried about the ability of his infantry to stand up to more than one round of melee before dispersing and so decided to attack with his allies on the flanks and make best use of the Hiberians as his most potent weapon.

His Armenian infantry, with the best on the right, would form a line between the two hill groupings. The Hiberians would advance on to the hills on the right.

The Albanians would lead a thrust up the road, around the marsh and through the wood. Once the Albanians were in position to threaten the enemy flank, the Hiberians would lead the central advance followed by the Armenian infantry.

The Gordyenes would hold the hills above the boggy ground and prevent any enemy trying to get on the left flank of the Armenian line, whilst the Adiabene cavalry would advance on the far left and get behind the enemy flank.

The idea was that the flank attacks would be distracting the enemy by the time the main line came to blows and have a chance of winning.

Cunobeline knew that he stood little chance of controlling a lot of his men once they were closing on the enemy, but if they were riled up they could probably beat most of the opposition.

He deployed his main warbands in the centre who would advance and engage the enemy to their front with his best and biggest warband in the centre forward role. His own chariots and cavalry would cover and provide support for any gaps.

Cunobeline did not fancy sending any men through the marsh or dense wood to his left but felt the enemy might risk it. So, the Canonium Clan were ordered to hold the road where it sloped down through the wood and the Coastal Clan were to cover the left flank of the warbands and watch out for enemy coming through the wood or the marsh.

Togodumnus' men were positioned to the right of the main warbands with orders to take the hills to their front and stop any enemy attacking the right flank. Caratacus was sent on a sweep on the far right to get round the enemy flank.

The Order of Battle

In my rules, each Corps takes its turn in being active and doing something. The order in which they become active is determined by a dice roll at the start of the battle. This sequence is set out below and may help to explain the battle report slides, each of which shows the actions for an individual Corps during a period when it is their turn to be active. Each Division normally occupies a single hex on the battlefield.

- C1 – Cunobeline’s Warbands (6 Divisions)
- C2 – Coastal Clan (Trinovante ally) (1 Division)
- C3 – Tigranes’ Armenians (7 Divisions)
- C4 – Gordyenes (Armenian ally) (2 Divisions)
- C5 – Albanians (Armenian ally) (3 Divisions)
- C6 – Togodumnus’ Men (3 Divisions)
- C7 – Hiberians (Armenian ally) (2 Divisions)
- C8 – Adiabene (Armenian ally) (1 Division)
- C9 – Canonium Clan (Trinovante ally) (1 Division)
- C10 – Caratacus’ Men (2 Divisions)

Each Corps commander is in the first Division in their Corps. All photographs are taken from the Trinovante edge.

P1/C1



In the centre of the Trinovante line, the main Clan warbands started to advance.



P1/C2



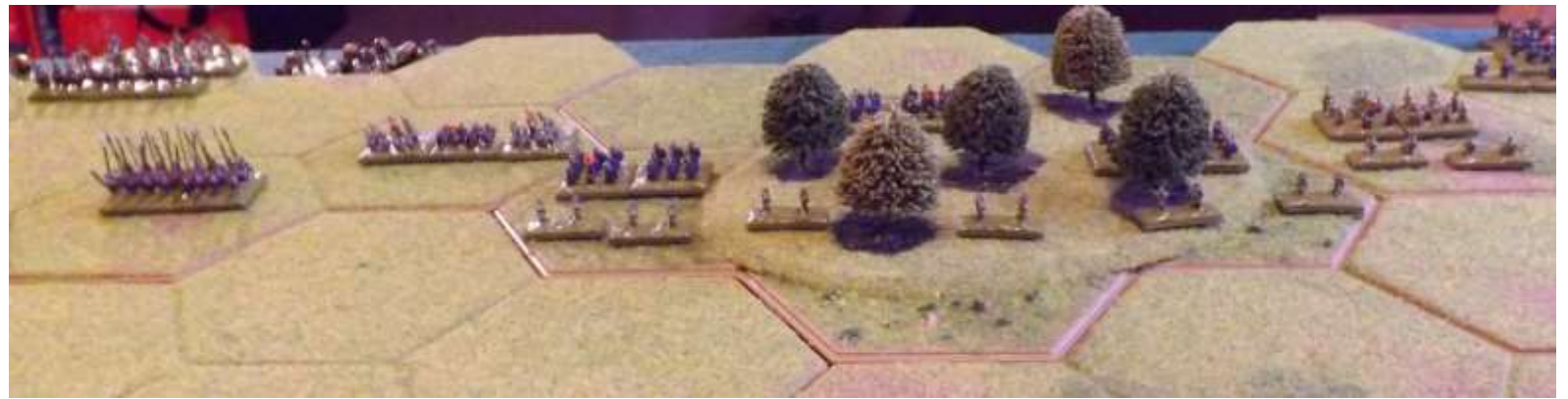
On the Trinovante left, the Coastal Clan advanced. Cartivelios, their chieftain, sent some light cavalry forward to scout in the wood (just in case).



P1/C3



Apart from Tigranes' cavalry, all the Armenian troops started to advance. Tigranes' trained infantry were closest to him which meant his native infantry had to find their way through the wood.



P1/C4



On the Armenian left, the Gordyenes advanced. Their chieftain, Zarbienus the Unfaithful, led his cavalry on to the hill to view the approaching enemy.



P1/C5



On the Armenian right flank, the Albanians advanced. Oroeze, their chieftain, rode ahead with the cavalry along the route of the road whilst the infantry headed for the high ground above the marsh.



P1/C6



On the Trinovante right, Togodumnus and his men advanced. Some light cavalry were sent ahead on to the crest of the hill to spy out what the enemy was up to.



P1/C7



On the Armenian right, the Hiberians started to advance. However, Zanticus' cavalry had difficulty in making any progress down the steep part of the crag.



P1/C8



On the Armenian left flank, the Adiabene cavalry advanced with their horse archers forming an advance screen.



P1/C9



On the Trinovante left flank, the Canonium Clan started to descend the crag.



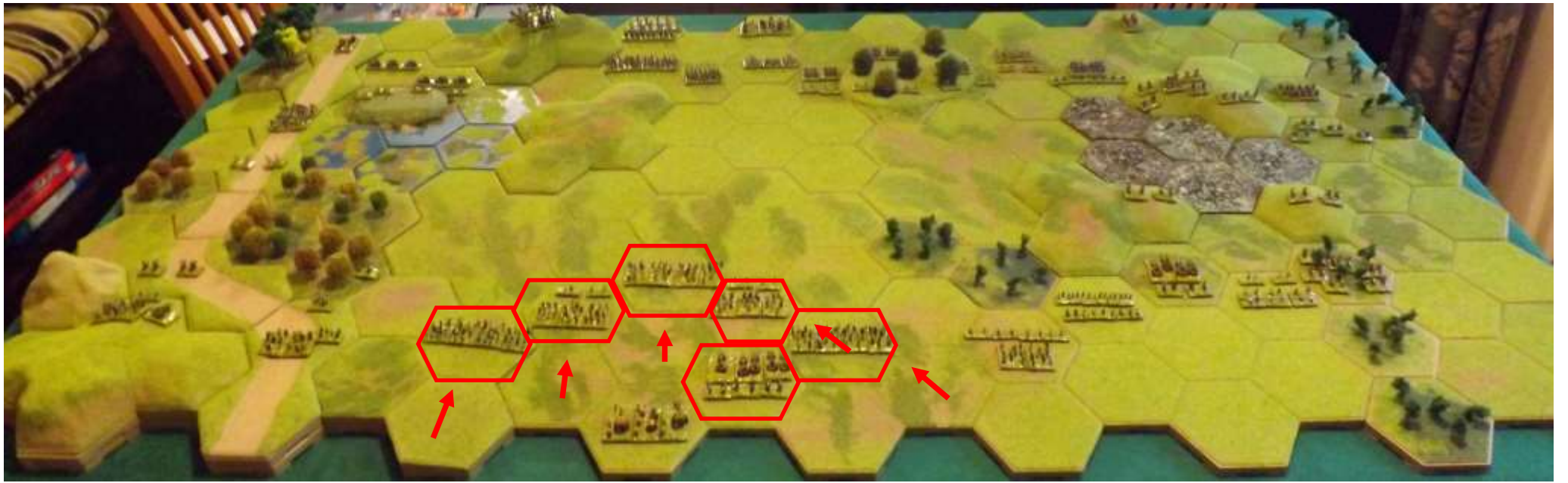
P1/C10



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus and his men advanced. Although he kept most of his cavalry hidden in the wood, Caratacus did send some forward on to the hill crest to advise of enemy movements.



P2/C1



In the Trinovante centre, the main Clan warbands continued to advance.



P2/C2



To the left of the Trinovante main Clan warbands, the men from the Coastal Clan closed up on to their flank.



P2/C3



The Armenian infantry advanced to form a line between the two sets of hills and the wood edge, where they were to hold until the Hiberians and Albanians were in a more forward position on their right.



P2/C4



Zarbienus the Unfaithful, held his Gordyene troops on the edge of the boggy ground waiting for the Armenian infantry to attack.



P2/C5



On the Armenian right flank, Oroeze advanced along the road with the Albanian cavalry and deployed ready to face the enemy, with his horse archers opening fire. Further behind, the Albanian infantry crossed the hill and started to enter the marsh.



P2/C6



On the Trinovante right, Togodumnus' men continued to advance. Togodumnus reached the crest of the hill from where he had a good view of the enemy moving forward on that flank.



P2/C7



Zanticus managed to get the Hiberian cavalry to move off of the crag whilst his infantry started to climb the hill.



P2/C8



Monobazus continued to move forward with the Adiabene cavalry but held his lancers back from the hill until he determined whether any more enemy would appear.



P2/C9



On the Trinovante left flank, Dumnovellanunos, chieftain of the Canonium Clan, moved his men on to the road to block the advance of the enemy. His light cavalry and slingers fired on the enemy.



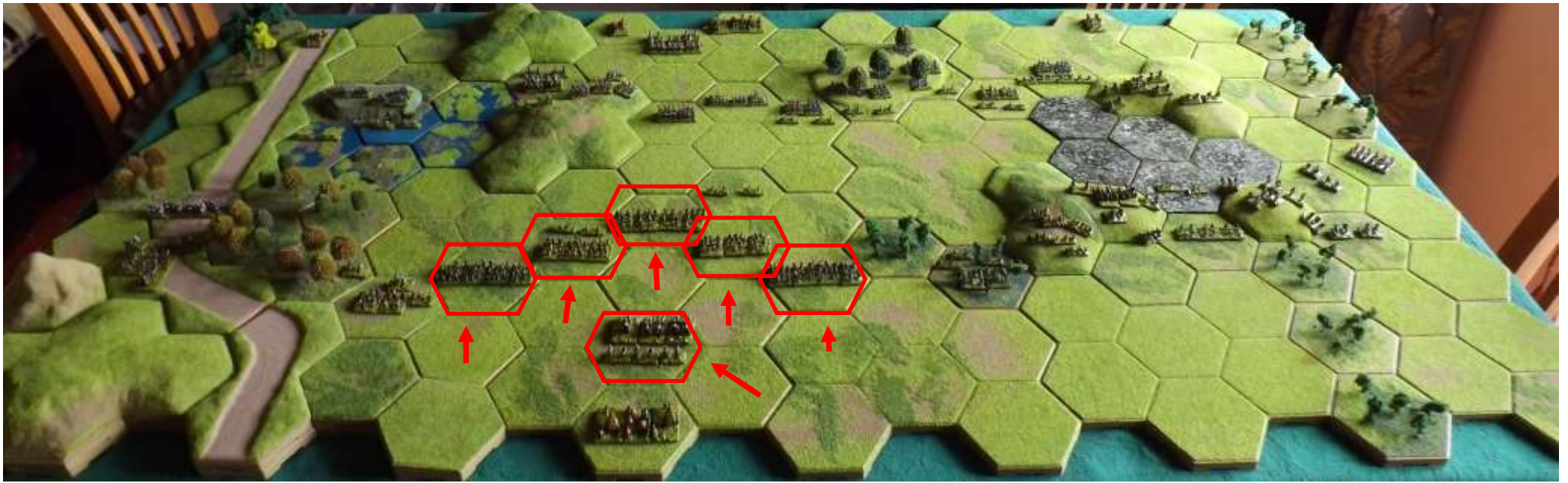
P2/C10



On the Trinovante right flank, Caratacus massed his cavalry on the hill from where they could threaten the enemy cavalry on that flank. His infantry continued to advance towards the boggy ground.



P3/C1



The warbands of the Trinovante main clan continued to advance. Cunobeline moved his own chariot force forward to a more central position.



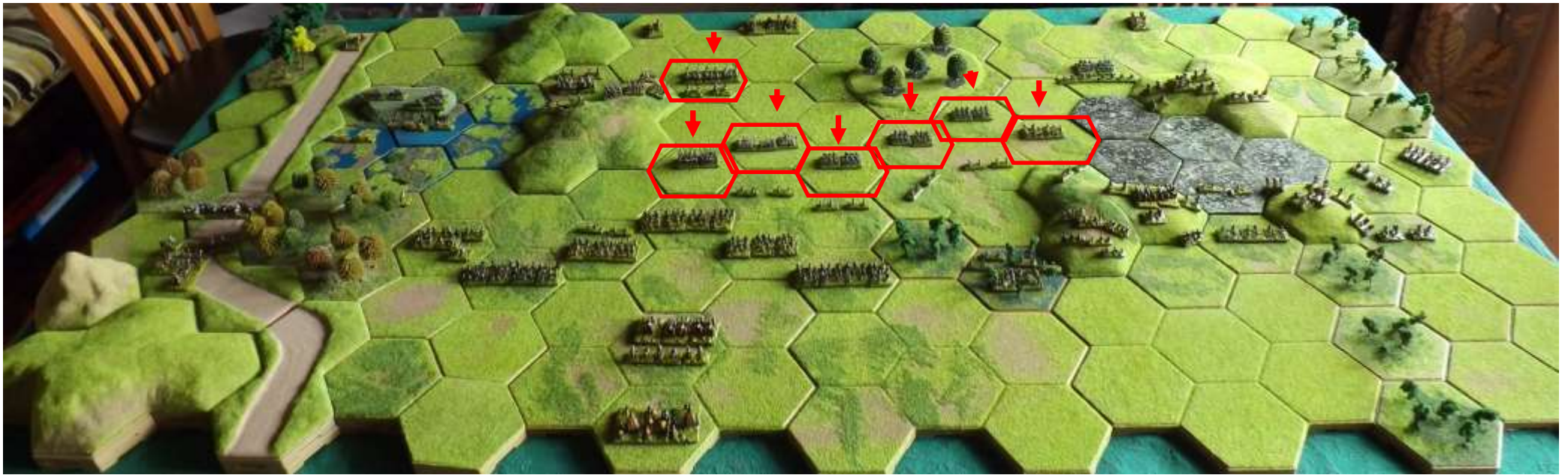
P3/C2



On the left of the warbands, the Coastal Clan also advanced. Cartivelios, their chieftain, could now see some enemy in the marsh and kept some light cavalry scouts in the wood to warn of further danger.



P3/C3



At this point Tigranes' plan was to hold position with his infantry until the Iberians and Albanians were further advanced. However, he assessed the situation as excellent and ordered a general advance for all his troops. The skirmishers attached to his native infantry groupings opened fire as they closed.



P3/C4



Zarbienus held the Gordyene cavalry in position on the hill but sent some light cavalry forward to skirmish with the enemy infantry now entering the boggy ground. He moved his infantry forward, around the boggy ground, to cover the flank of the Armenian infantry.



P3/C5



Oroeze, chieftain of the Albanians, also ordered a general advance and led his cavalry in a wild charge against the enemy blocking the road. The enemy skirmish line evaded and his troopers ploughed into the enemy warband. Back in the marsh, the Albanian infantry continued to advance with some skirmishers now able to fire.



P3/C6



On the Trinovante right, Togodumnus held his chariots on the hill crest but sent his light cavalry into the boggy ground to return fire on the enemy skirmishers. His infantry groupings continued to advance and his slingers and foot skirmishers were also able to fire back on the enemy.



P3/C7



Fortunately for Tigranes, both the Hiberian cavalry and infantry were able to make progress over the hill and were now in position to support his own infantry.



P3/C8



Seeing that it was just enemy cavalry on the hill and as his men were eager, Monobazus, the Adiabene king, charged them. The enemy light cavalry evaded and Monobazus' men started to melee with the remaining enemy cavalry.



P3/C9



Although their warband had been severely weakened, Dumnovellanunos, chieftain of the Canonium Clan, managed to keep his remaining men in a wild state and so continued to fight. The slingers and light cavalry were now able to provide support.



P3/C10



Caratacus' cavalry had taken a heavy beating from the enemy lancers and he was down to just a few men in his escort. So, he rallied his cavalry back out of melee and as his infantry were eager they charged into the enemy cavalry and continued the melee.



P4/C1



With the enemy now coming within charge range, Cunobeline released his warbands in a wild advance towards the enemy infantry line. The lead warband charged into melee and the others started to skirmish as they closed.



P4/C2



Confident that their colleagues would deal with the enemy cavalry on the hill, Cartivelios, chieftain of the Coastal Clan, turned his men to face the threat from the enemy moving through the marsh. However, he did keep his cavalry facing the enemy cavalry, just in case.



P4/C3



Tigranes' pike phalanx had held the wild charge of their opponents and continued in melee. Tigranes had his other Pontic trained infantry and the first of his Armenian warbands charge into melee. To the left of his line, the two remaining warbands advanced but the third – composed of camp servants – had dispersed in rout as a result of missile fire and their skirmishers headed for home.



P4/C4



Zarbienus' Gordyene infantry advanced to take the place of the routed Armenian infantry grouping but he held his cavalry on the hill crest. Both foot and mounted light troops skirmished in the boggy ground with the enemy cavalry.



P4/C5



The Albanian cavalry were down to just a Oroeze's nobles, but he kept them in melee as the enemy were nearly destroyed. Back in the marsh both Albanian infantry groupings were still wildly eager for combat and one made it out of the marsh and charged the enemy. But the other remained stuck.



P4/C6



Togodumnus held his mounted troops and slingers on the hill from where they continued to skirmish with the enemy. His warband was eager for melee and charged the enemy infantry facing them.



P4/C7



The Hiberians entered the fray with both their cavalry and infantry charging wildly from the hill into the facing enemy infantry below.



P4/C8



Despite seemingly being near to destroying their current opponents, the Adiabene lancers rallied back from melee. The combination of their isolation from friends, their own and news of losses from elsewhere, plus the threat of the enemy cavalry coming in behind them, caused their king, Monobazus, to seek a more secure position.



P4/C9



The Canonium Clan was near to being wiped out, so their chieftain, Dumnovellanunos, rallied his remaining men back on to the slope of the crag. He also despatched a message to Cunobeline advising him of the situation.



P4/C10



Caratacus had his men follow up the retreating enemy cavalry and continue to harass them with missiles.



P5/C1



The fighting had been tough but, despite the casualties, all of Cunobeline's warbands were still in good spirits and willing to carry on fighting. The melees seemed to be going in favour of the Trinovantes with holes appearing in the enemy line and the centre warband pushed on to charge the enemy cavalry.



P5/C2



The Coastal Clan had destroyed the enemy that had emerged from the marsh but had been badly weakened in the process. With the main Clan's warbands to their right dispersing in rout, Cartivelois, the chieftain of the Clan, thought it best to pull back to a safer position.



P5/C3



The situation for Tigranes was now poor. He was down to just his own cavalry and one warband, plus a few retreating skirmishers. He decided to pull back and re-group his remaining men anticipating that the allies on the flanks would save the day.



P5/C4



However, Zarbienus the Unfaithful of Gordyene was in no mood to save the day. Having seen most of Tigranes' infantry disappear and Monobazus' Adiabene cavalry fall back, Zarbienus issued a withdrawal order and his men started to pull back with his skirmishers forming a protective screen.



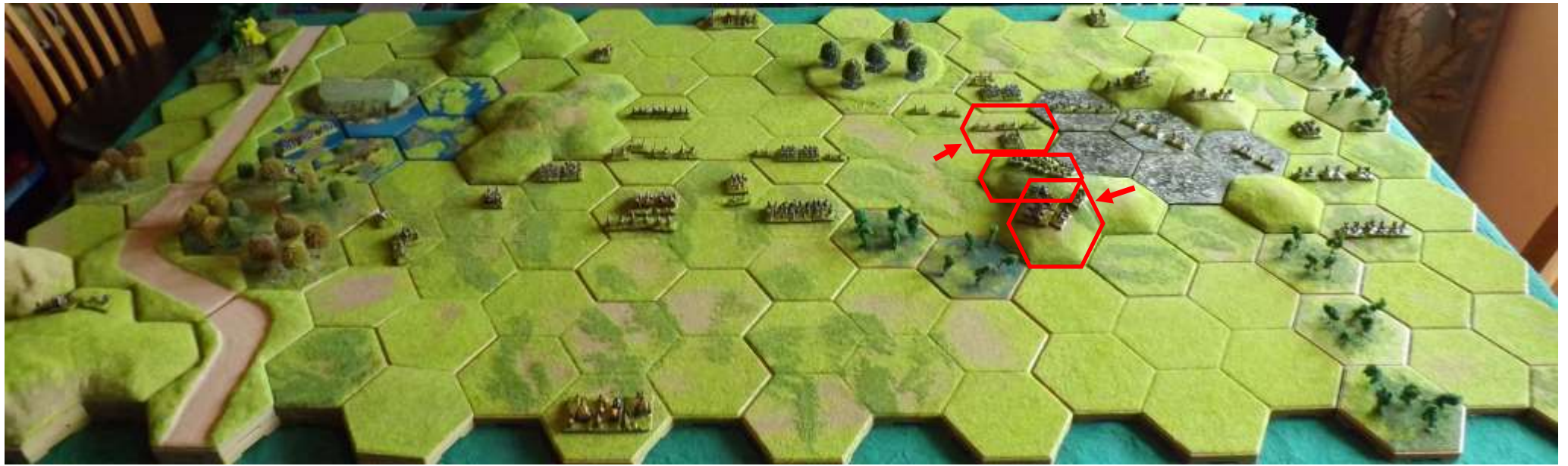
P5/C5



Oroeze of Albania considered the situation poor too. He rallied back his few remaining cavalry troopers into the wood next to his sole remaining infantry grouping – the other infantry grouping had been destroyed in melee.



P5/C6



With the enemy on the other side of the boggy ground starting to move towards the centre, Togodumnus decided he needed to be closer to support his now weakened warband as it advanced. Leaving his slingers shooting across the boggy ground, Togodumnus struggled to get his mounted troops around the hill.



P5/C7



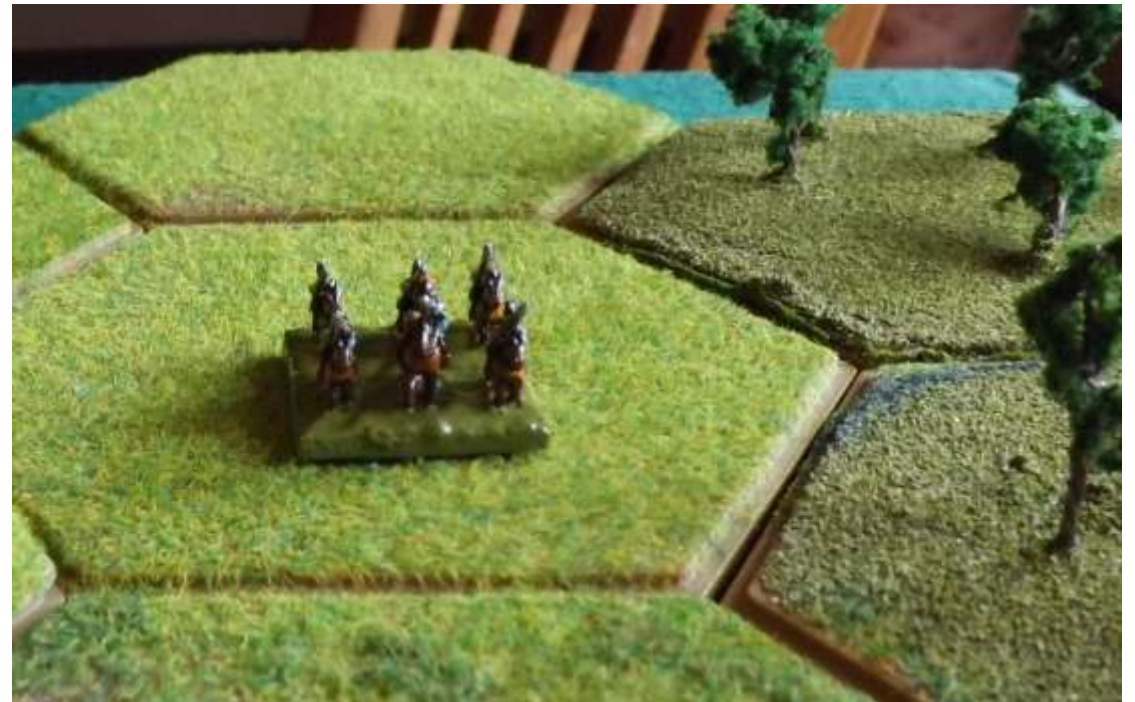
Both the Hiberian infantry and cavalry were low on numbers and with very few friendly units nearby. Zanticus, the Hiberian chieftain, decided the situation was poor. He moved all his troops back on to the hill which offered a more secure position to hold.



P5/C8



With continued pressure from the enemy, Monobazus, king of the Adiabene, continued to withdraw with his remaining men.



P5/C9



On the crag on the left flank of the Trinovate line, Dumnovellanunos and the Canonium Clan held their position.



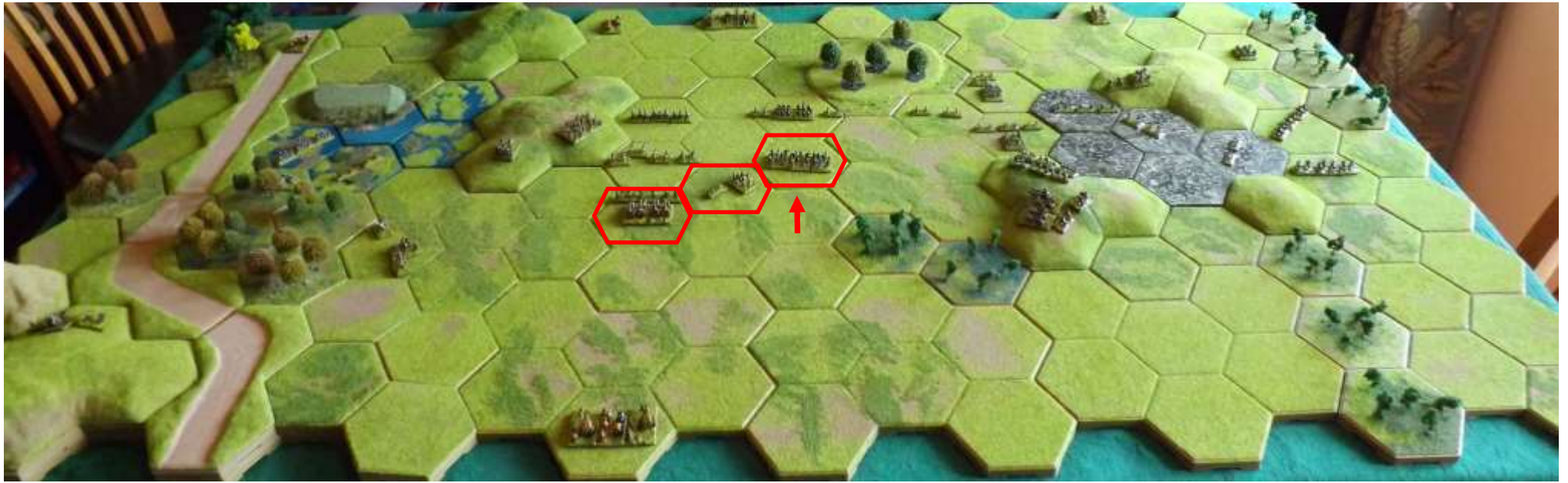
P5/C10



Caratacus moved forward with his cavalry and had his men now concentrate their fire on the enemy cavalry hanging about in the boggy ground and on the hill.



P6/C1



Cunobeline was now down to just his escort and one and a bit warbands but morale was still good. He held position with his chariots whilst his cavalry and the smaller warband pestered the enemy horse archers. The larger warband charged the sole remaining enemy infantry grouping who decided to evade.



P6/C2



Although the threats seemed to be reducing, Cartilvelois held the Coastal Clan in position.



P6/C3



Tigranes now assessed the situation as dire and his withdrawal turned into a retreat.



P6/C4



Zarbienus the Unfaithful of Gordyene continued to withdraw with his men.



P6/C5



Oroeze, chieftain of the Albanians, also assessed the situation as dire and ordered his men to withdraw.



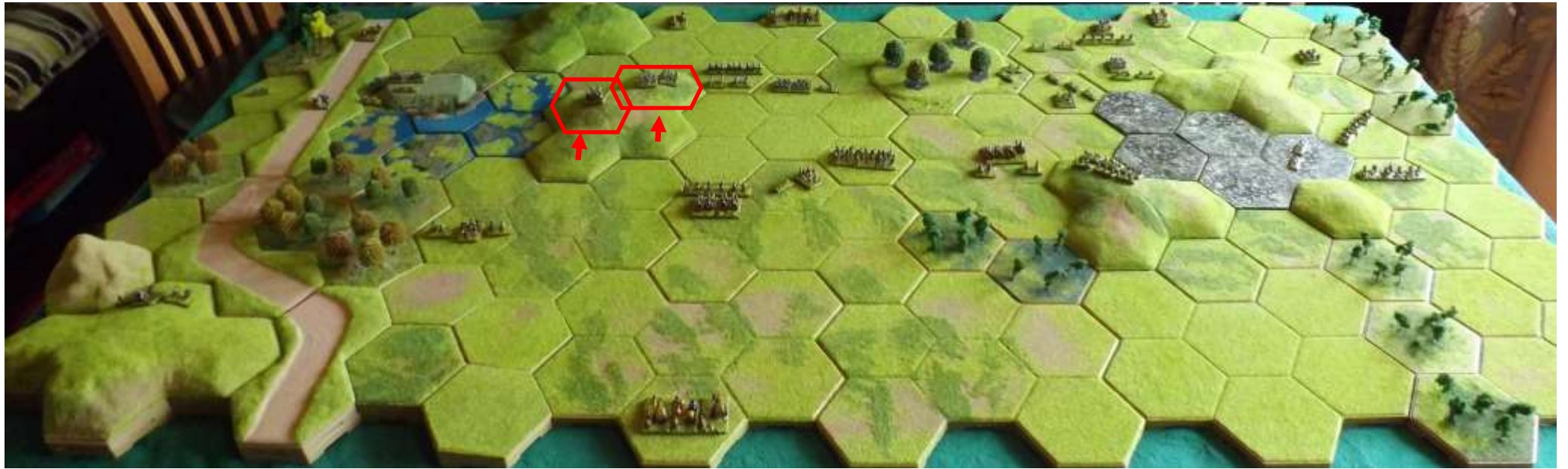
P6/C6



Togodumnus descended the hill with his mounted troops and set off to link up with his warband who were still eagerly pursuing the retreating enemy.



P6/C7



Zanticus of Hiberia also assessed the situation as dire and another withdrawal was ordered.



P6/C8



And the cavalry from Adiabene continued to withdraw.



P6/C9



From their position on the crag, the Canonium Clan watched the enemy retreating.



P6/C10



Caratacus moved forward over the hill as the enemy fell back.



The End

And that was it.

With all of the Armenian Corps commanders assessing the situation as dire and either retreating or withdrawing, that effectively ended the battle.

Although the Trinovantes were badly weakened, Cunobeline and his two sons still had sufficient morale and numbers to keep pushing forward.

So, the Trinovantes gained another victory.



The Conclusions

Despite being a loss, the battle was probably one of Tigranes' best performances to date and if a couple of near misses had bounced the other way he might just have sneaked a victory.

His plan probably came to grief when he decided to advance with his men rather than wait for the Hiberians to attack first. This might have dented the Trinovante wildness a touch and given his trained infantry a better chance of breaking through before their morale dropped. That the Albanians did not make any impact on the right flank was another problem.

Cunobeline made best use of his men's natural enthusiasm to pound the enemy centre, but against a better quality enemy infantry line he might have come unstuck and had just enough men left standing at the end. Similarly his sons on the right flank played their luck a bit and Caratacus narrowly escaped death. The allied sub-clans on the left did better than anticipated in actually defeating rather than just delaying the enemy attack. But again they just about did this.

The most valuable Unit? Probably Dumnovellanunos and the Canonium Clan who despite the threat of near extinction hung on in and prevented the Albanian cavalry from bursting through and turning that flank.