

ASCULUM

THE ▽ LUCANIAN ▽ COWS

STEPHAN ▽ BERRY



The Battle of Asculum (279 BC) between king Pyrrhus of Epirus and the Romans was the theme of a grand diorama that was presented at the DUZI 2011 in Wesel, Germany. This is the famous battle which yielded the notion of a “Pyrrhic victory”, because of the high casualty numbers that Pyrrhus’ army suffered despite the fact they won the battle.





Uwe Wild, the master mind behind this project, had asked me whether I could contribute some figures, and I had promised to provide some vignettes. These vignettes show the Romans fighting Pyrrhus' elephants, which they had called "Lucanian cows" after their first encounter with these strange beasts during the Battle of Heraclea (280 BC).



The figures and elephants used in these vignettes are from HäT (8018, 8023, 8044 and 8141) and Zvezda (8011 and 8034). I made some conversions; in particular I used the towers of HäT's Carthaginian Elephants to "upgrade" the tower-less Macedonian ones.





The Romans had developed special anti-elephant carts driven by oxen teams. The exact design is not known, but the Wargames Research Group has attempted a reconstruction based on Plutarch's description. Such carts have been cast by Peters Figuren, and I used two of them here. In addition, to have more variety, I also used two Hussite wagons from MiniArt (72010).



The following pictures show the steps from the unpainted figures until the presentation at the DUZI. The first experiments with conversions and positioning of the figures:



Then the painted and assembled elephants themselves:



Some of the individual vignettes, and then all seven vignettes placed side by side:



Putting everything together at the DUZI (pictures © Uwe Wild):



And, finally, the whole battle (pictures © Uwe Wild):



Further reading:

Uwe Wild's blog: <http://historyin172.blogspot.com/>

Cowan R.H. (2009) *Roman Conquests: Italy*. Pen & Sword, Barnsley.

Pietrykowski J. (2009) *Great Battles of the Hellenistic World*. Pen & Sword, Barnsley.

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