

## **Echoes of Hannibal: Cremona 200BC**

*After the end of the Hannibalic War(218-202BC) a Carthaginian officer by the name of Hamilcar had remained behind in northern Italy and caused considerable mischief among the restive Gallic tribes of Cisaplina assisting and commanding them as an independent freebooter against the Roman colonies of Placentia and Cremona. Book 31 of Livy's 1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C. classic work of Roman history covers the events of the Roman responses to this new Gallic upsurge in some detail through to the Battle of Cremona and the political maneuvering in Rome that followed the victory won by the Praetor L. Furius Purpureo.*

[31.10]Whilst all men's minds were turned to the Macedonian war, rumours suddenly arose of an outbreak of the Gauls, the last thing that was apprehended. The Insubres and Cenomani in conjunction with the Boii, who had induced the Celines and Ilvates and the other Ligurian tribes to join them, had taken up arms under Hamilcar, a Carthaginian general, who had held a command in Hasdrubal's army and had remained in the country. They had stormed and sacked Placentia and in their blind rage had destroyed most of the city by fire, hardly 2000 men being left amid the smoking ruins. Thence, crossing the Po, they advanced with the intention of sacking Cremona. Hearing of the disaster which had overtaken their neighbours the townsmen had time to close their gates and man their walls so that they might, at all events, be able to stand a siege and send a message to the Roman praetor before the final assault. ... Furius Purpureo was in charge of that province at the time, and acting under the resolution of the senate had disbanded his army, retaining only 5000 from the Latin and allied contingents. With this force he was encamped in the neighbourhood of Ariminum. In a despatch to the senate he described the serious condition of his province; of the two military colonies which had weathered the terrible storm of the Punic War one was taken and destroyed by the enemy and the other was being attacked. His own army could not render assistance to the colonists in their distress unless he was willing to expose his 5000 allied troops to be massacred by the 40,000 of the enemy - that number was under arms - and by incurring such a fatal disaster himself raise the courage of the enemy who were exulting over the destruction of a Roman colony.

[31.11]After the despatch had been read the senate decreed that the consul C. Aurelius should order his army to muster at Ariminum on the day which he had previously fixed for their muster in Etruria. If the state of public affairs allowed, he was to go in person to suppress the disturbance, otherwise, he was to send instructions to L. Furius requesting him, as soon as the legions reached him, to send his 5000 of the allied contingent to replace them in Etruria, and then raise the siege of Cremona. The senate also decided to send a mission to Carthage and to Masinissa in Numidia. Their instructions for Carthage were to inform the government that Hamilcar, one of their citizens who had come with either Hasdrubal's or Mago's army, had been left behind and in defiance of the treaty had persuaded the Gauls and Ligurians to take up arms against Rome. If they wished to remain at peace they must recall him and surrender him to the Romans. The commissioners were also to announce that the deserters had not all been given up, a great many of them were stated to be openly walking about in Carthage; it was the duty of the

authorities to find them out and arrest them in order that they might be handed over in accordance with the treaty. These were their instructions for Carthage.....

[31.19]The envoys who had been sent to Africa to report the action of Hamilcar in assuming the leadership of the Gauls were informed by the Carthaginian government that they could do nothing more than sentence him to banishment and confiscate his property; all the refugees and deserters whom after careful search they had been able to discover had been given up, and they intended to send envoys to Rome to give satisfactory assurances on this point. They sent 200,000 modii of wheat to Rome and a similar amount to the army in Macedonia.....

[31.21]By this time the consular army in Gaul had been transferred from Arretium to Ariminum, and the 5000 men of the Latin contingent had moved from Gaul into Etruria. L. Furius accordingly left Ariminum and hastened by forced marches to Cremona which the Gauls were at the time besieging. He fixed his camp a mile and a half distant from the enemy and would have had a chance of winning a brilliant victory if he had led his men straight from their march against the Gaulish camp. The Gauls were scattered over the fields in all directions and the camp had been left insufficiently guarded. But he was afraid that his men would be too much fatigued after their rapid march, and the shouts of the Gauls recalled their comrades, who, leaving the plunder which they had gathered behind, ran back to their camp. The next day they marched out to battle. The Romans were not slow in accepting the challenge, but they had hardly time to complete their formation, so rapidly did the enemy come on. Furius had formed the allied troops into two divisions, and the right division was stationed in the first line, the two Roman legions forming the reserve. M. Furius was in command of this division, M. Caecilius commanded the legions and L. Valerius Flaccus the cavalry. These were all staff-officers. The praetor kept two of his staff with him - C. Laetorius and P. Titinius - to assist him in surveying the field and meeting any sudden attempt of the enemy.

At first the Gauls brought their whole strength to bear in one direction, hoping to be able to overwhelm the right wing and smash it up. Failing in this, they endeavoured to work round the flanks and envelop the enemy's line, which, considering their numbers and the fewness of their opponents, seemed an easy task. When the praetor saw this maneuver he extended his front by bringing up the two legions in reserve to the right and left of the allied troops, and he also vowed a temple to Diovis, in case he routed the enemy that day. He then ordered L. Valerius to launch the Roman cavalry against one wing of the Gauls and the allied cavalry against the other to check the enveloping movement. As soon as he saw that the Gauls had weakened their centre by diverting troops to the wings, he ordered his infantry to advance in close order at the charge and break through the opposing ranks. This was decisive; the wings were repulsed by the cavalry and the centre by the infantry. As they were being cut down in all parts of the field, the Gauls turned, and in wild flight sought shelter in their camp. The cavalry followed in hot pursuit and the infantry soon came up and attacked the camp. Not 6000 men succeeded in making their escape; more than 35,000 were killed or made prisoners; 70 standards were taken together with 200 Gaulish carts loaded with spoil. The Carthaginian general Hamilcar fell in that battle as

well as three Gaulish nobles who were in command. (Also) 2000 men whom the Gauls had taken at Placentia were set at liberty and restored to their homes.

[31.22]It was a great victory and caused great joy in Rome. When the despatch arrived a three days' thanksgiving was decreed. The Romans and allies lost 2000 men, mostly belonging to the right division against which the enormous mass of the enemy made their first attack. Although the praetor had practically brought the war to a close, the consul C. Aurelius after finishing the necessary business in Rome proceeded to Gaul and took over the victorious army from the praetor.....

[31.47]....When the other consul, C. Aurelius, came into his province he found the war brought to a close, and he did not conceal his chagrin at the praetor's activity in his absence. He sent him into Etruria and then took his legions into the enemy's country to plunder it: an expedition from which he returned with more booty than glory. L. Furius, finding no scope for his activity in Etruria, and bent upon obtaining a triumph for his victories in Gaul, which he thought he might more easily do while the angry and jealous consul was out of the way, suddenly returned to Rome and convened a meeting of the senate in the temple of Bellona. After giving a report of what he had done, he asked to be allowed to enter the City in triumph.

[31.48]A considerable number of the senators supported him in view of the great services he had rendered, and also on personal grounds. The older members were for refusing him a triumph, partly because the army which he had employed had been assigned to another commander, and partly because in his eagerness to snatch the chance of a triumph he had quitted his province, an act contrary to all precedent. The consulars, in particular, insisted that he ought to have waited for the consul, for he could then have fixed his camp near the city and so have afforded sufficient protection to the colony to hold the enemy in hand without fighting until the consul came. What he failed to do, the senate ought to do, namely, wait for the consul; after hearing what the consul and the praetor had to say, they would form a truer judgment about the case. Many of those present urged that the senate ought not to consider anything beyond the praetor's success and the question whether he had achieved it as a magistrate with full powers and under his own auspices. "Two colonies," it was argued, "had been planted as barriers to check risings amongst the Gauls. One had been plundered and burnt, and the conflagration was threatening the other colony which was so near it, like a fire running from house to house. What was the praetor to do? If no action ought to have been taken in the consul's absence, either the senate was at fault in furnishing the praetor with an army - for as it had decided that the campaign should be fought by the consul's army and not by the praetor's which was far away, so it could have passed a special resolution to the effect that it should be fought under the consul and not under the praetor - or else the consul was in the wrong in not joining his army at Ariminum, after he had ordered it to move from Etruria into Gaul, so that he might take his part in the war, which you say ought not to have been undertaken without him. The critical moments in war do not wait upon the procrastination and delays of commanders, and you sometimes have to fight, not because you wish to do so, but because the enemy compels you. We ought to keep in view the battle itself and its consequences. The enemy were routed and cut to pieces; their camp taken and plundered;

one colony relieved from siege; those of the other colony who had been made prisoners recovered and restored to their homes and friends; the war was finished in a single battle. Not to men only was that victory a cause of rejoicing; thanksgivings for three days ought to be offered to the immortal gods because L. Furius had upheld the cause of the republic well and happily, not because he had acted ill and rashly. War with the Gauls was the destined prerogative of the house of the Furii."

[31.49]Through speeches of this kind delivered by him and his friends, the personal influence of the praetor, who was on the spot, outweighed the dignity and authority of the absent consul, and by an overwhelming majority a triumph was decreed to L. Furius. So L. Furius as praetor celebrated a triumph over the Gauls during his magistracy. He brought into the treasury 320,000 ases and 100,500 pounds of silver. No prisoners were led in procession before his chariot, nor were any spoils exhibited, nor was he followed by his soldiers. It was obvious that everything except the actual victory was at the disposal of the consul. ....

### **Terrain:**

X8 Hills: H3, I3, G13, C12, C13, D10, A7, A8

X5 Forest: I1, H1, B1, B2, A2

### **Initial Setup:**

**Roman Army:** x6 Medium Infantry: H9, G7, G6, G5, H4, H6 x2 Heavy Infantry: H5, H8 x3 Auxillia: G8, G9, G4 x2 Light Infantry: G10, H10 x4 Medium Cavalry: G3, H2, G11, G12 x4 Leaders: H6 (L. Furius Purpureo).G3 (L. Valerius Flaccus), G5 (M. Furius), H8 (M. Caecilius)

**Gallic Army:** x12 Warriors: D3, D4, D5, C3, C4, C5, C8, C9, C10, C11, B8, B9 x2 Medium Infantry:C6, C7 x2 Light Infantry:D7, D9 x1 Auxillia: D2 x2 Medium Cavalry: C2, C12 x4 Leaders: C6 (Hamilcar) D3 (Boii Chief) C8 (Insubrian Noble) C10 (Celine Chief)

### **War Council:**

#### **Roman Army:**

Leader: Furius Purpureo

Command: 6 Cards

## **Galic Army:**

Leader: Hamilcar

Command: 5 Cards **Gauls Move First**

**Victory:** Victory for The Romans is 9 Banners for the Gauls 8 Banners—all scored normally, except the Roman receives 2 Banners if he eliminates Hamilcar and 1 Banner if Hamilcar is forced to evade off-map.

## **Special Rules:**

**Command:** All Leaders may cancel a retreat **or** a sword hit if present with the unit. Units on both sides involved in close combat with the support of a Leader may only count one helmet hit amongst those rolled to inflict a hit on an opposing unit.

**Only the overall Leaders for each side: Hamilcar and Furius Purpureo** can support a unit in an adjacent hex involved close-combat or battle-back—the other Leaders in the scenario can only assist a friendly unit in combat if stacked with that unit.

*Units and the Rally Card:* No unit can be rallied to beyond its strength at the start of the scenario. If a Player rolls “swords” when attempting to rally he may freely chose which unit gets a block back.

**Outflanking---***This is an easy way of introducing facing and flanks to the game with little fuss—it can be retrofitted to other scenarios where appropriate:*

A unit is said to be “Outflanked” if it is surrounded **in all** six adjacent hexes by either enemy units, or hexes adjacent to an enemy unit. The presence of friendly units or impassable terrain does not negate an “Outflanked” situation **in any way**. Units on the board edges (and not surrounded by six adjacent hexes) **cannot** be “Outflanked”. **Effects of being Outflanked:** “Outflanked” units when battling back roll only half the normal number of dice they would be normally entitled to rounded up—to a maximum of only two dice—“Outflanked” units when battling back **never** hit on helmet rolls even if supported by a leader. A unit’s “Outflanked” situation is judged at the instant it battles back.

**Barbarian Exhaustion:** Gallic Warrior units with one or two blocks remaining may not engage in momentum combat after advancing unless the unit has a friendly leader in the same hex with it.

**Barbarian Indiscipline:** No more than six Gallic units in a single linked “blob” of hexes may be ordered by the Gallic Player via play of a single line Command Card.

**Roman Cavalry Discipline:** Roman Medium Cavalry only retreat 2 hexes per Flag result taken.