

“Mago’s Last Stand”: The Battle of the Po in Insubrian Gaul 203 BC

Historical Background:

“Mago advanced into cisalpine Gaul as far as the territory of the Insubrians. The Proconsul M. Cornelius and the praetor Quinctilius with four legions moved to oppose him. It would have been perhaps wiser of Mago to avoid battle, and make his push southwards to join fortunes with his brother. But he chose to fight and displayed all the family skill and courage. The Roman cavalry was defeated by Mago’s elephants and the legions thrown into confusion. Victory appeared certain for Mago. But a Roman troop bravely attacked the elephants, which as usual, wheeled around on their friends and turned the tide. Serious wounds prevented Mago’s personal efforts to retrieve the disaster. The loss of the Carthaginians was five thousand; of the Romans twenty-three hundred killed, figures that show heavy fighting. Among the Romans were three military tribunes, twenty-two distinguished knights, and several centurions. The relics of the Carthaginian army retired to the coast. But a small portion of his forces reached Africa, for which place they had sailed on receiving the senate’s orders to return. Mago died on the voyage home.” (The above was from T.A. Dodge’s 1891 masterwork Hannibal p.592)

Terrain:

Unfordable River: A2, B1, C1, D1, E1

Hills: F1 E2 G1

Forest: H12, G13, A13

OB & Setup For “Mago’s Last Stand” 203 BC

Roman Army:

X4 Heavy Infantry C7, C8, B6, B7

X6 Medium Infantry C5, C6, C9, C10, B4, B9

X4 Light Infantry D4, D6, D8, D10 ??

X2 Auxillia C4, C11

X3 Medium Cavalry C3, C12, C13

X2 Leaders C5 (Quinctilius) C9 (Cornelius)

Mago’s Carthaginian Army:

X3 Light Balearic Slingers G5, G7, G9(see special rules for these elite troops)

X4 Warriors I4, I5, I6, I7(make up an add’l warrior unit from spare labels and blocks)

X3 Medium Infantry H4, H6, H8

X2 Light Infantry G3, G11

X2 Medium Cavalry G2, H12

X2 Auxillia H3, H10

X2 Elephants I8, I9

X2 Leaders H7 (Mago) H4 (Hanno)

War Council:

Roman Army:

Leader: Cornelius

4 Command Cards (Romans start with Line Command card & 3 random choices)

Move First

Carthaginian Army:

Leader: Mago

5 Command Cards (randomly chosen)

Victory:

9 Banners—but Romans get 2 Banners if they eliminate Mago, **and the first** eliminated Roman light infantry unit does not count for Carthaginian victory.

Special Scenario Rules:

- 1) **Balearic Slingers:** The Carthaginian Light Slingers are elite Balearic mercenaries, when firing their missiles at Roman Light (Green) units they hit on swords—in battle back they also hit on swords.
- 2) **Elephant Reserve Move:** Once per game the Carthaginian side can declare before playing their card for their player-turn a special “Elephant Reserve Move”...The Carthaginian Player may immediately move any of his elephant units not adjacent to the enemy up to 4 hexes as if the elephants were making a normal move, however this move may not enter hexes adjacent to enemy units. After the “Elephant Reserve Move” he plays his card normally and may even have the elephants move again and have combat—being ordered via the card. The Elephant Reserve Move may not be executed during the first two Carthaginian turns of the game.
- 3) **Leader Command Rules:** A Leader attached (stacked with) a friendly unit may cancel one sword hit on the unit **in lieu** of canceling a retreat hit. Mago can cancel **both** a retreat **and** a sword hit if present. A unit 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.

4) **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 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.