

## **“Swords of the Celts” Telamon 225 BC: Gallic Tribes vs. the Republic of Rome**

### **Historical Background:**

“When the Celts reached the vicinity of Telamon in Etruria, their foragers encountered Atilius’ advanced guard and were captured...This news astonished Atilius but also raised his hopes, because he believed he had trapped the Gauls between the two Roman armies while they were on the march...By a fortunate chance he had noticed some high ground which dominated the road the Celts had to pass, and so taking the cavalry with him galloped forward, as he was anxious to occupy the crest of the hill before the Celts came up....”

“...The Celts at first knew nothing of Atilius’ arrival (from Sardinia), and supposed that Paullus’ cavalry must have outflanked them during the night and were occupying positions ahead of their line of march. They therefore immediately sent out their cavalry and light armed troops to oppose the move to occupy the hill. But they soon learned of Atilius’ presence from a prisoner who was brought in. At this they hastily deployed their infantry so that the army faced in both directions, to the front and the rear....”

“...Meanwhile Paullus had received news that Atilius’ legions had landed at Pisae, but had never supposed they were so near him. However when he saw fighting in progress round the hill it was clear that the other Roman army was close at hand. He at once sent forward his cavalry to support Atilius’ attempt to capture the heights; then he drew up his infantry in their usual order and advanced against the enemy who barred his way. The Celts had posted the Alpine tribe of the Gaesatae to face their rear, the direction from which they expected Paullus to attack,...on their front, to meet the attack of Atilius’ legions, they had stationed the Taurisci and the Boii who came from the northern bank of the Po. Their waggons and chariots had been placed at the end of either wing, and the spoils they had captured had been collected and placed under guard on one of the neighbouring hills, This Celtic order of battle which faced both ways was not only awe-inspiring to see but was also well suited to the needs of the situation....”

“...At first the conflict was confined to the fighting round the hill, and because of the great numbers of cavalry which were locked in battle the rest of the three armies stood by and watched the contest. In this encounter Gaius Atilius lost his life, fighting with desperate courage in the thick of the action, and his head was brought to the Celtic King. But the Roman cavalry fought on stubbornly, and at length overcame their opponents and took possession of the heights. By this time the infantry were almost in contact, and the battlefield provided a strange and marvelous spectacle...”

“...In the first place, as the battle was fought between three armies, it is clear that the appearance and the movements of the forces must have been strange and unusual in the extreme. Secondly a spectator must have asked himself-as we do to this day-whether the Celts were in the more dangerous position with the enemy advancing upon them from both sides, or in the more favourable one, because they could fight both armies and had their rear protected from each, and above all because they were completely cut off from

retreat or from any possibility of escape if they were defeated; for this is the peculiarity of adopting an order of battle which faces both ways.”

“For their part the Romans felt encouraged at having trapped the enemy between their two armies, but at the same time dismayed by the splendid array of the Celtic host and the ear-splitting din which was created. There were countless horns and trumpets being blown simultaneously in their ranks, and as the whole army was shouting their war cries, there arose such a babel of sound that it seemed to come not only from the trumpets and the soldiers but from the whole surrounding countryside at once. Besides this aspect and the movements of the naked warriors in the front ranks made a terrifying spectacle. They were all men of splendid physique and in the prime of life, and those in the leading companies were richly adorned with gold necklaces and bracelets. The mere sight of them was enough to arouse fear among the Romans, but at the same time the prospect of gaining so much plunder made them twice as eager to fight.”

“However, when the Roman javelin-throwers, following the regular tactics of Roman warfare, advanced in front of the legions and began to hurl their weapons thick and fast, the cloaks and trousers of the Celts in the rear ranks gave some effective protection, but for the naked warriors in front the situation was very different. They had not foreseen this tactic and found themselves in a difficult and helpless situation. The shield used by the Gauls does not cover the whole body, so the tall stature of these naked troops made the missiles all the more likely to find their mark. After a while, when they found themselves unable to drive off the javelin throwers who were out of reach and continued to pour in their volleys, their nerve broke under the unbearable ordeal. Some of the men rushed forward in blind fury and threw their lives away as they tried to close with the enemy, while others gave ground and fell back step by step into the ranks of their comrades, where they created confusion since they were evidently backing away from the enemy. In this way the martial ardour of the Gaesatae was broken by an attack of the javelin. However, when the javelin throwers stepped back into the ranks of the infantry and the whole Roman line advanced upon the enemy, the Insubres, the Boii, and the Taurisci met the charge head-on and held their ground in fierce hand to hand fighting. Although the tribesmen were almost cut to pieces, yet they stood firm and proved that they were equal to their enemies in courage, and inferior only in their weapons, in which the Romans had the advantage, both individually and collectively. The Roman shields, I should explain, were far better designed for defence, and so were their swords for attack, since the Gallic sword can only be used for cutting and not for thrusting. The end came when the Celts were attacked by the Roman cavalry who delivered a furious charge from the high ground on the flank; the Celtic cavalry turned and fled, and their infantry were cut down where they stood.”

“Some 40,000 Celts were killed and at least 10,000 taken prisoner, among them their King, Concolitanus. The other King, Aneroestes, fled from the battle with a few followers, and found a refuge where he and his whole retinue took their own lives. The spoils and trophies of the Celts were collected by the surviving consul, Lucius Aemilius Pallus, who sent them to Rome...”

(From Book II of Polybius' Rise of the Roman Empire written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC)

### **Terrain Setup:**

Gallic Camp: E12 (actually the location of the Gallic Loot & Plunder)

X10 Hills: F12, E13, D12, D1, D2, E1, E2, E3, F1, F2

### **Order of Battle and Initial Setup for Telamon 225BC**

Gallic Tribes: x22 units and leaders (Use Carthaginian Blocks, but make up one extra Warrior unit and one extra Medium infantry unit from spare blocks and labels & also use the two warrior units from the “Roman Block” gray mix marking them with a single blank burgundy block on top to show which side they belong to )

X2 Chariot E4, E11 (see special rules below)

X2 Leaders D4 (King Concolitanus) F7 (King Aneroestes)

X4 Medium Infantry (Elite Warriors see special rules below) D7, D6, F6, F7

X2 Light Infantry E12, E5

X1 Auxillia :E9 (has no Missile Capability see special rules below)

X6 Warrior : D5, D8, D9, F6, F8, F9

X3 Medium Cav. D4, F4, F10

X2 Heavy cav. (Noble Cavalry see special rules below) D3, D10

Roman Armies—x27 units and leaders (use the Roman Blocks)

X4 Heavy Infantry: A7, A8, H6, H7

X8 Medium Infantry: A5, B6, B9, A10, G3, H3, H9, H10

X2 Auxillia: B4, B11

X5 Light Infantry: H4, H8, B6, B8, B10

X5 Medium Cavalry: B12, B2, B3, E2, F2

X3 Leaders F2 (Atilius), A7 (Paullus), and B4 (Legate)

### **War Council:**

Gallic Tribes:

Leader: King Aneroestes

4 Command Cards goes to 5 cards (draw an extra card) if a Gallic unit enters hex E2

Move First

Roman Armies:

Leaders: Paullus & Atilius (both are consuls)

6 Command Cards

### **Victory:**

The Roman Player wins by getting to 10 Banners The Gallic Player wins by getting to 12 banners. The Gallic Player scores one Banner the instant his units occupy hex E2. The Roman Player scores one Banner the instant his units occupy hex E12. Both Players may lose the banner they gained from entering these hexes if their opponent subsequently reenters the hex they gained the banner in, at any time thereafter.

### **Special Scenario Rules:**

**1) Retreat and Evasion:** (these rules were added due to the unique layout, ferocity, & character of this battle)

**a) Retreats:** Units in this game, if retreated due to a flag result, only retreat one hex if infantry, or one or two hexes (owner's choice) if cavalry units per flag result inflicted and not ignored or canceled. Retreats may be **in any** direction (if a two hex retreat, however it must end 2 hexes away) as long as the retreat route does not pass adjacent to an enemy unit—**units may never retreat through or into hexes adjacent to enemy units.** The Gallic Chariots are never and may never be retreated due to a flag result inflicted upon them

**b) Evasion:** Gallic units in the game **may never** attempt evasion if attacked in close combat. Roman units may evade **in any** direction if allowed to evade per the rules, but the hexes they evade into or through may not be adjacent to Gallic units--Roman units may never evade through or into hexes adjacent to enemy units.

Leaders if they evade/retreat and survive, evade simply to the nearest hex occupied by a friendly unit (owner picks if two or more friendly units equidistant)

**2) Gallic Elite Warriors:** All Gallic medium infantry units are treated as Warriors for all purposes, they are Elite Warriors—in addition they receive one extra dice the very first time in the scenario they battle back or engage in close combat as long as the unit still has three or more blocks.

### **3) Gallic Auxillia and Noble cavalry:**

a) The Gallic Auxillia unit has no missile capability.

b) All Gallic Heavy Cavalry are considered to be Noble Cavalry—they move three hexes, their normal Close Combat dice is 3 dice (not 4) --- in addition they receive one extra dice the very first time in the scenario they battle back or engage in close combat as long as the unit still has two or more blocks

**4) Gallic Chariots:** (These units played more of a blocking role than a combat one in the battle—likely some of the Gallic vehicles were war chariots, but the main purpose they were used for at Telamon was to protect the Gallic flanks at each end of their double line)

a) Gallic Chariots may only move one hex when moving

b) The only way to inflict hits on Gallic Chariots is to engage them in Close Combat or Battle Back and roll the matching “red” symbol. Gallic Chariots are totally immune to Roman Missile fire—Gallic Chariots totally ignore any Flag hits inflicted on them—Flag results are always No effect.

c) Gallic Chariots normally roll only 2 dice in close combat or battle back—but may have that increased through the + # on the cards if ordered by such cards.

### **5) Special Leader Rules:**

A Leader attached (stacked with) a friendly unit may cancel one sword hit on the unit **in lieu** of canceling a retreat hit.

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.

### **6) Gallic Line Commands**

The maximum number of units the Gallic player may move/order with a Line Command Card is five units.