

“The Final Battle” Zama: 202 BC

The Stakes:

“After this exchange, which offered no prospect of a compromise, Hannibal and Scipio parted, and the next morning both generals led out their forces and engaged. The Carthaginians were fighting for their very survival and the possession of Africa, the Romans for the empire and the sovereignty of the world. Is there indeed anyone who, once he has grasped the situation, can remain unmoved when he reads the story of this battle? It would be impossible to find more warlike soldiers, or generals who had been more successful or were more thoroughly versed in the art of war, nor had Fortune ever offered the opposing armies a greater prize than this, since the victors were destined to become the masters not only of Africa and Europe but of all parts of the world known to history. And this, indeed, proved to be the outcome.” (Polybius, Book XV The Rise of the Roman Empire)

The Historical Background:

“...By the time the dispositions had been completed on both sides the two opposing contingents of Numidian horse had both been skirmishing for some while, and it was then that Hannibal ordered the drivers of his elephants to charge the enemy. But when the sound of (Roman) trumpets and bugles pierced the air all around them (due to Scipio’s plan), some of the animals panicked, turned tail, and stampeded to the rear, colliding with the squadrons of Numidian cavalry which had come to support the Carthaginians...The rest of the elephants charged the Roman velites...and killed many of them, but also suffered heavy losses themselves. Then finally all the beasts took fright; some of them escaped by way of the gaps between the maniples...while others fled towards the right wing...and, in the end, stampeded clean off the battlefield. It was at that moment that Laelius, taking advantage of the confusion caused by the elephants, launched a charge against the Carthaginian cavalry, drove them back in headlong flight and pressed the pursuit, as did Masinissa on the right wing. Meanwhile the two opposing bodies of heavy infantry were advancing on each other at a slow and resolute pace, except for the troops whom Hannibal had brought with him from Italy, who remained in their original positions. When the two armies arrived within striking distance, the Roman troops charged the enemy uttering their war-cry and clashing their swords against their shields as is their custom, while from the mercenaries on the Carthaginian side there arose a strange babel of shouts and yells, but, as Homer says of the Trojan army, “

‘Here was no common language;
Many and strange were the tongues of this host
Many and far-off their homelands’

“...The whole battle then became a hand to hand struggle of man against man . In this contest the skill and courage of the mercenaries at first gave them the advantage and they succeeded in wounding great numbers of the Romans. Even so the steadiness of their ranks and the superiority of their weapons enabled Scipio’s men to make their adversaries give ground. All this while the rear ranks of the Romans kept close behind their comrades

and cheered them on, but the Carthaginians by contrast shrank back in a cowardly fashion and failed to support the mercenaries. The result was that at last the barbarians themselves gave way; it seemed to them that they had been abandoned by their own side, and so as they retreated they turned upon the soldiers in their rear and began to cut them down. This action forced the Carthaginians to die bravely in spite of themselves, for when they found they were being slaughtered by the mercenaries, they were obliged quite against their will to fight both the barbarians and the Romans at the same time: when they had been brought to bay they defended themselves with desperate courage and killed a great number both of the mercenaries and the enemy. This counter-attack by the Carthaginians even threw some of the maniples of the hastati into confusion, but as soon as the officers of the principes saw what was happening, they held their own ranks firm, and most of the mercenaries and the Carthaginians were cut down where they stood, either by their own side or by the hastati. Hannibal then barred the fleeing survivors from entering the ranks of his veterans; he ordered his rear ranks to level their spears and hold the men off when they approached, and they were obliged to take refuge on the wings or in the open country. “

“The space between the two corps which still remained on the field was by now covered with blood, corpses and wounded men, and the physical obstacle created by the enemy’s rout presented a difficult problem to the Roman general. Everything combined to make it hard for him to advance without losing formation: the ground slippery with gore, the corpses lying in blood drenched heaps, and the spaces between encumbered with arms that had been thrown away at random. However Scipio first arranged for his wounded to be carried to the rear, and next for those of the hastati who were pursuing the enemy. Then he regrouped the hastati in the forefront of the ground where the battle had just been fought, and opposite the enemy’s centre, and ordered the principes and tiiarii to deploy and, picking their way over the dead, to take up position in close order on both the wings and in line with the hastati. When they had made their way over these obstacles and the line been formed, the two main bodies hurled themselves upon one another with the greatest ardour and fury. Since they were equally matched not only in numbers but also in courage, in warlike spirit and in weapons, the issue hung for a long while in the balance. Many fell on both sides, fighting with fierce determination where they stood, but at length the squadrons of Masinissa and of Laelius returned from their pursuit of the Carthaginian cavalry and arrived by stroke of fortune at the crucial moment. When they charged Hannibal’s troops from the rear, the greater number of his men were cut down in their ranks, while of those who took to flight only a few escaped, since the cavalry were close upon their heels and the ground was level. The Romans lost over 1,500 men, but of the Carthaginians more than 20,000 were killed and almost as many were taken prisoner.”

“This was the result of the final battle between these two commanders, which decided the war. When the fighting was over Scipio moved forward in pursuit of the enemy, plundered the Carthaginian camp and then returned to his own. Hannibal, who was escorted by a few horsemen, did not draw rein until he arrived safely in Hadrumentum. During the battle he had used every resource which a good general of long experience could be expected to employ...”(Polybius, Book XV The Rise of the Roman Empire)

Scenario Notes:

The scenario is a “Deluxe Zama” version of the Zama scenario found in the rulebook. A few more units on each side are added and the initial battle order on the map is adjusted to reflect the probable alignment and battle plan of the two armies. The special scenario rules also make allowances for the peculiar battle order adopted by Hannibal, the quality and character of the troops and elephants, and Scipio’s pause to re-organize his troops.

Terrain: No terrain tiles are used—the field between and around the armies is the typical flat plain ancient battleground.

Order of Battle for Deluxe Zama 202 BC and Initial Setup

Carthaginian Army x20 cavalry/infantry units & x4 elephant units + 2 Leaders

X4 Elephants (use one of the Roman Elephant units and designate with a blank Carthaginian. Block on top) E4, E6, E8, E10

X3 Warriors D6, D7, D8

X1 Balearic Slings (elite troops see special rules below) D9

X2 Light Infantry D5, C3

X4 Auxillia (raw levies from Carthage see special rules below) C6, C7, C8, C9

X4 Medium Infantry (make up one extra unit from spares) B4, B5, B9, B10

X3 Heavy Infantry B6, B7, B8

X2 Light Cavalry D2, D3

X1 Medium Cavalry C11

X2 Leaders B7 (Hannibal) B10 (Hanno)

Roman/ Numidian Allied Army: x21 units + 3 Leaders

X4 Heavy Infantry I7, H6, H7, G7

X6 Medium Infantry H4, G5, G9, H9, G11, H11

X4 Light Infantry G6, G8, G10, G3,

X1 Auxillia: G4

X4 Light Cavalry (designate one available Medium Cavalry as Light Cavalry and indicate with a spare gray block on top) F1, F2, G1, H1

X2 Medium Cavalry G12, G13

X3 Leaders H6 (Scipio) F1 (Masinissa) G12 (Laelius)

Order of Battle Notes: *Hannibal had about 50,000 men on the field, mainly infantry, with very few cavalry along with, as Polybius specifically states, “over eighty” elephants . Scipio had about 40,000+ in the battle, about 10-12,000 of them being Numidian allies led by Masinissa. The only troops Hannibal could firmly rely on were the 20,000 or so veterans that he brought back with himself from Italy, the remainder were either unreliable mercenaries, mainly left over from his now dead brother Mago’s army or raw newly recruited Carthaginian and African levies. Hannibal’s plan was to keep his veteran ‘Army of Italy’ out of the initial clash and disorganize the Romans with the elephants first and the other expendable forces arrayed in two more lines, so that his Italian veterans in the final line of battle could finish the fight and have every chance to break the Roman legions. The annals tell us that the Carthaginian battle order crafted by Hannibal almost succeeded in achieving its goal.*

War Council:

Roman/Allied Numidian Army:

Leader: Scipio

6 Command Cards (5 randomly chosen & 1 Line Command Card)

Carthaginian Army:

Leader: Hannibal

6 Command Cards (5 randomly chosen & 1 Line Command Card)

Move First

Victory:

8 Banners—but all units & leaders are not worth the same, below is listed the banners received by the players for eliminating different enemy units/leaders:

Roman Player receives:

1 Banner for each eliminated Carth. Heavy or Medium infantry or Hanno

2 Banners for eliminating Hannibal

½ Banner for eliminating any other Carthaginian unit except the elephants

The Roman Player scores zero(0) banner for eliminating the Carth. Elephant units

The Carthaginian Player receives:

1 Banner for each eliminated Roman Heavy or Medium infantry/cavalry or Leader other than Scipio

2 Banners for eliminating Scipio

½ Banner for eliminating any other Roman unit

Scenario Special Rules:

Scipio's Noise Attack on the Carthaginian Elephants

Before the very start of the very first Carthaginian turn in the scenario roll one dice for each Carthaginian elephant unit on the map. On a Flag result initiate a normal retreat result on the elephant unit complete with any adverse stampede results. On a Blue result treat the elephant exactly as if it **had two normal** Retreat results inflicted on it. On a Red result remove one block from the Elephant unit. A helmet result prevents the Carthaginian Player from ordering that elephant unit in his first Player-turn. The other results (sword or green color) have no effect on the elephant unit. The noise attack only happens once per game, right at the start of play.

Raw Carthaginian Troops & Untrained Elephants

The Carthaginian Auxillia represent raw troops recently raised in Carthage and the surrounding Punic towns. All Carthaginian Auxilla has no missile capability, Carthaginian Auxillia reduced to one or two blocks at the start of a combat only have two dice normally in close-combat or battle-back as opposed to the standard three dice. Hannibal's Elephants seemed to have been a somewhat raw and untrained lot given how easily they panicked in the battle so follow these rules—a) when reduced to one block they always roll one less dice than normal when attacking in close combat or battling back—and this effect takes effect **immediately** upon the elephant being reduced to one

block. b) The Carthaginian Elephants may only attempt close combat attacks against Roman Light Infantry units on the very first Carthaginian turn of the game—other Roman units may not be attacked that player-turn by the Carthaginian Elephants except as a result of a Momentum move and attack

Elite 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.

Carthaginian Infighting & Warrior Movement

If the retreat of a Carthaginian Warrior unit is blocked by the presence of two other Carthaginian units one block is removed from one of the blocking Carthaginian units. The Roman Player determines which unit suffers the removal. Carthaginian Warrior units may never move two hexes and attack through normal card play (although they could move two hexes and then **must attack** if ordered with a “Double-time” card, ignore the reference to a possible three hex Warrior move **on that** card)

Outflanking

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.

Command Rules:

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

A unit **in the same hex with** Hannibal or Scipio can count up to two helmets when inflicting hits in close combat or battle back rather than just one.

Scipio’s Pause for Regrouping:

Once per game, the Roman Player may—**in lieu of taking his Player-turn**, announce a pause to regroup his forces. **All** Roman Medium and Heavy Infantry units **not** adjacent to the Carthaginians **and within** four hexes of the Scipio Leader block gain back one eliminated block each. This pause may not be announced if Scipio is no longer on the map or if Scipio is located in a hex adjacent to a Carthaginian unit.