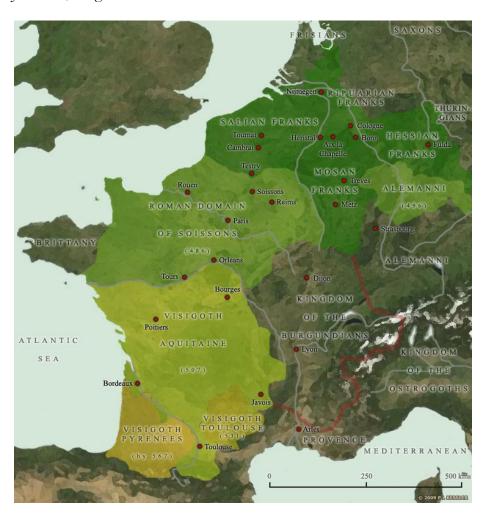# The Battle of Averne 469 AD

"Now Eurich, king of the Visigoths, perceived the frequent change of Roman Emperors and strove to hold Gaul by his own right. The Emperor Anthemius heard of it and asked the Brittones for aid. Their King Riotimus came with twelve thousand men into the state of the Bituriges by the way of Ocean, and was received as he disembarked from his ships.

Eurich, king of the Visigoths, came against them with an innumerable army, and after a long fight he routed Riotimus, king of the Brittones, before the Romans could join him. So when he had lost a great part of his army, he fled with all the men he could gather together, and came to the Burgundians, a neighboring tribe then allied to the Romans. But Eurich, king of the Visigoths, seized the Gallic city of Arverna; for the Emperor Anthemius was now dead. Engaged in fierce war with his son-in-law Ricimer, he had worn out Rome and was himself finally slain by his son-in-law and yielded the rule to Olybrius "

Jordanes; Origins and Deeds of the Goths.

Gaul in the period after the Battle.

The Scenario

Riothamus is often conflated with the title, High King. Sometimes he is equated with the legendary King Arthur, High King of the Britons. In terms of British History this period of 460-70 AD may represent the time when Ambrosius Aurelianus and the Romano-British have successfully contained the Saxon Revolt and regained control of most of Britain.

Soon after the defeat of Riothamus and the large British contingent (who are never heard of again) the Saxons once again become active. In 473 the Men of Kent, under Hengest, move westward, driving Britons back before them "*as one flees fire.*" In 473 the Saxon chieftain, Aelle, lands on Sussex coast with his sons. Britons engage him upon landing but his superior force besieges them at Pevensey (Anderida) and drives them into the Weald. Over the next nine years, Saxon coastal holdings are gradually expanded in Sussex. It is not until a later "King Arthur "figure defeats the Saxons in the 490's that the situation is brought back under control.

What if Riothamus and the Romans had been better able to co-ordinate their forces? If Riothamus and his forces had survived to return home the situation would clearly have been very different for Aelle and the South Saxons. Could such a reversal have changed the course of British History as well as the situation in Gaul?

The scenario therefore represents Riothamus and his Britons linking up with the Romans under Ecdicius in the region of Averne and thus able to meet with Euric on more equal terms.

Jordanes tells us of Ecidius; "*He was a senator of most renowned family and the son of Avitus, a recent emperor who had usurped the reign for a few days--for Avitus held the rule for a few days before Olybrius, and then withdrew of his own accord to Placentia, where he was ordained bishop*".

Euric was the ruthless King of the Visigoths who had murdered his own brother King Theodoric II in 466 AD in order to seize power. He was eventually destined to rule over Southern France and Spain.

The Battle

The Battle will be fought in one session, VPs calculated at the end. These were clearly treacherous times though (Riothamus was said to have been betrayed by the Roman Prefect of Gaul, Arvandus) so the game is best played with a view to individual victory. Draws are possible so in the case of a tie award victory to the surviving general on the winning side with the least VD lost in their command.

The Roman force is split between British (troops from across the Loire) and Roman (troops from Averne and Italy) contingents. The Visigothic army was probably more cohesive but in the interests of a challenging game they have been split between the Visigothic command, loyal to the rising fortunes of King Euric, an "Ostrogothic" command of "allies" newly arrived from the East and Visigoths who had previously been loyal to Theodoric and a "Saxon" Command of Northern Germanic and Frankish mercenaries.

Visigoths

King Euric wins if the Visigoths win and he survives and his command loses less VD than the Ostrogoths.

The Ostrogoths win if the Visigoths win and either Euric dies or the Ostrogoths lose only ¼ of their VD.

The Saxons win if the Visigoths win and Riothamus dies or they lose only ¼ of their VD. In a four player game the Saxons can be considered as a neutral command following Euric's orders without any individual victory conditions.

Romans

Riothamus wins if the Romans win and he survives and his command loses less VD than the Averne Romans. Ecdicius wins if the Romans win and either Euric dies or they lose only ¼ of their command.

Setup

The board should be laid out with dense woods to the west and a central hill. A road and small stream may also be included but have no effect on gameplay. The ground is gently undulating with scattered copses, fields or orchards which have no effect on movement or visibility in terms of gameplay but can be included for aesthetic purposes and moved if necessary. Troops in the woods count as in Difficult Ground and troops on the large central hill receive a height bonus in combat and visibility is restricted to 15U/5U.

The Visigoths have bribed the Hunnic mercenaries hired by the Romans who have thus betrayed them and led them into danger before switching sides. The Visigoths should therefore record the relative position of their commands and any troops they wish to place in ambush in the dense woods or behind the large central hill. The Romans then deploy on the southern edge with their baggage and first command up to 9" from the base line but not within 12" from the edges. The Visigoths then do the same on the opposite edge. Troops can be deployed on Opportunity. Troops can march on through the Baggage which can be temporarily removed or reduced if necessary for the first turn. All generals must be deployed with VD3 units.

King Euric has One Die Roll of Destiny which he can use to re-roll a cohesion test or force Riothamus to repeat a Cohesion Test.

Riothamus rides out to face King Euric and his destiny.