



In the summer of 451 AD, the Roman general Aetius assembled a military force to resist the advances of Attila the Hun.

Theodoric, King of the Visigoths, was among those forces gathered at the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields. He, and his men, were part of the forces allied against the Huns.

Jordanes, the ancient historian, describes the “monstrous” nature of the hand-to-hand combat:

Hand to hand they clashed in battle, and the fight grew fierce, confused, monstrous, unrelenting—a fight whose like no ancient time has ever recorded...For if we may believe our elders a brook flowing between low banks through the plain was greatly increased by blood from the wounds of the slain.

Theodoric was among those who had died.

In this image, Angus McBride—the highly prolific and respected artist who (until his death in 2007) specialized in historical and military subjects—imagines how that scene may have appeared so many thousands of years ago.

Attila, meanwhile, believed he would also die. Aetius and his men had him surrounded. Then ... for whatever reason ... Aetius decided he would end the battle, convincing Theodoric’s son (Torismond) that he should attend to matters at home.

When Torismond and his Visigoths withdrew, the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains was effectively over.

Attila, to his own surprise, was still alive.

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Flavius Aetius

Image of Flavius Aetius from *Ancient History for Colleges and High Schools: Part II - A Short History of the Roman People*, by William F. Allen; Ginn & Company, Boston, 1895. (See page 331.) Online, courtesy Google Books.

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