

Ancient World Volume I

Rise of the Roman Republic

BY STEVE CAREY

"Early Rome and the Romans were only one of a number of peoples and settlements in Iron Age Italy."

— Nicholas Sekunda,
EARLY ROMAN ARMIES,
Osprey Publishing, 1995

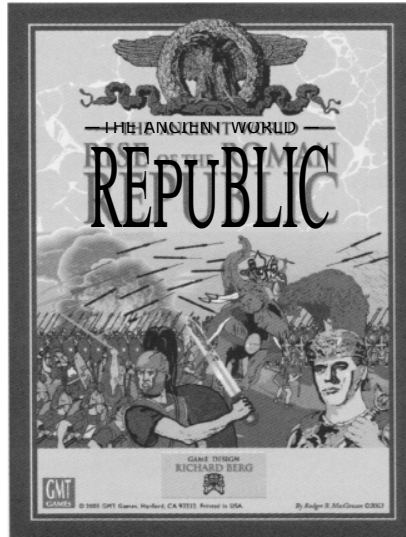
There was a time in our hobby when Ancient-themed designs, like those that covered World War One, were considered to be poor candidates for successful publication. However, with popular GMT LLC releases like *Paths of Glory*, *Reds!*, *Clash of Giants*, and *Grand Illusion* most of us are now aware that multi-award winning designer Ted Raicer has brought early 20th Century warfare to the forefront of the hobby. Many of us have enjoyed discovering that the WWI environment is a viable setting for insightful and exciting game play.

Well, prolific designer Richard Berg rarely sits idle, and his *Rise of the Roman Republic* (hereafter *RRR*), the first volume in *The Ancient World* series, has the potential to now draw in a large number of gamers into the ancient fold. Epic marches, titanic sieges, climatic battles, risky naval maneuvers, treachery, tribal conflicts, diplomatic actions, and much more from the sword and sandal era can be faithfully recreated in *RRR*. There are a variety of forces to command, including the Samnites, Epirotes, Gauls, Greeks, Carthaginians, and of course the Romans. Grand in its scope, and rich in history, *RRR* is a breakthrough design that amply rewards any individual who takes the time to grasp its innovative mechanics. Let's take a brief look at some of the core aspects of *RRR* so as to impart a better feel for just what the system has to offer.

INITIATIVE

"The level at which the army fought was dictated by local circumstances, though it was always aggressive. The emphasis on the offensive remained central to Roman military doctrine until late antiquity."

— Adrian Goldsworthy,
REASSESSING CAESAR'S
GENERALSHIP, *MHQ* Vol.15 #3
Primedia Inc, Spring 2003



Being able to assertively implement one's strategy is a crucial element in *The Ancient World* system. Each Leader in the game receives an Initiative Rating ranging from a lowly '1' (many early Roman Leaders) to a lofty '4' (Hannibal). At the start of each turn, each Leader gets a number of Leader Activation Markers (LAMs) placed into a cup equal to his Initiative (*Play Note: Roman Praetors only receive 1 LAM, regardless of their ratings*). The LAMs are drawn at random, resulting in Initiative often shifting back and forth between the players. Obviously, the more LAMs that you have in the cup the more opportunities that your leader will have to activate. This is a smooth, solitary-friendly, method to simulate the chaos of war.

LEADERS

"The accomplishments of Hannibal... were enough to permanently etch his name among the greatest military leaders in history."

— Jonas L. Goldstein, LCDR, USN (ret.),
HANNIBAL AND THE SECOND
PUNIC WAR, *Military Heritage* Vol.3 #1,
Sovereign Media, August 2001

As Hannibal Barca so ably demonstrated during his initial invasion of Roman Italy in 218 B.C. (*Play Note: covered in RRR via the 'Thunderbolt' scenario*), leadership is the key component in *The Ancient World* Units

basically can't do anything except defend without a Leader. There exists a large variety of Operations that a Leader can undertake, including Movement, Diplomacy, Attack, Siege, etc. Some Operations mandate that a Leader is Finished (i.e., done for that LAM) after performing the action, while others allow him to roll against his Campaign Rating in hopes of continuing the move. Overall Commanders (OCs) are designated for all sides, each having special abilities such as moving unled Allies, sending Ambassadors, bringing on a replacement Leader, or raising Manpower. A brilliant Leader such as Hannibal has the capability to have a tremendous effect on play, as it should be.

Leaders also have a unique ability to expend Guile points in a variety of ways. Romans may want to use their Guile to influence the Senate or to help them avoid a battle (*Play Note: the Romans, who were often hesitant to shy away from battle for political reasons, have a harmful +4 drm to their Avoidance rolls*). Or perhaps the leader would rather use his Guile to try and take a besieged city via Treachery. Also, leaders are historically rated for their Mortality — after all, who wants to live forever without glory?

When taken together as a total package, *RRR* presents a smooth and intuitive method for reflecting the crucial element of leadership at all levels of ancient warfare.

MOVEMENT

"His route, via the Rhone and the Alps, had been well prepared... by reconnaissance, and he expected to live off the land during his long march. Hannibal may have lost upward of one-quarter of his entire force during the march."

— John Warty, WARFARE IN THE
CLASSICAL WORLD, University of
Oklahoma Press, reprinted 1995

The most noticeable difference between *RRR* and most other wargames is that units have no movement allowances. As forces march on the map, they accumulate Attrition Points in each province depending on the type of terrain traversed (*Play Note: Devastated provinces double attrition costs*).

Rise of the Roman Republic: *Ancient World Volume 1*

Basically, when attempting anything else other than movement, a force must Stop and roll on the Attrition Table for troops lost. Also, when a force finally does cease its movement, it likewise checks for attrition based on the total Points accumulated. Players have the option of moving their soldiers as far as they want during the yearly turns, but an extended campaign will likely result in heavy attrition losses.

Players may choose to have their forces engage in short marches, thus reducing attrition, but then run the risk of not being able to finish their move if the Leader *fails* his Continuation roll. How to conduct Movement is one of the most agonizing, yet important, decision making opportunities in the game.

Another novel element of **RRR** involving movement is that the map reflects three different eras of roads, and one must be aware of which networks exist and which don't at any given time. This actually is an easier task than it sounds since the roads are clearly delineated on the beautiful Mark Simonitch map.

Interceptions, Double Envelopments, Battle Coordination, River Control, Ambush, Overrun, and Movement into or outside of Cities are all covered, providing tremendous 'feel' for those engaging in these ancient campaigns.

NAVAL SUPERIORITY SYSTEM

"There had been little need for warships of any size during Rome's steady conquest of Italy, for even those enemies who possessed a navy could be reached and defeated on land by the legions."

— *Adrian Goldsworthy,*
THE PUNIC WARS,
Cassell & Co., 2000

Playing a decidedly secondary role in **RRR** the struggles on the sea are effortlessly covered via a simple and abstract naval system. The map has separated sea zones marked off, each having a varied level of superiority for the opposing sides. Players do have some measure of control here as they are allowed to reallocate their naval assets (*Play Note: only one point of naval strength may be removed from each separate sea zone per turn, but any gathered points may be relocated into a single sea zone without limit*), and to also perform naval construction.

There are no naval vessels or fleet combat per se in **RRR**, with such actions as Straight Crossings, Naval Transport, and Port Capabilities all being handled via a set of various charts and tables. Overall, the naval system provided in **RRR** has enough flavor to satisfy, without detracting from the main (land operations) portion of the game.

The next projected volume in this series (Carthage) will include more detailed rules for Naval operations and sea combat.

LAND COMBAT

"The terror of battle seems not the mere killing of humankind but the awful metamorphosis that turns on a massive scale flesh to pulp, clean to fold the courageous to the weeping and defecating. in a matter of minutes."

— *Victor Davis Hanson,*
CARNAGE AND CULTURE,
Doubleday, 2001

Once Battle is joined, land combat resolution is a tense aspect of **RRR**. The risks are high, and don't expect battles to be easy victories for the Romans because they will face some formidable foes. In addition to their other aforementioned ratings, Leaders also possess Battle Letters (A through E) to showcase their talents in combat. Each player rolls on the Tactical Chart to see how his Leader's performance is reflected in the current battle, so it's possible (though unlikely) that a poor Leader can outsmart a higher rated Leader (hey, anyone can have a bad day).

Cavalry superiority, so crucial to the ancient battlefield, is duly represented. Not only will extra cavalry give you a better chance of winning the combat, but more horse will also realistically raise the defeated enemy's losses in retreat via a Pursuit & Butchery rule.

There's a lot of chrome in combat, but it's really quite manageable. Roman command limits, Elephants, Elite units, Subordinate Leaders, Roman Veteran Legions, etc., can all be factors in battle. And don't rely on the odds to guarantee a win for you; there's a chance of rolling an 'Unpredictable' result in battle, with the final outcome being...well, unpredictable.

If the defeated side had 20+ strength points (*Play Note: or upon successfully resolving a Siege of a Large or Medium City,*

regardless of garrison) and also suffered at least twice as many casualties as his prevailing opponent, a Major Victory is achieved. Such a Major Victory may offer the opportunity of a Triumph to the Roman commander, or may affect the Diplomatic loyalty of provinces in the immediate area. A function called After Battle Status will also affect both sides in the larger battles, realistically reflecting the exhaustion and loss of cohesion suffered by the participating troops. Combat fitness can be recovered when troops rest inside a city for an entire Campaign Phase with an active leader, or during the Recovery Phase of the end-turn sequence.

CITIES AND SIEGES

"Blockade was the most common and successful means of taking a city... but it was still a difficult task, requiring a sizeable force to remain in one area for a long period of time. Almost as many cities fell to treachery as to conventional means."

— *Adrian Goldsworthy,*
THE PUNIC WARS,
Cassell & Co., 2000

Sieges were an integral part of ancient warfare, and once a city is actually placed Under Siege (*Play Note: a separate Operation on its own mandating the leader to be Finished — it takes time to place those siegeworks*), **RRR** offers a variety of ways to capture enemy strongholds. First, a player will try to reduce the occupants via a Attrition rolls whenever any of the three Siege LAMs are drawn. This represents the ravages of disease and starvation over time, not only upon the besieged defenders, but also (usually to a lesser effect) upon the attackers as well. Next, using the Leader's Campaign Rating and Guile points, players may consult the Treachery Table to influence a defending garrison into betrayal (*Play Note: unoccupied cities may not be taken via treachery*). Also, Involuntary Surrender is another possibility if the besieging army has a show of force consisting of infantry that is at least ten times the city's siege defense strength. And finally, the direct method of City Assault may be employed, using a single siege engine if one is available (*Play Note: remember to check for Leader casualties after any city assault*).

While often necessary, sieges can be a lengthy and costly undertaking.

Rise of the Roman Republic

MANPOWER

"Non-Romans and Greeks of the ancient world could always mobilize enormous numbers of warriors, but in no sense did these tribal musterings and mercenary armies constitute a nation of arms. Not a single one of Rome's formidable adversaries in the centuries to come would ever grasp this Western dual idea of free citizen/soldier."

— Victor Davis Hanson,
CARNAGE AND CULTURE,
Doubleday, 2001

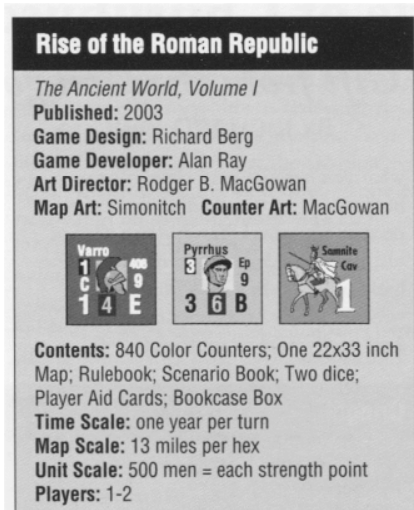
Another fascinating element of **RRR** is how manpower is portrayed. Covered almost entirely by the Exclusive rules, the raising of legions, tribes going into revolt, allied levies, etc., are again handled via a series of various charts and tables. When raised, legions start off in 'recruit' status, but can be upgraded to 'veterans' via training in Rome or being victorious in combat. The resiliency of Rome is nicely shown in **RRR**—the worse the war goes, the better chance that the Roman player has of raising more troops. Manpower levels can be a tricky area to portray in any game, but **RRR** does a fine job in making things relatively easy, and even quite entertaining.

MILITARY CONTROL

"To the victor, the potential of new territory and dominion; to the vanquished the humility of subjugation."

— Chris Wheatley (editor),
introduction to BARBARIANS
AGAINST ROME, Osprey
Publishing, reprinted 2000

Conquering and subjugating a neighboring people was a common form of foreign policy during ancient times. In **RRR**, there are two ways to control a province: Military and Diplomatic. Military control involves occupying all the Large and Medium sized cities in a province, plus one of the smaller cities. If no large or medium cities are present, then two-thirds of the Small cities must be taken (*Play Note: unlike large or Medium cities, Small cities do not have to be garrisoned to retain control*). Failure to meet these requirements results in the province immediately reverting back to the control of the prior owner. And in *The Ancient World* might makes right — Military Control always takes precedence over Diplomatic Control.



DIPLOMATIC CONTROL

"Rome ruled a tranquil world primarily because she cowed her enemies..."

— Robert L. O'Connell,
THE ROMAN KILLING MACHINE,
MHQ Inc., Autumn 1988

When the sword is impractical, players may utilize firm Diplomacy to pacify natives and gain control of their lands. An Alliance chart keeps track of the various loyalty/hostility levels for the provincial tribes/minor nations that are scattered about the map. These provinces can be pro-Roman, non-Roman, or Independent. From the mighty orange-men of Syracuse, to the relatively minor Italian tribes like Lucania, there is a lot of variety here. Certain intimidating events like devastating a province or concluding a successful siege will affect diplomatic status. And it's not easy to entice a province back to your side once it joins the enemy since the Alliance Track must be shifted all the way to the maximum (level 4) in your favor before the changeover takes place. Still, in *The Ancient World*, peace is sometimes preferable to war.

AUGURIES

"Polybius found the Romans' obsessive adherence to obscure religious rites at times of crisis rather odd, but we should never doubt its importance to the Romans themselves."

— Adrian Goldsworthy,
THE PUNIC WARS,
Cassell & Co., 2000

Ancient peoples went to great lengths to curry the favor of the gods. These omens are represented as Random Events in the

game. The two larger scenarios in **RRR** have augury tables reflecting droughts, illness, political intrigue, rampaging Gauls, and the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, to name just a few. You just have to love a game that has an erupting volcano rule!

CONCLUSION

"Roman military history is chequered by catastrophes. Few great empires can sustain more major disasters during the period of their growth."

— John Warry,

WARFARE IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD,
University of Oklahoma Press, reprinted 1995

All the above is represented in just the core of *The Ancient World* system, being contained within the Standard Rules. Move on to the Exclusive booklet to explore the intricacies of the Roman political system and other scenario-specific rules. **RRR** indeed has multiple levels of complexity, and it's best to be prepared because the politics of Rome will take some getting used to. But if you're like me, the more time that's spent with this system the more enjoyment you will get out of it. Just like attempting to establish the historical Roman Empire, **RRR** provides a challenging, yet ultimately rewarding, gaming experience.

SIMPLEGBoH BATTLE MANUAL



Simple Great Battles of History has come to the pages of *C3i Magazine* in force. Based on the award winning *GBoH*

series design of Mark Herman and Richard Berg, this Special *C3i* Publication contains *SimpleGBoH* versions of every *GBoH* battle that has been included in the back issues of *C3i* from issue Nr.1-to-14, and also the *SPQR-C3i Player's Guide*. Nearly sixty *GBoH* battles are featured in this *NEW* publication. It will consist of a playbook in the same style as the original *SBGoH Packet*, plus a sheet of *GBoH* counters. The *SimpleGBoH Battle Manual* is edited by Alan Ray (*Great Battles of History Series Developer*) and Rodger B. MacGowan (*C3i Editor*).

Pre-Order your copy by going to the *P500* section of our website at

www.gmtgames.com
or call (800) 523-6111

Please mention this ad with your order.