

GBOH MODULE PREVIEW

The Battle of Crimissos River, 341 BC

BY DAN FOURNIE

The Sacred Band of Carthage face the Phalanx of Syracuse.

Crimissos was one of the decisive battles in the recurring wars that pitted Carthage against the Greeks of Syracuse. Two additional Greek-Carthaginian battles may soon be available in the planned **Great Battles of Alexander Module, Tyrant** (soon to be on the P500 List later this year).

Historical Background, 814-485 BC
Long before Hannibal led the armed forces of Carthage into a titanic struggle with Rome, Carthage had vied for centuries with the Greek city of Syracuse for supremacy in the Western Mediterranean. Traditionally, Carthage was founded in 814 (all dates BC) by Phoenician Tyre, and Syracuse less than a century later in 733, by the Greek city-state of Corinth. This was part of a great westward colonizing movement of these two seafaring peoples. At first, there seemed to be plenty of room for both Phoenician and Greek colonists in the West. However, as colonies multiplied, two distinct spheres of influence developed. The Phoenicians were dominant in the south and West, in North Africa, southern Spain, Sardinia and Western Sicily. The Greeks held sway in the North and East, from Northern Spain and Gaul to Southern Italy and Eastern Sicily. This band of independent Greek colonies became known collectively as Magna Graecia.

As friction between the two peoples developed, Carthage gradually developed into an imperial power by uniting the Phoenician trading colonies under her leadership, from about 650-450. But Magna Graecia never developed political unity comparable to the Carthaginian Empire. One Greek city would emerge to lead the struggle against Carthage, and this was Syracuse. Sicily emerged as the primary battlefield between Syracuse and

Carthage. The island was considered wealthy in itself, and also sat astride the trade routes linking the eastern and Western Mediterranean as well Africa to Italy.

Gelon, the first Tyrant of Syracuse, 485-478 BC

Syracuse initially became a military power under the first of a series of tyrants (today these leaders would be called *military dictators* or *warlords*), Gelon of Gela. Gelon saw the immense advantages of the site of Syracuse as a port and fortress, seized control of the city in 485 and forcibly transferred the populations of nearby cities to build up his new capitol. Gelon, like most of the tyrants that followed him, pursued an expansionist foreign policy, especially aggressive against the Phoenicians of Sicily.

Gelon's actions provoked a major Carthaginian invasion in 481 under the warrior king Hamilcar. Some scholars assume by the simultaneity of this attack with the Persian assault on Greece that Hamilcar was in league with Xerxes. But the evidence for this is inconclusive. Gelon took charge of an alliance of Greek cities (though some Greek cities preferred the alliance of Carthage) to resist Hamilcar. This was the first great war between Carthage and Syracuse. Gelon won a decisive victory at the battle of Himera, in 480.

Seventy Years of Peace, 480-410 BC

Gelon's victory solidified the position of Syracuse as the leading city of

Greek Sicily. A formal peace treaty was signed, which held for seven decades. But both cities continued to fight other opponents. Carthage expanded her land empire in Africa, at the expense of Libyan and Numidian tribes and pacified Sardinia. In Syracuse, Hiero followed Gelon as tyrant in 478, and scored a notable naval victory over the Etruscans at Cumae in 474. His tyranny was suppressed in 465, and a democracy introduced in the city. Democratic governments of Syracuse were generally domestically oriented and less aggressive than the tyrannies.

In 415 a new power entered the scene to contest for dominance of Sicily. The ongoing Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta had spilled over into the West. The great expedition of Athens was directed at Syracuse. With the aid of a Spartan general, Gylippus, Syracuse crushed the Athenian force by 413. During the later phases of the Peloponnesian War (412-404), Syracuse was able to project its naval power into the Aegean Sea and as far as the Asian coast in support of her allies, Sparta and Corinth.

The Invasion of Hannibal, 410-405 BC

But while the attention of Syracuse was focused on internal factional struggles and the great war in the East, the leaders of Carthage had decided to launch a major invasion in response to the call of Segesta, an allied Greek city. Hannibal, grandson of the Hamilcar defeated at Himera, commanded the invasion in 410. Hannibal had great success, destroying the Greek cities of Selinus and Himera by 409 and continuing his advance. The response from Syracuse was half-hearted, as democratic and oligarchic factions were embroiled in civil war,

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408-407. Himilco, who had replaced Hannibal, took the major city of Agrigentum (Agragas) in 406.

Dionysius the Elder, Tyrant of Syracuse, 405-367 BC

The poor showing of the Syracusan army against Hannibal set the stage for the rise of Dionysius. This officer first engineered his election as *strategos*, or supreme commander of the allied Greek forces in 405. Dionysius led the allied Greek army against Himilco's force at Gela. The result was a tactical defeat for Dionysius, but in the aftermath he managed to obtain a treaty from Himilco and consolidate his position as Tyrant of Syracuse.

Dionysius was to create an empire for Syracuse, and fight no less than four wars with Carthage, in the course of his 38-year reign (406-05, 398-92, 383-75 and 368-67). His empire ultimately included Eastern and Central Sicily and much of Southern Italy. In fact, it was the struggle with Dionysius that first brought Carthaginian armies to Italy in support of their Italian allies. So Hannibal was not the first Carthaginian general to wage war in Italy. Although his fortunes were varied, Dionysius generally had

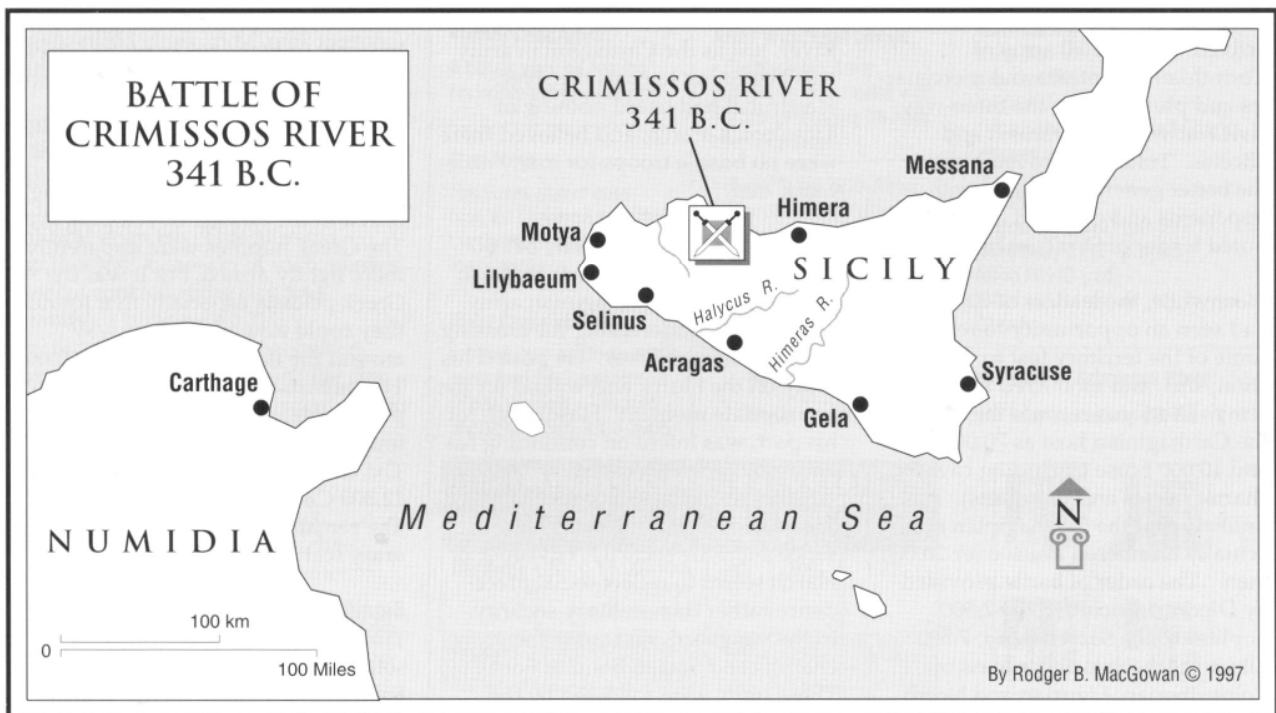
the best of Carthage in his many wars. Dionysius was a military innovator. He introduced the quinquereme, which became the primary warship for centuries. His siege of Moyta, with the latest siege engines and technology, is believed to have been the model for Alexander's assault on Tyre. Dionysius was also utterly ruthless and brutal in his naked pursuit of power, expanding on the stereotype of a Greek tyrant. The empire of Dionysius was the greatest ever held by Syracuse, only rivaled by the later tyrant Agathocles.

The Sacred Band of Carthage

The wars with Dionysius spurred innovation in the Carthaginian military system. Carthage had for centuries relied on polyglot assortments of barbarian mercenaries. These forces were strengthened with chariots and cavalry from Carthage. But the battles with the Greeks soon made the superiority of the heavily armed Greek hoplite apparent (just as it was to the Persians). Carthage responded by forming the Sacred Band of Foot. This unit was composed of 2,500 superbly equipped and trained citizen hoplite infantry.

Their large shields, similar to the Greek hoplon, were in addition covered with elephant hides. They carried the same eight-foot thrusting spear and wore the same helmet, breastplate and greaves as a Greek hoplite. If anything, they wore armor and arms which were superior to those of a typical Greek hoplite. In addition to this phalanx unit, the civic heavy cavalry was reorganized as a Sacred Band of Horse, numbering between 1,000 and 2,500.

The concept of an elite unit, often named a sacred band, had become popular in Greece beginning with the Sacred Band of Thebes. Pelopidas had created this unit to spearhead Theban assaults, and it fought with distinction from Leuctra, 371, until its annihilation by Alexander at Chaeroneia in 338. Other city states, such as Argos, had formed units of elite professionals maintained at public expense. The rise of the Sacred Band of Foot had significant political and social overtones in Carthage as it strengthened the 'middle-class' citizenry, at the expense of the aristocrats who formed the chariotry and cavalry. But more significantly, the Sacred Band greatly increased the military potential of Carthage.



The Battle of Crimissos River, 341 BC

Properly combined with the superior Carthaginian mounted arm, the Sacred Band could provide the key to defeat the vaunted Greek hoplite phalanx.

Timoleon of Corinth, 345-323 BC

The death of Dionysius the Elder in 366 led to a resurgence of democracy in Syracuse. His son, Dionysius the Younger proved just as brutal but far less capable. The result was another period of factional strife and the collapse of Dionysius' empire (365-345). Two would-be tyrants, Dionysius the younger and Hicetas, vied with the the democrats of Syracuse for supremacy, while Carthage intervened as convenient. The democratic faction was in a quandary. They could not entrust command of their army to any of their own experienced generals for fear that he would use the opportunity to establish a new tyranny. But they recalled that in the war with Athens, command had been entrusted to a Spartan general, Gylippus. They came to believe that only a foreign general, with no ties to any local faction, could be trusted with the supreme command. Pleas were sent to the mother city, and Corinth responded by dispatching Timoleon, an exiled noble and strong supporter of democracy. Timoleon arrived with a small army of Corinthian volunteers and mercenaries and plunged into the three-way civil war with Dionysius II and Hicetas. Timoleon proved himself the better general, defeated both opponents and emerged as undisputed leader of Syracuse by 343.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Carthage had seen an opportunity to regain some of the territory lost to Dionysius, and mobilized a large army. Diodorus records the size of the Carthaginian host as 70,000 foot and 10,000 horse (including cavalry, chariot horses and remounts). It is unlikely that the Carthaginian army actually numbered much over 20,000 men. The order of battle provided by Diodorus included the 2,500 hoplites of the Sacred Band, 7,500 Libyan conscripts and a mass of Celtic, Iberian, Ligurian and North

African mercenaries. The various contingents of this army came from all quarters of the Western Mediterranean, and were slowly assembled in Western Sicily under the generals Hasdrubal and Hamilcar (familiar recurring names in Carthaginian military history, to be sure).

Timoleon learned that Hasdrubal had completed the assembly of his army at Lilybaeum and was preparing to advance against Syracuse. Timoleon initially marshaled 7,000 troops from his own army, including 4,000 mercenaries, 3,000 troops of the Syracusan citizen levy. Allied Greeks, including the army of his rival Hicetas, now tyrant of Agrigentum, added another 6,000 men. However, 1,000 of his mercenaries deserted upon hearing rumors of the size of the Carthaginian army. Despite his best efforts, Timoleon was therefore only able to assemble an army half the size of his opponent's, 11,000 foot and 1,000 horse by June. Undaunted, Timoleon decided not to wait on the defensive, though the fortifications of Syracuse were among the most formidable in the world. Instead, he resolved to take the offensive, seize the initiative and steal a march on Hasdrubal. Racing across Sicily in eight days, Timoleon arrived on the high ground east of the Crimissos River, just as the Carthaginian army was beginning to cross the river. Hasdrubal had heard nothing of Timoleon's march, and believed there were no hostile troops for many miles to the east.

The Battle of Crimissos River, 341 BC Timoleon saw his chance to ambush and destroy the Carthaginian army when it was undertaking the crossing of the Crimissos River. He posted his army on the bluffs, and waited for the appropriate moment. Hasdrubal, for his part, was intent on continuing his leisurely march across Sicily. As morning came he sent his army across the river, with no reconnaissance and little security. His order of march seems to reflect social precedence rather than military security.

In the vanguard, first came the chariots and Sacred Band of Foot. These units were followed by the

Sacred Band of Horse and the Libyan conscripts. Bringing up the rear would be the mass of barbarian mercenaries.

Timoleon waited until the vanguard, about half of the enemy army, was across the ford. Then he struck, launching his cavalry first. Caught completely by surprise, Hasdrubal reacted slowly at first. Finally realizing what was happening, he attempted to use his chariots to disrupt the Greek cavalry charge. But caught out of position and unprepared, the chariot counter charge was ineffective. Then Timoleon sent his phalanx rolling downhill, supported by peltasts. Soon, the Libyan conscripts were routed and joined the flight of the chariots. But the Sacred Band stood like a rock.

This was the critical point in the battle. As long as the Sacred Band held, reinforcements could stream across the ford to turn the tide of battle. Timoleon saw his victory slipping away. At this moment, the gods intervened on the side of the Greeks (at least it seemed so to them). A violent thunderstorm erupted onto the battlefield. The storm benefited the Greeks in three important ways. First, the wind blew the rain and hail into the faces of the Carthaginians, but only onto the backs of the Greeks. Second, the heavy rain greatly slowed the crossing of the Carthaginian mercenary reinforcements. And, finally, the very heavily armored hoplites of the Sacred Band became mired in the quickly developing mud. The Greek hoplites were apparently more lightly armed, but it was the Greek peltasts especially that found they could now work their way around the flanks of the Sacred Band. The peltasts commenced to cut it to pieces. Nearly all the sacred Band fought and died where they stood. The Greeks claim to have counted 12,500 Carthaginian dead on the field. The remainder of the Carthaginian army scattered in flight.

Significance of the Battle

Timoleon's victory at Crimissos solidified the hold of Syracuse on Eastern and Central Sicily. It also

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fortified the democratic movement in Syracuse. Nearly twenty years of freedom, peace and prosperity followed. Syracuse was able to grow in wealth, power and prestige. However, a new tyrant was waiting in the wings, to once again plunge Sicily into warfare.

For Carthage, the defeat was sobering. Crimissos was a hard blow to Carthaginian pride and prestige. Strategically, the loss did not seriously threaten the Carthaginian hold on Western Sicily. However, the loss of 2,500 citizens was another matter. When one considers that during the Peloponnesian War the Spartans made peace with Athens to secure the freedom of only some 292 citizens captured at Pylos, its magnitude can be better appreciated. This number represented a significant portion of the entire citizen body of Carthage. Such a loss could not be endured again. Therefore, Carthage established a new policy with regard to the Sacred Band. Never again would this unit be dispatched overseas. In the future, the Sacred Band would serve only in Africa, against native tribes or as a last line of defense for the home city. To provide her armies afield with the necessary high quality infantry a practical alternative was adopted. Carthage would rely on Greek allied cities and Greek mercenaries for hoplites and peltasts.

Agathocles, the Last Great Tyrant of Syracuse

Following the death of Timoleon in 323, Syracuse reverted to her usual political anarchy. This allowed Agathocles, a captain of mercenaries, to seize control of the city and establish a tyranny by 317. Agathocles, like Dionysius before him, exploited the wealth of the city to hire a large mercenary army and to embark on a wave of conquest. Agathocles was recognized by contemporaries as one of the *Diadochoi* along with Seleucus, Ptolemy, Antigonus and Pyrrhus. Soon, Syracuse amassed another empire stretching North to Campania, East to Corcyra and West into Punic Sicily. Agathocles fielded a very large army by Sicilian stan-

THE BATTLE OF CRIMISSOS RIVER, 341 B.C.

MAP – Use the *Issus* Map from *GBOA*. The Pinarus River is now the Crimissos. The Carthaginian Army uses the North map edge as its retreat edge. The Greek Army uses the East map edge.

COUNTERS – You will need both *SPQR* and the *Great Battles of Alexander*. Carthaginian units are from *SPQR* and the *GBOA* Persian mix. New Leader counters are displayed below.

Initial Deployment

Carthaginian Army		Greek Army	
Unit(s)	Hex(es)	Unit(s)	Hex(es)
ADVANCE GUARD <i>(all units in column heading South)</i>		MERCENARIES	
Hasdrubal (OC)w/Chariot*	3923	Timoleon (OC)	4318
Mago	3409	Deinarchus	4524
Sacred Band Foot	3817-18,	Corinth Phalanx HO/HI (1)	4320-21
HO/HI (1-2) [Afr.PH]	3916 -17	Spartan Phalanx HO/HI (1)	4318-19
Carthage Levy	3819-22, 3813-16,	Theban Phalanx HO/HI (1)	4316-17
MI (1-16)	3912-15, 3918-21	Corcyra Phalanx HO/HI (1)	4314-15
Sacred Band Horse	3823, 3922	GrkMrc Peltast LP (1-5)	4422-26
HC (1-2)		Corinth (use Elite Thess.) HC (1)	4524
Chariots (use Persian)	3716-19, 3824-25,	SYRACUSANS and ALLIES	
(1-12)	3924-25, 4016-19	Hicetas	4310
MAIN BODY <i>(all units in column heading Southeast)</i>		Greek Allies Phalanx HO/HI (1-2)	4310-11, 4312-13
Hamilcar	3708	Mrcny Peltast LP (1-5)	4206,4306-09
Numidian LC (1)	3808	Syracuse (use Thess.) HC (1)	4525
Mauretanian MI (1-4)	3406,3506,3607,3707	Grk Ally LC (#3)	4526
Celtic LN (1)	3708		
Celtic MI (1-4)	3306,3407,3507,3608		
Iberian LN (1)	3305		
Numidian MI (1-6)	2702,2803,2903,3004 3104,3205		
Iberian LI (1-4)	2300,2401,2501,2602		
Ligurian MI (1-4)	3105,3206,2904,3005		

Victory Conditions

A player wins by forcing his opponent to withdraw.

First Move

The Greek player goes first, as Timoleon surprised the Carthaginian Army in the battle.

River Crossing Rules

Carthaginian reinforcements must ford the Crimissos (Pinarus) River. The ford includes hexes 3809-3908.

Army Withdrawal Levels

• Carthaginian Army: Withdraws when units with TQ points totalling **75** have been eliminated.

• Greek Army: Withdraws when units with TQ points totalling **55** have been eliminated.

Unit 'Type' (4.2) This format is for the new *Simple GBoH* Rules.

Carthage:

Sacred Band PH
Cart Levy MI
Chariots
Cavalry
Celtic MI
Mauretanian MI
Numidian MI
Ligurian MI
Iberian LI
*Hasdrubal's Bodyguard Chariot moves with him

Greeks:

Mercenary HI/HO (purple)
Mercenary LI/LP (purple)
Allied HI/HO (red)
Allied LI/LP (red)
Cavalry

New Leader Counters for The Battle of Crimissos River

These new counters will appear in an upcoming *C3i* Insert.

Army Size and TQ Levels					
Army	SP	Size	TQ Pts.	Rout Ratio	Quality
Carthage	221	18,600 foot 2,200 horse 200 chariots	262	30%	1.22
Greeks	120	11,000 foot 1,000 horse	150	35%	1.25



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dards, over 25,000 men. And the ambitious warlord threatened to drive the Carthaginians from Sicily completely.

But Carthage rose to challenge the tyrant, defeating him at the hard-fought Battle of Himeras, 311. Carthage pushed on to eliminate the threat from Syracuse once and for all, and besieged the Greek metropolis. Agathocles responded with an audacious stroke. Slipping through the blockading Carthaginian navy with a small army of 13,500 men, Agathocles turned the tables on Carthage by invading Africa itself. At the Battle of Tunes, 310, a Syracusan army would once again face the Sacred Band of Carthage in battle.

Agathocles' great battles of Himeras and Tunes will be featured in the upcoming Tyrant Module for the Great Battles of Alexander.

Sources

The history of the tyrants of Syracuse comes primarily from Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon*. Good secondary accounts include Brian Caven's *Dionysius I*:

War-Lord of Sicily and C. A. Kincaid's *Successors of Alexander the Great*. For Carthage in this period, B. H. Warmington's *Carthage: A History* is recommended.

Scenario Rules

All rules from Great Battles of Alexander are in effect. You can also use the Simple GBoH Rules in this issue, either way will work fine.

Special Rule: The Storm

The ancient accounts of this battle

make much of a violent storm that occurred during the fighting and greatly benefited the Greeks. The rain drove into the face of the Carthaginian army, flooded the river disrupting the fording and generated a deep and slimy mud that hampered the more heavily armored Carthaginians.

Storm Table

Greek player rolls one extra die each time he attempts to activate Timoleon. Storm begins with a die roll 0-6.


Storm Effects

- 1) **Rain:** All Carthaginian units immediately receive +/-(-1) on all shock combat DRs for "rain in the face."
- 2) **River:** Rising water allows Carthaginian reinforcing units to cross the ford at hex 3809 only.
- 3) **Mud:** All Cavalry, CH, HI and MI units have their movement allowance reduced by two (2).


Deluxe Edition:
The Great Battles of Alexander

The Macedonian Art of War, 338 - 326 B.C.
The Great Battles of History Series, Volume I
Published: 1995


Game Design: Mark Herman & Richard Berg
Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan
Project Editor: Gene Billingsley



Immortal
1 MI
8 5



Alexander III
9 7 2 4



India
5 LI
14 5

Contents: 720 die-cut Counters; Three 22x34 inch Maps; Ten Great Battles; Rulebook; Charts & Tables; One 10-sided die; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: 20 minutes per game turn
Map Scale: 70 yards per hex
Unit Scale: 100 men per size point
Players: 1-4

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off (privately and quietly) at Avaloncon last year, and the gamer feedback was excellent, which leads me to believe that (a) maybe you guys know more about what makes a good game than those insiders do, and (b) maybe we just haven't done a good enough job of telling you guys about why it'll be worth having. Here are three reasons you'll like it, in my view.

First, as a gamer with less time than I once had, what appeals to me most about the game is that it's a quick, 1-2 hour battle that plays really easy but still requires you to think! This is no *Blue and Grey Quad* (SPI) but a real tactical battle with tactical nuances that will challenge you. It just has a low unit density so you can play it quickly. Second, I really like the

tactical combat chits (Flank, Refuse, Assault, etc.). These add a flavor much like that of Mark Herman's popular *We The People* (AH) game, so you can never be sure that the perfect attack you set up is going to come off as planned. Finally, in today's game market, at \$20 (the pre-order price - retail is \$29), this game is a steal. Although I love big games, I've often found that I received more fun and play value from the little gems I've bought (the GDW *Series 120* games for \$6 each or the GBACW *Jackson/Corinth* (SPI) dual pack for \$10 come to mind) and played again and again than from those monsters I never had time for. Well, I think *Saratoga* is one of those you'll play again and again; this one won't sit on your shelf gathering dust.

Project 500

I promised Rodger to take only one page for this column, so I'm going to put the details of P500 in an Insert in this issue. Essentially, P500 is a new program aimed at (a) giving us the funds to print games with as little risk as possible, ensuring our health as a company for years to come, and (b) giving you guys much more voice in exactly which games get produced, and (c) alleviating any problems with long waits between you sending in a pre-order and receiving your game. I think it's a major step forward in our business model and invite your participation in the project. And, as always, I thank you for your support.

Enjoy our games and *C3i* magazine!