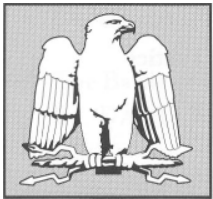


# THE MAXIMS OF WAR

## The Clash of Swords, the Thunder of Hooves

BY JAMES P. WERBANETH

Proper tactics for **SPQR** – simulating the conflict between two successful, but markedly different military systems.



At first glance, **SPQR** is about five battles fought by the Roman Republic: Beneventum (275 B.C.), Bagradas Plains (255), Cannae (216), Zama (202), and Cynocephalae (197). The ensuing expansion modules *War Elephant*, *Consul for Rome*, *Pyrrhic*

*Victory* and *Africanus*, added Magnesia (190 BC), the Trebbia (218), the Metaurus (207), Heraclea (280), Ausculum (279), Baecula (208) and Ilipa (206). In addition, *War Elephant* included the Battle of Raphia in 217 between Ptolmaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria, unique in that it did not include Romans.

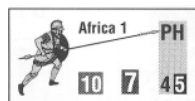
Raphia notwithstanding, the deeper purpose of **SPQR** is to simulate the conflict between two successful but markedly different military systems. On one side is the Macedonia-derived army of Alexander's successors, plus Epirus and Carthage. On the other are the legions of Rome.

Each has its defining characteristics. The first relies on masses of cavalry to cave in the enemy's flanks, while the center is held by a single line of phalanxes and smaller units of heavy and medium infantry. The second is generally poor in both cavalry and flank security, while exploiting multiple lines of flexible, lethal foot soldiers to break through the center.

For **SPQR** players, this means that tactics have to be approached on the terms of their sides' military systems. Effective tactics for one will be disastrous for the other. Indeed, the strengths and weaknesses of the respective systems are always more important tactical considerations than are variations in order of battle and terrain.

### Macedonian Model Army

The armies of Rome's opponents were descended from those of Alexander the Great and his father, Philip II. They inherited the impressive cavalry of their



native Macedon with the phalanx of the Greeks, an infantry formation known more for its cohesion and the momentum of its charge than for its maneuverability, into a potent combination that extended Macedonian power from the Balkans to the Indus.

After the death of Alexander, the system was not sealed in amber, but continued to evolve on the battlefields of his successors, as well as those others who recognized its potency. Thus, by the era portrayed in **SPQR**, the Macedonian military system remained impressive and, under the command of a Hannibal or Pyrrhus, dominant.

Though it has been correctly described as a combined arms system, the arm of decision was the cavalry, and it remains so in **SPQR**. In addition, the area of decision is the flanks, where the Macedonian-Epirote-Carthaginian horse

have both superiority over the Roman cavalry, and room to maneuver.

This is not just because of the strengths of the Macedonian model army, but due to its weaknesses as well. Despite the impressive history of the phalanx, it is generally impossible for the other infantry in the center to stand up to an assault by the legions of Rome. The norm is for this to be just one line deep, making a rupture of the line by the deeper Roman formations critical if not outright fatal.

Furthermore, the infantry's flexibility and maneuverability is markedly inferior to Rome's. Whereas legionary units can wheel and reverse direction extremely well, at least as long as they are not in contact with the enemy, their opponent's foot soldiers move best in just one direction — forward.

A look at the game's *Shock Superiority Chart* reveals the final factor making victory by the infantry exceedingly rare. Legion infantry enjoys attack superiority over every type of infantry fielded by Rome's enemies, except for the phalanx. So a player in command of a Macedonian-style army volunteers to cross swords with the legion only at his own distinct risk.

A second glance at the same chart reveals that infantry of all types enjoys a defensive superiority over most cavalry. However, this is more than a little misleading, as a smart player will seldom send his horses on a frontal charge against an intact line of enemy infantry. The better tactic is to attack from the flanks or rear, achieving attack superiority regardless of the chart.

This plays right into the tendency of the Carthaginians especially to force an early collapse on the Roman flank.

## Proper Tactics for the Great Battles of SPQR

### Legionary Army

In sharp contrast to the Macedonian-derived military system is that of the Roman legion. It was the premier infantry formation of antiquity, and was so closely connected with the social and political systems of Rome that when the legion evolved from a force of citizen militia into the *reformed* professional unit of Gaius Marius and the subsequent Empire, the Republic fell. In truth the collapse of republican government had to do with a lot of factors besides the character of the army, but ultimately the legion was the canary in the constitutional coal mine.

In the era of **SPQR**, the Roman Republic was at its apex. Though the legion was not yet at its peak, as that would happen in the first centuries of the Empire, it proved resilient enough to insure Rome's survival against the likes of Pyrrhus and Hannibal, as well as lesser enemies.

Whereas the Macedonian model army utilized its cavalry to decide the issue on the flanks, **SPQR** demonstrates the propensity of the Romans to aim for a victory in the center, relying on their infantry.

This exploits the strengths of the game's Roman and allied infantry. Depth is a primary one. The typical enemy army has a single line of infantry units, screened by light skirmishers, but an **SPQR** Roman army has four ranks of counters.



*Velites* form the first rank. They are functionally similar to skirmishers, but have a special ability to move adjacent to

enemy units, throw their javelins, and then back off before the enemy can retaliate for this harassment.



Next come the *hastati*, accompanied by very similar cohorts of Rome's allies (*alae socionum*). They are the shock troops of the

legion, as they make first contact with the enemy. Unlike a great deal of their opponents' own line infantry, they have an intrinsic missile capability in the form of their *pila* (javelins). It is only one volley's worth before disengagement and replenishment, but it is still one volley more than most of the opposition has.



Behind the *hastati* are the *principes*, and still more allied cohorts. They function very similarly to the *hastati*, and can relieve fatigued or routed units of that rank, or join the fight in a body.



The *triarii* form the last rank. They are remnants of Rome's pre-legionary phalanxes, and in game turns count as heavy

infantry, not legionary units per se. In theory, the *triarii* form a backstop in case the *hastati* and *principes* lines collapse. In practice, most **SPQR** players will find them at best semi-mobile, and utterly useless, particularly if they use the *Triarii* Tactical Doctrine rule introduced in *War Elephant*. If a Roman player finds this last line engaged in any meaningful way, chances are he has already lost the game.

**SPQR**

The Art of War in the Roman Republic 275-197BC  
*The Great Battles of History Series, Volume II*  
 Published: 1992 Winner: CSR & Origins Awards  
 Game Design: Mark Herman & Richard Berg  
 Art Director: Rodger B. MacGowan

Hannibal

7-7 2 3

1a PR J

3 LG 9 5

Svilius Preposui

3 3 1 0

Contents: 800 die-cut Counters; Four 22x34 inch Maps; Rulebook and Scenario Book; One 10-sided die; Charts & Tables; Bookcase Box

Time Scale: 15-20 minutes per game turn  
 Map Scale: 70 yards per hex  
 Unit Scale: 300-1000 men per counter  
 Players: 1-4

So in the end, the heart of the legionary army remains the *hastati*, *principes* and their accompanying allied infantry. This still amounts to twice as many lines as the enemy can normally muster.

One of the most important consequences of the standard Roman deployment's use of multiple lines is a significant increase in collective cohesion. The troop quality [TQ] ratings of Roman units are frequently lower than those of the opposition, but the depth of the legion allows fresh units to be thrown into the fray, thereby wearing down the enemy. *Consul for Rome* contains an optional rule for line replacement that makes this even easier, at least in the post-Pyrrhus scenarios in which it is permitted.

In addition, legionary infantry has a fundamental flexibility beyond that of the much more limited Macedonian model foot units. Counters of the same legion, in good order, can move through each other's hexes, or even stack throughout movement, at no penalty. On the other hand, stacking is prohibited to the other military system, and if units move through each other, it is with the penalty of one cohesion point for each. Even when routed, Romans of the same parent formation can pass through each other's lines with impunity, although for others this can cause a catastrophic chain reaction of rout.

Roman units can turn as far as completely around at the cost of one movement point, a crucial advantage over their opponents, who must pay a point for each hex vertex of front change. Thus legionary counters can move laterally or even in reverse and still maintain the integrity of their lines, while Macedonian-derived formations are basically limited to moving forward.

Finally, the most fundamental elements of Roman weapons and training gives the legion massive advantages when the infantry lines meet in combat. Enemy lines were composed, to a large degree, of updated hoplites, densely packed, and frequently using the spear as the primary weapon.

By contrast, the Romans used much looser formations and, once the *pila* were thrown, short stabbing swords. The combination of the lethal so-called Spanish sword, and room to use it, was more than enough to counter the greater density of the enemy.



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 BATTLES OF THE DIADOCHI  
 217-190 B.C.

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MAGNESIA, 190 B.C.  
 ANTIOCHUS THE GREAT VS. ROME

GAME DESIGN:  
 MARK HERMAN  
 RICHARD BERG

ART DIRECTOR:  
 RODGER MACGOWAN

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GAME DESIGN:  
 MARK HERMAN  
 RICHARD BERG

ART DIRECTOR:  
 RODGER MACGOWAN

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AUSCULUM, 279 B.C.  
 PYRRHUS VS. CONSULS SULPICIUS & DECIVS MUS

GAME DESIGN:  
 MARK HERMAN  
 RICHARD BERG

ART DIRECTOR:  
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 SCIPIO VS. HASDRUBAL BARCA

ILIPA, 206 B.C.  
 SCIPIO VS. HASDRUBAL GISGO AND MAGO BARCA

GAME DESIGN:  
 MARK HERMAN  
 RICHARD BERG

ART DIRECTOR:  
 RODGER MACGOWAN

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 Antiochus the Great vs. Ptolemy

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 Antiochus the Great vs. Rome

**PYRRHIC VICTORY**  
 Heraclea, 280 B.C.  
 Pyrrhus vs. Consul Laevinus

**Ausculum, 279 B.C.**  
 Pyrrhus vs. Consuls Sulpicius & Decius Mus

**CONSUL FOR ROME**  
 The Trebbia, 218 B.C.  
 Hannibal vs. Consul Longus

**The Metarus, 207 B.C.**  
 Hasdrubal vs. Consuls Nero & Livius

**AFRICANUS**  
 Baecula, 208 B.C.  
 Scipio vs. Hasdrubal Barca

**Ilipa, 206 B.C.**  
 Scipio vs. Hasdrubal Gisgo & Mago Barca

This is readily apparent in game terms. First of all, the legionnaires enjoy attack superiority over all their rivals, except the double-hex phalanx, which could present a sword-proof wall of spears. Second, if the optional rules for casualties are in use, and they really should be, legionary infantry stands a better chance of actually killing enemy troops, and not just destroying their cohesion.



But as good as the Roman infantry is, in almost every battle, their cavalry arm is inadequate. Again, historically,

the Roman social system demanded the employment of a citizen militia, in which the soldiers provided their own arms and armor. Since the cost of a horse and tack makes the cost of outfitting a cavalryman a lot higher than an infantryman, the Romans had a vastly greater number of foot soldiers, and ended up neglecting their cavalry to the same degree that they developed their infantry. It became a secondary, supporting arm to be provided largely by allies. This connection between narrowly defined nonmilitary considerations and the battlefield is essential to understanding both the dynamics of the Republic and, because **SPQR** has weak Roman cavalry provided mainly with the *aloe sociorum*, it is to some extent relevant to the game.

Incidentally, the high ratio of infantry to cavalry, and the employment of a strong yeoman farmer and artisan class in the former, had a strong influence centuries later on Niccolo Machiavelli in his *Discourses*. It was his conviction that the achievements of the Republic could be replicated only by nurturing of the social classes needed to man Roman-style infantry formations, inasmuch as relying on cavalry fostered the growth of economic elites and social inequities, and eventually weakened the state by making the rich richer and poor poorer.

In the context of **SPQR**, Roman cavalry does not threaten the cohesion of the Republic so much as it weakens the safety of the flanks. In just about every scenario, Roman cavalry cannot compete against that fielded by a competent enemy player. Zama is a crucial exception, but that is due to a rather massive contingent of Numidian allies.

## Proper Tactics for the Great Battles of SPQR

So, for the Romans, the army's strength is infantry, massed and directed against the center, while the cavalry-held flanks are weak. The situation for the enemies is the direct opposite; strong cavalry on the wings, and relatively weak infantry between them.

### Offensive Tactics

In SPQR, to an even greater extent than in warfare in general, battles are won by the offensive, and the tactics of the attack are the ones that decide the issue. Because the armies are essentially different however, the nature of the offensive must be just as different.

The prototypical offensive by the Macedonian model army begins with a massive cavalry charge, on at least one of the flanks. It is vitally important that the player adhere to three principles: keep the horses as concentrated as possible; concentrate not just in an absolute sense, but against few enough Roman counters that they can be blown away at little cost in cohesion points; and, whenever possible, take the enemy in the flanks or rear.



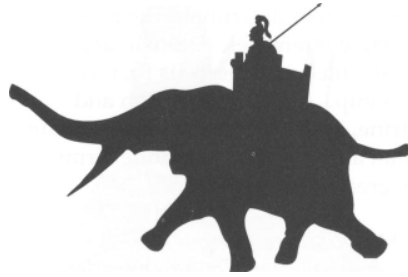
The first target of the Macedonian-Epirote-Carthaginian horse should be the Roman player's cavalry.

Once it is gone, the player can use his leaders to remove cohesion points, and in general reform the cavalry for the next stages of the battle, free from meaningful interference.

When using the original **SPQR** rules for cavalry pursuit, pursuing units will probably have to be recalled to the battlefield and command and control over them restored. However, this is significantly less likely to occur with the use of the revisions in the *Pyrrhic Victory* module.

The second stage of the battle is not quite as inevitable as the initial cavalry charge. It calls for the infantry line to advance closer to, but not make contact with, the Romans.

The goal is to close the gaps between the infantry and cavalry, at least partially. Most often it is useless or even dangerous in the short term for the Romans to try to



exploit such a hole, as this exposes their front lines' rear to the cavalry. On the other hand, closing the range between infantry and cavalry makes it safer for the overall commander to issue line commands to the latter, while shielded by the former.

But advancing the infantry should be undertaken only when necessary, and with great care, considering the power of the Romans on its front. Doing so precipitously is akin to a boxer leading with his chin.

The third stage of the offensive is the destruction of the enemy, starting from the flanks. Ideally, the cavalry should fall on the enemy foot units' rear, preferably aided by the friendly infantry, thus catching the legionnaires in a vice. The Romans will find escape difficult, because when a new line of troops comes to the rescue, much of the cavalry can use orderly withdrawal to escape melee, and the advancing Romans are themselves subsequently vulnerable to destruction from behind.



A special consideration for many anti-Roman player is the elephant. Elephants have a reputation among many gamers as ostentatious, even tasteless, exhibitions of wealth and power, of dubious worth in actual combat, except maybe to trample one's own army. The image is of a lumbering, unpredictable manifestation of the same compulsion for prestige over effectiveness that kept the scythed chariot in service far too long. Although the language of **SPQR** might take an occasional swipe at elephants, and especially the humans who kept them, in practice the game places them in a more favorable light. Unlike the justly maligned chariot, they do have their uses.

First of all, elephants can function as a slower, less maneuverable form of shock cavalry. Mixing in an elephant counter with cavalry in a charge can overwhelm the defender, while shielding the animal from the bulk of the called for cohesion hits, and thus delaying or even eliminating the prospect of it rampaging.

Putting them in the initial cavalry charge can be particularly useful. The elephants can insure early success, accelerating the exploitation phases, and leaving cavalry unengaged, free of cohesion hits, and therefore more free to engage in the general chase.

Secondly, a line of elephants makes an outstanding reserve. Not every battle can be like Heraclea, in which Pyrrhus' commitment of his elephant reserve panicked the Romans, who had never seen them before, and dramatically turned defeat into victory. However, a timely counterattack against Romans bearing cohesion hits from previous combat can do much to restore a bad situation. Used correctly and with a little luck, an elephant reserve can somewhat compensate for their side's lack of depth.

Finally, they are useful for exploitation purposes. Just as the Roman's best infantry, his *principes*, are often in a position to take advantage of the *hastati's* success, elephants exploiting after cavalry offer the promise of hitting the enemy with the strongest units when his plight is particularly difficult.

But special care is needed to employ elephants. When a normal unit routs, it can be rallied, and if the effort fails, the worst that can happen is that it disappears. By contrast, an elephant that routs goes berserk instead; and may not be particular about whether it attacks enemy or friendly units before dying. In fact, all units are enemies to rampaging elephants.

A Roman attack is much different. The first stage is an advance by the *velites*, destroying or driving off the other side's own skirmishers. If the opposing player decides to execute an orderly withdrawal, this can expose his line infantry to a *velite* javelin volley, with the Roman screening forces getting away by using their ability to retreat after throwing.



their missiles. Executed optimally, this amounts to a preparatory bombardment along the enemy infantry line, at little risk to the *velites* themselves.

The second stage is a frontal assault by the *hastati* and accompanying cohorts. There is no subtlety here; just a straight ahead charge.

In the third stage, the *principes* join the fray. They should be advanced close behind the *hastati*, using line commands, so that they are at hand when the time comes to commit them.

They are two uses for the *principes* line. If the *hastati* have not yet broken through, the *principes* will often tip the balance, turning a barely intact enemy infantry line into a massive rupture. Should a hole already exist, the fresh troops can pour through it, taking the enemy in the rear and beginning the process in which a battle becomes a slaughter.



One advantage of the Roman system is that friendly units removed from the front by rout or line replacement can rejoin

the battle, or engage in the ensuing butchery. The Romans, as a rule, have more minor leaders than their enemies, in the form of various tribunes and *praefects sociorum*. Besides being well-suited for issuing line commands under *Pyrrhic Victory's* revised command rules, they are extremely useful for removing cohesion points.

Keeping a couple of these immediately behind the line is an extremely good idea. They cannot rally routed units very well, and with the changes to this contained in *Pyrrhic Victory*, their efforts to do so can be badly counterproductive. Nonetheless, once a better leader has done the job of rallying, a tribune or *praefect sociorum* can remove the remaining cohesion hits in the next turn and return the units to action. Since the offensive is decisive, most frequently both sides will launch their attacks at the same time. And, again due to the relative paucity of effective defensive tactics, the game will become a race to see whose army can smash the other.

In most games at least one player can work toward victory by trying to fend off defeat, which is fundamentally different than playing to win first. But *SPQR* is not such a game.

The factor that determines the pace of the respective offensives, and to a large degree which one succeeds first, is leadership. As in organization and doctrine, the command structures of the Roman and Macedonian model armies vary greatly.

The Macedonian, Epirote and Carthaginian forces tend to have fewer leaders, but the ones they have tend to have higher initiative ratings. The Romans have a greater number of leaders, though many are tribunes and *praefects sociorum*. These have low initiative ratings, and are further handicapped by limitations on the types of units they can command; the former may give orders only to Roman citizen units, and former just the *aloe sociorum*. Neither can command cavalry; that is the exclusive province of the *praefects equitum*.

Their low initiative actually helps the Roman cause. In the normal order of leader activation, the lower leaders go first, often enabling the Romans to start their offensive first, and exercise the initiative thereafter. In many scenarios the anti-Roman player can negate this to a degree by using the ability of an elite commander, Pyrrhus or Hannibal, to give the first activation to his side.



Also, having leaders with higher initiative, he can attempt to trump the Roman, should that player try to use momentum with a low-initiative leader. However, this is too risky to be done on anything close to a regular basis, and in any case the burden to upset the standard order rests with the side with the higher-initiative leader, and then only if the other side gives him the opportunity.

This Roman advantage grows further with the introduction of *Pyrrhic Victory's* new rules for line commands. Now, any leader within its overall commander's range can *automatically* issue a line command in its initial orders phase, without rolling the die against the overall commander's strategy rating. Also, all leaders can issue a line command, regardless of range to the supreme leader, in their initial orders phase in the first game turn.

This has two effects, both favoring Rome. First of all, even the lowest rated leaders can use line commands to move, and attack with, large numbers of units early in the game. Second, the importance of the strategy rating, low for most Roman overall commanders, is dramatically reduced.

Under the original version of *SPQR*, an enemy commander could frequently maneuver his army freely, while the Roman player vainly rolled against his strategy rating, trying to get his army to move. No more. Now, the legions are active from the very beginning.

The challenge to the other side is greatly increased. In the past, an army led by the likes of Hannibal could count on the merits of its commander to gain victory. Now, that player must formulate and execute tactics with something approaching the skill of his historical counterpart to achieve similar success.

### Defensive Tactics

The offensive has primacy in almost every case in *SPQR*, so the best defense is basically the offense that cracks the enemy first. Yet there is some room for defense-oriented tactics.

As in almost every wargame, keeping some sort of a reserve is a good idea, for defensive as well as offensive purposes. The structure of the Roman legion, in fact, offers ready-made, institutionalized reserves in the form of multiple infantry lines, ultimately backed up by the *trarii*. For those armies using the Macedonian model army, retaining a small to moderate sized body of cavalry, and possibly elephants, is good insurance, though the first cavalry charge should not be overly denuded.

Elephants also have an important defensive role, especially in Zama. Cavalry can attack elephants only through the flank or rear, and then only by taking at least two cohesion hits, just for moving next to an elephant, and then losing attack superiority.

So elephants make excellent barriers against cavalry, provided there are enough of them to effectively cover, at minimum, the flanks. Of the battles in the original game, only Zama has the potential for providing enough

## Proper Tactics for the Great Battles of SPQR

elephants to do this, assuming that the players agree to give the Carthaginian side the full amount, or the die roll provides them. Secondly, there has to be cavalry for the elephants to actually ward off, and only Zama portrays Rome as having it.

One major problem with using reserves is that of retrograde and lateral movement. Most infantry just cannot do it in a meaningful way. On the other hand, the high movement rates, and liberal line definition rules, for cavalry ameliorate this. Again, because Roman legionary infantry can change facing easier than other types, it can move with more freedom and speed to the sides and rear.

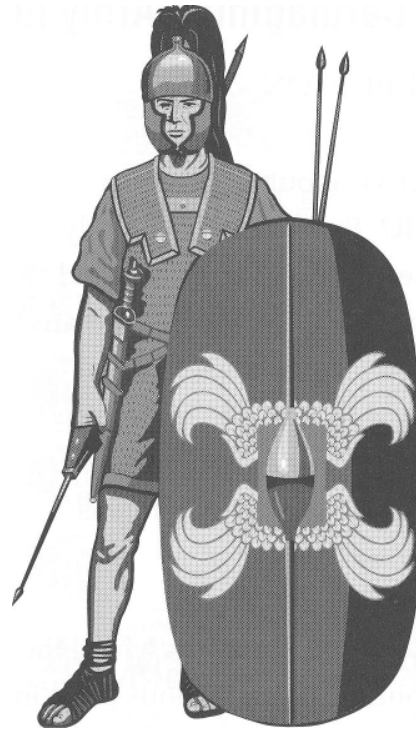
Further inhibiting strictly defensive tactics is a striking lack of truly defensible terrain. To a large extent, the battlefields of Cannae and Zama are representative; basically featureless terrain as flat and traversable as a pool table. A narrow stream or low hill is the most significant obstacle to the offensive.

The strongest obstacles are the rivers dividing the armies at Heraclea and Ausculum, in *Pyrrhic Victory*. Crossing either entails at least one cohesion hit for most units. This might sound like a modest penalty, until one considers that contact with the enemy normally occurs before a leader can remove all, or even most, hits from the units.

In addition, attacking onto dry land is a difficult proposition, even with attack superiority. Attacking from a shallow water hex mandates a two column shift, favorable to the defense, on the Shock Combat Results Table. If the attack comes from a deep or rocky river hex, then *each* attacker suffers one extra cohesion hit.

Therefore, if a player in either *Pyrrhic Victory* scenario wishes to assume a defensive posture, he should use his first line command to advance his infantry (*hastati* for the Romans) to the river's edge.

The other noteworthy defensible terrain is the hills in *Cynocephalae* and the *Metaurus*. The latter, from *Consul for Rome*, presents a situation reminiscent of twentieth-century battles; two infantry



forces face either other, and one must climb up a steep hill to root out the other. At times, it does beg comparison with Hamburger Hill or Monte Cassino.

A Carthaginian army under Hasdrubal Barca begins deployed atop a high ridge line. The Romans start at the bottom, and must work their way up. Unfortunately for them, there are up to six elevation changes between the base and the summit, and with each one comes a cohesion hit.

The only option for the Roman player is to advance slowly and deliberately, using line commands. Each time any units cross to a higher elevation, he should stop the army and use individual orders to remove cohesion points. This way, when the Romans reach the top, the most cohesion hits any leading unit should have is one.

But defensive tactics for the Carthaginian has to be more than just waiting for the enemy to struggle up the slopes, as the first line will have attack superiority when they get to the top. This, and a quick follow-up commitment of the second echelon, should be enough to put the Carthaginians to flight.

So the Carthaginian has to seize the initiative himself by launching his own charge, downslope, when the Romans are within striking distance. The ideal is to strike before the Roman player can remove the cohesion hits from his leading infantry. Preferably, it should also come before the next line of enemy infantry is close enough to lend support, or counterattack.

The *Metaurus* is a good example of the special defensive tactics needed to fight in broken terrain. But more than that, it underscores that the only decisive tactics are those of the attack.

### Conclusions

More than almost any other game, SPQR and its modules portray a clash of military systems — one descended from the army used by Alexander to conquer antiquity's largest empire, and the other developed by Rome to gain control of Italy, and then the entire Mediterranean basin. Though there are nonstandard battles such as the *Metaurus* and *Beneventum*, which features an Epirote attack on a Roman camp, the norm is that of *Zama*, *Cannae* or, most of all, *Consul for Rome's* Battle of the *Trebbia*; head to head, set-piece fights on an open field.

To win, a player must adopt tactics tailored to his type of army, aiming for a mismatch of his strength against the other side's weakness. From the Roman perspective, this means sending his infantry against the enemy's, and for the doctrinal heirs of Alexander, matching their cavalry against the afterthought horse formations of Rome. The *Trebbia* and *Cannae* might have been Roman disasters, but their historical tactics start to make more sense in the twenty-century hindsight of the game.

The offensive reigns supreme on the battlefields of SPQR. It is not the side that defends the best that wins, as might be the case in a World War I or American Civil War game, but the one that takes the fight most effectively to the enemy, and crushes him first. There is but one word that sums up SPQR's tactics: *Attack!*

