

THE SWORD OF ROME

Conquest of Italy 386 to 272 BC

Designed by
Wray Ferrell



PLAY BOOK

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SCENARIOS AND SETUP

Four Players

The players are Roman, Gallic, Etruscan/Samnite, and Greek. Each player sits in their assigned positions as indicated on the map.

Cards: The players place both of their *Desperate Times* cards in front of them and shuffle the remainder of their decks. The Roman player deals himself eight cards and the other players deal themselves seven, each from their own deck.

Markers

Game Turn: Turn 1 (386-374 BC) space.

Victory Point Track: Roman, Gallic, Greek, and Etruscan/Samnite VP markers all on the 6 space.

Alliance: Place a Samnite PC marker in the Etruscan/Samnite box to indicate the alliance. This alliance is permanent and cannot be broken.

Leaders and CU

Romans:

Camillus, 5 CU - Velitrae
Valerius, 7 CU - Roma

Gauls:

Minor Leader A, 4 CU - Sena Gallica
Minor Leader B, 5 CU - Luna
Minor Leader C, 3 CU - Placentia

Etruscans and Samnites:

Etruscan Minor Leader A, 5 CU - Clusium
Etruscan Minor Leader B, 2 CU - Pisae
Samnite Minor Leader A, 5 CU - Bovianum

Greeks:

Dionysius, 7 CU - Syracusae
Minor Leader A, 5 CU - Tarentum

Carthaginians:

Hamilcar, 7 CU - Lilybaeum
Bomilcar, 5 militia CU - Kerkouane

Volsci:

Minor Leader A, 4 CU - Antium

Transalpine Gauls:

Minor Leader A, 4 CU - Transalpine Gaul box

Appian Way:

The Appian Way is not built at the start of the game. Treat those connections as clear until the event is played.

Three Players

The players are Roman, Etruscan/Samnite, and Greek. Set up cards, markers, leaders, and CU as in the 4-player game except as noted below.

Cards: Remove the Gallic deck and Gallic *Desperate Times* cards.

Markers: Remove the Gallic VP marker.

Leaders and CU: Remove all Gauls and Transalpine Gauls.

Map: Gallic home spaces are not in play.

Special Rule: Gallic Events Table

A Gallic event is rolled when the Gallic player's action would occur. Roll two dice and consult the Gallic Events Table on the back of this Playbook.



Cards marked with the icon to the left may not be played as the printed event, but may be played as a response event to cancel a Gallic Event roll. The Etruscan player is immune to all Gallic event rolls the turn *Grand Coalition* (#36) is active.

Two Players

The players are Roman, Gallic, Etruscan/Samnite, and Greek. One player plays the Romans and Etruscan/Samnites, the other plays the Gauls and Greeks with separate hands for each power. Set up cards, markers, leaders, and CU as in the 4-player game except as noted below.

Cards

Each player places the two *Desperate Times* cards from both powers in front of him.

Markers

Alliance: Place a Samnite PC marker in the Etruscan box. Place a Roman PC marker in both the Etruscan and Samnite boxes. Place a Gallic PC marker in the Greek box. These alliances are permanent and cannot be broken.

Special Rules

- The Roman hand size is seven, not eight.
- The Gallic hand does not have to be discarded at the end of each turn.

DESIGN NOTE: Both special rules are for play balance. It would be quite unfair to allow one player to have an eight card handsize for one of their powers while forcing the other player to discard an entire hand for one of their powers.

Short Game

For players wanting a quicker-playing game, the player with the most VP at the end of Turn 6 wins.

EXTENDED EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Perhaps the best way to illustrate game play in *The Sword of Rome* is with a journal of an actual game. Designer Wray Ferrell and developer Brad Johnson join Bill Dyer and Dan Eaglin to play one turn of a standard 4-player game. With each action, the players will give some insights into their rationale for making the decisions they did. They received a random card draw and made no particular effort to demonstrate all of the cases that may arise in a game, but you should get an idea of the variety of situations that you may face. Also note that the players in this sample game turn may or may not have made the optimal decisions. If you believe you can see a better choice, you will have to try it out in your own games.

The Gauls

Played by Bill Dyer

Playing the Gauls in *The Sword of Rome* is the most different from any of the other powers. In general, the Gauls' road to victory does not involve conquering and holding enemy victory point spaces. Instead, the Gauls use a combination of raiding and special victory point cards. This is not to say that the Gauls won't occasionally try to besiege a city, but it's usually because they have a card or two in hand that makes it worthwhile.

The Gauls' main disadvantages are that they can't hold cards between turns and that they don't have many named leaders. Because of this, each turn is a totally new adventure and there is limited long-range planning when playing the Gauls. For maximum effect, it is wise to try to play all seven cards every time if possible.

You will want to get your one and only named leader (Brennus) on the map as soon as possible. Brennus can be exceptionally threatening in combination with cards such as *They Swept Down Like a Torrent*. An opposing army that assumed it was safely out of reach could find itself being slaughtered by the very mobile Gauls.

The first and most important advantage held by the Gauls is mobility. All the Gallic generals, named or not, can be moved with any of the cards in your hand. There are still some trade-offs to be made since you can move further with a 3-op than a 1-op, but at least you won't find yourself in a position where you can't move at all. The second major advantage is that you don't have to hold territory beyond your initial home spaces to get victory points.

As was stated above there is little long-range planning, but there are a few key long-term strategies that are worth achieving. First, you must protect against incursions by the Transalpine Gauls. My preferred strategy is to keep a small army within striking distance of the northern border. I don't like to block the T-Gauls entirely because that tends to discourage players from activating them and then their CUs begin stacking up. You don't want to let the T-Gauls build up an army that can do more than just raid a space or two.

Second, get rid of the Roman-friendly tribal space in your homeland. As long as this space remains Roman it makes attacking the Romans risky because they can convert spaces around it and take VPs from you.

Third, raid enough Etruscan spaces to remove their bribery ability. There is nothing worse than attacking the Etruscans only to be bribed

into leaving the battle field, thus wasting a valuable action.

Other than that, the Gauls have to play their cards. If the cards say attack the Etruscans, then attack the Etruscans. If they say attack the Romans, do that. If the cards really don't point either way, start raiding whatever you can. Either way, you must try to position yourself at the end of the turn to be as flexible as possible for the next turn.



Gallic Cards

- **Sympathetic Locals (#8)** - Could be used to help Brennus go deep into Etruscan territory without worrying about retreating.
- **Souls for Teutates (#14)** - This is also good to have along with Brennus in the first turn. It's a good gamble to attack an Etruscan army to get a quick first turn VP.
- **Land for Sucellus (#17)** - It might be worth trying for this VP, but the Etruscans will know what is up as soon as I start taking control of spaces instead of raiding them.
- **Neutral Power Activates x2 (#20, #23)** - Always good to have at least one of these. Can be used to harass the Greeks or the Romans.
- **Bloodlust (#32)** - A good card in certain situations, but probably more valuable later in the game. I will probably use it as a 3-op in the first turn.
- **Brennus (#33)** - This is the single best card to draw in the first hand. If the Gauls get Brennus into play early, they have a definite advantage.

Given these cards, I will probably play Brennus and then try to get the VP from either #14 or #17. Along the way, I will play one of the Neutral Power cards against the Romans or the Greeks, or possibly both. One action will probably be spent positioning some units to protect against the T-Gauls. If this doesn't work out, I will start raiding as many Etruscan spaces as possible.

The Etruscans and Samnites

Played by Wray Ferrell

With my forces and territory split, it would seem the prospects of victory would be slim. However, I do have several advantages over my opponents. My first advantage is that there are no Neutral Powers to harass me and my *Neutral Power Activates* events can be used to

activate any of them. I feel it is my responsibility to keep the Gauls busy on their northern border by activating the Transalpine Gauls whenever possible. In addition, I like to make taking Antium as difficult as possible for the Romans, so boosting the Volsci is never a bad idea. Adding just 1 CU allows them to retreat 3 CUs inside Antium and leave 2 CUs outside when the Romans attack. The 2 CUs outside Antium actually force the Romans to fight rather than getting an Automatic Victory, and the 3 CUs inside Antium prevent him from using any support points against the city.

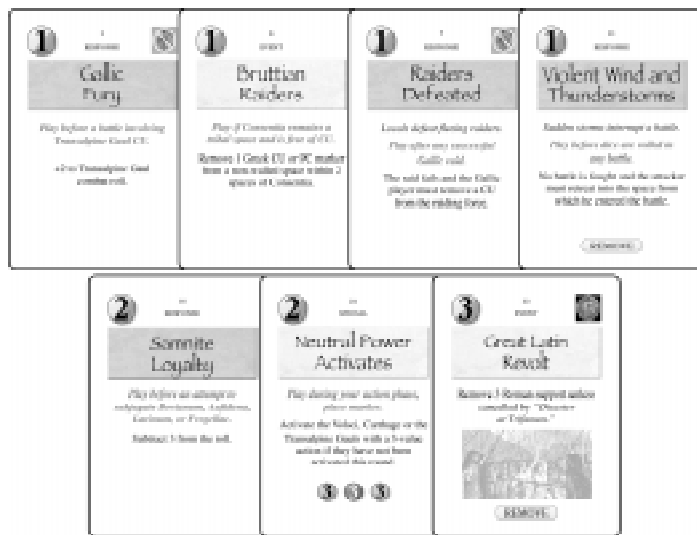
The Etruscans have the convenient yet expensive ability to bribe enemy forces which allows them to choose when and where they fight. My two *Desperate Times* cards can be used to bribe so I am assured of being able to bribe twice regardless of how lousy my initial draw is. The Romans have the *Integrity* event which means bribing them is not always a sure thing, but luckily the Gauls are always distracted by pretty baubles. Bribes are usually used to prevent an enemy army from attacking the Etruscans, but remember they can also be used to move through an enemy army without having to fight. This can be a nasty surprise for an opponent who has forgotten this. The downside is you can lose this ability unless you spend actions to clean up the independent PC markers left by the inevitable Gallic raids. It may seem at first glance that this is counter-productive as the Gauls can now raid the newly reclaimed spaces, but better to give him some plunder than to lose your bribe ability.

The Samnite ability to treat all rough connections in their homeland as clear connections makes Bovianum the perfect hideout as it was historically. All connections to Bovianum are rough, meaning an enemy army attacking you suffers a -2 penalty on the combat roll and will be destroyed if defeated. However, if you are defeated you have your choice of many locations to retreat to. Nonetheless, at some point the Samnites have to leave the mountains if you hope to accomplish something with them. I prefer to stay in my mountain hideout until either Capua and/or Neapolis becomes an inviting target and then go besiege it. A Carthaginian activation in Sicily coupled with a Samnite siege of Neapolis is a nice combination.

The Etruscan-Samnites play like a porcupine: the bribes and mountain hideout should keep the enemy at bay until you decide the timing is right for you to attack.

Etruscan/Samnite Cards

- **Gallic Fury (#1)** - This card can be a nasty surprise if the Gauls just try to slide by when attacking the T-Gauls.
- **Bruttian Raiders (#6)** - Almost always used to take Thurii from the Greek player. A good card to distract the Greeks if they are besieging one of your cities.
- **Raiders Defeated (#7)** - I usually play this card at the first possible opportunity as there is never a bad time to remove a Gallic CU and plunder marker.
- **Violent Wind and Thunderstorms (#11)** - An excellent card to hold, it's basically a free bribe that cannot be blocked. I usually don't like holding 1-op cards in my hand, but this is the exception.
- **Samnite Loyalty (#16)** - Usually Rome takes Fregellae by playing an event which limits the usefulness of the card. Can be very helpful when it can be played, but not an event I typically hold onto.
- **Neutral Power Activates (#24)** - Always nice to have at least one of these in your hand. Think long and hard about attacking with the neutral powers, they are much better used to force the other players to spend their cards and actions to respond to them.



The Etruscan/Samnite Hand

- **Great Latin Revolt (#33)** - I prefer to use this card after I have started besieging a Roman city. Use the event to lower the city's loyalty so that it falls to you without having to roll on the siege table. A tactic to pick up a quick VP is to play one of your *Desperate Times* events before you take your regular turn. Use the 3-ops from the *Desperate Times* event to move an army to besiege a Roman city. Then during your regular turn, play this event to take the city.

Not a bad hand, but a bit light on the ops. On the plus side, I have at least one event to inflict damage on all the other players, so regardless of who takes the early lead I should be able to harass them some. For the first turn I would like to raise both of the Etruscan cities' loyalty to 3, move my army from Clusium back to Pisae, prevent the Roman player from taking (or even besieging) Antium, ensure the Gallic player does not build up a reserve of plunder, and lose no Etruscan CUs. While it will be nigh impossible to accomplish all of this, it does mean that the only event that I don't really need is Samnite Loyalty, so that will be my first card play.

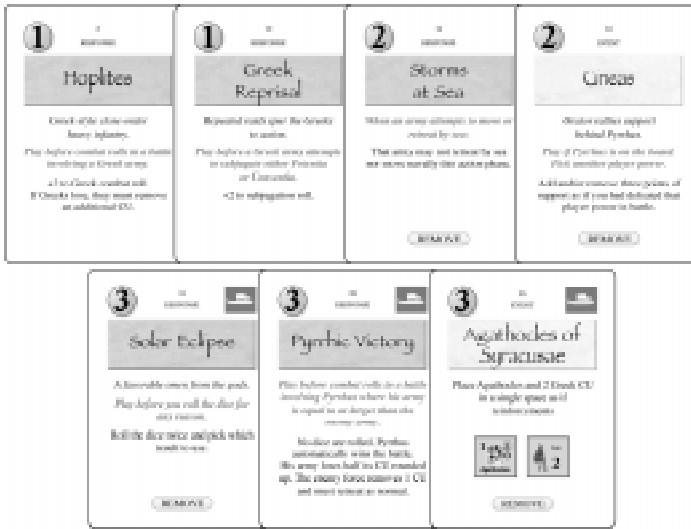
The Greeks

Played by Dan Eaglin

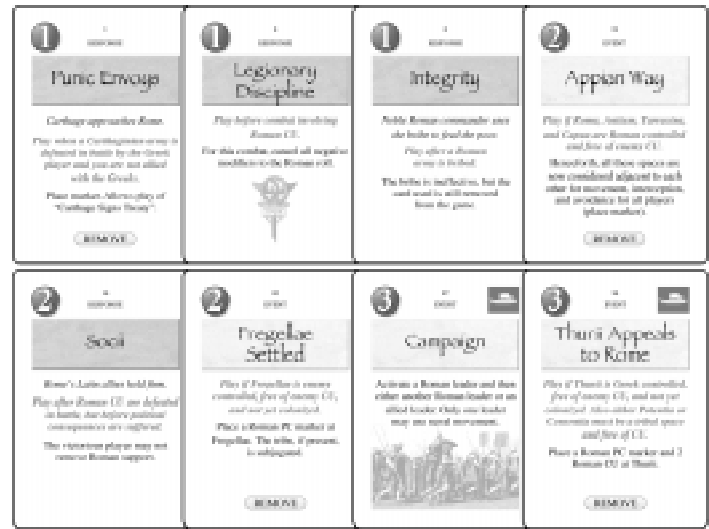
As the Greeks, my strengths include my naval movement ability, my wide-open home territory with limited conflict with the other players, and my strong leaders. All of these can help me get out to an early lead. However, I must pay constant attention to keeping city loyalties high to pay for my leaders each turn. Without battle victories, several actions per turn are easily burned to ensure this. Also, Carthage is the most powerful non-player force. Its naval ability is practically unlimited and it gets 3 new CUs each turn, making it even harder to wipe out as the game progresses.

Greek Cards

- **Hoplites (#5)** - Adding 2 to a combat roll is a big boost to the odds of success, so this will definitely be used in the first battle, unless the modifier is already overwhelming for one side or the other.
- **Greek Reprisal (#10)** - It's very unlikely I'll want to subjugate any tribes this turn, so this will get used for ops.
- **Storms at Sea (#12)** - This would be great to have the first time Carthage moves by sea. They don't tend to need to use their naval move early, however, so it would be good to save.



The Greek Hand



The Roman Hand

- **Cineas (#16)** - Only valid when Pyrrhus is in play. Might be nice to save, but will most likely be used for ops.
- **Solar Eclipse (#31)** - A tremendous advantage for either battle, naval combat, or siege.
- **Pyrrhic Victory (#32)** - Also only valid when Pyrrhus is in play, so this will be good to use for 3-ops.
- **Agathocles of Syracuse (#35)** - Good leader to get out because he only needs a 1-op to be activated. Plus, if the right card turns up later, he's the only leader who can attack Africa.

I've got two cards (16 and 32) that are only useful if Pyrrhus is in play. I can't get anything done if I save all my cards for later, so both of those will probably get used for ops. *Pyrrhic Victory* is a good choice because I'm thinking I'd like to try to get a quick VP by taking Caralis and I'll need a 3-op to sail there. Since it's Carthaginian controlled, I'll have to roll on the naval combat table, needing a 1 or 2. That's where I'll use *Solar Eclipse* so I'll have two shots at getting there. If successful, I'll have a nice jump-start in the scoring. I'll then use *Greek Reprisal* for ops to convert Caralis.

I want to get Agathocles on the board in Neapolis and use another action to bump up my city loyalties. Agathocles is a good leader to have and Neapolis is too close to Roman and Samnite territory to ignore. At this point, I'll have used up my 3-op cards. I'd like to save *Storms at Sea* to prevent Carthage from moving into one of my cities the first time they try, so I'll use *Cineas* to increase Neapolis from 1 to 3 loyalty. Besides making it more secure against potential sieges, I'll need a cushion of 4 loyalty points among the Greek cities to pay for Agathocles and Dionysius at the end of the turn.

If attacked during the turn, I would probably use *Hoplites* unless it looked completely hopeless, and if someone activates Carthage, I might use *Storms at Sea*. Since those seem like reasonable possibilities, that would leave me with no cards, so I'd have to pass on my fifth action. Things would have to be pretty desperate indeed to use a *Desperate Times* card on the very first turn.

All of the above requires a favorable roll or two, and minimum interference from the other players, which is not unheard of when you're the Greeks.

The Romans

Played by Brad Johnson

Naturally, Rome is the centerpiece of a game called *The Sword of Rome*. But this is not the Rome from Imperial or Republican times that you may be used to playing in other games. This is Rome not long after it was ruled by the Etruscans and sacked by the Gauls, and during the time the Greeks were still the premier world power of the Mediterranean.

Many novice players will think of Rome as the player to beat in this game simply because they "won" in real life and they're probably used to seeing Rome romp across the board in other games. On the contrary, Rome is very vulnerable in this game, being right in the center of the board. The Roman player needs to be aware of this and engage in diplomacy appropriately.

To its advantage, Rome has the unique ability to cement its power over the course of the game by converting its PC markers to walled cities, making them harder to take and giving extra reinforcements at the same time. Use this ability well! A "hedgehog" strategy can be very, very effective. Rome also has many effective combat-oriented events, including the ability to appoint a Dictator, so you should usually not be afraid of fighting battles to get the political points necessary to expand your empire, assuming you have at least one good consul in play.

The random selection of consuls each turn is Rome's disadvantage, however. Military leadership is at the whim of the electorate. When you happen to get a good general, you must take action, but be prepared to play conservatively when you don't. And as already mentioned, you must manage the "psychological" issue of being in the center of the board and being the target of several really nasty events in the other players' decks.

The game is set up for the Romans to fight the Etruscans and Samnites in turn 1. Rome can fight the Etruscans to defend Sutrium (as happened historically), hopefully getting a couple of support points in the process to bolster the loyalty of their own cities.

If Rome chooses to be friendly (or even allied) with the Etruscans and Samnites, their only readily available VP space will be Neapolis. This can be a very viable strategy, especially since the Greeks start to the south and have Carthage to worry about.

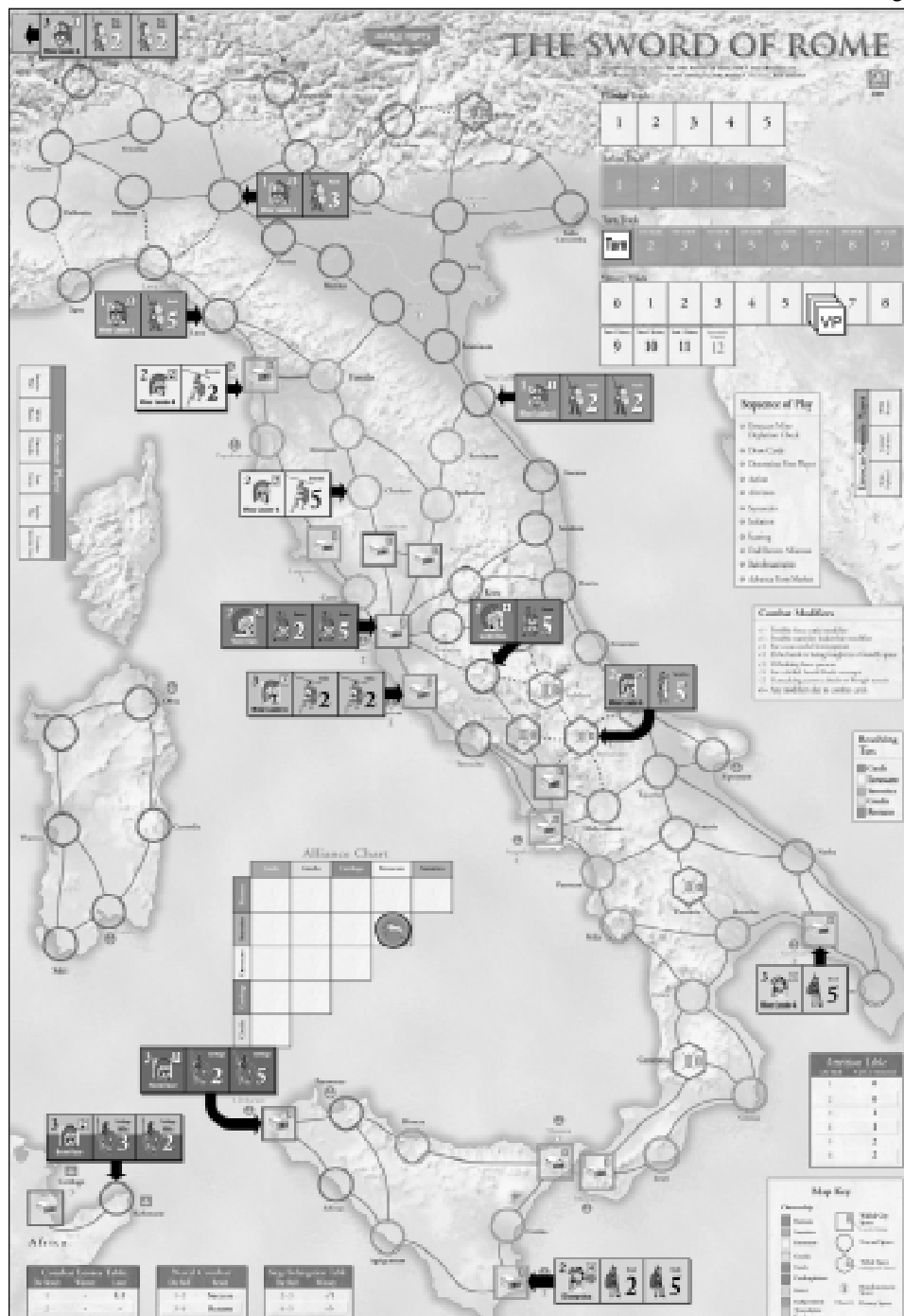
Another variant that avoids making enemies right from turn 1 is to attack the Volsci in earnest. Taking them out early can be a great benefit, even though it doesn't yield any VPs right away.

Roman Cards

Overall, a fairly average mix of ops points, but a few really good events. Many of them require set-up before I can use them to maximum effect, however, so I may be forced to try to save two or more of them for turn 2.

- **Punic Envoys (#1)** - Getting an alliance with Carthage early (before the Greeks beat them up too badly) would be fine, and this is the start of the process.

- **Legionary Discipline (#6)** - This is only a 1-op, but I will probably use it that way since I don't necessarily anticipate an opportunity to use this event if I play conservatively.
- **Integrity (#8)** - If I'm going to annoy the Samnites by settling Fregellae, I might as well also target the Etruscans, in which case this event may be useful.
- **Appian Way (#12)** - Challenging to bring into play. Can be a big advantage for Rome, which frequently ends up having to defend both north and south with limited CUs, but it can also be a double-edged sword. Since it would be very hard to play this in the foreseeable future, I expect to use this for ops.
- **Socii (#18)** - A nice event that prevents me from taking political losses after losing a battle. I definitely want to save this in the event of a catastrophic loss.



The illustration above shows the starting setup.

- **Fregellae Settled (#25)** - This allows a "free" conversion of a Samnite VP space right next to Roman territory. This is very, very nice, but played early, it will certainly make enemies of the Samnites. Nonetheless, I expect to try to play this late in turn 1 so it can't be taken back before I can score it at least once.

- **Campaign (#27)** - Used properly, campaign cards can be very, very powerful. Sometimes, it can be the only way to root out a big 10+ CU stack by allowing two forces to coordinate. I will try to save this for when I really need it, particularly since I don't have two full stacks worth of CUs in turn 1 anyway, but I don't really have a lot of other cards that I want to use to activate armies this turn.

- **Thurii Appeals to Rome (#28)** - Another great event for a free VP space, but I have found that if this event is played when Rome isn't in a position to hold Thurii (which is actually hard to do), this becomes nothing more than an irritant to the Greeks; they typically just take it right back. I'll probably use this as ops this turn.

Overall, I think my plan for turn 1 will revolve around taking Fregellae and having a strong army on it or at least next to it to prevent the Samnites from taking it back right away. I usually really like to use Camillus in turn 1 while I have him; he's one of the very best generals in the game. I wouldn't mind sending him up to fight the Etruscans in or around Clusium, particularly since I have *Integrity*, but that means I would likely have to move him back to take Fregellae. I need two 2-ops to activate generals, the *Fregellae* event, and the *Integrity* event (probably). In case I lose to the Etruscans, I have the *Socii* event to cut my losses. That's three actions. For my other two actions, I will probably want to spend the *Thurii* card and one other one to increase the loyalty of my frontier cities (unless I get several support points from winning battles).

Etruscan Mine Depletion Check Phase

Not applicable in turn 1.

Draw Cards Phase

All four players draw seven cards (eight for Rome) from their own decks. The cards drawn for this sample turn are listed above.

Determine First Player Phase

By tie breaker, the Gauls get to decide who goes first in turn 1. They choose the Romans to start.

Roman Action #1

Play #28 *Thurii Appeals to Rome* for 3-ops. Increase Narnia, Sutrium, and Capua to 2 loyalty each.

Since I have to start the turn, I really don't wish to make any enemies immediately and let them take advantage of my weak starting position. My frontier cities can be taken too easily. I could try to get support points from a battle and kill two birds with one stone perhaps, but it's somewhat risky. If I lose, I'll start out in a deep hole. In this position, I like to play somewhat conservatively, boost my cities' loyalty first, and take offensive action later.

Galic Action #1

Play #20 *Neutral Power Activates* to add 1 CU to the Volsci in Antium.

Play #33 *Brennus* to place Brennus in Sena Gallica. (Remove this card from the game.)

I reinforced the Volsci because it never hurts to harass the Romans early in the game. Plus, the harder it is for them to get rid of the Volsci, the better. As for Brennus, it's an obvious play. It makes the Gauls more powerful and makes the Etruscans think twice about coming north. This card play is setting up to either try to take 3 Etruscan spaces or to lure the Etruscans into an even battle so I can play one of my VP cards.

Etruscan/Samnite Action #1

Play #16 *Samnite Loyalty* for 2-ops. Activate Etruscan Minor Leader-A in Clusium and move his entire force to Pisae.

I would have preferred to play this to raise the loyalty of my two Etruscan cities to 2, but I can't allow my forces to be defeated piecemeal. I could play #11 *Violent Winds & Thunderstorms* to prevent the attack, but then Brennus would still be in Arretium, meaning I would still have the same problem next action. I am tempted to play my Neutral Power card to activate the Transalpine Gauls to give Bill something to do, but I will hold off until I see what Brennus does.

Greek Action #1

Play #35 *Agathocles of Syracuse* to place Agathocles and 2 CUs in Neapolis.

I want to do the most attention-getting actions near the end of the turn to give the others less opportunities to react before we score. Placing Agathocles in Neapolis can appear threatening, but not as much as grabbing a VP, which I hope to do on the last action. I placed him as my first action because if someone else moves in ahead of me, I'd have to start him somewhere else and use an extra action to move him to Neapolis.

Roman Action #2

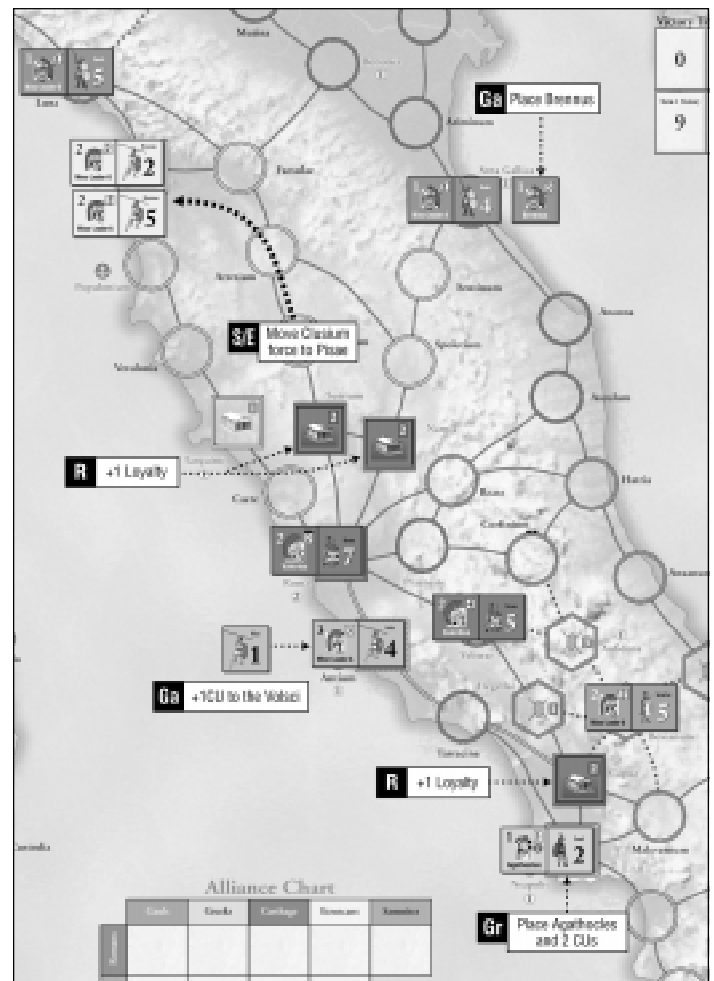
Play #27 *Campaign* to activate Valerius and Camillus. Move Valerius and 7 CUs to Velitrae, drop 3 CUs with Camillus, then to Roma, drop

1 CU with Minor Leader-A, and finally to Praeneste. Move Camillus and 8 CUs through Fregellae and Capua to attack Agathocles in Neapolis.

Neither the Samnites nor the Greeks attempt interceptions. Agathocles and his 2 CUs flee into the city and allow Camillus to place a level 0 siege marker.

I'm really wondering why the Greeks would put a small army in Neapolis. I imagine he just wants to garrison the city, but it seems like a risky play because if he lets me battle him, I'm likely to get the point I need to convert Neapolis immediately. His 2 CUs aren't enough to besiege Capua or attack me, so I wonder what he has in mind. He probably has a good combat card, but I might be up to accepting that risk.

I'm having second thoughts about trying to attack the Etruscans, first because he consolidated his forces further north from me, and I don't want to get that far out of position for a protected takeover of Fregellae later. Maybe if I attack the Greeks, the Etruscans and Samnites will stay friendly with me and focus on the now well-led Gauls. I really want to attack with Camillus so I can keep Valerius on the north side of Roma, but I'd like to take more than 5 CUs to the battle. The Campaign event allows me to shift my forces, attack the Greeks, and also set up Valerius to settle Praeneste all in one action. I'm disappointed that Dan didn't let me have my battle, but it was the



ACTION PHASE #1: Situation at the end of the action phase. Each player's move is indicated.

NOTE: The total CU value of each stack is shown as a single unit—even if no unit of that value is supplied in the game (i.e., 4 and 8).

smart play for him to be sure. I'm hoping he'll be unwilling to sail reinforcements up to attempt to lift the siege.

Gallic Action #2

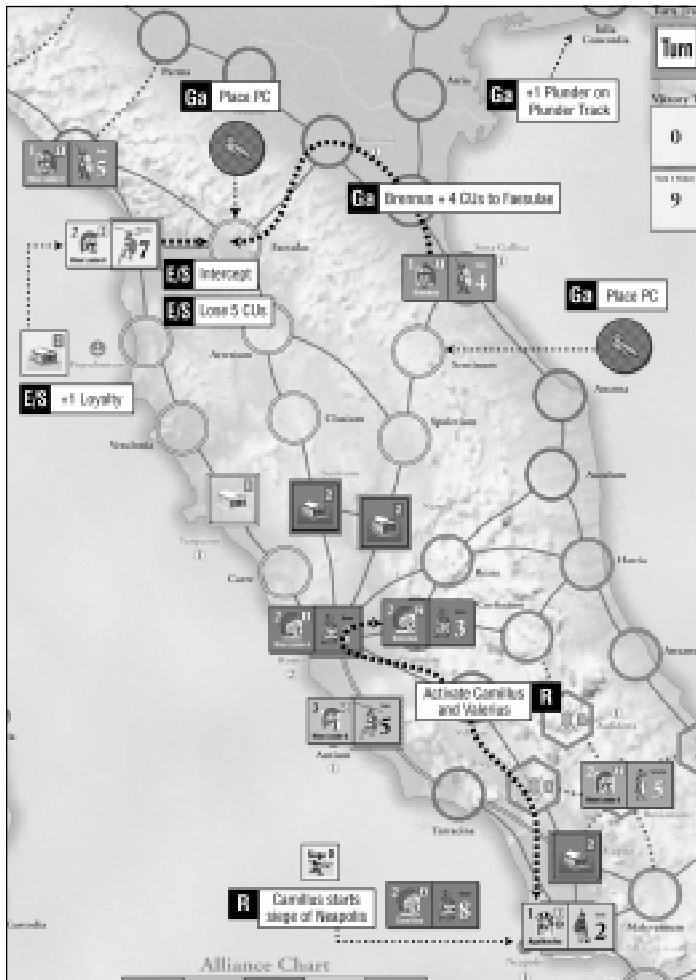
Play #23 *Neutral Power Activates* for 2-ops. Activate Brennus and move him and his entire force through Ariminum, Bononia, and Faesulae.

The Etruscans roll a 1, and Minor Leader-A intercepts Brennus in Faesulae and a battle ensues. The Etruscans get +1 (for intercepting) +1 (for friendly territory) +2 (for superior force), and the Gauls get +1 (for superior leadership), giving a final modifier of +3 for the Etruscans.

The Etruscans roll 2,5,4 + 3 = 14 and the Gauls roll 5,4,6 = 15. It's a bloody battle that ends with a Gallic victory. The Etruscans lose 5 CUs and the Gauls lose 2. The remaining 2 Etruscan CUs retreat to Pisae.

Play #14 *Souls for Teutates* to gain 1 VP for killing at least 3 Etruscan CUs in a battle. (Remove this card from the game.)

The Gauls get 3 (5/2 rounded up) support points to play for themselves and/or against the Etruscans. Place Gallic PC markers in Faesulae and Sentinum and place 1 Gallic plunder marker on the plunder track.



ACTION PHASE #2: Situation after the Romans, Gauls and Etruscans/Samnites have moved. During the Greek portion of Action Phase #2 the Greek player sails Dionysius and 6 CUs from Syracusae to Neapolis to attack Camillus. The Roman general successfully avoids the battle—but the siege of Neapolis is lifted. Not shown is the T-Gaul activity to the north which plunders two cities and removes the Gallic plunder marker and replaces it with the T-Gaul plunder marker.

This move was mostly to consolidate two armies under Brennus. Since the Etruscans intercepted, I was happy to give them battle, and with some lucky dice, the victory is sweet! I not only cashed in one of my VP cards, I'm well on my way to being able to cash in the second. I would have loved to convert Arretium for my third Etruscan space right now, but I couldn't because it wasn't adjacent to territory that began the action under Gallic control.

Etruscan/Samnite Action #2

The Romans' attempt to take Neapolis combined with the potential to colonize Praeneste and take Antium concerns me. On the other hand, only Valerius and 3 CUs are guarding the northern Roman cities and Camillus is now 5 MPs away from either city (thanks to the extra CU Bill placed in Antium), which means I could use *Great Latin Revolt* to remove 3 Roman support and take one of them without a roll. I could go after Sutrium if only I were assured the Gauls would not attack my northern border.

I approached the Gauls about an alliance, but he responded with a "let me think about it", which is a polite way of saying "no". Therefore, he either has an understanding with the Romans (unlikely, due to adding a CU to the Volsci) or he has anti-Etruscan VP events. The move with Brennus seemed to support the latter. Fighting Brennus before he could consolidate his forces gave me an 72% chance of victory.

Unfortunately, I may have brought Lady Luck to the dance, but she went home with Brennus. Not only did I lose 5 CUs, but being left with only 2 CUs means I can't even siege a Roman city if I wanted to. The Gauls actually converting territory to their control means they must either have the event that gives a VP for taking Etruscan spaces or he wants me to think that and spend some actions retaking my spaces. With only two cards that can activate an army and only having 2 CUs, I will sit tight in Pisae and give him the VP if he does have the event. Perhaps scoring 2 VPs in the first turn will put the bulls-eye on him.

Play #6 *Bruttian Raiders* for 1-op. Increase the loyalty of Pisae to 2.

Play #24 *Neutral Power Activates* to activate the Transalpine Gauls. Move T-Gaul Minor Leader-A and 4 CUs to Eporedia and raid. The T-Gauls roll an 8 and place an independent PC marker in Eporedia. Remove the Gallic plunder marker from the plunder track. Continue moving to Carreum and raid again with the 5th and last MP. The T-Gauls roll an 8 again and place an independent PC marker in Carreum and a T-Gaul plunder marker on the track.

I activated the T-Gauls to give the Gauls something to do other than beat on Etruscans. I used *Bruttian Raiders* for ops because the Greeks already have their hands full and I need to save *Great Latin Revolt* in case I need to move an army.

Greek Action #2

Place Minor Leader-B in Syracusae.

Play #32 *Pyrrhic Victory* for 3-ops. Activate Dionysius and 6 CUs to sail from Syracusae to Neapolis. Agathocles and 2 CUs sortie and all attack Camillus.

Camillus rolls a 4 and successfully avoids battle, withdrawing to Capua.

Dionysius and all 8 CUs attempt to pursue, but roll a 5 and fail, ending their move in Neapolis.

I decided I had to send someone up to Neapolis to help get Rome out of there. I considered offering him the chance to avoid battle automatically, but that wouldn't set me up any better for my original plan to take Caralis. Since I'm left with only #31 *Solar Eclipse* to move by sea,

which I need to give me a decent chance of making the trip successfully, Caralis is off the agenda.

My plan is now to use *Solar Eclipse* along with *Hoplites* to get my best shot at winning against Camillus and getting a good number of political points. I've already burned an action coming up to Neapolis, so maybe I could save the action I already planned to spend increasing my cities' loyalties by getting a favorable battle outcome here. Unfortunately, I didn't expect Camillus to avoid battle, and I failed to follow him. However, now that this Capua idea has presented itself, maybe I should pursue it on subsequent actions.

Roman Action #3

Play #12 *Appian Way* for 2-ops. Activate Valerius. Remove 1 CU from his army to place a 1-loyalty Roman walled city in Praeneste.

I didn't really count on the Greeks lifting the siege at Neapolis so quickly; they must not fear Carthage much. I wish I could activate

Carthage to teach him a lesson. That's OK, nothing lost. But the risk of attacking Dionysius seems too great. I'm not going into Samnium, and the Etruscans and Gauls are occupied. Since I don't want to play my *Fregellae Settled* event yet, I will colonize Praeneste. If things go well, I'll at least get another reinforcement CU for next turn.

Desperate Times Interrupt

The Gauls interrupt their own turn to play #38 *Desperate Times* for 3-ops. (Remove this card from the game.) Activate Brennus and his entire force to move to Luna, pick up 3 CUs, then back to Arretium via Faesulae.

The Etruscans do not attempt to intercept.

Galic Action #3

Play #8 *Sympathetic Locals* for 1-op. Place a Gallic PC marker in Arretium.

Play #17 *Land for Sucellus* to gain 1 VP for controlling 3 Etruscan spaces. (Remove this card from the game.)

Obviously, finishing up on my plans already in action. I had to burn one of my two *Desperate Times* cards to ensure I could do it before the Etruscans got a chance to interfere, but I think it's worth it.

Etruscan/Samnite Action #3

Play #7 *Raiders Defeated* for 1-op. Increase the loyalty of Tarquinii to 2.

This round would have been completely different if I hadn't lost that battle last round. On the plus side, both of the anti-Etruscan VP events are now out of the Gallic deck, he's already spent one of his *Desperate Times* cards, and I haven't actually lost any home VP spaces.

With three of my home spaces taken, the Gauls could raid two more and I would lose my bribe ability if I did not clean up at least one space. However, I get to go after him so I will save my 3-op card in case I have to respond. I needed to play one of my 1-op cards to raise Tarquinii to two loyalty as I still can't believe Rome didn't go after it last action. I chose *Raiders Defeated* because I doubt Brennus will raid next action; I assume he will move Brennus up and attack the T-Gauls on the last action of the turn.

Greek Action #3

Play #16 *Cineas* for 2-ops. Activate Dionysius and move him and 7 CUs to Capua (leaving Agathocles and 1 CU behind in Neapolis).

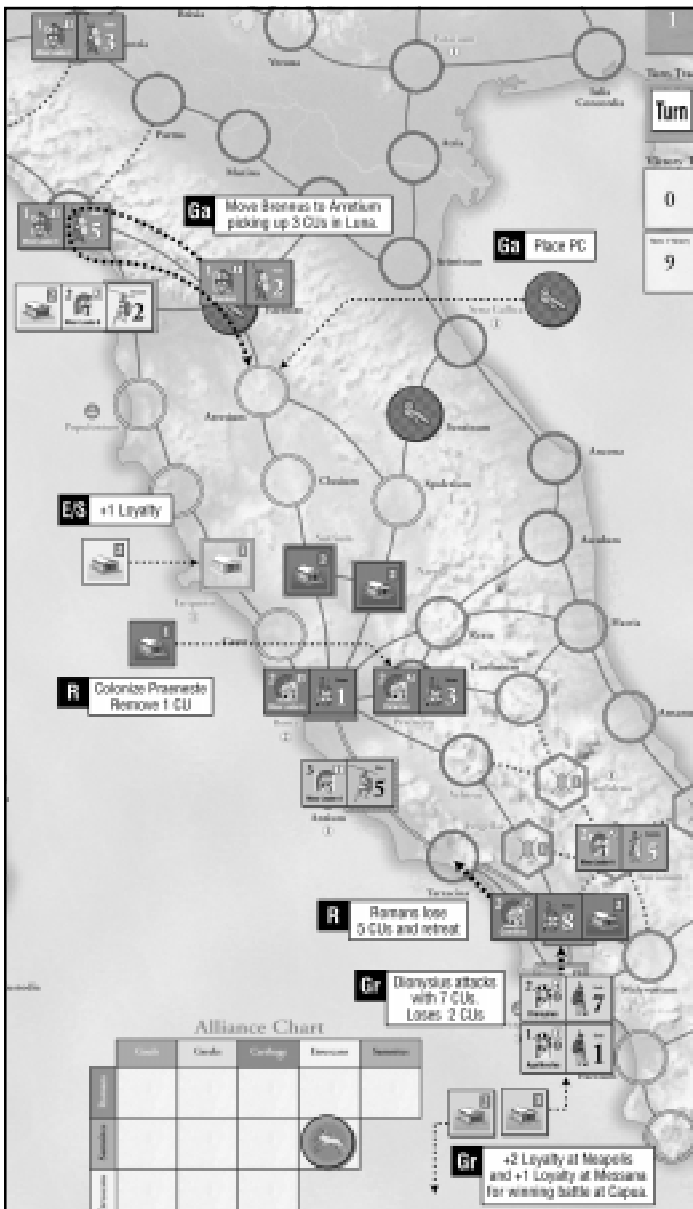
Rome chooses not to attempt to avoid battle.

The Greeks play #31 *Solar Eclipse* for the privilege of rolling twice and picking the best one. (Remove this card from the game.) They also play #5 *Hoplites* for +2 (but losing an additional CU if they lose the battle). The Romans have +1 (for friendly territory), giving a final modifier of +1 for the Greeks.

The Greeks roll 6,1,2 and 4,6,5 (choosing 4,6,5) + 1 = 16 and the Romans roll 2,6,5 = 13. The Greeks are victorious, losing 2 CUs to the Romans' 5. The tattered remains of Camillus's army retreat to Tarracina.

But Rome plays #18 *Socii* to prevent the Greeks from removing any Roman support for this battle. The Greeks increase the loyalty of Neapolis to 3 and Messana to 2.

I'm looking at several Greek cities pretty open to attack by Carthage, but I can't get any CUs there in any number with any speed. I've only got one card that would allow me to move by sea, but the event is too good to use for ops and it could really only help Syracuse, so instead I concentrated on the area where the CUs are.



ACTION PHASE #3: The Gallic player plays three cards this action round to secure a Victory Point (controlling 3 Etruscan spaces). The Greek player moves Dionysius and 7 CUs against the Roman army at Capua and achieves a major victory.

I should have moved the whole stack from Neapolis to Capua instead of leaving Agathocles behind with 1 CU. I did that so Neapolis would be left with a garrison and because 7 CUs against Rome's 8 is the same as 8 against 8. But what didn't occur to me at that time was that in the case of having to siege Capua later I'd need to be able to activate my leader there. I'd much rather use *Greek Reprisal* for ops than *Storms at Sea*, but since I left Agathocles behind, *Storms at Sea* is my only option for activating Dionysius.

Even though Rome stopped the immediate conversion of Capua, I should have two siege rolls this turn (one action and one free at the end of the turn).

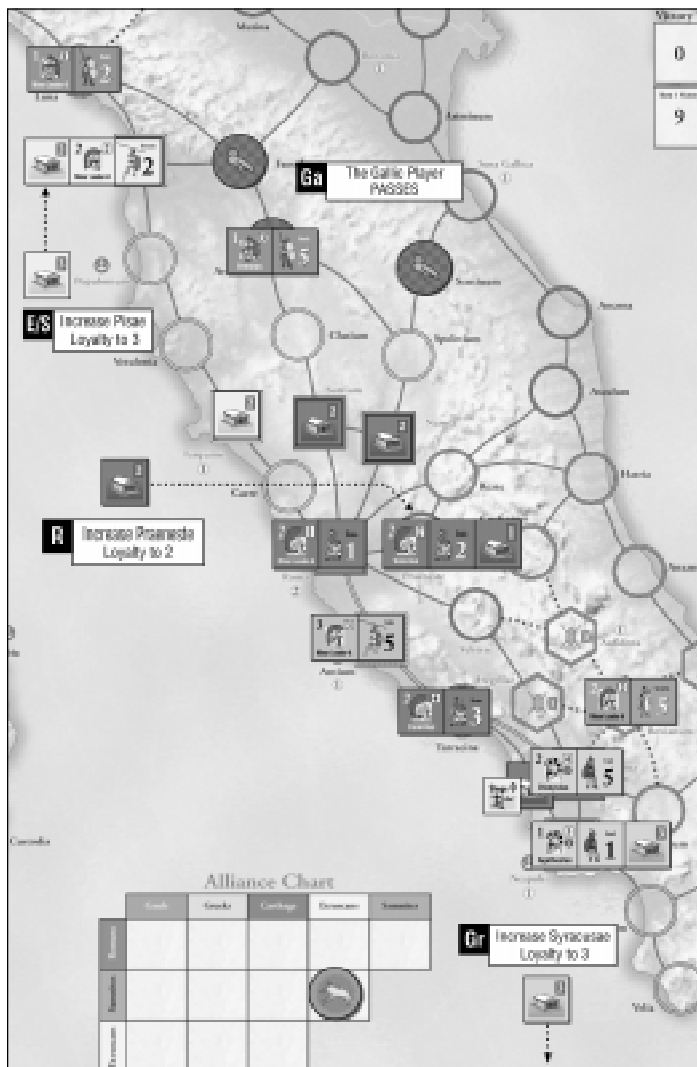
Roman Action #4

Play #1 *Punic Envoys* for 1-op. Increase the loyalty of Praeneste to 2.

Sadly, I have limited resources at this point—Not enough CUs and not enough ops to force Dionysius out of Capua. If I had to “waste” an action, I would have preferred to spend this card for the event, but the Greeks are not attacking Carthage at all. But I've never regretted increasing the loyalty of a city anyway.

Gallic Action #4

Since I only have one card left, I have to pass either this action or the next. The obvious choice is passing now and saving my last action for the end.



ACTION PHASE #4: The Gallic player passes while the other three players consolidate their positions.

Etruscan/Samnite Action #4

Play #1 *Gallic Fury* for 1-op. Increase the loyalty of Pisae to 3.

Timely card play by the Romans prevents Capua from switching to the Greeks, but it does allow the Greeks to raise the loyalty of their two remaining 1-loyalty cities. However, by being forced to retreat to Tarracina, Camillus is in a bad spot as he is hemmed in by the Volsci and Dionysius.

But the more I think about it, the more I think I cannot let the Roman army get destroyed by Dionysius. Normally, I would not be opposed to that, but the Gauls are 2 VPs ahead of me and the Greek would be at least 1 VP ahead of me by taking Capua. In addition I have lost 5 CUs, so being behind in both army size and VPs means I would have to benefit more than either the Gauls or the Greeks, which is not going to happen. Therefore, if Dionysius attacks Camillus, I will play #11 *Violent Wind and Thunderstorms* to prevent the attack.

Greek Action #4

Play #10 *Greek Reprisal* for 1-op. Increase the loyalty of Syracuse to 3.

I need to have four points of city loyalty to burn if I want to keep both Dionysius and Agathocles in the game at the end of the turn. I only had 1-op to spend, but a point is a point. Plus, I don't anticipate subjugating Potentia or Consentia any time soon, so I won't miss having *Greek Reprisal* as an event. My only other card is 2-ops, which I need to activate Dionysius to siege Capua. I'm waiting to do that until my 5th action to avoid the likelihood of reprisals this turn from Rome. He'd have to burn a *Desperate Times* card since I'll be doing that after his last action. That wouldn't be good for me, but getting him to use them early is a good thing. Chances are, though, he won't do anything and I'll be able to finish the turn with another roll on the siege table.

Roman Action #5

Play #25 *Fregellae Settled*. Place a Roman PC marker in Fregellae. (Remove this card from the game.)

Well, my whole turn was focused on playing this event last, so I'm still going to do it. The only other reasonable alternative would be to try to muster an attack against the Greeks in Capua, but that's just not going to work: not enough CUs. I'll just have to hope that attrition and a bad siege roll keep Capua standing. Worst case, if it does fall, at least the city in Praeneste and the VP from Fregellae will keep me even.

At this point, I just hope the Gauls don't have an easy way to pick up one more VP somewhere for the instant victory. Actually, they still need to clean up Eporedia, so I suppose that's not really an issue.

I'm betting the Etruscans are saving up a 2-ops (possibly their only one!) for their final response, which almost assures the Samnites will come out and convert Fregellae back, but it can't be helped. I'm hoping they really have only 1-op cards left.

Gallic Action #5

Play #32 *Bloodlust* for 3-ops. Activate Minor Leader C and 3 CU in Placentia to move to Eporedia.

The T-Gauls cannot intercept.

Just performing the mandatory cleanup duties.

Etruscan/Samnite Action #5

Play #33 *Great Latin Revolt* for 3-ops. Move Samnite Minor Leader-A and 5 CUs from Bovianum to Fregellae.

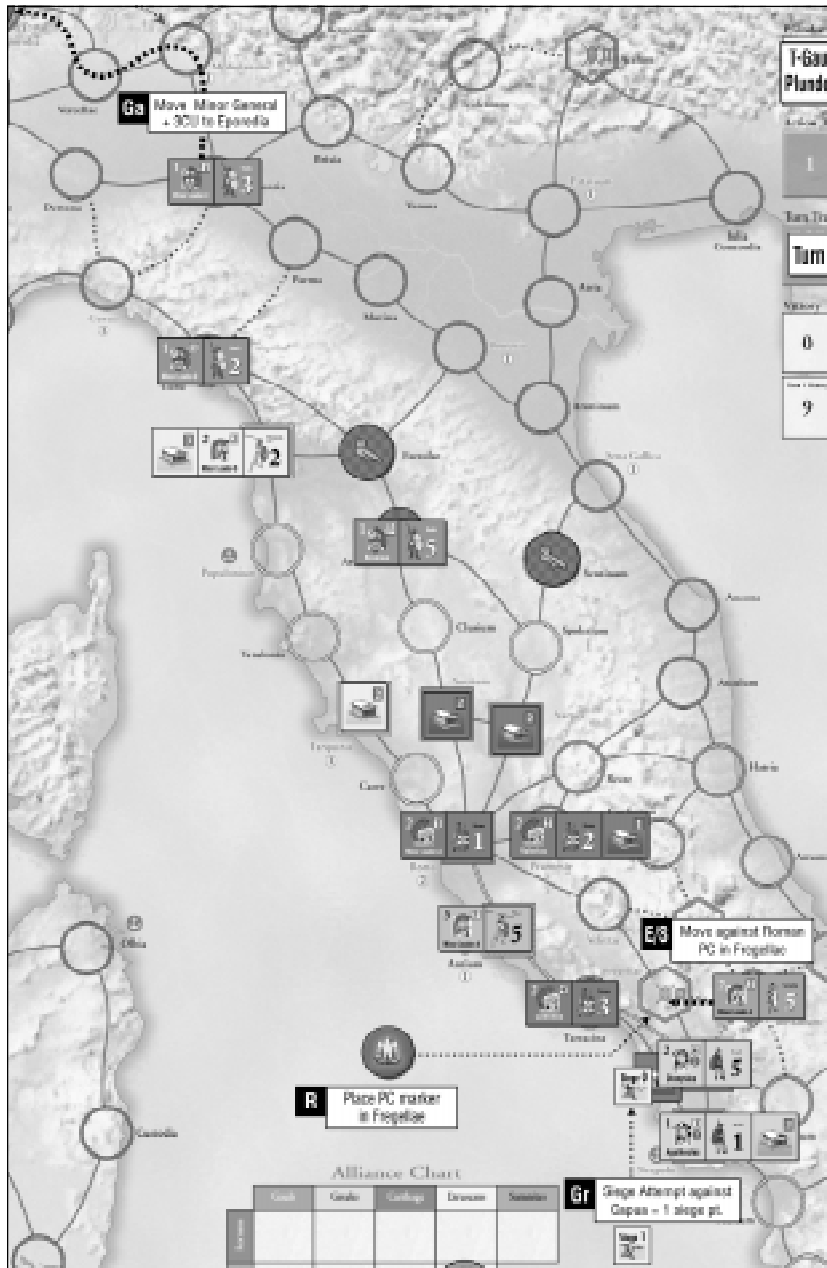
The Greeks choose to not attempt to intercept.

I can't believe I was thinking about playing an event to save the Roman's army. At least I saved my 3-op card so I can move down there and do something about it. I will probably lose some CUs during the attrition phase which I really can't afford, but that is better than losing a VP. The only downside is that I have to waste a really good event to clean up this mess. I still have *Violent Winds and Thunderstorms* to prevent Dionysius from trying to attack me.

Greek Action #5

Play #12 *Storms at Sea* for 2-ops. Activate Dionysius to siege Capua.

The Greeks roll a 6 on the siege table, resulting in a loss of 1 CU, but gaining 1 siege point.



ACTION PHASE #5: The Roman player settles Fregellae with an event card, but the settlers are quickly ousted by the Samnites.

I only had one card left. I could save it for later—*Storms at Sea* could be handy against Carthage—but I'd really like to gain that Capua VP. It's possible I could pick it up in the free siege roll at the end of the turn, but that would require a good roll, so I decided I'd better increase my chances by getting two rolls this turn. I did end up losing a CU, but by getting one siege point now, I'll only need 6 or better on my free roll.

Attrition Phase

- The Gauls in Eporedia roll a 2 and lose nothing.
- The Transalpine Gauls in Carreum roll a 3 and lose 1 CU.
- The Samnites in Fregellae roll a 4 and lose 1 CU.
- The Greeks in Capua roll a 1 and lose nothing.

Surrender Phase

- Remove the independent PC marker in Eporedia.
- Replace the independent PC marker in Carreum with a TGaul PC marker.
- Replace the Roman PC marker in Fregellae with a Samnite PC marker.
- Dionysius rolls a 4 on the siege table, inflicting no additional siege points to Capua. Capua remains Roman.

Isolation Phase

No spaces are isolated.

Scoring Phase

No further changes in scores. Gauls have 8 VPs; Romans, Etruscans/Samnites, and Greeks all remain at 6 VPs.

End/Renew Alliances Phase

No alliances active at this time.

Reinforcement Phase

- Add 1 Volsci CU in Antium.
- Add 1 Transalpine Gaul CU in the TGaul holding box.
- By tie-breaker, the Etruscans get to decide to add 3 Carthaginian CUs in Lilybaeum.

The Gauls (with most VPs) must place reinforcements first, and the Etruscans decide the remaining 3 players will place in the following order: Greeks, Romans, Etruscans.

- Add 5 Gallic CUs with Brennus in Arretium and 1 CU in Eporedia.
- Add 4 Greek CUs in Syracusae and 1 CU in Neapolis.
- Keep both Agathocles and Dionysius in play by decreasing Syracusae, Neapolis, and Tarentum to 2 loyalty and Rhegium to 1 loyalty.
- Remove both Roman consuls.
- Add 5 Roman CUs to Praeneste.
- Draw two new consuls: Claudius and Veturius. Place Claudius in Praeneste and Veturius in Roma. (No reinforcements can be placed in Tarracina since it cannot trace a path to an unbesieged Roman reinforcement space.) Place Minor Leader-B in Tarracina.
- Add 5 Etruscan CUs to Pisae.

Turn 2

Etruscan Mine Depletion Check Phase

Only 3 Etruscan spaces are not Etruscan-controlled, so the Etruscans retain their bribe ability.

Draw Cards Phase and Final Thoughts

Etruscans

After losing 5 CUs early in the turn on an unexpected battle result, I am very happy that I ended the turn even on VPs. The problem though is I lost 6 CUs in total this turn meaning I am down 1 CU from the start of the game even after the turn 1 reinforcements. On the plus side, neither the Romans nor the Greeks picked up any VPs either and those two look like they could be fighting over Capua for quite some time.

I kept one card from last turn *Violent Wind and Thunderstorms*—#11 and so I draw 6 new cards:

- *Mountain Passes* (#10)
- *Punic Naval Victory* (#12)
- *Mercenaries Switch Sides* (#27)
- *Dis Comes for Brennus* (#29)
- *Consul Ambushed* (#32)
- *Linen Legion* (#35)

An excellent draw—I could not have picked a better set of cards! Since I determine who goes first next turn, I would go first and play #29 to remove Brennus before he could do any damage with that 10 CU army. Or I could play #27 to remove 2 CUs from the Gallic army in Eporedia and place them in Pisae. That would leave his army very vulnerable against the T-Gauls and make Brennus even against Pisae instead of +2. Thinking about it, playing #27 first makes more sense since if Brennus attacked Pisae I could play #11 to prevent the attack. In any event, my first two card plays would be #29 and #27 to blunt the Gallic threat. With event #32, I could easily blunt any Roman offensive, and with Carthage to worry about I am not too concerned with a northern Greek offensive.

The key to *The Sword of Rome* is to remember that nine turns is a long time, so you should never panic and foolishly grab for a space that is too risky. That being said, I would probably be content for the 2nd turn just to build up my CUs and watch the Greeks and Romans pound each other.

If all went according to plan (ha!), I would end turn 2 with all my cities at 3 loyalty, 9 CU in Pisae, and 6 CU in Fregellae. Then with my turn 2 reinforcements, I place one in Pisae and four in Fregellae giving me two 10 CU armies for the start of turn 3.

Greeks

Game turn 1 didn't turn out very much as I planned, but it turned out pretty good. Rome attacking Neapolis required me to go up there and fight. On the other hand, no one activated Carthage, so I only had the one unexpected event to deal with, and that led to my advantage, since I'm on the verge of converting the Capua VP space. It would have been ideal if I'd gotten that VP already, but I did take out several Roman CUs.

I used all my cards in turn 1, so I draw seven new ones.

- *Tarentines Sink Roman Fleet* (#1)
- *Alexander of Epirus* (#7)
- *Insubordination* (#11)
- *Thessalians* (#13)
- *Neutral Power Activates* (#23)

- *Plebeian Revolt* (#25)
- *Pyrrhus of Epirus* (#26)

For turn 2, I'll want to finish the siege of Capua, and I would expect to have to fight off Rome and possibly Carthage. If Rome doesn't entangle me, I should probably go on the offensive against Carthage in Lilybaeum.

I've only got one 3-ops card and it's too good to not use for its event, so I won't be doing any naval movement this turn.

I will want to use #26 to get Pyrrhus on the board. I've already used two cards that gave their benefit when he's in play, but a 1/4 leader is worth having no matter what. I want him in Sicily to add to the force that can attack Carthage. He does have a -3 leader penalty, so I'd let Dionysius go at the end of the turn. I don't need Alexander, so #7 can be used for ops, as can #1.

I'd like to use #11 and #25 to annoy Gaul and Rome. Wherever my first battle is, I'd use #13 to increase my chances.

If I use my cards as planned, that leaves me only #23 to activate Dionysius to siege Capua, which I would take as my first action. If it was unsuccessful, I'd have to strongly consider using #25 to try the siege again. After completing the conversion of Capua, my second priority would be getting Pyrrhus into play.

Romans

I suppose it wouldn't surprise anyone to know I wasn't too happy with turn 1. The big loss to the Greeks in Capua and the forced retreat to Tarracina (where Camillus was trapped) pretty much foiled my plan to take Fregellae and keep it. In hindsight, I probably would have been much wiser to either not set off the Greeks by staying away from Neapolis, or to save the *Fregellae* card for next turn. Now I have two enemies and I gained nothing from it. I always find myself thinking I have to be doing something aggressive (or at least constructive) with each action, and that's not always the case. I suppose it's possible I could have gone after the Etruscans instead of Neapolis as I originally planned, but at that point I really didn't want to make the Etruscans any weaker lest the Gauls somehow find their 3rd VP (and thus automatic first turn victory). Now that the Gauls are well in the lead and the rest of us are feeling some pain, I think I might like to try to mend fences with the Etruscans and Samnites and try to get an alliance. I could help him against the Gauls in the north if he could find a way to help me against the Greeks in the south.

I will discard *Legionary Discipline*, but I'll keep *Integrity* (#8), if for no other reason than because the Etruscans will know they can bribe me with impunity after they see it discarded. I draw seven cards

- *Ptolemy II* (#9)
- *Gallic Loss of Heart* (#15)
- *Neutral Power Activates x 2* (#19, #21)
- *Cities Garrisoned* (#29)
- *Devotio* (#31)
- *Carthage Signs Treaty* (#35)

This hand has a relatively high number of ops, which is good, but it so happens both of my new consuls are easily activated anyway, so I've got a lot of freedom in choosing which events I'll use. *Devotio* is almost a must-keep for the Romans—with a good consul, it can bring almost assured victory to a key battle, but at the cost of removing the consul from the game. I'll save that event for a time when I'm desperate to turn a loss into a victory. Now that I've made enemies of both the Greeks and the Samnites, I will use *Gallic Loss of Heart* if necessary to keep the Gauls away from me. I will also use at least one Neutral Power card

(maybe both) to get Carthage moving against the Greeks—it'd be great if I could get him to pull back out of Capua, but that seems unlikely. Cities Garrisoned is nice, but it can be tricky to make the three new CUs useful. I'll use it if I can, maybe first to add CUs to Roma and Praeneste and somewhere else. *Carthage Signs Treaty* and *Ptolemy II* look like my primary cards to use for activations, and I certainly need at least one to try to kick the Greeks out of Capua.

Gauls

Overall, turn 1 couldn't have been any better for me: 2 VPs in the first turn is an excellent start for any side. The key action of the turn was when the Etruscans intercepted and then lost the battle, allowing me to play *Souls for Teutates* and set up to play *Land for Sucellus* on the next action. The only downside was having to spend a *Desperate Times* card. I usually like to save these for later in the game, but I wanted to make sure I didn't lose my chance to play *Land for Sucellus*, since it is rare for the Gauls to do so.

As usual, the Transalpine Gauls were a problem, but not as big a problem as they could have been. I fully expected another Neutral Power card to be played to activate them.

I have no cards remaining in hand, but even if I did I'd have to discard them and draw 7 new ones:

- *City Abandoned* (#6)
- *Enemy Surprised* (#12)
- *Siege Train Captured* (#18)
- *Neutral Power Activates* (#19)
- *Recruitment* (#25)
- *Mercenaries* (#28)
- *Headlong Rush* (#31)

Not a bad hand for turn 2. My main goal will be to hold onto the VPs I already have. Being 2 VPs up will make me a giant target and I expect several Neutral Power cards to be used against me. Cleaning up the T-Gauls will be an early priority: you can't activate T-Gauls that aren't there! Other than that I will probably try to raid wherever possible to get another VP. I'll save *Headlong Rush* in case I have a battle with the Etruscans or Romans. I may even consider going on the offensive with this card, although attacking the Etruscans is likely to result in a bribe, so I have to be careful to not waste an action.

I would like to try to use the *Siege Train Captured/City Abandoned* combo on one of the Roman cities if possible. The reinforcement rate will eventually become a problem if something is not done. Other than that, I may use the *Neutral Power Activates* card against the Greeks if they continue to do well against the Romans, or against the Romans if they start to do well against the Greeks.

CARD NOTES

Roman Deck:

#2 - Etruscan Indifference

The Etruscan city states considered each other rivals and often refused to help each other even when it would have been prudent. The Roman siege of Veii is an example of this short sighted policy.

#3 - Duoviri Navales

In 311 B.C., the Romans formed a small naval board to reorganize the fleet captured from Antium in 338 B.C. The following year a small squadron was sent to attack Nuceria, but was unsuccessful.

#4 - Neapolis Turns to Rome

In 326 B.C., the 'old citizens' of Neapolis introduced a Samnite garrison into the city and entered into friendly relations with the Samnites. Capua appealed to Rome of behalf of Neapolis as Rome and the Samnites were at war. Consul Philo besieged the city and eventually Neapolis got rid of the Samnite garrison and surrendered the city to the Romans. Neapolis was then given a very favorable treaty with Rome free of military obligations to Rome in return for guarding the harbor.

#5 - Obesus Etruscus

A Latin phrase that translated literally means "Fat Etruscan" – the Latin equivalent of our phrase "couch potato."

#6 - Legionary Discipline

#17 - Triarii

#18 - Socii

These cards represent the solid military structure that the Romans had. Feeling that the gods had destined them for control of Italy allowed Rome to survive tests that would have toppled most empires.

#9 - Ptolemy II

Rome's defeat of Pyrrhus directed the attention of the whole Hellenistic world towards Rome for Pyrrhus had been considered a possible empire builder like Alexander. Ptolemy understood the significance of the event and sent envoys to establish a record of friendship.

#11 Claudius the Blind

After successive "defeats" by Pyrrhus the Senate was inclined to come to terms with him, but the fiery and patriotic eloquence of the aged and blind Appius Claudius shamed the senators into rejecting the offer. Cineas (Greek Card #16) was ordered to tell Pyrrhus that Rome would not negotiate so long as foreign troops remained on Italian soil.

#13 - Disaster at Trifanum

The last gasp effort by the Latin League to assert it's independence from Rome ended in a crushing defeat.

#14 - The Sacred Band

An elite force consisting of Carthaginian citizens trained to fight like Greek hoplites.

#16 - Servian Wall

After the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 B.C. one of the first things Rome did was build a wall around the city. Named after Servius Tullius.

#25 - Fregellae Settled

Rome's founding of this colony started the 2nd Samnite War.

#28 - Thurii Appeals to Rome

About 285 B.C. Thurii appealed to the Romans for help against the Lucanians. This aid provoked a war with Tarentum who saw itself as the protector of southern Greek cities.

#31 - Devotio

At the battle of Sentinum, in which Rome faced the combined forces of the Gauls and Samnites, the consul P. Decius Mus rode headlong into a Gallic charge to steady his wavering troops.

#32 - Licinian-Sextian Laws

The passage of these laws, while unpopular with the patricians, ended the plebeian revolts. It gave the plebeians protections from patricians in regards to debt and mandated that one consul each year was to be a plebeian.

#34 - Epirote Traitor

A story much in doubt, but makes for good reading. Pyrrhus' physician sent a note to the Roman consul offering to poison him in return for gold. The noble Roman consul refused to consider the offer and instead sent the treasonous letter back to Pyrrhus.

Greek Deck:

#1 - Tarentines Sink Roman Fleet

This act was in response to the aid Rome gave Thurii. (Roman card #28)

#2 - Heights of Epipolai

The walls guarding the strategic Epipolai Heights were the first ever to incorporate artillery into the defenses.

#3 - Greek Privateers**#34 - Gallic Mercenaries**

Known as the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius ruled Sicily with an iron grip from 405 to 367 B.C. Employing Gallic mercenaries, he raided up and down the Italian coast trying to add southern Italy to his empire.

#6 - Cleonymus of Sparta

One of many foreign kings hired by Tarentum. He quickly decided to build his own empire rather than helping the Greeks. When Metapontum refused to send him a contingent of forces, he entered the town, exacted a heavy penalty and abused the citizens. The Greeks deserted him, he was defeated by the barbarians and compelled to depart.

#7 - Alexander of Epirus

Not learning from past history, Tarentum asked Alexander for aid. Like others before him Alexander was more interested in building his own empire than helping the Greeks. Therefore in 330 B.C. Tarentum refused to send help when his army was attacked by the barbarians. His army was defeated and Alexander slain.

#8 - Agathocles Lands in Africa**#14 - Bomilcar Withdraws****#31 - Solar Eclipse****#35 - Agathocles of Syracuse**

Yet another king who desired to recreate the Sicilian empire of Dionysius I many years earlier. In 311 B.C. Carthage surprised his army and killed 7000 men while losing only 500. The remnants of his army fled to Syracuse where Carthage besieged the city by land and sea. By the next year the situation had become critical; supplies were giving out and there was no chance of seeing the Carthaginian blockade broken. Needing a diversion to save his army, Agathocles made plans for a desperate invasion of Africa. He took a solar eclipse the day before he was to leave as a good sign. As luck would have it, as Agathocles' fleet left the harbor, the Carthaginians were distracted

by a convoy of corn vessels with the result that the city was replenished and Agathocles made it safely to sea. He landed in Africa where Carthage sent its citizen army 40,000 strong out into the field to meet his army of 13,000 mercenaries. One division, led by Hanno, made a hasty charge and was fought to a standstill and then fell back when Hanno was killed. The other Punic wing, led by Bomilcar, drew back when Hanno got in trouble. It is not certain whether Bomilcar, who was a personal rival of Hanno, deliberately withdrew to ensure his rival's defeat or prudently disengaged his troops to save the city when it became apparent that Agathocles had won. The way to Carthage was open and the senate recalled Hamilcar from Sicily. For the next four years Agathocles fought in Africa and was eventually defeated, though he had discovered the weakest point in the Punic army. A little over one hundred years later Scipio Africanus would take the lessons Agathocles learned to a more decisive outcome.

#16 - Cineas

The chief diplomat for Pyrrhus. He studied oratory in Athens and was regarded as the most eloquent man of his age. Pyrrhus said that Cineas' tongue had won him more battles than his own sword.

#18 - Timoleon of Corinth

Greek statesman and general who championed the Greeks of Sicily against the rule of tyrants and Carthage. The only bright spot in a dreary succession of mercenary kings hired by Tarentum.

#25 - Plebeian Revolt

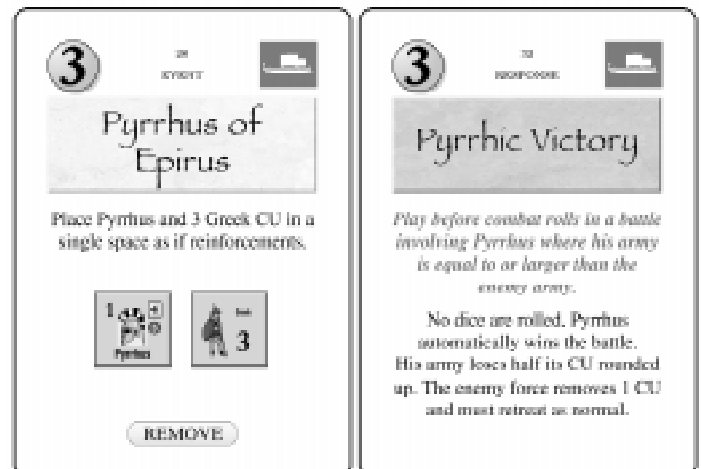
In an attempt to gain certain rights, the Plebeians would withdraw from Rome when their military services were most needed. Tradition records five such secessions between 494 and 287 B.C. The passage of the Licinian-Sextian laws (Roman card #32) ended these revolts.

#26 - Pyrrhus of Epirus**#32 - Pyrrhic Victory**

The famous Greek general whose costly victories gave rise to our expression of a pyrrhic victory. After his "victory" at Asculum he was congratulated by one of his soldiers. His response: "One more victory over the Romans and we are completely done for."

#33 - Indian War Elephants

When Pyrrhus arrived he brought with him twenty war elephants. While very effective in the first battle, the Romans soon learned that when hit with javelins the elephants would stampede.



Etruscan/Samnite Deck:

#2 - Death of Aulus

In 316 B.C. the Roman dictator Q. Fabius Rullianus met the Samnites at Luatulae where his army was defeated and Q. Aulus, his master of horse, was killed.

#3 - Treason of Marcus Manlius

He defended plebeian debtors from harsh patrician creditors, but carried his defense a bit too far. He inflamed the plebeians' anger by stating only he was the Patron of the Plebs and accusing the senate of hiding gold. He was convicted of high treason and thrown to his death from the Tarpeian Rock.

#4 - Gellius Egnatius

Samnite general who conceived the idea of linking up with Rome's northern enemies. Died at the battle of Sentinum. (Roman card #31, Etruscan card #36).

#5 - Lucanian Raids

#6 - Bruttian Raids

Represents the Lucanian and Bruttian raids that plagued the Greek cities in southern Italy.

#9 - Gavius Pontius

The Samnite leader whose victory over the Romans ended the Second Samnite war. (Etruscan cards #26 and #31)

#11 - Violent Wind and Thunderstorms

A battle between the Romans and Samnites was interrupted as a violent storm started just as the battle was to commence.

#12 - Punic Naval Victory

In 275 B.C., Pyrrhus was returning to Italy after spending two fruitless year attempting to create a Sicilian empire. The Punic fleet attacked him as he crossed into Italy, destroying more than half of his ships.

#13 - Vestal Impurity

After losing a battle to an inferior foe the Romans assumed that they had angered the gods. The priests "divined" that one of the vestal virgins had been impure and she was killed to placate the gods.

#15 - Unfavorable Auguries

Roman priests often cut open live chickens and read their entrails to determine what the future held. If the entrails were bad (or the priest had a queasy stomach) then whatever action was being contemplated would be postponed until a nicer set of chicken entrails were found.

#17 - Bloodshed Beyond the Alps

Fighting for livable space in Gaul forced many tribes over the Alps into Italy. This card represents the influx of a new tribe into northern Italy.

#18 - Lucius Numisius

Led the Latin League in their revolt against Rome. (Etruscan card #33).

#26 - Yoke of Spears

#31 - Caudine Forks

In 321 BC the Second Samnite war was being fought between Rome and the Samnites. The Samnite leader, Gavius Pontius, saw to it that the Roman consuls received news that the Samnite main force was in Apulia. The news, if true, meant that a forced march by the most direct route might enable the Romans to bring the enemy to battle in the plains of Apulia with the Romans between them and their mountains. One great victory might end the war. But the news was false. The Samnite army had concentrated in Western Samnium and the consuls were entrapped in the narrow valley. After failing to break out of the trap, the consular army was starved into surrender. The defeated army was

disarmed and humiliated by passing beneath a ritual yoke of spears. In addition, 600 Roman soldiers were taken as prisoners to ensure Rome's adherence to the peace terms.

#28 - Plebeian Revolt

See Greek card #25

#29 - Dis Comes for Brennus

Dis was the Gallic god of death and ruler of the underworld. Since Brennus was a title, meaning chieftain or warlord, this card represents the current chieftain dying. However a new leader will arise from the next generation of Gauls to claim the title of Brennus.

#30 - Mamertines

Certain of Agathocles' discharged mercenaries on their return home had treacherously seized the town of Messana. Styling themselves Mamertines, after the Sabellian war god Mamers, they settled there and proceeded to plunder the surrounding districts, Carthaginian and Greek alike. Eventually they were defeated by Hiero of Syracuse who then besieged the city. At this point Carthage intervened, refusing to look on while Syracuse won control of the Sicilian straits. Their admiral threw a Punic garrison into the town with the consent of the Mamertines and Hiero withdrew to Syracuse. But the Mamertines did not want to keep their new garrison indefinitely and decided to seek an alliance with Rome. That request brought Rome and Carthage into opposition and started the first Punic war.

#32 - Consul Ambushed!

Battling the Hernici in 362 B.C., the consul L. Genucius was surprised in an ambush and killed.

#33 - Great Latin Revolt

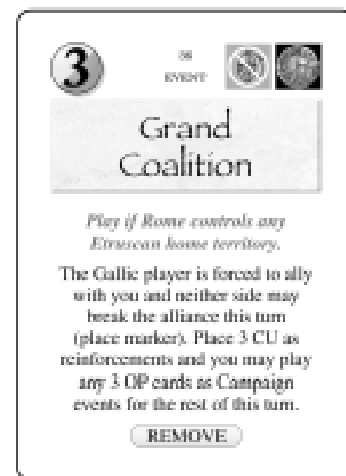
In a final attempt to shake off Roman control several towns in Latium, the old Latin League, revolted and were soundly defeated at the battle of Trifanum (Roman card #13).

#35 - Linen Legion

The Samnites had an elite corps which took its name from a huge linen tent into which each man selected for the legion was conducted. The soldier swore an oath that he would fight to the last and kill any of his colleagues who did not show the same spirit. The legion contained the best fighters in the Samnite nation and had a formidable reputation.

#36 - Grand Coalition

An army of Samnites and Gauls were attempting to link up with the Etruscans. The combined army was met near Sentinum on the north-eastern slopes of the Apennines. It was the battle that decided the destiny of central Italy and fate had declared for Rome. The Roman consul Decius gave his life to steady his troops (Roman card #31) and the tide of battle turned against the enemy. The great coalition collapsed, the Gauls retired, and the remnant of the Samnites broke away south.



Gallic Deck:

#3 - Plebeian Revolt
See Greek card #25.

#4 - War Cries!

#5 - "Wild Beasts"

A quote from Livy. The Gauls numbers, their lack of discipline, their primitive equipment, and the ferocity of their war-cries all combined to strike terror into the Romans. Some forty years after the sack of Rome the consul Laenas is quoted as saying, 'You are not facing a Latin or Sabine foe, who will become your ally when you have beaten him, we have drawn our swords against wild beasts whose blood we must shed or spill our own'

#7 - "They swept down like a torrent..."

Another quote from Livy about the sack of Rome describing how quickly the Gauls moved from Clusium to Rome. 'The Gauls with the extreme mobility which always marked their raids swept down it like a torrent.'

#10 - "To the Brave Belongs Everything!"

Quote attributed to Brennus when asked why his tribe was ravaging the countryside.

#11 - Titus Manlius

Probably a story of legend, but too good to leave out of the game. In a battle against the Hernici, the Roman and Hernici armies were camped on the opposite sides of a river spanned by a single bridge. After several days of skirmishing, a Gaul of extraordinary stature walked onto the unoccupied bridge, and shouted as loudly as he could: "Let the bravest man that Rome possesses come out and fight me, that we two may decide which people is the superior in war." A Roman soldier, Titus Manlius, accepted the challenge and slew the Gaul. (Did you really expect the story to end any other way?) He then removed the Gaul's chain from around his neck as a spoil of war earning himself the name Titus Manlius Torquatus.

#13/#14 - Souls for Teutates

Teutates was the Gallic god of War.

#16/#17 - Land for Sucellus

Sucellus was the Gallic god of agriculture, land, and fertility.

#29 - "Tumultus Gallicus"

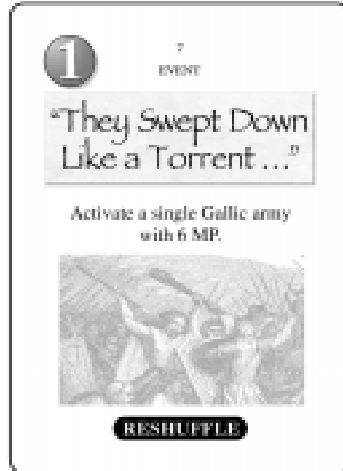
To the Romans the Gallic raids were terrifying and aroused deep and irrational fears. The mere threat of a Gallic raid called for emergency troop levies and induced a state of extreme panic.

#33 - Brennus

Brennus is a latinized version of the Celtic word for "King". Thus Brennus is not a person, but a title.

#36 - "Vae Victis!"

It is said that after the sack of Rome, when the gold ransom was being weighed out, the Romans complained about the scales the Gauls were using; whereupon Brennus threw his sword onto the scales with the words 'vae victis!'—Woe to the conquered!



Designer Notes

The idea for *Sword of Rome* started way back in the summer of 1999. A friend and I were playing Avalon Hill's *Hannibal: Rome vs Carthage* every day during our lunch break at work and after numerous playings I began to wonder if a card-driven game of similar complexity set during Rome's early days existed. Posting my question on Consimworld (how did we ever get by before this site existed?) elicited quite a few responses, but none were quite what I was looking for. Having the joyful ignorance of a first-time game designer I decided to design my own.

The goals for the game I wanted to play were as follows:

- *Hannibal* complexity or less. It seemed to me that each successive iteration of card-driven games was getting more complex. Not being a hard-core wargamer, I wanted to bring the complexity level back down.
- Multi-player. The diplomatic aspect of a game is one of my favorite parts.
- Playable to completion in a single day, i.e., eight or less hours.
- Fun. I did not want the game to bog down in historical minutia and chrome.

The first design step was to take all my card-driven games and analyze them to determine if I could figure out why I liked some of them and was lukewarm on others. It was an interesting exercise and I quickly determined that the deck construction had a lot to do with my enjoyment of a game. The frequency of card cycling through your hand was important to me; too quick and it becomes too easy to play a card for operations knowing it will show up again; too slow and it becomes too easy to play it for the event knowing you will probably not see it again. In addition, I liked games where each deck was substantially different, not just different event names that both provide a +1 to combat, but events unique to each deck. I wanted a game where playing each power would be a different gaming experience. Finally, I determined that I was not a big fan of heavily scripted games. While it is important that the game be able to recreate the historical narrative, I wanted the players, not the game, to drive the story.

After some reading I decided to focus on Rome's conquest of Italy. The reasons were that, to my knowledge, no game had been done on this era at this scale, and each of the combatants were quite different in their strengths and weaknesses making for an interesting gaming situation.

The initial version of the game had a single deck just like *Hannibal*, but play testing determined that the game needed a deck for each player. The reason was that in a four player game, on average 75% of the events you draw will not be for your power making for a very generic, bland, conquer Italy game. Also, breaking the single deck into four player decks made it much easier to tweak the decks for play balance. The other concept that was introduced quite early on was having more cards than actions in a given turn. This allowed for some long-term planning as you could keep some cards back each turn if you so wished. This also had the benefit of having more combat cards played as playing them did not cost you an action.

Without a doubt the one area of the game that underwent the most design and rule changes was the concept of non-player powers. Looking at the map, it was obvious that the Gauls and Greeks would have an unfair advantage by virtue of being on a map edge. Thus the idea of having non-player powers was conceived which had the additional benefit of allowing me to bring Carthage into the game. The

challenge was to have the non-player powers act rationally, but without eight pages of rules governing their behavior. Initial attempts at giving victory points for operating the non-player powers historically proved to be too much of a good thing, but players were reluctant to activate the non-player powers as their only action of the round without some incentive. The change of allowing non-player power activations to be free, other than the cost of the card, proved to be the key in having them be effective but still a side show. Slowly over the course of development non-player powers went from having scripted behavior to the final version where players make all the decisions for them. Brad convinced me that 99% of the time the players will make the “correct” decision, and it is pointless writing pages and pages of rules trying to prevent the other 1%. I think the final result is a happy marriage between simplicity and historical results.

After quite a bit of playtesting by Brad Johnson, Bill Dyer, and the rest of the Chicago group, GMT agreed to pick up the game after seeing it at PrezCon in 2001. Volko Ruhkne was assigned as my developer and did a great job of injecting more history into the cards. One of the first things he did was go through the decks and throw out every generic event I had stolen from the other card-driven games and ask me to replace them. It was also Volko who first conceived of the notion of Gallic raids, though the final result blossomed far beyond what he had envisioned. He even agreed to my irrational demands that not a single event in the game steal or discard cards from other player’s hands and each event have no random element to it. I felt strongly that four players added enough chaos without having cards stolen/discarded or those events where 4-6 means something good happens, but 1-3 means you wasted a card.

In the summer of 2002, Volko took a new job which prevented him from continuing on as my developer. Brad Johnson, my lead playtester, graciously agreed to step in and the process really did not miss a beat. Since the rules and cards were pretty much set, Brad spent his time going through the rules and “de-chroming” the game: deleting those rules that were only used in 1% of the games or that slowed down the game without really doing anything more than showing folks that I knew about a historical tidbit. But Brad’s biggest contribution to the game was the combat system. I really liked how the game had come together except for the combat system. I had been trying to come up with something that would combine the speed of a CRT with the uncertainty of the buckets of dice approach. I still remember reading Brad’s email with his off-hand suggestion of using the values of the dice themselves to determine the combat losses. It sounded great and had the additional advantage of eliminating the retreat roll. I immediately went home that night and wrote a combat simulation program in C to start modeling his idea. We spent a week tweaking the numbers and the last major piece of the game was now complete.

I think *Sword of Rome* does a good job representing the historical aspects of this era that I wanted to highlight—mainly the inherent differences in the powers and my belief that it was likely that any of the powers could emerge victorious and just as likely all them would continue to fight with no one gaining the upper hand.

After having spent almost five years working on *Sword of Rome* I have a new-found respect for game designers. If I had known beforehand how long it would have taken I doubt I would have ever started. I can’t thank the Chicago group enough for playing all those early versions of the game when it was not a lot of fun. Their feedback made the game good enough for GMT to take. I also thank all the folks on Consimworld who responded to my repeated posts on historical questions and the folks who proofed the rules, map and offered suggestions. It is amazing the amount of work it takes to make a game, I now consider it a minor miracle every time a game is released. Finally, I dedicate this game to

my wonderful family—Lynda, Grace, Kayla, Ricky, and Elijah who put up with me buying all these history books and the countless late nights spent re-working just one more card or section of rules. Far from being jealous of this project, you all supported me every step of the way. Thanks. By the way, did I tell you about the expansion I am working on?

Developer Notes

Wray and I “met” perhaps 10 to 12 years ago. The Internet was still very young, but gamers were already using this new-found facility to find opponents for their favorite games, run by neutral moderators solely via email. My very first foray into email gaming was a 6-player *Republic of Rome* game also joined by Wray. I honestly don’t recall the details of that game, but I know we all enjoyed it. A year or two later, Wray contacted me via email with a request to try a moderated game of Avalon Hill’s *We the People*. I couldn’t help but notice the uncommon spelling of my opponent’s first name, and we confirmed that yes, we had played together in that *Republic of Rome* game long ago. This led to more games of *We the People* and quite a few games of *Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage*, now with the assistance of Warhorse Simulation’s Automated Card Tracking System (ACTS). Through this purely email relationship, we learned that we had a lot in common: we both loved board games, especially ones employing the strategy-card-driven system; we both had an amateur interest in Roman history; and we were both employed as software engineers at major telecommunication companies.

It turns out that creating a board game is a lot like creating almost any product that gets to market, and particularly, as Wray and I immediately observed, like the process of creating software. Software is created through a phased “development life cycle,” the major principles of which can be readily applied to game design. I credit this shared understanding of a disciplined engineering approach as a key enabler for the successful completion of this project.

In very broad terms, the first phase of software development is “Concept.” It is during this phase that the software’s purpose is initially conceived, justified, and documented. For a game, this is the time to be concerned with what the game will cover, but not yet necessarily how it will be done. It is very important during this phase that the theme and some core design ideas (defining game mechanics) are identified. Alternatives should be considered and decisions explicitly made regarding what will be “in scope” what will not. By the end of this phase, the designer should be able to articulate the requirements of the game: what will be simulated and to what degree; what the players will be required to accomplish and what they will be permitted to do; and what other constraints will be imposed upon the design.

In software engineering, the concept phase is typically undertaken by a small, highly experienced team. In game design, this is normally performed solely by the designer, who may or may not have a partner or assistant to help bounce ideas around.

Sometime right in the middle of the Y2K panic, Wray sent me the first note mentioning that he had plans to try his hand at designing a strategy-card-driven game. He wanted it to be set in ancient Rome, but for his original twist he would cover the early pre-Republican period, which has very rarely, if ever, seen treatment as a board game. Since he knew I enjoyed card-driven games and Roman history, he asked if I might be willing to act as his sounding board as he entered into this process. I was happy to offer my assistance, excited to get involved in a project like this with a highly motivated and knowledgeable partner. I confessed

that my historical expertise (if it could be called that) was mostly limited to the Roman Republic, but Wray said he was already beginning to study pre-Republican literature. My main contributions would be in the area of constructive criticism of the merits of the design as a fun and challenging game. The working title of the game was “The Rise of Rome.” At a very high level, Wray summarized his initial concept as:

- Covers Rome’s conquest of peninsular Italy from 386 BC (4 years after the sack of Rome) to 272 BC (right before the start of the 1st Punic War).
- A 4-player version of *Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage*. Powers are Rome, Gauls, Greeks, and Etruscans (also controlling the Samnites since they’re not as large as the others).
- Elements of multi-player diplomacy allowing players to make and break formal alliances.
- No provinces to control. Players contend for control of victory point spaces.
- Special victory conditions for the unpredictable Gauls.
- Special power cards per player (like the home cards in *The Napoleonic Wars*), but usable only once per game.
- Hand size greater than actions to help allow for some long-range planning.
- Cities with changing levels of loyalty to reflect numerous historical revolts primarily driven by battle losses.
- Neutral powers (like the minor allies in *The Napoleonic Wars*) that would provide threats from the edges of the board, but would be partially controllable by the players.

I believe most games today are well conceived with clear requirements, although I am sure every avid gamer can name a design or two that seems to be “schizophrenic,” trying to be all things to all people, or trying to meld two or more mismatched ideas into one package. These are games that have not even been properly fostered through the concept phase. I was quite confident that *The Rise of Rome* had passed this first hurdle. Not only were these ideas compelling to me as a fan of previous card-driven games, but you can see how virtually all of his key initial concepts survived the development process.

The next phase of a standard software development lifecycle is “Design.” During this phase, the exact functions and structure of the software to be built are elucidated, documented, and validated. For the game designer, the focus shifts to details about how the game concepts will be implemented. The main tasks become detailing the game mechanics and writing a first draft of the game rules. Throughout this exercise, the designer should be prepared to refine the initial concept as necessary. In the later stages, it should be possible to create prototypes of critical game components.

By the end of 1999, Wray had written his first draft of the game rules, which he characterized as about 90% of *Hannibal’s* rules with a number of modifications. This was very effective, first because it leveraged the best features of a very strong game design, and second because it enabled Wray to advance out of the design phase quickly. Known in software engineering as “Rapid Application Development,” priority was placed on quickly piecing together existing “design modules” (e.g., *Hannibal’s* movement system) and straight-forward original rules, with the intent that fine-tuning would be done as we progressed through the lifecycle.

With simple but sufficient prototype components (board, counters, and cards) that Wray drew using standard Microsoft Office applications, I was able to play *The Rise of Rome* for the first time in February 2000. (In case you’re interested, the Gauls won an automatic victory with 12 points in 6 turns.)

Both software and game projects are similar in that their successful completion relies heavily upon having a very complete and detailed specification at this point. A software design specification tells the developers exactly what the program must do. A game specification (i.e., the written rules) tells the developer and playtesters exactly what the designer wants the game to do. Specification quality hinges upon completeness (covering all necessary and sufficient information), consistency, and clarity.

Being a software engineer by trade, Wray is well aware of the importance of writing a precise specification. While some designers may question the need for documenting game rules up front, I was gratified that Wray tackled these issues early.

This brings us to the next phase: “Development.” For software engineers, development primarily means implementation (writing the actual program according to the design) and then testing (making sure it works as designed). Note that design drives implementation and testing. Poor design leads to poor implementation and very, very painful testing.

It was 4 full years (give or take) from the time *The Rise of Rome* entered development in earnest to the time it was published. At first, our own local groups (Wray’s in North Carolina, mine in Illinois) played a handful of times, just enough to get a feel for the overall flow of the game. Then Wray and I would retire to extensive email discussions, debating the merit and impact of various design choices, proposing alternatives, and exchanging critiques. I saved at least 150 email messages between the two of us that held significant design input through the end of 2001. There were probably many more, but I tried to limit my disk space consumption. Nonetheless, this grew to almost 1000 saved messages by the time of publication.

This process was highly productive, with many ideas tried, tested, and discarded. This is analogous to the design reviews that are usually conducted in the software development process. The designer calls in knowledgeable peers to discuss the design in detail in an effort to identify significant issues as early as possible. Owning and having played every existing card-driven game equipped me well to comment on the likely ramifications of most of the design decisions Wray made. Since Wray has as much, if not more, experience in card-driven games as I have, I have always felt that Wray was quite adept at keeping significant issues out of the design in the first place.

In addition to experience, a critical element of successful design reviews is what we call “egoless development.” This means that despite the designer’s obvious ownership of the design, he should strive to detach himself from it and allow himself and others to view it with complete objectivity. Constructive criticism should not only be accepted, but actively sought. In this, Wray excels. Nothing in his design was truly sacred to him, other than the overriding principles of historical accuracy and satisfying gameplay, and that permitted us to explore many possibilities that a more insecure designer might not have welcomed.

Another very helpful technique that both Wray and I are comfortable with, in part due to our software backgrounds, is the concept of computer modeling aspects of the design. Some of the most modern software engineering tools enable us to create simulations of the design so that its correctness can actually be verified even before coding

begins. A number of times we have found it very useful to write relatively simple computer programs to generate statistics about the expected operation of critical parts of the game. For example, we were able to evaluate many questions that we had about the various incarnations of the battle resolution system, which Wray has written about in detail for *Against the Odds* magazine, by creating programs that would simulate and aggregate all possible battle results. This enabled us ultimately to establish some key parameters that we wished for battle results and then to invent the original system that achieved the results we wanted within those parameters.

In summer of 2002, Wray was finally able to get an official GMT developer assigned to the project—Volko Ruhnke. He quickly organized about half a dozen independent playtest groups, and the official playtest phase began. I continued working as a playtester, and Volko began consolidating inputs from many different groups for the first time. Having many different types of players putting a game through its paces, without direct assistance or instruction from the designer, is absolutely essential. People who have not been involved in the full history of the design will naturally identify issues to which the designer has long since become inured. As a designer of a card-driven game himself (GMT's *Wilderness War*), Volko also had a lot to personally offer to the development process. For example, he was responsible for the introduction of the Gallic raiding ability, which eventually led to the inclusion of unique abilities for each of the major player powers.

Unfortunately, by the end of 2002, Volko had been forced to resign from the assignment due to personal availability issues and the project had stalled a bit. Wray put in a good word for me at GMT, and I was offered the opportunity to take over as official developer. I jumped at the chance, and we initiated a second round of playtests. By summer 2003, we felt confident enough in the stability of the design to have the game, now officially dubbed "*The Sword of Rome*," placed on the P500 list.

For the next six to nine months, we continued playtesting with our local groups, at conventions, and online, while anxiously watching the pre-orders mount. Sometimes we were surprised to stumble upon an odd case that needed clarification, even after so many plays and so much time. Wray and I were glad to be able to identify such issues before publication, but we were also happy that the overall design continued to hold up well in front of many different groups and styles of play. With help from many new eyes, Wray tweaked the wording of the rules right up to the end in order to anticipate the answers to as many rules questions as we possibly could. The cards were the last item locked down—I believe Wray finally declared his complete satisfaction with the events in all four decks in May 2004.

Which brings us to the final phase: "Production." Production of software can take many forms, depending on how it is to be distributed, from publication on the Internet, to CD burning, to embedding in manufactured items of all types. Board game production, by comparison, is quite involved. All of the art must be created, components including maps, counters, cards, rules, and boxes must be printed, and then everything must be assembled. Every item must be checked and double-checked and triple-checked for accuracy before being committed to print. But finally, after about 5 years of effort, *The Sword of Rome* is complete.

Just as in the software world, it is not unlikely that some issues will be identified with the game after its publication. When all is said and done, we are only human. But the structure of a development lifecycle can help improve the quality of a board game, just as it can help improve the quality of software.

Acknowledgments

The rules for *The Sword of Rome* are based on the *Hannibal: Rome vs. Carthage* 2nd Edition rules by Mark Simonitch, Bruce Wigdor, and Jung Yueh. I am indebted to Mark Simonitch for graciously allowing me to use his work and Mark Herman whose *We The People* game is the foundation upon which both games are built.

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Sequence of Play

1. Etruscan Mine Depletion Check Phase

- Etruscan player determines if his mines have been depleted. (7.2.3)

2. Draw Cards Phase

- Gauls must discard all cards.
- Others may discard.
- Romans fill out an 8-card hand.
- Others fill out a 7-card hand.

3. Determine First Player Phase

- Player with the fewest VP decides who goes first.

4. Action Phase

- 5 Rounds, proceeding clockwise from first player.
- If 3 players: Gallic Event when the Gallic player's action would occur.

5. Attrition Phase

- CU on enemy-controlled spaces roll for attrition.

6. Surrender Phase

- CU on enemy PC markers may place their PC markers.
- Commanders with 3 or more CU on an enemy walled city may roll on the Siege/Subjugation Table (Rule 13).

7. Isolation Phase

- Place an independent PC marker where no path via friendly spaces to a friendly walled city (even if that city is besieged), reinforcement space, tribal space, port or CU. No path via enemy control unless friendly CU present. No path via rough connections.

8. Scoring Phase

- Adjust VP totals (5.8.1).
- Check for Victory (4.2, 4.3).

9. End/Renew Alliances Phase

- All alliances automatically end at this time, with no penalty, unless both players agree to remain allied (15.4).

10. Reinforcement Phase

- Non-player powers, followed by the players in descending VP order, place reinforcements (5.10).
- Romans also randomly replace Consuls (8.2.2).
- Greeks may remove leaders and must suffer support penalty for any retained leaders (8.2.3)

Advance Turn Marker

Gallic Events Table

3-player games only: Roll 2 dice when the Gallic player's action would occur.

Roll Effect

2	Current Leader must reduce one city's loyalty by one
3	Greek player must remove one CU
4	Roman player must reduce one city's loyalty by one
5	Current Leader must remove one point of support
6	Etruscan player must remove one CU
7	Etruscan player must remove one point of support
8	Roman player must remove one point of support
9	Roman player must remove one CU
10	Etruscan player must reduce one city's loyalty by one
11	Greek player must remove one point of support
12	Current Leader must remove one CU

Notes:

Removal of support and reduction of city loyalty must still follow the restrictions of 7.3.2

If more than one player is tied for victory point lead, the current leader is determined by 4.4

