· HAIL CAESAR ·

ROME'S DACIAN WARS

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Sarmatians spring their ambush!

FOREWORD

THE EMPIRE UNDER TRAJAN

At the end of the first century AD the Roman Empire was the most powerful that the western world had ever seen. All of Western Europe south of the Rhine and the Danube, southern Britain, North Africa, Egypt, the Balkans and most of the Levant fell under the control of Rome. Even outside of this area, the cultural, economic and military shadow of Rome was enormous. The empire was stable, prosperous and resilient.

So when Marcus Ulpius Traianus became Emperor of Rome in early 98 AD, one could have forgiven him for not feeling overly ambitious. He could have easily sat back and enjoyed his situation as one of the most powerful men on earth and left the running of the empire to the massive Roman bureaucracy.

But Trajan, as we now know him, was made of sterner stuff. His 20 year reign saw a new public works program both in Rome and across the empire, economic and welfare reforms and efficiencies and major military campaigns. Under Trajan Rome annexed the Kingdom of Nabatea (part of modern day Jordan and Saudi Arabia) and won a major but ephemeral victory over Rome's old enemy, the Parthians. The empire reached its high water mark in 116 AD as a victorious Trajan stood on the shores of the Persian Gulf having just captured the Parthian capital, something no Roman Emperor had achieved before. But it was another military campaign that

would become the defining feature of his reign – Trajan's two wars against the Dacians.

Rome had long been troubled by the Dacians, a warlike people who lived north of the Danube in what is now Romania. Gaius Julius Caesar himself considered a campaign against the Dacians, but was assassinated before anything was planned. The Emperor Domitian, one of Rome's less popular emperors who ruled between 81 and 96 AD, had major problems with the Dacians and their warlike king Decebalus. During a campaign against the Dacians in 86 AD, it is thought that an entire Roman legion, the 5th Alaudae, was destroyed and its standards captured, always a subject of great shame to the Romans. In 88 AD a reinforced Roman army managed to defeat the Dacians, but unrest on the Rhine frontier brought this campaign to a premature close. The Romans agreed to a surprisingly generous treaty with the Dacians which included financial and military assistance in return for a non-aggression pact.

The unpopular Domitian was eventually assassinated by a conspiracy that seemed to incorporate most of the population of Rome, but this left the empire without an obvious choice as the next emperor. To the surprise of most, the experienced but elderly and childless Senator Nerva was 'elected' as the new emperor. Nerva soon began to suffer his own political difficulties, and to counter this and cement his

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The situation looks grim for the badly outnumbered Romans

position he formally adopted the 44 year old Trajan as his heir and successor. Trajan was already an experienced general and administrator, had a respectable lineage and, most importantly, was popular with the army. Trajan did not have to wait in the wings for very long – the following year Nerva died and Trajan became the Emperor of Rome.

It seems that Trajan's first priority was the Dacians, as he immediately began planning a campaign and assembling an army. Despite the treaty signed between Rome and Dacia, Decebalus continued his raiding and warmongering, and the Romans no doubt regretted the generous terms that they had offered him. Dacia also had considerable natural resources, particularly precious metals, which the Romans must have coveted.

The first of Trajan's Dacian Wars began in 101 AD with the Romans crossing the Danube River from the province of Moesia Superior into Dacian territory. Given that perhaps as much as a third of the entire Roman army was involved, approximately 100,000 fighting men, the logistics involved would have been enormous. Scenes that are repeated time again on Trajan's Column show engineers and soldiers building bridges and constructing roads and fortifications. The first major battle was probably at a place called Tapae, where the Romans had won a victory 13 years before, and history was repeated with a second victory to the Romans, though a costly one in terms of casualties. Not long after Tapae, the Dacians and their Sarmatian and Bastarnae allies appear to have gone on the offensive and attacked across the Danube into Roman territory, though they were repelled with heavy losses.

The winter of 101/102 AD saw a brief pause in major hostilities, but the Romans were back again by the time the snow in the mountain passes had thawed. After more campaigning the Dacians were forced to surrender, returning to the Romans all of the captured Roman equipment, prisoners and deserters, with no doubt a substantial amount of gold thrown in for good measure. Decebalus swore undying fealty to Rome and the Romans withdrew.

However, it seems that it did not take long for Decebalus to get back to his old tricks again, raiding adjacent territory and re-building his forces. He even annexed some of the territory of the Sarmatian Iazyges tribe. (Although Trajan objected to this, in true Roman fashion when he eventually conquered Dacia he did not return this territory to the Iazyges.) In 105 AD the Senate of Rome once again declared Decebalus to be

"Among other sayings of his, the following remarkable one is mentioned. When his friends found fault with him for being too courteous to everybody, he replied that he was such an emperor to his subjects as he had wished, when a subject, that emperors should be to him."

Eutropius, writing about Trajan
(*Roman History, Book VIII*)

Sarmatian lancers bear down on Roman auxiliary cavalry

an enemy of the state, and planning for a second invasion began. This second invasion was even bigger, and to facilitate more efficient troop movement Trajan ordered the building of a massive bridge across the Danube at Ister, the stone foundations of which are still visible.

Although Decebalus lobbied other nations to help support him against Rome, it is likely that many found reasons to be otherwise occupied that year, given the outcome of the first war. The Romans crossed into Dacia and Trajan's Second Dacian War began in earnest. Whilst faring poorly militarily, Decebalus made several attempts to win the war by covert means. Firstly he sent assassins to infiltrate Trajan's camp, but they were discovered before they could make an attempt on the Emperor's life. Secondly, he captured a high-ranking general by the name of Longinus and attempted to ransom him back to Trajan in return for a cessation of hostilities. However, the loyal Longinus managed to get hold of some poison and committed suicide, removing himself from the equation.

It is probable that the second Dacian War was much quicker, as it is difficult to imagine the Dacians recovering quickly from the devastation of the first, and with fewer of their allies willing to support them again. Eventually the capital was placed under siege, and after one unsuccessful attempt, was stormed by the Romans. Decebalus escaped but was cornered by Roman cavalry, and rather than surrender he cut his own throat. His head was brought to Trajan and laid at his feet. The Romans also discovered Decebalus' hidden treasury, which he had buried in a river bed.

The conquest of Dacia was complete and its assimilation into the empire began. Dacia disappeared as an independent nation, instead becoming the province of Dacia Traiana. Within a few years Roman settlers would have made up the majority of the population and new towns and a new capital were built. Two legions were stationed permanently in the province to maintain order and protect the borders. Although many tribes escaped by retreating to the mountainous north, Dacia ceased to be a major military power or threat to Rome's borders and security.

Near the end of his reign Trajan went on to successfully invade Parthia, though he was never able to consolidate his hold over that country or destroy the Parthians as a military force in the way that he had the Dacians. Standing on the shores of the Persian Gulf in 116 AD, Trajan watched a trading ship sailing off to India and commented "I should certainly have crossed over to the Indi, too, if I were still young", just as Alexander the Great had done four and a half centuries earlier.

On his long journey back to Rome Trajan fell ill and died, and so passed Rome's last great conqueror.

THE ROMAN ARMY

The army that Trajan commanded was a huge, complex but highly flexible organisation that could call upon a wide range of soldiers, specialists and equipment to deal with just about any conceivable situation. The core of the army was the heavy infantry of the legions, but these were supported by an equal number of auxiliary infantry and cavalry as well as large numbers of regional allies and irregulars, not to mention a sizeable navy. The total number of fighting men the empire could call upon is hard to estimate, but it almost certainly exceeded 250,000.

THE LEGIONS

The legions are the most famous and iconic element of the Roman military machine. As much an administrative structure as a military one, each legion had its own name, number, standards, imagery and proud history. A number of legions existed more or less continuously for more than 400 years and served in virtually every part of the empire. Trajan inherited twenty-seven existing legions, and founded two new ones for his campaigns of conquest.

The fundamental unit of the legion was the century, which consisted of 80 legionaries and was commanded by a centurion with an optio as second-in-command. Six centuries formed a cohort (with the exception of the first cohort, which had five double strength centuries), probably the main tactical unit of the legion. Ten cohorts formed a legion, making the likely full strength of a legion more than 5,000 men, though legions were very rarely, if ever, at full strength. Legionaries were heavy infantry, with each man equipped with a large shield, sturdy helmet and body armour. The most common form of the latter was what we call the lorica segmenta, a type of banded metal armour. Legionaries were armed with the pilum, a type of heavy armour-piercing throwing spear, and a short heavy stabbing sword called a gladius.

The legion was commanded by a Legate, supported by a Prefect and six Tribunes. Each legion had a small cavalry detachment of 120 men, used for scouting and relaying messages, as well as combat, and also had its own artillery support – a scorpio for each century and an onager for each cohort. The scorpio, essentially a type of very large crossbow operated by two men, was mobile enough to be used in field battles and had a long range and reputedly a high degree of accuracy. Its mobility was sometimes increased by placing it in a horse-drawn wagon.

THE PRAETORIAN GUARD

The headquarters of a Roman camp was called a praetorium, and from this term came the Praetorian Guard, originally the bodyguard of a Roman general, but later the personal guard of the Emperor himself. Praetorians were recruited from veteran legionaries and served for sixteen years. For much of the first century AD the only troops stationed permanently in Italy were the Praetorian Guard. Praetorians obviously held enormous influence and it was their political machinations rather than their martial skill for which they are best remembered.

THE HORSE GUARD

Following a tradition started by Caesar, many Emperors had a personal bodyguard of cavalry above and beyond even the Praetorian Guard. This unit was variously known as the German Guard, the Imperial Guard and the Horse Guard at different times and was only a few hundred men in size. The specific details of this enigmatic unit remain unclear, as it is likely that it did not follow standard military conventions. Caesar's Horse Guard was composed solely of Germans, and it seems that some of his successors also used barbarians.

TRAJAN'S COLUMN

The reason that Trajan's Dacian wars hold such a prominent position in Rome's military history is down to one of the ancient world's greatest propaganda exercises – Trajan's Column in Rome. This 38 metre high, 700 tonne stone column tells in glorious detail the story of Trajan's invasion and subjugation of the kingdom of Dacia through a continuous series of scenes carved into the marble, featuring literally thousands of figures. As the story spirals upwards one can follow the exploits of the Roman army as it builds bridges, invests fortresses and battles the Dacians. Trajan himself appears more than 50 times – addressing his troops, riding into battle, receiving heralds and even piloting a warship! This of course indicates the degree to which the column is propaganda, but there are no doubt kernels of truth hidden in most of the scenes. The representations of the soldiers and their equipment are invaluable, and although the paint has long since disappeared (the original column was painted in glorious technicolour) and tiny metal weapons rusted away, the carvings are perhaps one of the greatest influences on our visualisations of the Roman army.

Less well known, but almost as significant, is another monument known as the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamclisi in Romania. This features 54 panels also showing scenes from Trajan's Dacian Wars, which, although more stylised, are just as valuable.

AUXILIARY INFANTRY

Although the legions took all the glory, the non-citizen auxiliary infantry units were just as important to Rome's military success. In some battles, such as at Mons Graupius in Britain in 84 AD, auxiliary infantry units undertook all of the fighting whilst the legionaries never even drew their swords. Although some auxiliary infantry units retained their national dress and fighting style, most were uniformly equipped and trained in Roman tactics. Much less is known about the history, tactics and appearance of auxiliary units compared with the legions, and often historical sources make only passing reference to them. This can be squarely attributed to the bias of Roman society, and therefore Roman historians, against non-citizens.

Auxiliary infantry were deployed in cohorts approximately five-hundred strong, probably six centuries of eighty men. Such a unit was commanded by a Prefect. Like legionaries, auxilia were also equipped with shield, helmet and armour, though perhaps not of as high quality. Their most common armament would appear to be a spear and sword, and most would also have had short range missile weapons such as javelins.

Archers were common in Roman armies and were usually deployed on the flanks of the army or behind more heavily armoured infantry. In this role archers would provide suppressing fire, breaking up or slowing enemy formations before they contacted the Roman line. Archers from the Middle East were much valued, with at least one unit from Syria being posted as far away as Hadrian's Wall. Roman archers seem to have been armoured, rare for such troops during this period, and they also carried a sword. Slingers were also common, and provided skirmishing fire for the army, but had no armour and probably little interest in getting into combat!

Non-citizen units of cavalry were also recruited to fight for Rome and organised into alae (Latin for 'wing'). Native Romans were never natural cavalrymen, and it is the Numidians, Gauls, Illyrians, Germans, Arabs, Sarmatians, Iberians and even Persians who provided Rome with its most

Roman legionaries approach the Dacian defensive position in testudo formation

Roman auxiliary cavalry

effective cavalry. These units ranged from light skirmishing horsemen armed only with javelins and shields to armoured cavalrymen armed with sword and spear. Such cavalry units were far more likely to retain their native equipment and tactics than auxiliary infantry. Once again, these units were approximately five-hundred men strong, organised into sixteen *turmae* of thirty-two men commanded by a Decurion, with a Prefect holding overall command.

ALLIES

As well as its own standing army, Rome could call upon significant numbers of regional allies. Such soldiers were not paid, but instead fought for plunder or to fulfil a political obligation, and served under their own leaders and banners. These were known as *foederati* and feature prominently on Trajan's Column. They would be more likely to be thrown into battles before the regulars.

NAVY

Rome maintained a number of fleets throughout the empire during this period. The largest was based at Ravenna in Italy, but there were also fleets based in Egypt, Syria, and Pontus as well as on the Rhine and Danube. Sailors were recruited from non-citizens, served for twenty-five years and received their citizenship on discharge. Slaves were not used, contrary to popular opinion. The navy also had a substantial core of marines, who were sometimes recruited into the legions, as occurred during the civil war of 69 AD.

The fleet known as the Classis Flavia Moesica would have played an important role in the Dacian Wars, as it operated primarily on the Danube River. It included a number of warships, probably mostly biremes (warships with two ranks of oars) as well as a few larger triremes. Warships were fitted with artillery and had their own contingent of archers and marines. The fleet would also have had numerous transport ships from simple barges known as *ratis* to large merchant ships. Trajan's Column depicts ten separate warships as well as many transport ships ferrying troops and supplies.

THE DACIANS & SARMATIANS

The Dacians inhabited the region around the Carpathian Mountains, in what is now Romania and Moldova. They were probably closely related to the Thracians to the south. Major Dacian tribes included the Carpi and the Costoboci. They also had close associations with neighbouring Celtic, Germanic and Sarmatian tribes, which makes a precise definition of exactly what is Dacian problematic. However, there is no doubt that by Trajan's time the Dacians had a well established and stable civilisation, with a relatively large population, established industries such as gold mining, a number of significant walled fortresses and a large capital city that featured Roman-like amenities such as piped water and stone buildings. In fact, the Dacians were proven assimilators of Roman technology and even used captured siege engines against the Romans during Trajan's Dacian Wars.

Dacian society had an aristocracy referred to as 'cap wearers' and Dacians are distinguished on Roman monuments by their wearing of the Phrygian cap, a conical cap made of cloth or felt that has the point pulled forward. Dacia was ruled by a king, and in Trajan's time this was Decebalus ('the Brave'), a wily and aggressive leader who seemingly delighted in games of brinkmanship. Originally called Diurpaneus, Decebalus reunited the Dacian kingdom in 85 AD before embarking on a series of wars and raids that increased Dacian influence and wealth, but infuriated the Romans.

The Dacians were famous for their use of the falx, a type of pole arm with a long curved blade set on an equally long handle. Wielded two-handed, this weapon could easily split Roman shields and armour and must have caused horrific injuries. Like most northern people, the majority of Dacians probably wore little in the way of body armour, with only the odd shield and helmet for protection. The Dacians did use massed archery, which was rare amongst Rome's northern enemies, but seem to have had little cavalry.

Dacian armies also included many allied tribes, including more typical Germanic and Celtic warriors. However, their most famous allies were the Sarmatians, who provided them with devastatingly effective heavy cavalry.

Sarmatian is a term used to describe a group of Eurasian steppe nomad tribes who displaced the Scythians from the lands around the northern coast of the Black Sea in the third century BC. The Sarmatians spoke an Iranian dialect similar to Persian and included the Roxolani, Iazyges, Siraces, Basilaens and Alans. (Some hold the last of these to have been an entirely separate people.) Their warlike nature brought them into constant conflict with Rome from late in the first century BC onwards, but they also warred with the Parthians and served as mercenaries and allies for many other nations. The Sarmatians were first and foremost horsemen and their armies were comprised of heavy lancers supported by horse archers.

Sarmatian shock cavalry wielded the kontos, a long lance that was held in both hands. Shields were not used. They were also armed with swords and bows, though the latter was usually spurned in favour of a charge. The rider was armoured with a sturdy helmet and close fitting suit of scale mail, constructed from either iron or horn. Sometimes the mounts were armoured in a similar manner. Horse archers were armed with a powerful composite bow and a sword, and were sometimes armoured in the same way as the heavy cavalry. Sarmatians are believed to be the source of the Draco standard, a windsock attached to a metal head in the shape of a dragon or other creature. It has been speculated that Chinese whistles were incorporated into this standard so that it made an unearthly keening noise when the rider was in motion.

The Sarmatians are possibly the origin of two intriguing myths. Women appear to have held a much higher status in Sarmatian culture than in other contemporary civilisations,

A savage Dacian warband

TRIBES, FORTS & SETTLEMENTS OF DACIA

Map legend:

COSTOBOCES

BASTARNAE

Cotnari

Lunca Ciurei

Porolissum · Saratel

Napoca

Petrodava

CAUCOENSES

Potaissa · Moresti

Poienesti

Rosia Montana

BASTARNAE

Pecica · BIEPHI

Sincraieni

Poroboridava

Piatra Craivii

Apulum · APULI · Sighisoara

Germisara

Surcea

Birsesti

Cugir · Tilisca

RHADACENSES

Covasna

ROXOLANI

Berzobis · Tibiscum

Cumidava

Barbosi · Dinogetia

Aizis

Sarmizegetusa Regia

Noviodunum · Danube

Danube

BURIDAVENSES

Ramidava

Arrubium

Troesmis

AMANTINI

ALBOCENSES

Polovragi

Cetateni

Poiana-Cotofenesti

Aegyssus

Murighial

BREUCI

Arcidava

Buridava

Tirgsor

GETAE

SALDENSES

Dierna

Capidava

Singidunum

Drobeta

Piscul

Histria

Viminacium

GETAE

Cotofeni · Pelendava

Bucuresti

Axiopolis

The Black Sea

Popesti

Sexaginta Prista

SENSES · IAZYGES

Tomis

POTULATENSES

Alexandria

Durostorum

Ratiara

Calarasi · Sucidava

Callatis

Danube

Oescus · Novae

TRACI

TRIBALLI

Dionysopolis

KEY

Major Dacian tribes Sarmatian tribes
Thracian, Germanic or Celtic tribes
■ Major Dacian walled fortress
• Major Dacian settlement
■ Roman fortress
▲ Roman naval base
Altitude: 0 m 250 m 500 m

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and there is both archaeological and written evidence for the existence of female Sarmatian warriors. It could well be that the Greek legend of the Amazons, a tribe of fierce warrior women living somewhere in the region of the Black Sea, has its roots in the Sarmatians. Secondly, Sarmatian warriors favoured long swords which they venerated by thrusting them into the earth. Around 5,500 Sarmatian warriors were posted to Britain as auxiliary cavalry after their defeat by the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius in 175 AD. At least some of these units remained in Britain as late as 400 AD, prompting the theory that Sarmatian practices contributed to the King Arthur myths.

As with most non-Romans, Roman writers took every opportunity to disparage and insult Sarmatians, often referring to them as brigands and thieves and implying that they lacked constraint or subtlety. This could be because the Sarmatians won military victories against not only the Romans but also the Parthians, and were a significant power in the Imperial Roman period.

WALLED FORTRESSES OF THE DACIANS

Cugir

Capâlna

Tilisca

Blidaru · Costesti

Piatra Rosie

Sarmizegetusa Regia

Banita

Polovragi
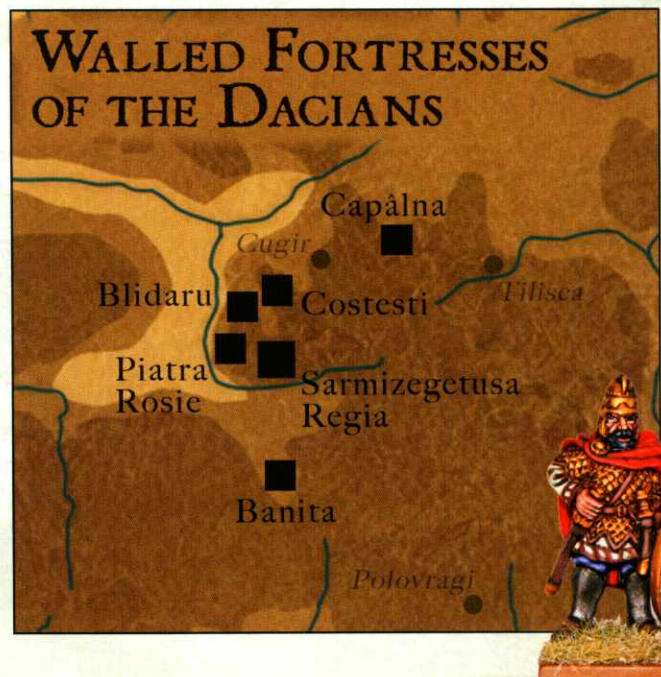
"A bad peace is even worse than war."

RULES ADDITIONS

The following is a compilation of the various new rules and rules modifications that our players developed during the course of our games and which we used with the army lists and scenarios described in this supplement. The spirit of *Hail Caesar* very much encourages players to adapt the rules as written, and in tackling a specific historical campaign this seemed liked a good opportunity for us to do just that. Naturally we would recommend our rules changes and additions, but if players do not wish to use them, or prefer to develop their own, then that is – of course – perfectly fine.

WARBAND

A feature of many wargames set in the ancient world is to restrict the manoeuvrability of barbarian warband units – and this is something our veteran players had become accustomed to over the years. Our assumption is that warbands are made up of large numbers of undisciplined troops who are less well able to manoeuvre in the face of the enemy than legionaries and the like.

We recognised that the key reason that *Hail Caesar* is such a fast and flowing game is that it deliberately avoids placing too many restrictions on how units move, instead concentrating on the decision-making process of commanders. We were therefore reluctant to tinker, but old habits die hard, so we agreed to restrict warband movement compared to other units, and came up with the following rule.

Any order to a warband, or to a division containing at least one warband, that involves it doing anything other than moving directly forward, or moving forward whilst making a single sideways 'drift' or single 'wheel' up to 2", invokes a -1 command penalty.

The 2" drift (shuffle sideways) and 2" wheel (slight adjustment to facing) don't substantially affect the fact the unit is moving directly forward, and allows for some lining up of units as they approach. Bear in mind that an order to charge might oblige a unit to move beyond these parameters and can therefore invoke the penalty. Orders to rally or change formation, and manoeuvres such as turning to face the side or rear will naturally attract the penalty. However, we decided that where there was any doubt about whether to apply the restriction or not, our fallback position was to not apply it as this helped to keep the game moving.

OVERHEAD FIRE

Roman archers were drilled in firing over the head of auxiliary or legionary units stationed in front of them. Although this is already represented after a fashion by the rules for supporting troops, we wanted to extend this to allow for overhead shooting as a ranged attack. We therefore decided to allow a Roman archer unit positioned directly behind another unit to shoot using overhead fire. The archer unit has to be positioned right behind the unit it is shooting over, in the same way as a unit positioned to support in combat. The archers are allowed to shoot through the unit in front of them, ignoring them for purposes of drawing line of sight, but with a -1 penalty to hit in addition to any other penalties that apply. Note that overhead fire is only allowed where units are not actually engaged in combat; if the unit in front of the archers is fighting the archers will support in the combat as normal. Overhead fire can't be used to make traversing or closing shots.

We also allowed units stationed inside fortifications to use overhead fire over the intervening wall - presumably with their shots directed by a spotter or something along those lines.

Sarmatian horse archers run a deadly ring around their Roman foe

COMMANDER QUALITIES

Assigning personal qualities to commanders can add a lot to a game of *Hail Caesar*. The *Black Powder* game (*Hail Caesar's* stable mate) deals with this issue in some depth, which we have shamelessly plagiarised here with a few minor changes to account for the differences between the two games.

Players can either choose to assign qualities randomly, or the umpire might assign some based on the personalities of the players involved. One method of allocating qualities is to roll dice as described below.

Roll a D6 to determine whether a particular commander has out of the ordinary aggression (1-2), decisiveness (3-4) or independence (5-6). Then roll again to see whether the commander scores low (1-3) or high (4-6) in that area. The results are as follows.

High Aggression: +1 on any order that involves all units in this commander's division charging the enemy, -1 on all other orders.

Low Aggression: -1 on any order that involves units moving towards the enemy, +1 on all other orders.

High Decisiveness: May re-roll one additional failed command roll per turn, but a failure on this re-roll is automatically a blunder.

Low Decisiveness: Any successful command that would normally allow three moves (even if that wasn't the specific order) must be re-rolled.

High Independence: Must give orders (and units must be moved) before any of the other commanders, or suffers a -1 on command rolls.

Low Independence: Must give orders and move units after all other commanders, or suffers -1 on command rolls.

The Dacian high command (and a dog)

SHIPS

Using ships in some scenarios adds another element to the game. Only the Romans used ships, and in these rules we are only considering ships that are propelled by oars. The table below lists the firepower and types of troops found on each type of ship, as well as its transport capacity.

Ships are given orders just like units, but this is somewhat dependent upon the direction the ship is moving. All ships may make one move downstream for free, without testing. Any move downstream is also at +6" move (for the first move only). Unlike units, a ship can only turn up to 45 degrees for each move that it makes.

A failed order will see the ship move downstream D6". Any blunder will see the ship move downstream 2D6", and the ship will become disordered – something has gone badly wrong!

Troops may be ordered to embark on or disembark from a ship as if it were a normal move.

ROMAN SHIPS						
Type	Firepower	Troops	Transport	Move	Command	Special
Light warship	1 light artillery	Tiny unit of archers or marines	None	9"	8	Drilled
Heavy warship	2 light or 1 medium artillery	Tiny units of archers & marines OR small unit of archers or marines	Small unit	12"	8	Drilled
Small transport	None	None	Regular unit	6"	7	–
Large transport	None	None	2 Regular units	9"	8	–

SIEGES

Hail Caesar deals with assaults on fortifications remarkably well. Such games benefit even more than usual from the presence of a non-playing umpire, as unusual situations tend to come up more frequently.

Generally, we assume that troops assaulting fortifications will be equipped to do so with scaling ladders, ropes, picks and so forth. Before the game begins, it is a good idea to establish which units are equipped in this way and which are not. These things have no effect on a unit's ability to fight hand-to-hand combat as it is only reasonably to imagine such items would be quickly cast aside in the face of imminent fighting.

Attacks against the actual fabric of walls, gates and such-like fortifications are resolved in the hand-to-hand combat part of the turn instead of fighting in combat. Only units that are suitable equipped, and which are not engaged in combat, can attempt to break down walls/etc in this way. If troops are engaged in combat whilst attempting to break down fortifications they will immediately cease their efforts and fight hand-to-hand combat instead.

If a unit succeeds in breaking down and destroying a section of wall/etc then it can move into the breach if you wish, but cannot move to engage an enemy in combat. In other words, the unit that has broken down the wall/etc doesn't get a sweeping advance or sweeping charge. It may, of course, move through the breach and charge enemies in the following turn if it gets a chance. Equally likely, the unit may find itself charged by enemy on the other side, in the opposing player's turn. Breaches count as linear obstacles, so there are advantages and disadvantages to moving through a breach depending on what awaits on the other side.

Another Dacian fortress is about to fall to the mighty Roman war machine

In terms of unit frontage, it makes life a lot easier to simply allow defending units to man sections of wall of approximately the same width as the unit itself. If defenders are in short supply, you may decide to allow units to man sections of walls twice their width, but count stats as one size class smaller (because they are spread out over a longer frontage). This is where things can start to get messy, so stick to one unit per wall section where possible.

Fortifications generally mean walls of wood or stone defended by troops on a parapet. Such walls may also be surrounded by defensive ditches to slow down assaults, and the defenders may have some nasty tricks up their sleeves!

ASSAULTING ENEMIES ON THE WALLS

- Attacking units move at half speed across defensive ditches, and must roll a D6 at the end of an individual move when they do so. On the roll of a 6 the unit halts and becomes disordered. On any other result the unit is not affected. Note that this can result in a unit that would have made three moves making only one or two moves because it becomes disordered whilst crossing a ditch.

- Attacking units can charge defenders positioned on ramparts by 'charging' to the wall. Attackers suffer a -1 penalty to hit against enemy fighting from behind ramparts. Attackers are still allowed their +1 to hit bonus during the turn they charge into contact – although with the additional -1 penalty this is effectively cancelled out of course.

- Units defending walls count as being uphill (+1 to hit their enemy) and in fortifications (+3 to their Morale). Additionally, Morale test results that read, 'Give ground in good order' can be taken as 'Hold ground without penalty' if the defender wishes. However, 'Give ground disordered' results still count.

- When a defending unit has been destroyed or has fallen back from the wall, the attacking unit can move onto the rampart. It must then spend its entire following move consolidating its position. Note that this means it can never move back into contact with the unit that is falling back, and it may not make a sweeping charge against another enemy unit.

- We sometimes allow defenders to tip boiling water, scalding hot sand or other unpleasantness onto an assaulting unit. This is a one-off attack, usable on the first assault attempt. The assaulting unit takes D3 hits, with no Morale save allowed. In general, we would decide upon this before the game as part of the set-up, or the umpire might decide to spring it upon our players unexpectedly.

- A unit that is on a rampart can fight an enemy unit next to it and also on the rampart in the same way that a flank attack is conducted. Both units count as fighting to their flank. A unit that is on a rampart and which is attacked by another unit from inside the walls gets no advantage except for counting as being uphill.

ATTACKING THE WALLS THEMSELVES

- See the table below for the stamina values of walls and gates. Units attacking walls never use their clash value, always their sustained value.

- You may wish to allow units that are attacking a wall to be armed with special equipment such as battering rams – in which case, the unit may re-roll up to half its attacks (rounding up). This should be established before the game begins and ideally units provisioned with a suitable model.

- A unit can attack walls or gates by moving into contact. Note that it does not have to 'charge' as it would an enemy unit. In this case defending units on ramparts are not engaged in combat. The unit attacking the walls/gate/etc is treated as if it was 'engaged' in combat whilst it remains in contact, and is therefore unable to use its own missile fire, for example.

- Defending units that are not engaged in combat can employ their own short-range attacks against enemy units attacking walls/gates/etc. They gain an additional +1 to hit when they do so. Obviously, they can't be attacked in return as the attackers are busy working away at the walls/etc. However, missile troops can fire over the heads of units that are attacking walls at any unit above them on the rampart.

- A unit that is on a section of wall that collapses suffers D3 automatic hits and becomes disordered.

- The only type of missile fire that can damage walls is artillery, and light artillery has no effect on stone walls. Medium artillery does D2 points of damage for each hit, and heavy artillery does D3. Artillery has a +1 bonus to hit fortifications.

- Destroyed walls and gates count as linear obstacles, which means they take an entire move to cross. Note that units that destroy a wall/etc can move through it once they have done so, thereby avoiding this penalty.

MOVING AROUND THE FORTRESS

Use the rules for moving into and out of buildings on page 39 of the main rulebook for moving onto or off walls (from the inside!) and into and out of fortress gates.

FORTIFICATION STAMINA VALUES	
Fortification Type	Stamina
Wooden wall	10
Wooden gate	8
Stone wall	20
Reinforced gate	12
Reinforced stone or earth wall	30

PLUNDER

The opportunity to supplement their income with a bit of looting and thievery has been a major motivating factor for soldiers down the ages. The Dacian Wars were no different. Even those troops that we would consider close to the modern concept of professional soldiers, such as legionaries, were not loath to sheathe their swords and help themselves to somebody else's property when the opportunity arose.

Certain situations on the tabletop present troops with an opportunity to plunder. Likely sources of temptation can include baggage units, tents/camps or anything else that seems appropriate. All of these are plunder! Plunder is something we would agree before a game or leave to the umpire to decide. Some scenarios obviously suggest the use of plunder – an attack upon a baggage convoy for example.

At the start of a side's turn any unit that is within a single move distance of plunder that it can see will use its initiative to move into touch with the plunder unless it is successfully given an order to do otherwise. Drilled troops can use their free move to obey a failed order as usual, unless their order test results in a blunder, in which case the result is always to plunder. Note that the plunder rule does not take effect if a unit's move is otherwise governed by the proximity rule or by other rules that constrain or oblige movement. The unit must be otherwise free to move into touch with the plunder.

Once a unit is plundering it can only stop plundering and move further if given an order, if charged in combat (in which case plundering stops) or if obliged to retreat as a result of enemy shooting.

SKIRMISH

A small skirmish game can be a great way to begin a large multi-player game, with the outcome conferring a small bonus (and bragging rights) to the victors. Once again, *Hail Caesar* was remarkably easy to adapt to skirmish games of half a dozen models per side. We used models that had been individually based on 20mm square bases, but so long as all models are based approximately the same there should be no issues.

The following rules are a guideline to playing *Hail Caesar Skirmish*, but remember, this is not meant to be a fully-fledged, stand-alone game, simply a way to have a bit of fun prior to the main event!

- Each individual model is treated exactly as if it were a unit in *Hail Caesar*, except that some statistics are slightly modified as shown in the army lists below.

- All rules and options available to units are available to the models, including Close Ranks (but only if the model has a shield) and Countercharge (if the charged model is cavalry).

- The main change that we found was necessary was the introduction of an initiative roll. When two or more models are about to fight a round of combat, roll a D6 for each model to see the order of combat. If a single model is fighting two or more enemy models, it gets -1 to this roll for each opponent beyond the first. Apply the result of each 'strike' before moving on to the next, which may result in a model becoming shaken or even

"Remember lads – they don't like it up 'em!"

being killed before it gets a chance to strike. After all models have fought, apply Break Test results as usual.

- Forget the Proximity rule, and if an unengaged model is charged in the rear or flank, simply turn it to face its attacker. However, if that model is already engaged, then you have a flank or rear charge.

- Use the same Break Test chart, and apply results as you would for a unit.

- Commanders are slightly different, as they have statistics and fight just like units, but may also issue orders. When it comes to activating a command model, it does not have to be given an order to move or charge, but can move no farther than any of the units under its command moved that turn.

- As with playing a full-sized game, the key is to apply common sense and if necessary the D6 rule.

ROMAN SKIRMISHERS						
Model	Clash/Sust	Short	Long	Morale	Stamina	Special
Centurion	2/2	1	0	4+	2	Commander (8) Drilled
Legionary	2/2	1	0	4+	1	Drilled
Auxiliary Centurion	2/2	1	0	4+	2	Commander (8)
Auxiliary Spearman	2/2	1	0	5+	1	–
Auxiliary Archer	1/1	1	1	6+	1	Bow
Auxiliary Slinger	1/1	1	1	0	1	Sling
Decurion	3/2	1	0	5+	+3	Commander (8) Cavalry
Auxiliary Horseman	2/1	1	0	5+	2	Cavalry
Numidian Horseman	2/1	1	0	6+	2	Cavalry

DACIAN & SARMATIAN SKIRMISHERS						
Model	Clash/Sust	Short	Long	Morale	Stamina	Special
Chieftain	3/1	1	0	5+	2	Commander (7)
Falx-man	3/1	1	0	0	1	Falx
Warrior	3/1	1	0	6+	1	–
Skirmisher	1/1	1	0	0	1	–
Sarmatian Noble	4/1	1	0	4+	3	Commander (7) Cavalry
Sarmatian Lancer	4/1	1	0	4+	2	Cavalry
Horse Archer Captain	2/1	1	1	6+	3	Commander (6) Cavalry
Horse Archer	2/1	1	1	6+	2	Cavalry

"...the Sarmatians, a tribe most skilful in plunder..."

Ammianus Marcellinus,
Roman History, 16.10.20

Skirmish Scenario Ideas

The following are some scenario ideas for skirmish games. Generally an area about 24" square is more than adequate for these games. Creating terrain or painting models for this sort of thing can take on a life of its own, but that's often half the fun.

The Lost Patrol

A group of five auxiliary spearmen and a centurion go in search of a missing patrol. They find the patrol wiped out, and realise that the enemy army is closer than believed. They must get back to the army, but a group of six Dacian warriors led by a chieftain stand between them and safety. The Romans must get at least one figure past the Dacians to win, and the Dacians must kill all of the Romans.

The Scouts

A unit of four Numidian cavalry and a Decurion are scouting when they come across a Sarmatian noble and three horse archers out hunting. Each side must attempt to eliminate the other to keep the presence of their respective forces secret.

Working Party

A group of four legionaries are digging some latrines at the edge of a camp, supervised by a centurion, when they are attacked by a group of four Dacian skirmishers, two warriors and a chieftain. The Dacians principal target is the fine looking mule that the Romans have with them. Domitian, as the mule is named, will only move if a model is in base contact and never more than once per turn at a movement rate of 6".

The Lost Eagle

A report has reached Trajan that the Aquila of Legio V Alaudae has been located at a temple in a secret grove high in the mountains. A centurion and four legionaries have been sent to retrieve it, but they must first overcome the temple guards – a chieftain and five falx-men. This is a fight to the death, and all models may re-roll break tests.

The Prisoners

A Decurion and four auxiliary cavalry are escorting a wagon carrying Dacian prisoners back to camp, not knowing that one is the son of a high-ranking nobleman. A chieftain, three skirmishers and three warriors ambush the convoy. The Romans must try and escape with the wagon (which will only ever make a single move of 9"), whilst the Dacians must stop them.

Victory Bonus

If you are playing a skirmish game as a prelude to a larger game, then it makes it more interesting to have something at stake. Roll a D6 and consult the table below to determine the advantage that the victor gains, or decide on your advantage depending on the context of the game – or the personalities involved!

D6 Score	Result
1	The losing side must deploy its entire army first.
2	The winning side gets D6 re-rolls to be used during the upcoming battle on ANY dice rolls. (But no re-rolling re-rolls – plainly that's cheating!)
3	The losing side may be forced to re-roll one successful command roll during the battle.
4	One division from the losing side, chosen randomly, is kept off the board and may not be given orders until the start of turn 2.
5	The winning side gets the first move, and all division commanders get a single command re-roll in the first turn.
6	Once per game, the winning side may re-roll an attempt to wound any enemy commander.

"Put your backs into it! That marching fort isn't going to build itself!"

Sarmatian cavalry thunder across the battlefield

DISMOUNTED CAVALRY

Any cavalry unit may dismount to fight, though most would probably prefer not to! However, this may be useful in a siege situation, when attackers or defenders are at a premium. Dismounted cavalry units take on the statistics of the closest type of infantry unit, as shown below. Special rules are retained, except for Parthian Shot, Feigned Flight and Kontos.

DISMOUNTED CAVALRY STATISTICS	
Mounted Unit Type	Equivalent Unit Type When Dismounted
Roman Auxiliary Cavalry, Roman Guard Cavalry	Roman Auxiliary Spearmen
Light cavalry (any type)	Barbarian Skirmishers
Warband Cavalry, Bastarnae Cavalry	Regular Warband
Sarmatian Horse Archers	Dacian Archers
Sarmatian Lancers	Roman Auxiliary Spearmen

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Hail Caesar provides clear rules on victory and defeat, but we often found that we wanted to quantify the scale of our momentous victories . This can also be useful when games are cut shorter than the participants would have liked, or a stalemate is reached when each side is reluctant to commit to further actions.

At the end of the game, assess the number of units that have broken or are shaken, as well as the number of slain commanders, and tally up a total for each army.

VICTORY POINTS		
Unit Type	Points Scored if Shaken	Points Scored if Broken
Skirmish Infantry	0	0
Artillery & Tiny Units	0	0.5
Small Units	0.5	1
Regular Units	1	2
Large Units	2	4

Additionally, score one point for each Commander that has been killed and two points if the general has been killed, and elite units such as Praetorians, Guard Cavalry and Cap Wearers are worth an additional one point if Broken (nothing extra if only Shaken). The difference between the scores indicates the scale of victory, as shown on the following table:

Difference	Scale of Victory
0–2	Draw
2$\frac{1}{2}$–5	Minor Victory
5$\frac{1}{2}$–10	Major Victory
10+	Momentous Victory!

ARMY LISTS

The following two army lists were used for all of the scenarios in this supplement. The starting point was the lists included in *Hail Caesar* rule book, and I have tried hard to maintain some consistency with both those and the lists in the *Biblical & Classical Army Lists* supplement. However, play-testing and the preferences (even prejudices!) of the play-test group (particularly the principal author) have led to some minor differences. Those who prefer the units as they are in either of the other lists should feel free to use them, or alter the statistics as they see fit. There is no 'right' answer, and it is unlikely to make a significant difference.

IMPERIAL ROMAN   DACIAN CAMPAIGN 101-106AD

Infantry 50%+	At least half the units in the army must be infantry.
Legions 25%+ of infantry	At least a quarter of the non-skirmisher infantry units in the army must be legionaries.
Praetorians up to one unit	The army can contain no more than one unit of Praetorians.
Horse Guard up to one unit	The army can contain no more than one unit of Horse Guard.
Cavalry up to 25%	No more than a quarter of the units in the army may be cavalry.
Artillery	There must be at least two legionary units for every artillery unit fielded, and heavy and medium artillery may only be used in a siege scenario.
Divisions 4+ units	Divisions must contain at least four units and be led by a commander.
0-50% light infantry units per division	No division may have more than half light infantry units.
Generals: Leadership 9, two Attacks	Roman Generals are leadership 9 but only add two attacks to a combat.
Trajan	Trajan may be fielded as the Army general and has the Commander-in-Chief special rule. Any unit that Trajan joins gains the Valiant special rule.

The Praetorian Guard on campaign

Imperial Roman Troop Values							
Unit	Combat				Morale Save	Stamina	Special
	Clash	Sustained	Short Range	Long Range			
Legionary heavy infantry armed with pila and swords	7	7	3	0	4+	6	Drilled, Testudo
Veteran legionary heavy infantry armed with pila and swords	7	7	3	0	3+	6	Drilled, Testudo, Brave
Praetorian Guard heavy infantry armed with pila and swords	7	7	3	0	4+	6	Drilled, Testudo, Elite
Auxiliary medium infantry armed with spears	6	6	3	0	5+	6	
Auxiliary light infantry archers fielded as small units	3	3	2	2	6+	4	
Skirmishers armed with slings and fielded as small units	2	2	2	2	0	4	
Marine medium infantry armed with slings	6	6	3	2	5+	6	
Foederati medium infantry warband armed with spears and javelins	8	6	2	0	6+	6	Wild Fighters (2)
Foederati medium cavalry armed with spears and javelins	8	5	3	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters (1)
Auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears and/or javelins	7	5	3	0	5+	6	
Auxiliary Guard heavy cavalry armed with spears and/or javelins	7	5	3	0	4+	6	Drilled, Elite
Auxiliary light cavalry armed with javelins and fielded as small units	5	3	2	0	6+	4	Feigned Flight, Marauders
Light artillery scorpio bolt throwers	1	1	2	2	5+	3	Drilled
Light artillery scorpio bolt throwers fielded as tiny units	1	1	1	1	5+	2	Drilled, Count as skirmishers in close combat
Light artillery carroballistae	1	1	2	2	5+	3	Drilled, 9" move, may move twice & fire
Medium artillery onagers	1	1	0	3	5+	3	Drilled
Heavy artillery ballistae	1	1	0	3	5+	3	Drilled
Baggage	2	1	0/1	0	0	3	May not support
Commanders	One commander must be provided per division						Free

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

The legions played a major role in the Dacian Wars, so are represented here by three different types. Veterans represent up-armoured legionaries with reinforced helmets and *manica* (arm armour). These modifications are evident from both archaeological finds and representations on Trajan's Column and the Tropaeum Traiani, and are probably a direct result of the Dacian falx's ability to destroy Roman armour. Praetorians represent the Praetorian Guard that accompanied Trajan on campaign or any other unit of elite legionaries that might have been present. Regular legionaries are the rank and file of the legions, but still exceptional soldiers by the standards of the time. I have omitted 'raw' legionaries, as I expect that Trajan only mustered experienced troops for such a major campaign.

Auxilia were just as important to the campaign, and both cavalry and infantry appear frequently on Trajan's Column. The Roman fleet would have been heavily involved at certain stages, and so the option of fielding marines has been included. Trajan's Column features a number of depictions of barbarian allies fighting on the side of the Romans, so both infantry and cavalry options have been included. Guard cavalry could be used to represent Praetorian cavalry or the enigmatic Horse Guard that was the personal bodyguard of emperors since Caesar's time. All of the artillery options are included, particularly carroballistae which feature on Trajan's Column. Baggage represents mules and wagons, which would have a small contingent of handlers and drivers with some limited ability to protect themselves.

ARMY LISTS

DACIANS & SARMATIANS

Infantry 75%+	At least three quarters of the units in the army must be infantry.
Warbands 25%+ of infantry	At least a quarter of the non-skirmish infantry units in the army must be warbands.
Falxes 0-50% of warbands	No more than half of the warbands may be armed with falxes.
Capwearers up to one unit	No more than one unit in the army can be Cap-wearers.
Sarmatians/non-Sarmatians cannot mix	Sarmatian units and non-Sarmatian units cannot be mixed in the same division.
Artillery up to one unit	The army can have up to one unit of artillery.
Divisions 4+ units	Divisions must contain at least four units and be led by a commander.
0-50% light infantry units per division	No division may have more than half light infantry units.
Decebalus	Decebalus may be fielded as the general. Any unit that Decebalus joins gains the Valiant special rule.

Dacian & Sarmatian Troop Values

Unit	Combat				Morale Save	Stamina	Special
	Clash	Sustained	Short Range	Long Range			
Medium infantry Cap-wearer warband armed with falx	9	6	2	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters (3), Elite, Combined
Medium infantry falx-men warband armed with falx	9	6	2	0	6+	6	Wild Fighters (2)
Medium infantry lowlander warband armed with spears and javelins	9	6	2	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters (2)
Medium infantry regular warband armed with spears and javelins	8	6	2	0	6+	6	
Light infantry mob armed with improvised weapons & fielded as small units	4	2	1	0	0	4	
Skirmishers armed with javelins and fielded as small units	3	2	2	0	0	4	
Skirmishers armed with slings and fielded as small units	2	2	2	2	0	4	
Light infantry archers fielded as small units	3	3	2	2	0	4	
Light cavalry armed with javelins and fielded as small units	5	3	2	0	6+	4	Feigned Flight, Marauders
Bastarnae medium cavalry armed with spears and javelins	8	5	3	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters (1)
Light artillery scorpio bolt throwers	1	1	2	2	0	3	
Light artillery scorpio bolt throwers fielded as tiny units	1	1	1	1	0	2	Count as skirmishers in close combat
Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers armed with kontos, sword & short bow	9	6	3	0	4+	6	Eager, Kontos
Sarmatian horse archers fielded as small units	4	2	2	2	5+	4	Feigned Flight, Parthian Shot
Baggage	2	1	0/1	0	0	3	May not support
Commanders	One commander must be provided per division						Free

Auxiliary cavalry charge a Dacian warband

SPECIAL RULES

Falx: Enemy unit suffers -1 to its Morale Save.

Combined: Once a unit of Cap-wearers become Shaken, and even if it subsequently rallies, it takes the statistics of Falx-men.

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

The core of Germanic-Celtic armies of this period, including the Dacians, is generally thought to be warbands, large groups of warriors that are highly effective on the charge but less so in sustained combats. Their best hope of success is to overwhelm their enemy in a headlong rush, where their lack of discipline and armour does not count so much. To provide some variety, four different types of warbands are available. First there are regulars, lightly armoured and with no special rules. Then we have lowlanders, better armoured and more ferocious, perhaps indicative of the Bastarnae tribe that

fought alongside the Dacians. The most iconic unit is the falx-men, warriors wearing no armour (and often no shirt!), wielding the vicious two-handed falx that reduces their opponent's Morale save. Finally, the Cap-wearers are the elite warriors of the Dacians, with both armour and hitting power.

Warbands are supported by a host of other infantry, including archers, which appear to have been common in Dacian armies, and skirmishers. The Mob unit can be used to represent civilians that are associated with baggage.

Finally, the Sarmatians. It is likely that archers and lancers were present in roughly equal number, and the former can be highly effective either on their own or as supports for the lancers. The latter are a terror, and the Romans players in our campaign developed a healthy respect (perhaps even fear) for them.

"After spending some time in Rome he made a campaign against the Dacians; for he took into account their past deeds and was grieved at the amount of money they were receiving annually, and he also observed that their power and their pride were increasing. Decebalus, learning of his advance, became frightened, since he well knew that on the former occasion it was not the Romans that he had conquered, but Domitian, whereas now he would be fighting against both Romans and Trajan, the emperor."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 68.6

SCENARIOS

Some of the scenarios in this supplement are based on what little we know about the actual events of the Dacian Wars, others are a best guess at what might have happened, and the rest just sounded like they would make for a good wargame!

The majority of the games were played in the houses or garages of the play-test group, but some were also played at gaming club meets as well as at CanCon, Australia's biggest wargaming convention. Although a couple were played with only two or three players in total, most had five or six. Most were also played on large tables – at least 54" wide and 96" long – and sometimes larger! *Hail Caesar* is a game that really rewards playing on big tables, and when you have half a dozen 'well-fed' wargamers, as well as their armies, tape measures, dice, summary sheets, rosters, beverages, food and egos – well, the bigger the table the better.

No points values were used when designing these scenarios. When putting together orders of battle, I tended to try and balance out the numbers of heavy/medium infantry on each side, but that's as far as it got. The actual number of painted units that were available was also a major contributing factor. Although orders of battle are provided for most of the scenarios, don't be afraid to play with whatever you have available. The same rule applies to the battlefield maps – work with what you have.

There were six main players who contributed to this supplement. All are gentleman of distinction based in Canberra, Australia, and if they are perhaps slightly past their prime, this in no way affected their enthusiasm. In their own words:

Greg Blake has been historical wargaming for eons – or at least since the very early 1970s. His wargaming interests are pretty diverse, but do tend to focus on colourful uniforms and things that go bang and explode. Having said that he had dropped out of ancients gaming decades ago, but thanks to *Hail Caesar* has rediscovered the genre and is thoroughly enjoying stomping about table with Legionaries once again. In addition to gaming he loves model soldiers and is a figure collector, figure painter and sculptor.

Bern Entriken is from an extended family of cutthroat Euchre players and has been playing games since *Dungeons and Dragons* hit Australia. He soon after found board wargames and later computer games then, a decade after, miniature games. He finds *Hail Caesar's* style rather easier than using the Acts' Interpretation Act to parse board wargame rules while at the same time imbibing elderberry wine (well it was the 70s). Better than that, 28mm miniatures are much easier to see than cardboard counters.

Ian Haidon has been a wargamer for over 40 years and has just ventured back into the Ancient and early Medieval wargaming as a result of his involvement with this supplement. Put off the period for many years because of the lack of a rule set that is fun to play he has now found a set he enjoys in *Hail Caesar*. He also owns the world's most expensive beagle.

Mike Peck has collected more ancient armies than either time or sanity permits and often blogs about his armies and ancient sites he has visited on *satrapminiatures.blogspot.com*.

Garry Grant has been wargaming since the late 1970s. He started with a WRG Mithridatic army, expanded to Sassanids and Byzantines, switched to WAB but recently tried out *Hail Caesar* and likes it a lot.

Pete Rixon, a long-time tragic of wargaming, has become ensnared with the whole *Hail Caesar* gambit. A tribune in training, in his games to date he has shown a definite preference for the grandeur of Imperial Rome.

As for myself – after being attracted to playing games with toy soldiers by rules written by some bloke called Rick Priestley in the late 1980s, I have played almost every rules set and genre before settling on ancients as the most fun and rewarding.

As with most wargames (most that I am involved with, anyway), we regularly misinterpreted rules, forgot to move the odd unit or commander, strayed from the scenario, did things in the wrong order, argued and got distracted talking about other things. Visitors, partners and pets wandered through the gaming room, we stopped for coffee and tea breaks and once even a slice of birthday cake. Games sometimes didn't run for as long as they could for no better reason that it was decided to stop playing or that somebody had to go. But critically, everyone enjoyed the games (even if they cursed the dice on occasion), we got something approaching an intellectually satisfying result almost all the time and when the email was sent round organising another game, everyone was keen to front up again. I think that I speak for the entire group when I say that that is a good result.

THE PILUM

One of the signature weapons of Roman legionaries was the pilum, a weighted armour piercing throwing spear, described:

"As to the missile weapons of the infantry, they were javelins headed with a triangular sharp iron, eleven inches or a foot long, and were called piles. When once fixed in the shield it was impossible to draw them out, and when thrown with force and skill, they penetrated the cuirass without difficulty."

Roman writer Vegetius,
De Re Militari, Book 1

Dacians employ captured Roman technology
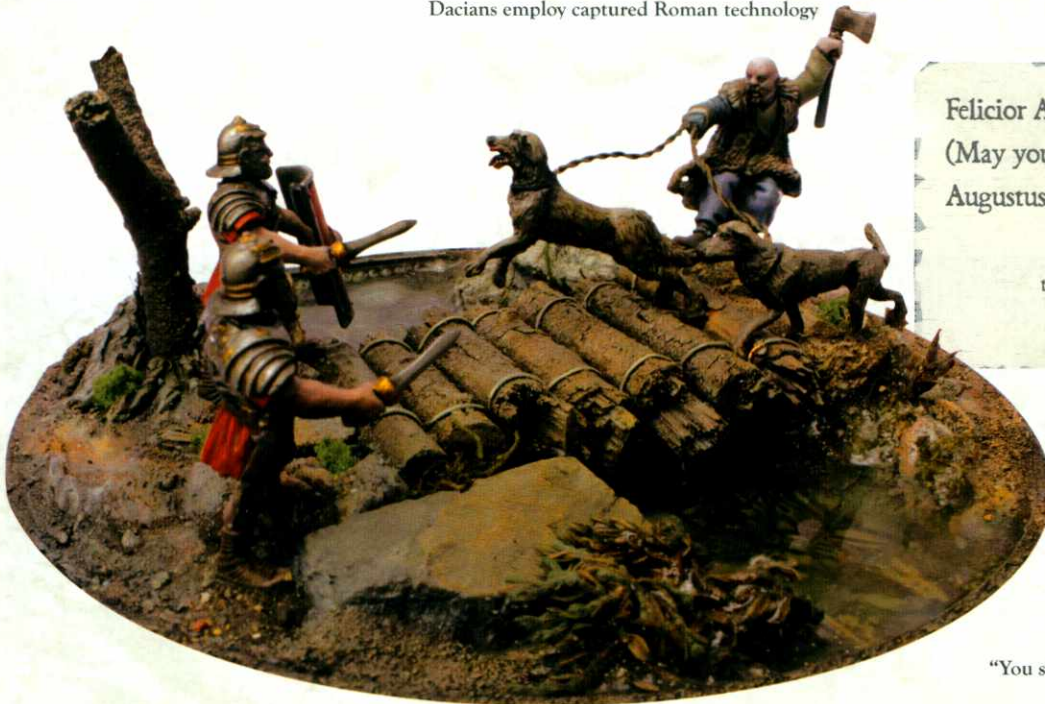
Felicior Augusto, melior Traiano
(May you be luckier than
Augustus and better than Trajan)

A formal blessing given by
the Senate of Rome to Emperors
long after Trajan's death

"You shall not pass!"

Sarmatian light cavalry

THE BATTLE OF TAPAE

"When Trajan...had drawn near Tapae...a large mushroom was brought to him on which was written in Latin characters a message to the effect that the Buri and other allies advised him to turn back and keep the peace. Nevertheless he engaged the foe, and saw many wounded on his own side and killed many of the enemy."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History, 68.8*

The first great battle of the Trajan's invasion of Dacia took place at Tapae, also the site of an earlier battle during Domitian's reign. Whilst the exact location of this site is unknown, it was possibly at a mountain pass only a few kilometres from the Dacian capital of Sarmizegetusa Regia. This battle is depicted on Trajan's Column featuring a god hurling thunderbolts, perhaps indicating that the battle was fought during a storm. Although this battle was a Roman victory, it was possibly a very bloody one. Cassius Dio writes that Trajan "...saw many wounded on his own side...and when the bandages gave out, he is said not to have spared even his own clothing, but to have cut it up into strips." If indeed the Romans suffered heavy casualties at Tapae, it would certainly have slowed down their campaign. After the battle the Romans captured some fortified hill tops and recovered Roman standards captured by the Dacians, but did not march on the capital.

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES
Each side deploys along the long edge of a table. Deployment zones should be sufficiently far apart to allow for plenty of room for manoeuvre – 36" is a good distance. This battle takes place during a fierce thunderstorm, thus no bows or torsion artillery may be used. All missile fire is at an additional -1 to hit, and all orders given at more than 12" suffer an additional -1 penalty (even for units with Marauders special rule).

OBJECTIVES
The objective of each army is to break the other. Use the Victory Points table on page 19.

The Dacian horde surges forward

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (Trajan)
- 1 unit of Praetorian Guard
- 1 unit of auxiliary Guard cavalry

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of veteran legionaries
- 1 unit of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light cavalry

5th Division (baggage guard)
- Division Commander
- 1 small unit of auxiliary medium infantry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 2 units of baggage

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (Susages)
- 1 unit of medium infantry Cap-wearers
- 3 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 4 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)
- 1 small unit of light cavalry

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers

5th Division (baggage guard)
- Division Commander
- 1 small mob of light infantry
- 2 small units of light infantry archers
- 2 units of baggage

HOW IT WAS PLAYED

Garry, Bern and I fronted up to Mike's newly constructed, custom-designed gaming centre (i.e. his new garage) on a chilly spring evening. Bern and Garry took charge of the Sarmatians and Dacians whilst Mike and I commanded the Romans, with Mike taking the role of Trajan.

The Dacians and Sarmatians deployed evenly across the board, the Sarmatians on the right flank, with divisions 3, 2 and 1 stretching out to the left and the baggage on their far left. The Romans refused the left flank slightly, attempting to put as much distance as possible between them and the Sarmatians (quite correctly, as it would turn out). The Emperor's divisions held the left flank with divisions 4, 3 and 2 stretching along to the right and the baggage tucked in on the baseline.

The Dacians won the dice roll for first turn and the Sarmatians surged forward, as did division 2 in the centre of their line. The remainder of the army faltered, however, as inter-tribal squabbling took precedence over more pressing matters. Seizing on this potential advantage, the Roman division 2 marched forward and angled their alignment to potentially take the keen Dacians in the flank. Roman division 3 also moved forward, but not as far as was hoped. Trajan's division and the cavalry re-aligned themselves in anticipation of a Sarmatian charge.

Turn 2 did not bring the devastating Sarmatian charge that the Romans feared, as their heavy cavalry only succeeded in moving forward one move and the third Dacian division also failed to move again. However, in a feat of discipline and manoeuvring worthy of the Legions themselves, Dacian divisions 1 and 2 managed to lock lines and put themselves in position to receive a Roman charge.

On the Roman turn, the Guard cavalry elected to strike first and charge the Sarmatians, whilst the Praetorians moved in to support the Foederati and auxiliary cavalry. The Roman infantry divisions once gain moved forward, but did not engage. Roman light cavalry attacked Dacian light cavalry, but the combat was drawn. The Guard cavalry inflicted several casualties on their opponents, but were forced to give ground as the wicked kontos and heavy armour of the Sarmatians won out.

Turn 3 began with a massed Dacian infantry charge, hitting the Roman lines and resulting in four separate melees. The Roman infantry locked shields, and lost three of the four combats, but were only forced to give ground. The second Sarmatian unit charged the Praetorians and supporting cavalry, but the combined might of the Romans forced them back. The Guard cavalry were defeated again by the other Sarmatian unit and pushed to the very edge of the table.

In the Roman turn, the Guard cavalry were broken and the Sarmatians pursued them from the table. The other Sarmatian unit was less fortunate and was roundly defeated and broken by the Romans facing it.

Hold the line! Legionaries brace for the impact of the Dacian warhosts

The Roman units also gained the upper hand in the infantry melees, winning three out of four combats and pushing the Dacians back. Two Dacian units were broken and the victorious Romans pushed forward in to their supporting unit. However, on the far right Roman flank the Dacians continued to push back their opponents. The Dacians were beginning to falter, and the Romans could sense victory.

Turn 4 saw the victorious Sarmatians return to the table, now in the Romans' rear. The Romans again won three out of four infantry melees and two more warbands broke. However, it did not all go the way of the Romans and the beleaguered legionaries on the right flank broke and the victorious, though mauled, Dacians crashed into the supporting auxilia.

In their turn, the Roman cavalry charged the tardy Dacian division 3 that had yet to play any significant role in the battle. They inflicted heavy damage, but took some themselves. The Praetorians turned to face the Sarmatians, but racked with indecision, they decided not to charge. Critically the Emperor moved to support his elite troops by joining the unit.

In turn 5, the Sarmatians charged the Praetorian cavalry. All eyes turned to this critical combat. The Sarmatians won by a single point, and the Praetorians were forced to fall back. However, a carefully placed unit of horse archers blocked their retreat, and they were destroyed! There were sudden howls of anguish from the Romans and cheers from the Dacians when it was realised that Trajan himself was also lost! In the other combats, seemingly meaningless now, the

Romans continued to butcher Dacians, whilst the lone successful warband destroyed a unit of auxilia. All surviving units regrouped, and with both armies almost broken, it was decided to end the game. A subsequent examination of the auguries (i.e. the rule book) and a quick dice roll revealed a previously overlooked but sorely wounded Trajan still on the battleground. He would live to fight another day, and the Romans would be back...

Everyone seemed exhausted by the end of this battle, which had a massive body count that almost included the emperor himself. The lack of missile fire takes away one of the Romans' big advantages, though no horse archers for the Sarmatians was also a significant loss. Predictions of a Roman white-wash were definitely unfounded – this would be a hard-fought campaign.

FORTRESS ASSAULT

"To the strength and fierceness of barbarians they added a contempt for life."

Edward Gibbon on the Dacians,
The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

Dacia featured a number of hilltop fortresses, all of which were eventually taken by the Romans. In fact, some were probably stormed twice, as no doubt the Dacians re-occupied some sites after the first war and the Romans re-took them in the second! This scenario represents just such an event, with the Romans having to re-take a fortress that was damaged during the first Dacian War.

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES

All of the Dacian forces must deploy first within the fortress. The fortress has three walls that are stone, but several sections are damaged and have been replaced by wooden palisades (as shown in the map below) whilst the gate is wooden. The Dacians may deploy their scorpios as two tiny units.

The Romans deploy second, and can deploy anywhere that is more than 24" away from the fortress walls. The Romans may equip any unit with the tools to either assault or attack the walls.

OBJECTIVES

The Romans must storm the fort within eight turns to win, otherwise the Dacians win.

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS
1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

DACIANS
1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 2 small units of light infantry archers
- 2 tiny units of scorpio bolt throwers

TIPS AND TACTICS

The Dacians just need to sit tight in this game, though they do have the option to sally out and must also make decisions about how to defend the walls. The Romans must decide which walls to assault and in what order. Concentration of forces is definitely the best option, but also has its risks.
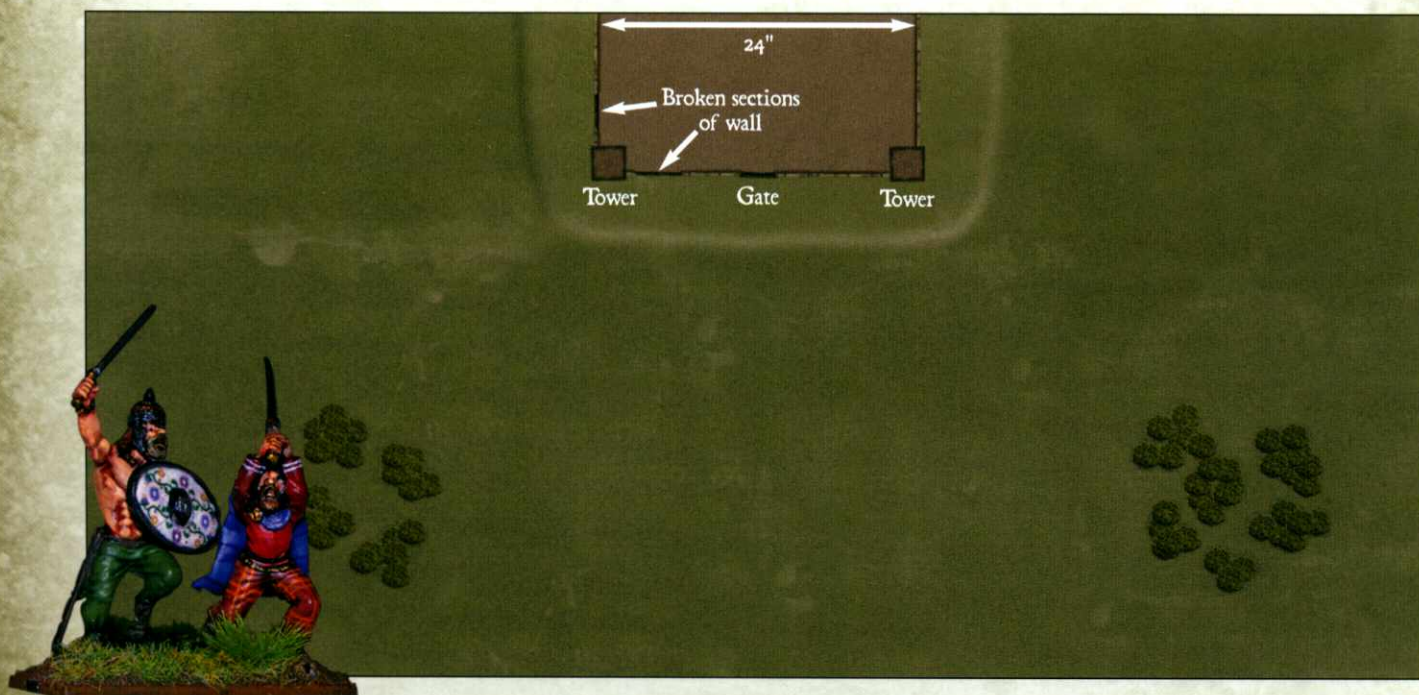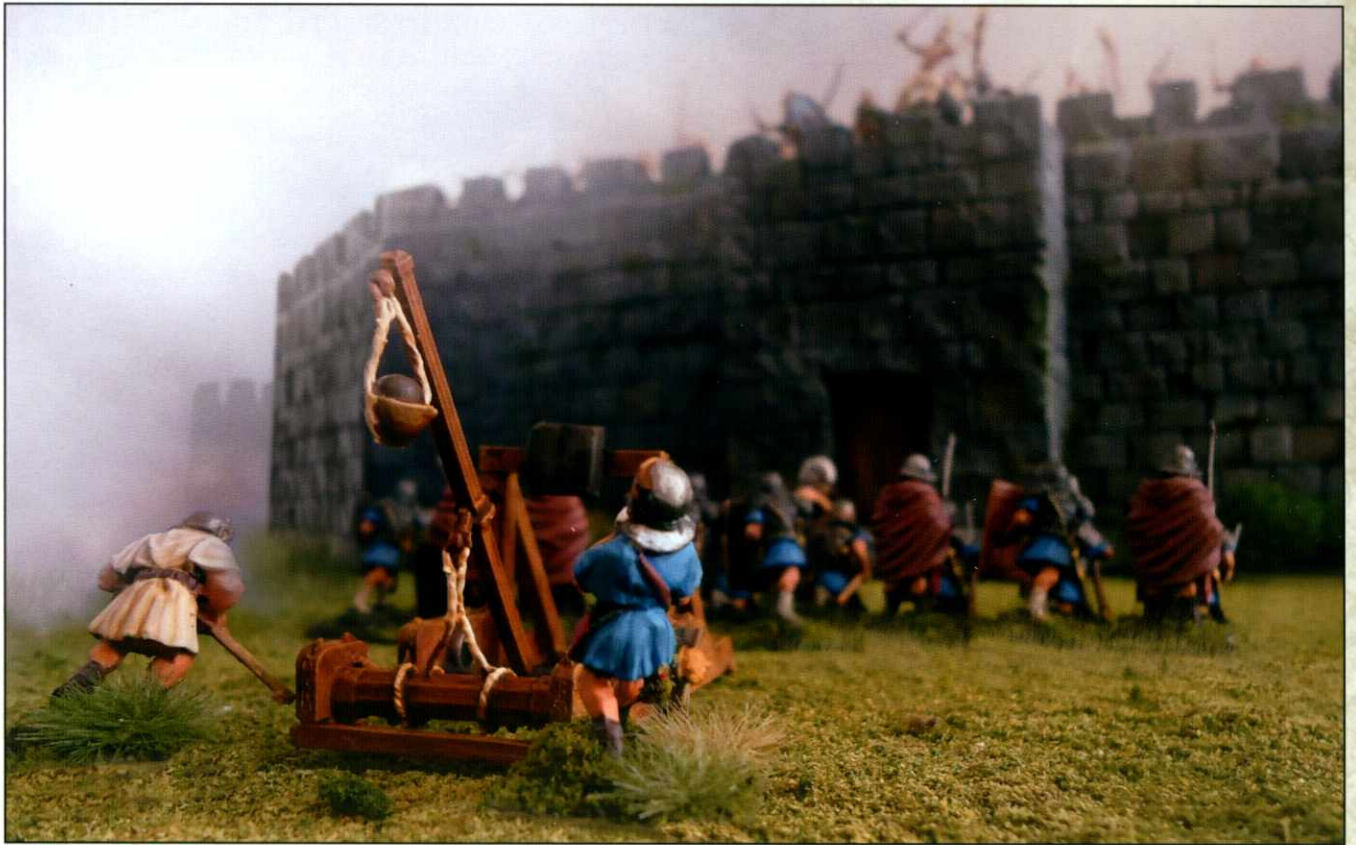
Roman artillery versus Dacian masonry

A desperate sally by the Dacian defenders

THE BATTLE OF ADAMCLISI

> "In honour of the soldiers who had died in the battle he ordered an altar to be erected and funeral rites to be performed annually."
>
> Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 68.10

After their initial successes against the Dacians in late 101 AD, the Romans returned to Moesia for the winter and prepared for the final push the following spring. During the winter a Dacian army crossed the frozen Danube (not without mishap, if we believe Trajan's Column) and attacked the Roman garrisons, no doubt in an attempt to dissuade the Romans from attacking again in the spring.

The main Roman army assembled and pursued the invaders, and after an indecisive and confused night time engagement, fought a major battle at Adamclisi resulting in another Roman victory. It is possible that the Romans surprised the Dacians in camp, as a monument at Adamclisi shows Romans fighting amongst four-wheeled carts.

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES

The Romans have the element of surprise. Asa result, the Dacians must deploy their entire army first, the Romans automatically get the first turn and the Dacians suffer -1 on all command rolls in the first turn.

The Dacian division 5 (the baggage guard) may not leave the table unless accompanied by at least two warband units, and all those units count as being Shaken for the purposes of determining victory conditions.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of each army is to break the other. Use the Victory Points table on page 19. A secondary objective for the Dacian army is to escort their baggage units off the Dacian exit zone shown on the map (right). Each unit of baggage escorted off the table earns an additional 1 victory point.

TIPS AND TACTICS

This is a tough scenario for both sides. The Dacians will get off to a slow start, but they have lots of devastating cavalry that has the capacity to win them the game. If they can get organised and hit the Romans early, they will have a chance of holding the Romans off long enough to withdraw their baggage.

For the Romans, this game is about neutralizing the enemy cavalry, which means getting stuck in as soon as possible.

Map labels: RIVER ISTER · Roman Entry Zone (18") · Dacian Deployment Zone · 18" · 18" · Dacian Exit Zone (18")

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

Available forces, or use the following lists:

ROMANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 1 unit of veteran legionaries
- 1 unit of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of auxiliary Guard cavalry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light cavalry

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 3 units of Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers
- 3 small units of Sarmatian horse archers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 3 units of Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers
- 3 small units of Sarmatian horse archers

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of medium infantry lowlanders
- 2 units of Bastarnae medium cavalry
- 2 small units of skirmishers (javelins)

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers

5th Division (baggage guard)
- Division Commander
- 1 small mob of light infantry
- 4 units of baggage

AMBUSH

"...Julianus, who was appointed by the emperor to conduct the war, made many excellent regulations, one being his order that the soldiers should inscribe their own names as well as those of their centurions upon their shields, in order that those of their number who should perform any particularly good or base deed might be more readily recognized."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 67.10

The time-honoured tactic of ambushing the enemy whilst they are on the march was no doubt uppermost in the minds of both sides during the Dacian Wars. Almost a century beforehand Rome had suffered one of its greatest ever defeats when three entire legions and supporting auxilia were ambushed and annihilated in the Teutoberg Forest east of the Rhine. The Dacians would have been hoping to emulate this feat as Roman columns moved through the forests and mountains of Dacia.

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES

The Romans must deploy first on and around the road, with the baggage within 6" of one long table edge. All Roman units must be in column formation except for light cavalry.

The Dacians may keep a single unit of any type off the table. This unit may be ordered to move onto the table from any point on any table edge (as long as there is physically room to place the unit!) at the start of turn 3. The remainder of the Dacian army deploys along the short table edges, at least 27" from the road, with exception of one unit of skirmishers or light cavalry, which may be deployed on the road at the other end of the table to the Roman deployment zone, within 6" of the table edge.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of each army is to break the other. Use the Victory Points table on page 19. A secondary objective for the Romans is for their baggage units to leave the table. Each unit of baggage that leaves the table earns them an additional 1 victory point.

An ambush is sprung

ROMANS

1st Division

- Division Commander (General)
- 1 unit of Praetorian Guard
- 1 unit of legionaries
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 unit of auxiliary Guard cavalry
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light cavalry
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

2nd Division

- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers
- 2 units of baggage

DACIANS

1st Division

- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

2nd Division

- Division Commander
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

3rd Division

- Division Commander
- 2 units of Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers
- 3 small units of Sarmatian horse archers
- 1 small unit of light cavalry
- 1 unit of Bastarnae medium cavalry

DON'T ARGUE WITH THE EMPEROR...

Apollodorus of Damascus was Trajan's favourite architect, but Hadrian, Trajan's successor, was not so enamoured.

"...he first banished and later put to death Apollodorus, the architect, who had built the various creations of Trajan in Rome – the forum, the odeum and the gymnasium. The reason assigned was that he had been guilty of some misdemeanour; but the true reason was that once when Trajan was consulting him on some point about the buildings he had said to Hadrian, who had interrupted with some remark: 'Be off, and draw your gourds. You don't understand any of these matters.' (It chanced that Hadrian at the time was pluming himself upon some such drawing.) When he became emperor, therefore, he remembered this slight and would not endure the man's freedom of speech. He sent him the plan of the temple of Venus and Roma by way of showing him that a great work could be accomplished without his aid, and asked Apollodorus whether the proposed structure was satisfactory.

The architect in his reply stated, first, in regard to the temple, that it ought to have been built on high ground and that the earth should have been excavated beneath it, so that it might have stood out more conspicuously on the Sacred Way from its higher position, and might also have accommodated the machines in its basement, so that they could be put together unobserved and brought into the theatre without anyone's being aware of them beforehand. Secondly, in regard to the statues, he said that they had been made too tall for the height of the cella.

'For now,' he said, 'if the goddesses wish to get up and go out, they will be unable to do so.' When he wrote this so bluntly to Hadrian, the emperor was both vexed and exceedingly grieved because he had fallen into a mistake that could not be righted, and he restrained neither his anger nor his grief, but slew the man."

Cassius Dio,
Roman History, 69.4

HOW IT WAS PLAYED

As usual we had Greg and Mike on the Roman side whilst Bern, Ian and Garry commanded the Dacian-Sarmatian alliance. Before the main game we played a small skirmish game to determine which side had the first turn. Greg commanded a Centurion and four legionaries who had to escape from a small village where they had been 'resting', whilst an angry chieftain and six warriors had to stop them. As long as one Roman escaped the table, the Romans won.

The Romans won the roll to go first, and immediately headed for their left flank in a bunch The Dacians moved to intercept them, and in short order were able to charge the four legionaries, ganging up 2-1 on two of them. The Romans hunkered behind their shields to try and weather this storm, opting for defence over attack. One combat was draw, two won by Dacians, resulting in one shaken legionary, but the fourth combat was a decisive win to the Romans, with a Dacian dispatched. The centurion immediately ordered the free legionary to 'Leg it!' before charging the Dacian chieftain. The combat swept back and forth for a couple of turns, with another legionary becoming shaken as well as two Dacians. The free legionary meanwhile was using his Drilled ability to continue to move away towards safety. Suddenly, in a flurry of blows, the centurion dispatched the chieftain, and two warriors fell as well. With no chance of stopping the Romans, the Dacians conceded the game and the first turn.

The game proper then started. The Romans deployed around the baggage in a fairly predictable defensive formation. The Dacians and Sarmatians deployed divisions 1 and 3 on the Roman left flan and division 2 on the Roman right.

The game started and the Romans immediately went on the defensive, with the infantry on each side of the road turning to face, whilst the cavalry moved up the road and also turned to face the enemy hordes.

On the Dacian first turn their horse archers used their initiative to move out of harm's way and also skirmish with the Roman light cavalry. The Sarmatian lancers initiated a charge against the bold Roman cavalry, which counter charged. In one of the combats the Sarmatians defeated the foederati cavalry by two, forcing them back. In the other the Guard cavalry lost by three, as they caused no wounds from 10 dice! They were pushed back in what was a very bad turn

for the Romans. Meanwhile, Dacian division 2 moved forward 6" whilst division 1 failed its first command check and went nowhere.

Roman turn 2 began with Greg failing his first command roll, with a characteristic sigh and rolling of eyes towards the heavens. However, the drilled legionaries at least moved once. In the main event the Roman light cavalry charged the horse archers, with one unit fleeing but the other fighting unsuccessfully and being forced back. The Romans lost both cavalry engagements again and were forced back, but at least this time the Guard caused some casualties! In the second Dacian turn the Sarmatians smashed the Roman cavalry and swept into the second unit of Auxiliary cavalry, destroying them as well. But miraculously, the Guard cavalry won their combat against the other Sarmatian unit and pushed them back. The Horse archers re-engaged the Roman light cavalry, even engineering a rear charge, but this mixed combat came out a draw thanks to some lucky Roman rolling. Dacian division 2 held, drawing unkind remarks from the Romans and speculation about Dacian strategy (and intelligence).

In Roman turn 3 the Guard cavalry caught its breath and recovered one casualty. Trajan ordered the legionaries to charge into the Sarmatians, but failed his command roll. He used his re-roll and produced a blunder! When the jeering and catcalls died away, it was revealed that the confused legionary unit moved to its right. At this point the subject of decimation was raised by the Roman commanders. The Roman light cavalry from division 2 swapped flanks to assist their comrades, whilst the entire infantry of division 2 trundled forward a single move. However, they were now within archery range and a single casualty was caused on the closest Dacian warband unit. As the roll was a six, the Dacians took a morale test and promptly rolled snake eyes and broke. It was one of those days when the dice gods laughed at the efforts of puny mortals, it seemed. Precious little happened in the Dacian turn 3. Suddenly and uncharacteristically cautious, perhaps rattled by the recent Roman archery, the Sarmatians pulled back, whilst the horse archers continued their inconclusive battle against the Roman light cavalry.

At the start of Roman turn 4, Trajan rallied his Guard cavalry and the whole Roman left flank reorganised to present a united front. Roman division 2 continued its snail-like advance on the Dacians. Come the Dacian turn, they inexplicably started to fall back, and although another turn was played, both sides appeared to have lost any appetite for conflict. The Dacians appeared happy to give a victory to the Romans rather than take more casualties, and although the battle was lost, the war was not over.

This is a tricky scenario to get right, as very good rolls on the first turn by either side might virtually end the game in the first turn. Still, risk and vulnerability are part of warfare and should also be part of wargaming. Although the Dacians did not choose to deploy any of their units behind or ahead of the Romans in our game, that may force a more dynamic game.

The Romans hunker behind their shields to try to weather the storm

Horse archers skirmish with Roman light cavalry

Sarmatian lancers initiate a charge against the bold Roman cavalry

RELIEVE THE FORT

Several dramatic scenes on Trajan's Column depict Dacians besieging Roman forts. The auxilia who form the garrisons of these forts can be seen throwing missiles at Dacians, who are gathered around the walls.

Whilst in enemy territory, it was standard practice for the Roman army to build a temporary or marching camp every night. It is a tribute to the organization and discipline of the Romans that such a feat was even conceivable, let alone achievable in just a few hours after a day's march. The design of such a camp was standardized, the only variable being the dimensions according to the number of soldiers it had to shelter. The basic layout of the camp comprised a ditch surrounding a low earthen wall topped with wooden stakes, whilst the gates were protected by trenches. If it were suspected that the enemy were close, half of the army would form a cordon to protect the other half whilst the defences were built.

In a campaign such as the Dacian Wars, it is likely that many such camps would be left intact along the route of march to help protect the army's lines of communication and supply.

In such cases, the garrison would undoubtedly strengthen the defences, adding towers and gates. Attacks on such forts were probably common during the campaign as the natives sought to slow down the advance of the Roman war machine.

This scenario deals with a very significant attack such as that shown on the column. Presumably scouts had gotten wind of the impending assault and word had been sent to the main army. But will they arrive in time?

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES
The Dacians automatically get the first turn.

The fort has wooden walls and gate and a defensive ditch. The Romans may deploy their scorpios as two tiny units.

Roman divisions 2 and 3 are held in reserve off the table. At the beginning of each Roman turn (including the first) roll a D6 for each division still off the table. On a roll of a 6 the division may be given orders to move onto the table that turn. The Cavalry division may re-roll this die. A 5 is required on the second turn to successfully move onto the table, a 4 on the third turn and so on.

The Roman tents within the fort count as Plunder.

The battle goes for seven turns or until one side withdraws from the field.

OBJECTIVES
The Dacians must destroy the garrison and then escape. They win if there are no Romans left in the fort AND at least half of the Dacian warbands have left the table unshaken.

If only one of these criteria is met, the game is a draw.

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS

1st Division – Fort
- Division Commander
- 2 small units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 2 tiny units of scorpio bolt throwers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 2 small units of auxiliary light infantry archers

3rd Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light cavalry

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 2 small units of light infantry archers

2nd Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 2 small units of light infantry archers

3rd Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 small unit of light cavalry

Dacian
Deployment
Zone

12"

48" or half of table

Roman
Reserves
Entry Zone
(12")

Roman Fort

> ## "He expended vast sums on wars and vast sums on works of peace."

Cassius Dio on Trajan, *Roman History*, 68.7

Legionaries close ranks to protect their camp...

HOW IT WAS PLAYED

Mike, Greg and Pete took the side of the Romans, with Bern, Garry and Ian lining up for the Dacians. Disaster struck the Dacians early, during the car journey to the game in fact, as a lapse of concentration and subsequent sudden braking put half the Dacian army on the floor before we had even arrived. Fortunately, the damage was minimal, though the names of a number of deities were invoked in vain.

The Dacians deployed with division 1 on their left flank, division 2 in the centre and division 3 on the right. They won the first turn and division 1 and 2 made a single advance whilst division 3 faltered. During the Romans' turn, long range missile fire from the Roman scorpio had no effect. No Roman reinforcements were forthcoming, so it was on to the next turn.

In turn 2 Dacian divisions 2 and 3 once again surged forward to within bow range, but their hasty missile fire had no effect. Dacian division 3 managed a wheel to the right to protect their flank from any Roman reinforcement. The Roman Cavalry division succeeded in making its reserve roll and made a single move onto the table, whilst missile fire from within the fort caused the first casualties, to ragged cheers from the nervous defenders.

Turn 3, and the Dacian General issued a charge order to his Warband units, but rolled an 8 which would only allow a single move (not enough to traverse the ditch). He used his re-roll, and rolled a 7 this time – still not enough!

The Warband pulled up short and threw a few desultory javelins to no effect. Dacian division 2 failed its command check totally (must have been some defensive ditch), but its archers disordered the auxiliary infantry on the wall. The warbands from Dacian division 3 merely sat and waited for the Romans to arrive, whilst the skirmishers moved out around its flanks to seek lines of fire. At the start of the Roman Turn 3, the Roman infantry division failed to make its reserve roll. The Roman light cavalry used it initiative to shower its Dacian counterpart with javelins, and they retreated disordered. Mike, as the Roman cavalry commander, hemmed and hawed over what to do with his heavy cavalry. When finally goaded into making a decision, he rolled too low to get a charge. Using his reroll, he blundered and the Roman cavalry shifted to its right, resulting in much cheering from the Dacians! Roman missile fire from the dismayed Roman garrison caused a few more casualties, as the auxiliaries realise that they might be in this alone...

In Turn 4, the Dacians used their initiative to charge the Romans on the walls. Division 1 pushed the Romans back shaken and disordered and occupied the wall, but the second Auxiliary unit, despite losing the combat by two, held firm. Dacian division 3, somewhat confused by the behaviour of the Roman cavalry, threw javelins at the light cavalry. In the Roman turn 4, the infantry once again failed to appear, accompanied by the sound of grinding teeth. The cavalry only managed a single move, still not far enough to engage the Dacians. In the fort, the Roman commander rallied the shaken auxiliary infantry and they steeled themselves for the inevitable charge from the Dacians swarming over the wall. Meanwhile, the other auxiliary infantry unit continued to hold, despite losing another combat by three.

...but the Dacians are already amongst them

On the Dacian Turn 5, division 3 manoeuvred backward, and then the light cavalry was defeated by the Numidian light horse and fell back, pursued by the doughty Africans. Inside the fort, Dacian division 1 charged the regrouped Romans and shattered them, though the warband became shaken in the process. The Roman commander narrowly avoided capture as howling Dacians began looting the camp. The other Roman auxiliary infantry unit finally gave ground disordered. Things look grim for the garrison. To assorted moans and cheers, the Roman infantry division once again failed to appear. The Roman cavalry division once again got only a single move. For the third turn in a row, the Roman General used his reroll to get the same or worse result, and the cries of Merda! were starting to draw the attention of the neighbours. A shower of javelins from the Roman cavalry caused some casualties, though.

Turn 6 began with the remnants of the Roman garrison being defeated and dispersed, and the Dacians got down to the time honoured soldier's tradition of looting. The Roman and Dacian light cavalry continued their epic battle, now well into the Dacian deployment zone. With the intervention of the gods, the Roman Infantry division finally appeared and marched onto the battlefield. The Roman cavalry, perhaps heartened by the appearance of the legions, charged the Dacian warbands and caused them to be shaken. However, the Romans took casualties in return, lost the combat and were forced back. Unfortunately, the legionaries, who were

directly behind the unit, refused to give ground! There was a tense stand-off whilst Mike and Greg 'discussed' this issue. But the infantry wouldn't move, and the Roman cavalry was destroyed. The Dacians were obviously delighted at this show of disunity within the Roman camp.

Turn 7 began with the Dacians within the fort slowly moving out and forming into a battle line, facing the approaching Romans. Unsuccessful command rolls meant that no combat occurred. This all changed in the Roman turn, with the legionaries who had so recently refused to give way for the cavalry slamming into the warbands in front of them, with auxilia in support. Quick work was made of the Dacians, with two warbands breaking and the remainder falling back in disarray. However, with the fort lost the Romans were content to allow the Dacians to withdraw to the hills, which they did.

The auxiliary troops in the fort did a fine job of holding out, but the delayed Roman relief left them with little hope of survival. If the Romans had arrived earlier the game would have been much more interesting, but even as it played it provided plenty of highlights. The main talking point, however, was the refusal of the legionaries to give way to the auxiliary cavalry. It meant that the legionary division pulled off a devastating charge the next turn, but at a massive cost.

There may well be a palace coup in the wings...

THE LIFE OF A LEGIONARY

During the Republican era a legionary was by definition a land holding Roman citizen and almost certainly an Italian, but the reforms of the general and consul Gaius Marius in about 100 BC changed this. Requiring more manpower to battle the invading Cimbri and Teutones Germanic tribes, he removed the property requirement and so opened the legions to the suburban working class. By the reign of Trajan probably less than 10% of legionaries were of Italian descent, although all still had to be Roman citizens.

A legionary enlisted for a 25 year term. Enlisting drives were usually undertaken en masse, ensuring that the legion retained a mix of new recruits and experienced soldiers. Upon discharge the legionary received a retirement benefit, usually a plot of land somewhere in the Empire. He could either work this land himself, or rent or sell it to someone who could. Many legionaries chose to re-enlist once their term had expired, and it was not uncommon for there to be serving legionaries in their late 50s. One could only imagine the stories that such hoary veterans would tell to wide-eyed young recruits.

Legionaries were organised into groups of eight, called a *contubernium*, and these men shared a tent and baggage mule and cooked their meals together, as a legion had no centralised mess. Legionary food consisted mostly of grains (baked into hard bread) and pulses served with rough wine and olive oil. Little meat was eaten, and in dire situations where only meat was available legionaries were known to complain loudly and bitterly about such a diet.

Many legionaries had skills that they learnt in civilian life and these were put to good use. Known as *immunes*, meaning that they were generally immune to unskilled hard labour and guard duty, these men were blacksmiths, carpenters, stonemasons, muleteers, clerks and other tradesmen. Thus a legion in the field usually had all the expertise necessary to perform most complex tasks without needing to be accompanied by large numbers of non-combatants.

Legionaries were forbidden to marry whilst serving, though many naturally had common law wives and even children. Upon discharge, such relationships were legally recognised and any associated children gained citizenship. This pragmatic policy also provided the legions with a pool of potential new recruits.

Legionaries were paid an annual salary of 300 silver denarii. This was not a great deal, thought to be roughly equivalent to a labourer's wage, but it was guaranteed income and included benefits such as food, shelter and medical care for the horrific injuries that might be suffered in the line of duty. Like soldiers down the ages, legionaries could always hope to for a bit of looting and stealing to supplement their income, and there was always the chance that a general or even an emperor might seek their favour through large cash gifts.

Legionaries were subjected to a life of harsh discipline, with both corporal and capital punishment common. Being caught asleep whilst on guard duty, for example, would almost certainly result in the execution of the unlucky soldier. One of the most feared punishments reserved for major offences such as rebellion or cowardice in battle was the decimation, where every tenth man of the offending units would be executed by his colleagues. The last recorded instance of this was in Africa in 20 AD, when the Governor ordered the decimation of a cohort of the III Augusta after it was defeated by the rebel Tacfarinas.

Pompeii-pattern Roman gladius, 1st-2nd century AD

ATTEN–SHUN!

A mighty onager

Roman scorpio

HOLD THE PASS

"Trajan seized some fortified mountains and found there arms, captured engines and the standard which had been taken in the time of Fuscus. Decebalus...was ready to agree without exception to every demand that had been made...in order that he might secure a respite from his temporary reverses."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History, 68.9*

One glance at an atlas clearly shows the mountainous nature of what was once Dacia. For an invading force such as the Romans, the few passes through these mountains were of vital strategic significance to maintain lines of communications and supply. It is a truism that amateurs talk of strategy whilst professionals talk of logistics, and one can only marvel at the capacity of the Roman military to conduct large scale military operations in hostile territory with the technology that was available to them. So the mountain passes of ancient Dacia no doubt witnessed many

a skirmish and battle, and this scenario represents such an encounter. The Romans are escorting vital supplies to the main army – food, medical supplies, and so on. A smaller force of Dacians has blocked the pass, and the Romans must force their way through.

DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES

The Dacian force can deploy anywhere on one side of the board, but must have at least one unit behind the abatis which stretches across the pass. This abatis is considered a fortification in terms of morale and a linear obstacle in terms of movement. Each 9" section has a stamina of 6 should the Romans elect to attack this.

The Roman force deploys at one end of the board within 12" of the edge. The Romans have the first turn.

OBJECTIVES

For a major victory, the Romans must break the Dacian army and escort their baggage from the table by the end of the sixth turn. For a minor victory, they can break the Dacians without the baggage leaving the table or get the baggage off the table without breaking the Dacians (unlikely though this is). Any other result is a major victory to the Dacians. The game lasts for eight turns, after which fading light will cause the sides to break off.

The Dacians block the pass
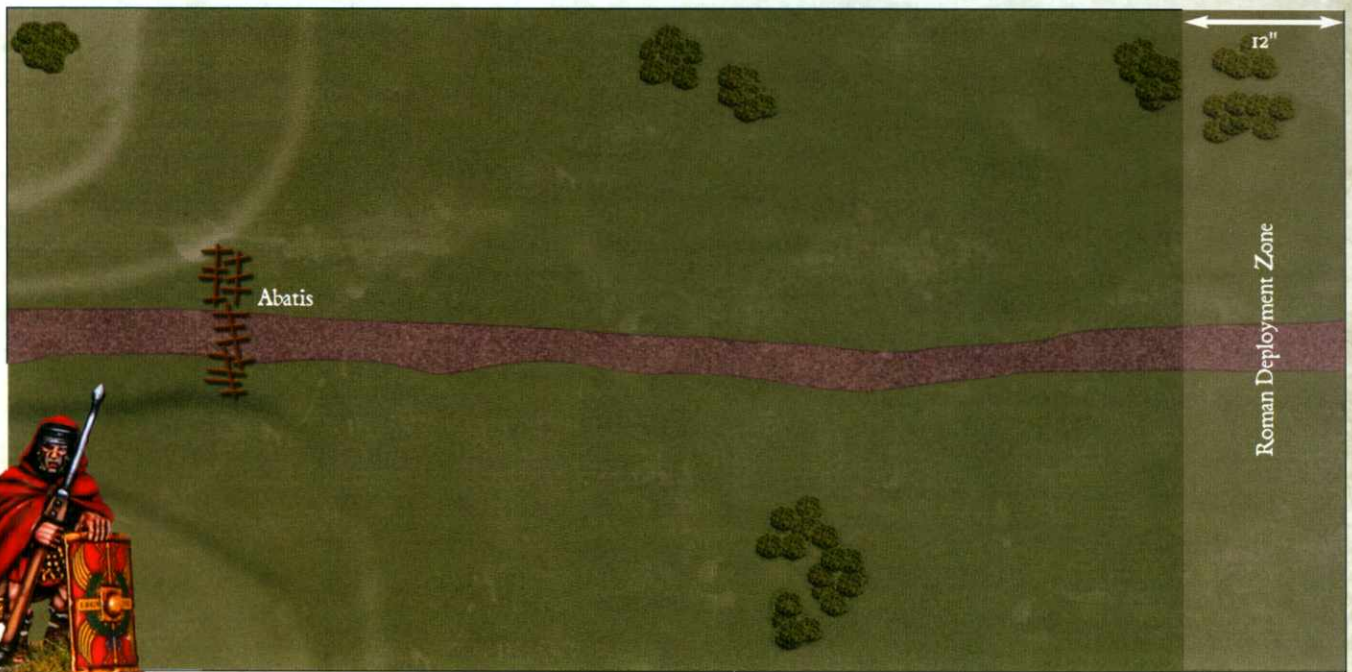
Abatis

Roman Deployment Zone

12"

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 2 small units of skirmishers (slings)

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of auxiliary Guard cavalry
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light cavalry
- 1 unit of baggage

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

HOW IT WAS PLAYED

We played several games of this scenario at CanCon 2012 (Australia's largest wargaming convention, held every January in Canberra). The following is a summary of one of these games, though the participants' names have been lost. If you were one of them – then thanks!

The Dacians deployed with their entire first division behind the abatis, whilst the other two divisions sat on the hills on either flank. The Romans started well, making strong moves forward. They decided to push their missile troops forward onto their right flank, the legionaries and auxiliaries at the centre whilst all of the cavalry concentrated on the left. The baggage followed the legionaries. The Dacians bunched up their units slightly, but did nothing else for the first turn. The Roman cavalry faltered, but the infantry continued to march forward, with the legionaries and auxilia making a beeline for the abatis. The first missile fire was exchanged by both sides, with minor casualties. The Dacian skirmishers moved down off the hill in anticipation of engaging the Romans with javelins.

Turn three saw the Roman light cavalry move to within javelin range of the warband on the right hand side hill, whilst the auxiliary cavalry supported by the foederati smashed into the skirmishers, ran them down and continued up the hill into the captured Roman scorpio. On the other flank, the Romans caused some more casualties on the Dacians with missile fire, and in the centre the Romans moved within short range of the abatis and cut down some of the defenders with a massed pila volley. In return, the Dacian scorpio skewered some unfortunate legionaries, whilst the Dacian skirmishers rushed down the hill to engage the Roman archers, chasing them off!

Apparently there's nothing scarier than naked hairy men running flat out at you waving sharp sticks.

In Turn 4 the Romans charged the abatis, winning both combats by the smallest of margins. In one case the Dacian defenders fell back and their Roman opponents scrambled through the branches to maintain contact, but the remaining Dacians held firm. The Roman cavalry swiftly dealt with the Dacian scorpio and then swung around in anticipation of a warband charge the next turn. This happened as expected; with the Dacian warriors driving the cavalry back down the hill. In the centre the fighting continued, with one block of Dacians continuing to hold the Romans at the abatis whilst the second lost again and were broken and dispersed along with the supporting unit. On the Roman right flank the Dacian missile troops continued to have the upper hand, whilst the unengaged warband re-aligned itself to join the fight in the centre.

Turn 5 saw the Roman light cavalry join the fight on the Roman left flank, and this time the Romans won, though the auxiliary cavalry was now shaken. The shaken warband fell back disordered, with the result left hanging in the balance. In the centre the engaged Roman units finally pushed the Dacians back from the abatis, whilst the two unengaged units failed their command check and were left stranded! The Roman archers destroyed the remaining scorpio with missile fire, but one unit was now shaken and the slingers were heading back to Rome with Dacian skirmishers in hot pursuit. The Dacian warband on the hill crashed into the Romans in the centre, and whilst taking an impressive number of casualties, forced all of the Roman infantry backwards.

In Turn 6 the Roman auxiliary cavalry moved out of the way, allowing the foederati cavalry to unleash a devastating charge on the warband on the hill, trampling them underfoot. The foederati were now set up for their own downhill charge into the pass. The pass was now a seething mass of Roman troops, but amazingly the unengaged units managed to extract themselves from the fray. The remaining Roman infantry became shaken in the combat phase, and were destroyed along with their opponents. Fortunately the warband was also shaken and retreated disordered.

Turn 7 saw the final act of the battle, with the Foederati cavalry sweeping down into the pass and destroying the last warband utterly. They continued up the hill and the remaining unit of Dacian archers saw the writing on the wall. The baggage moved up to the abatis and could shortly be moved off the table and make its way to Trajan's camp.

This is a small but brutal game and the outcome can easily go either way, as we discovered on the day. The onus is on the Romans to clear the pass quickly, but this a tough prospect with the defended abatis. Concentrating on the flanks is definitely the safest option, but this will also take valuable time. It is difficult for the Romans to pull off a major victory, and quite possible for the Dacians to see them off (as happened in another of our participation games).

Dacian skirmishers rush downhill to attack Roman archers

The pass becomes a seething mass of Romans

THE SIEGE OF SARMIZEGETUSA REGIA

"Decebalus, when his capital and all his territory had been occupied and he was himself in danger of being captured, committed suicide, and his head was brought to Rome. In this way Dacia became subject to the Romans... The treasures of Decebalus were also discovered, though hidden beneath the river Sargetia, which ran past his palace."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 68.14

Dacia had six major walled fortresses – Blidaru, Piatra Rosie, Costesti, Capâlna, Banita and the capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia. The Romans captured each in turn, with the capital the last to fall. An advanced city even by Roman standards, Sarmizegetusa had thick walls, piped water and paved streets. The remains of all of these fortresses are visible today in Romania, and collectively form the *Dacian Fortresses of the Orastie Mountains* UNESCO World Heritage site.

The siege of Sarmizegetusa Regia was the last major act of the second Dacian War and took place sometime in 106 AD, probably in summer or early autumn. A massive Roman army invested the city, and whilst the first assault on the walls was beaten back, it was really only a matter of time before the Romans prevailed. It seems that many Dacians took their own lives rather than be captured, and they set fire to the wooden buildings within the city to deny it to the Romans. Decebalus' head was brought to Trajan and the Dacian Wars were over.
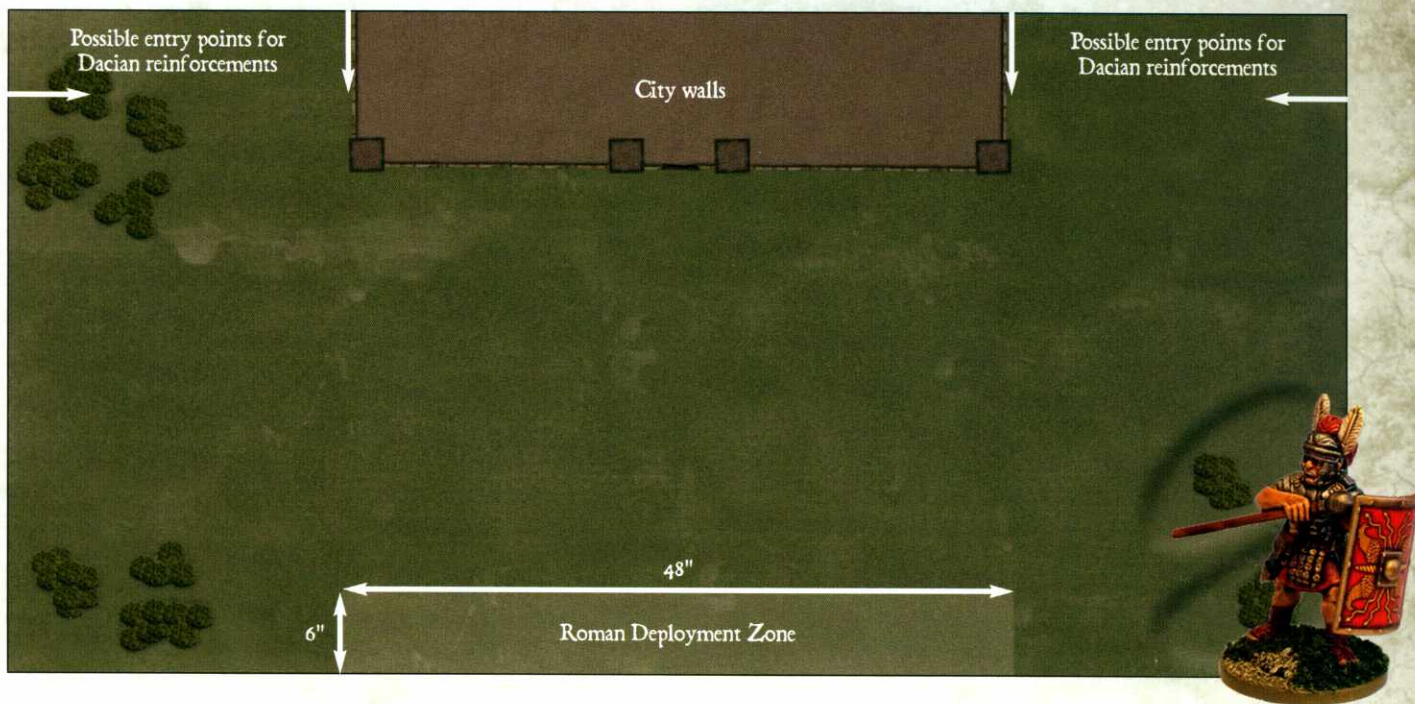
DEPLOYMENT AND SPECIAL RULES

The Dacians must deploy at least one division inside the city walls. The remainder of their divisions may be kept off the table and ordered on at the Dacians' discretion. However, a note must be kept of where these divisions will appear on the table, which must be an area of no more than 12" width inside the area shown on the map. Once the Dacians have deployed and made their notes, the Romans may deploy their entire army.

OBJECTIVES

The Romans must have at least two unengaged, unshaken non-skirmish unit inside the walls to win. The game lasts until this is achieved, or one of both armies is broken.

Possible entry points for Dacian reinforcements

City walls

Possible entry points for Dacian reinforcements

48"

6"

Roman Deployment Zone

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (Trajan)
- 1 unit of veteran legionaries
- 1 unit of Praetorian Guard
- 1 unit of auxiliary Guard cavalry
- 1 unit of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light cavalry

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 1 unit of legionaries
- 2 units of scorpio bolt throwers
- 2 units of medium artillery onagers
- 1 unit of heavy artillery ballistae

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (Decebalus)
- 1 unit of medium infantry Cap-wearers
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 small units of light infantry archers
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of medium infantry falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

4th Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of Sarmatian heavy cavalry lancers
- 2 small units of Sarmatian horse archers
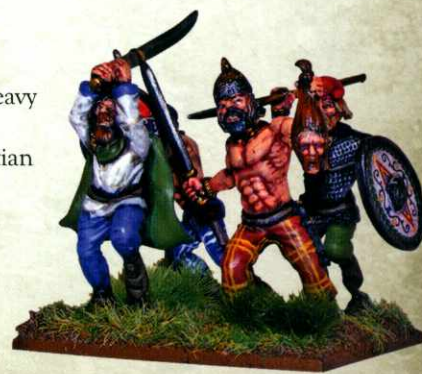
"At this time the Romans became involved in a very serious war with the Dacians, whose king was then Decebalus. This man was shrewd in his understanding of warfare and shrewd also in the waging of war; he judged well when to attack and chose the right moment to retreat; he was an expert in ambuscades and a master in pitched battles; and he knew not only how to follow up a victory well, but also how to manage well a defeat. Hence he showed himself a worthy antagonist of the Romans for a long time."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 67.6

HOW IT WAS PLAYED

The usual suspects took their by now familiar commands – Mike as Trajan, Greg as second-in-command with division 2 and the artillery, Peter with division 3. Bern was Decebalus, Garry divisions 2 and 4 and Ian division 3.

The Dacians deployed with division 1 within the city walls and the remainder of the army off the table. Divisions 2 and 4 were on the left flank, division 3 on the right.

The Romans refused their left flank, with most of their army on the right hand aide of the board. Division 3 was on the right, division 2 on the left, with the artillery and Trajan's division behind them.

Turn 1 started with the Roman infantry under Garry surging forward, the auxilia on the right flank far outpacing the rest of their comrades. The light artillery marched forward to within range and the onagers groaned as they loosed their first shots, but no casualties resulted. Little happened behind the walls on the Dacian first turn, with the only event being the appearance of the Sarmatians as the Dacians fluffed their command rolls, a trend that would continue throughout the battle.

In Roman turn 2 the fleet-footed auxilia from division 3 actually made it to the walls and started preparing grapples and scaling ladders as the rest of their division hurried to catch up. Not to be outdone, the entirety of division 2 made it to the walls, and the missiles started to fall around the Dacian defenders whilst the legionaries hefted battering rams to begin work on the walls. On the Dacian turn 2 both of the reserve divisions of infantry made it onto the table and the Sarmatians attempted to loop around the Roman right flank to get at their vulnerable rear. Dacian missile fire began to tell, with several legionaries falling and one of the eager Auxiliary units actually falling back from the wall.

Roman turn 3, and things started to get very interesting. On the Roman right, the lone auxilia unit at the foot of the wall found itself facing empty ramparts, and so scrambled onto the wall, yelling in triumph. A corona for that man! Back on the battlefield, the legionaries from the same divisions failed their command roll to charge the newly arrived Dacian infantry. The hardworking legionaries from division 2 were

by now battering the wall with earnest, and it was already starting to show cracks. Supporting missile fire drove the Dacian scorpio and one of the falx-men units from the walls, and long range missile fire began to inflict some casualties on the defenders. Trajan sent his Praetorians and light cavalry to intercept the Dacians on the Roman left and took the rest of his division in the opposite direction to deal with the Sarmatians.

The Dacian turn started with the anticipation of many charges, but most didn't eventuate. Dacian division 2 blunders, with the whole division shuffling to its right rather than falling screaming on the legionaries facing them, just out of initiative range. The Sarmatians spread out, anticipating a Roman charge. One of the legionary units attacking the walls was driven back by missile fire. And then the unit of falx-men driven from the walls the previous turn spied the auxilia standing triumphantly above. They charged, and despite having the advantage of being uphill, the shocked auxilia lost the combat 6 to 3 and were broken and thrown from the walls – literally!

On Roman turn 4, Trajan and his Guard Cavalry, supported by the auxiliary cavalry, charged the Sarmatian cavalry who were supported by horse archers and soon joined by the Sarmatian General. However, finding that their spears were out-reached by the kontos, the Romans lost the combat by 3 and fell back pursued by the Sarmatians. Meanwhile, Trajan's Praetorians marched across the field to help fight the Dacians on the far left flank. Light artillery and javelin fire caused some casualties on that flank and also on those Dacians still brave enough to stand on the city walls. The auxilia from division 3 that had previously fallen back from the walls now moved onto them again, whilst the legionaries from the same division charged a unit of falx-men, destroying them and following up into the rest of the division.

On turn 4 for the Dacians, the Sarmatians, now having an uphill advantage, fought against Trajan and his cavalry, but this time the result was a draw. The Guard cavalry were now shaken and obliged to fall back. The victorious legionaries from division 3 destroyed another unit of Dacians, but the second combat was a draw thanks to woeful rolling by both

sides. The Dacian units manning the walls withdrew, tired of taking regular casualties from archery and artillery, and the unblooded Dacian division advanced to the front of the walls to shore up the battle line.

Roman turn 5 began with Trajan's veterans charging the Sarmatians threatening him in the flank. Not surprisingly, the Romans won that combat decisively and the Sarmatians were destroyed. The legionaries from division 3 fought another couple of draws, but the remaining warbands from Dacian division 3 were by now either destroyed or shaken. The foederati and light infantry from division 3 peppered the horse archers with missile fire and ensured that they kept a safe distance. The legionaries continued to batter the walls, and were rewarded when an entire section collapsed.

Dacian turn 5 began with the second Sarmatian lancer unit charging the veteran legionaries in the flank. The resulting combat saw the veterans broken and the Sarmatians crash into the Guard cavalry. The legionaries from division 3 broke the Dacian division in the most comprehensive manner. The second Dacian division continued to advance on the Roman centre, whilst the warbands within the walls moved to cover the broken wall and prepared to face a Roman attack.

But the valiant Guardsmen found some last reserve and repelled the Sarmatians. The foederati and light infantry chased off one unit of horse archers, and the now opponent-less legionaries moved into position to assault the walls. The legionaries who had battered down the wall now attacked across its ruins, but were defeated and broken in the following combat despite inflicting heavy casualties on their opponents. In another feat of bravery, the lone unit of foederati charged the advancing Dacian division on the Roman left, won the combat and forced the entire division to fall back!

In what was to be the final turn of the game, the Dacians attempted to re-organise their right flank and centre. Their left flank was now well and truly broken. A wave of desperation swept over the inhabitants of Sarmizegetusa Regia, and they began to fall back, setting fire to buildings as they went. The capital was lost and the Dacian Wars were all but over.

This was a tough, exciting game. The Romans performed well, rarely faltering, but in contrast the Dacians and Sarmatians seemed to blunder at the least opportune times. So keen were the Romans to assault the walls that they didn't even bother to soften up the defenders for a turn or two, which would have made things a lot easier for them in retrospect. As it played out the Dacians managed to repel most of the attackers through attrition, but at the end of the day there were still free Roman units to throw at the walls and a decreasing number of defenders (and even fewer units in the field!). So overall a minor victory to the Romans.

"Come and get some!"

RIVER CROSSING

"Trajan, having crossed the Ister...conducted the war with safe prudence rather than with haste, and eventually, after a hard struggle, vanquished the Dacians. In the course of the campaign he himself performed many deeds of good generalship and bravery, and his troops ran many risks and displayed great prowess on his behalf."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History, 68.14*

As well as being mountainous, ancient Dacia was intersected by numerous rivers, large and small. The most significant was the Danube (which the Romans called the Ister), separating Dacia from Roman Moesia. To get troops into Dacia and then maintain a supply route required significant waterborne transport, clearly shown on Trajan's Column.

At the start of the second Dacian War, Trajan ordered the construction of a massive and permanent bridge of stone and wood across the Danube. Designed by Apollodoros of Damascus, this bridge must have been one of the engineering wonders of the time, and its stone piers can still be seen today. This scenario deals with the crossing of one such river by the Romans, though perhaps not one quite as broad as the Danube.

DEPLOYMENT

The Dacians deploy their entire army anywhere on their side of the board. The Romans deploy second, and their entire army must be within 6" of their edge of the board. Roll a D6 to determine which side goes first.

SPECIAL RULES

The entire river is fordable, approximately 6" wide and counts as rough ground. Units standing on the river bank fighting units in the river count as being uphill. Units in the river do not block the line of sight of units on the bank.

OBJECTIVES

The Romans must have at least half of their non-skirmish units on the other side of the river by the end of Turn 6. Shaken units count, but only if they are not engaged in close combat when the count is made. Otherwise it is a Dacian victory.

TIPS AND TACTICS

The Dacians need to stop the Romans at the water's edge. They have time on their side, and will have the advantage as the Romans attempt to climb out of the river. A mobile reserve may be useful to respond to breakthroughs or tricky Roman manoeuvres.

The Romans must come up with a plan and stick to it, as the turn limit will mean that they will have little opportunity to change plans and still win. Their superior missile troops should help soften up the opposition, and their cavalry will give them a mobility edge.

THE ARMIES – ORDERS OF BATTLE

ROMANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of legionaries
- 2 units of auxiliary medium infantry
- 1 unit of foederati medium infantry
- 1 small unit of auxiliary light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (slings)
- 1 unit of scorpio bolt throwers

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of auxiliary medium cavalry
- 1 unit of foederati medium cavalry
- 2 small units of auxiliary light cavalry

DACIANS

1st Division
- Division Commander (General)
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
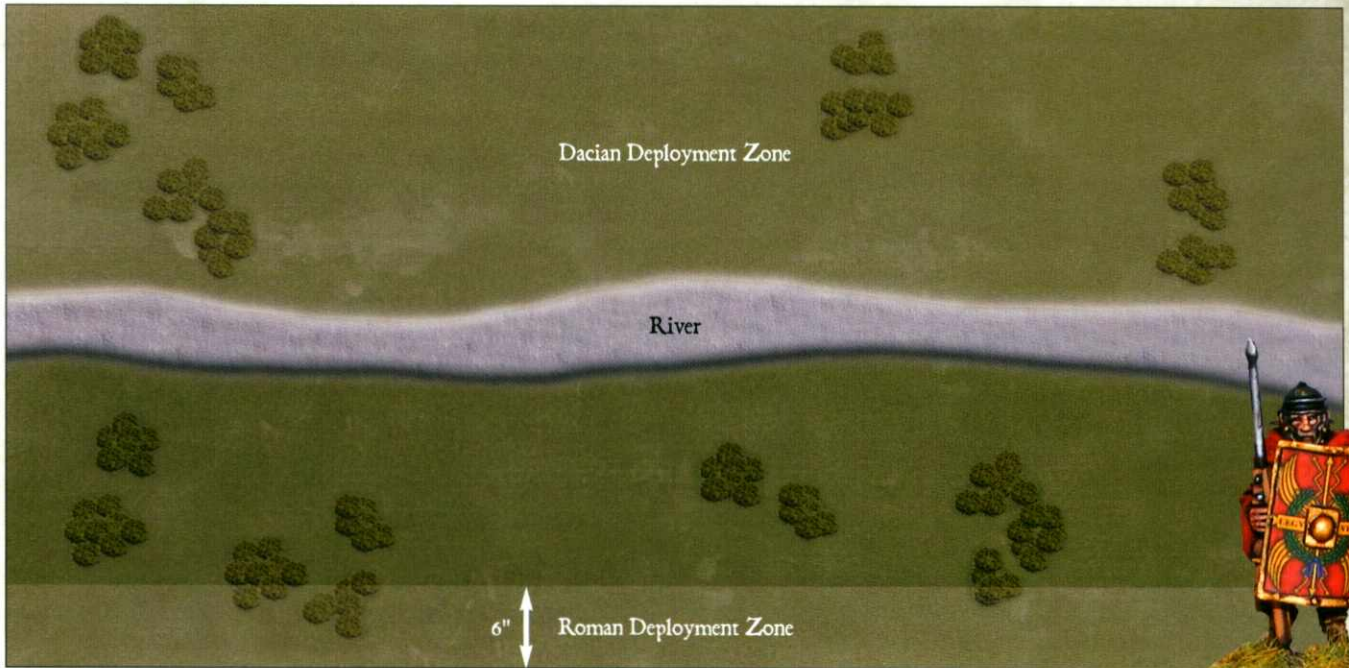- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

2nd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

3rd Division
- Division Commander
- 2 units of falx-men
- 2 units of medium infantry regulars
- 1 small unit of light infantry archers
- 1 small unit of skirmishers (javelins)

Dacian Deployment Zone

River

6" Roman Deployment Zone

River crossings are always risky

PITCHED BATTLE

> "Their drills are bloodless battles,
> and their battles bloody drills."

Flavius Josephus, Jewish General, Historian and Traitor,
writing of the Roman army in the 1st Century AD

Not all battles need to be based on carefully pre-planned scenarios – sometimes it's just as much fun to simply fill up the gaming table with model soldiers and get stuck in! Even so, adding a special rule or two can add a bit of flavour to an otherwise straightforward game, and so we have included some suggested rules covering battlefield conditions and deployment. These are all ideas we have tried out on occasion, and they are offered here as suggestions and hopefully as inspiration for further innovation along these lines.

THE ARMIES

At least two divisions per side, though three or four give a much better game. *Hail Caesar* is a great multi-player game, so if there are more than two players available we like to assign one division to each player. In addition, rather than calculate points (a tiresome exercise at the best of times, in our opinion), we usually prefer just do a quick count of the numbers and types of units on each side and roughly square them up.

DEPLOYMENT

Using our regular gaming tables we would normally allow both sides to deploy within 12" of their respective long table edges.

If using the special deployment rules we would first roll a D3 and consult the chart below.

D3 Score	Result
1	**Impassable Terrain.** Each long table edge represents impassable terrain such as a river, the sea, steep valley sides or cliffs. Players must therefore deploy their armies along each short table edge. Each side rolls a D6 and the lowest scorer starts deploying first, with both sides deploying one complete division at a time. No unit may enter or leave the table along a long table edge. If your tables are very long you might want to allow armies to deploy further in, or allow double moves for the first turn of play to get the opposing forces into contact more quickly.
2	**Meeting Engagement.** Only one division per side starts on the table, determined randomly. Roll a D6, and the lowest scorer deploys his division first within 12" of one of the long table edges, followed by the other player on the opposite side of the board. On turn 2, an additional division per side may be ordered to move onto the table at any point, and so on.

Paul 'Smiley' Daniels' mighty Dacian army

3   **Column of March.** Each player secretly draws a map to indicate the position of all of his units. We found it helpful to divide the deployment zone up into 6" blocks, allowing for one or sometimes two units per block. Once both players have completed their maps, the maps are revealed and the armies deployed as indicated.

SPECIAL RULES

Where we want to include a special rule for battlefield conditions, a D6 is rolled before the game and the result referred to the following chart.

D6 Score	Result
1	**Night Fight.** The battle takes place in darkness. No long range missile fire or overhead missile fire is allowed. All short range missile fire is at -1 to hit in addition to other penalties. All commands are at -1 unless the commander is within 6" or closer of the unit (or units) being ordered.
2	**Morning Assault.** Hostilities start in the early hours of the morning, and the sun begins to rise midway through the battle. Randomly designate one table edge as facing east. For the first three turns of the game the rules for night fighting apply (as specified above). From turn 4 on, no penalties apply, except for missile fire towards the eastern edge of the board, which will still suffer a -1 penalty due to the rising sun.

3   **Evening Assault.** Hostilities start late in the afternoon, and the sun sets midway through the battle. Randomly designate one table edge as facing west. For the first three turns of the game the rules of the game no special rules apply, except all missile fire directed towards the western table edge suffers a -1 penalty due to the setting sun. From turn 4 onwards the rules for night fighting (as specified above) apply.

4   **Blizzard.** Use the rules for night fighting above. Additionally, if a unit moves twice in a turn then it will become disordered on a roll of a 6 on a D6, as soldiers slip and stumble in the icy conditions. If the unit moves three times it will become disordered on a 5 or a 6!

5   **Mud.** The battlefield has been churned into thick mud. All units have their movement reduced by D2" for each successful move. So if a unit is successfully commanded to make three moves, it will move 3 x D2" less than normal.

6   **Broken Ground.** The Battlefield is strewn with rocks, thorn bushes and other impediments to easy movement. The entire battlefield counts as rough ground as described in the *Hail Caesar* rule book.

OBJECTIVES

Play 6 + D3 turns or until one army is broken.

THE INVASION OF DACIA

"Decebalus sent to him an embassy anew with the insulting proposal to make peace with the emperor, on condition that every Roman should elect to pay two obols to Decebalus each year; otherwise, he declared, he would make war and inflict great ills upon the Romans."

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 67.6

This mini-campaign uses the scenarios already described and binds them into a loose narrative that you may find increases the enjoyment of wargaming this period. Campaigns are a tricky thing – though definitely the holy grail of historical wargaming, striking the right balance and taking into account the often unpredictable demands of reality on the playing group is fiendishly difficult.

It is also true that wargamers are a fickle lot, easily distracted by bright and shiny advertisements in wargames magazines and the pile of unpainted lead and plastic in their man caves, so in many ways the best campaigns are also relatively short ones.

The framework for this campaign is a loose one designed to be played over a couple of months, assuming that games are played every few weeks or so. At least half a dozen players can be involved, each player taking command of a division for each battle, and it will help if players generally stick to the same side for the duration of the campaign. In fact, they may even start to speak in the first person when playing their character. (Watch such individuals carefully, and be careful to ration their wine intake.)

There is some book keeping involved, but the involvement of a non-playing umpire is not essential. However, given the propensity of Romans for bribery and legal sophistry, and of Dacians for rowdy and often violent behaviour, an impartial adjudicator is not such a bad idea.

There are four stages.

STAGE 1 – THE INITIAL BATTLE
Play a set number of scenarios from this supplement using the forces as listed. One scenario for every player in the campaign will give you a good number. However, keep careful track of the condition of the units and commanders at the end of each battle, as the unit attrition rules below will be applied at stage 2. Don't be afraid to shorten or lengthen the campaign according to enthusiasm and participation.

Welcome to Dacia!

Sarmatian lancers

STAGE 2 – REDEPLOY FORCES

Each side now takes stock of surviving units from the initial battles and pools these together to create new armies. Use the unit attrition rules described below to see what units are available from Stage 1.

All units must be allocated to divisions, commanders assigned and armies created. You may include additional commanders if you wish, but these will be Reserve Commanders as described on page 80 of the rulebook. Each army must comprise at least two divisions and no more than six, and it must comply with restrictions specified in the Army Lists section. Additionally, should players not be able to field all the units in the armies that they have designed in any subsequent battle, then those missing units are simply left out of the battle. None of that "those Vikings are actually legionaries" malarkey!

In addition to the forces left over from Stage 1, the Romans also have access to one unit of heavy artillery and two units of medium artillery, whilst the Dacians have access to two units of light artillery.

MONUMENT TO A HERO

Amazingly, we know the name of the Roman officer who cornered Decebalus outside of his capital because of a monument that this soldier himself raised in Philippi, Greece, and which has survived to this day. The inscription on this monument reads:

Tiberius Claudius Maximus, veteran, took care of setting this up while he was alive. He served as trooper in Legio VII Claudia Pia Fidelis, was made quaestor equitum, then singularis of the legatus legionis of the same legion; then vexillarius of the troopers of that unit, received awards from Emperor Domitian for bravery in the Dacian War, was made duplicarius in the Ala II Pannoniorum by the Emperor Trajan and was made explorator in the Dacian War and twice received awards for bravery in the Dacian and the Parthian War and was made decurio in the same ala by him because he had captured Decebalus and bore his head to him in Ranisstorum. He got his honorary discharge as a voluntarius from the consular commander Terentius Scaurianus, of the army of the Provincia Mesopotamia Nova.

Sarmatian light cavalry attempt to soften up the legionaries

STAGE 3 – THE ROMAN ADVANCE

The players must then decide where these armies will be deployed. The Roman objective is to get to the Dacian capital and lay siege to it, whilst the Dacians and their allies are attempting to stop them.

There are three routes through the mountains, and both sides must secretly choose which armies they allocate to which route. This should result in a second round of battles, which can be fought using the generic Pitched Battle scenario or another of the players' choice. It may be that more than one Roman army uses the same route, or more than one Dacian army is defending it (or both!). In this situation, more than one battle will be fought over that particular pass, as it is best to only have two armies fighting one battle. This is where a non-playing umpire will become invaluable, and he or she may even throw in some additional rules or ideas.

Once again, take careful note of unit losses and use the Unit Attrition rules.

STAGE 4 – SIEGE

Finally, players get to concentrate all of their remaining forces in one final titanic battle. Use the scenario for the Siege of Sarmizegetusa Regia, with the players using all of their surviving units. May the best side win!

UNIT ATTRITION

Use these rules for determining which units can fight in later stages of the campaign.

- Units that are shattered, broken or which flee the table are lost and cannot be fielded again.

- Units that are Shaken but still on the table at the end of the battle are considered to have dropped in size – large units become regular, regular units become small, small units become tiny. Tiny units disappear!

- Players can combine two tiny units to make a small one, or a small and a tiny unit to make a regular one (adjusting unit statistics as clarified on page 97 of the *Hail Caesar* rulebook).

  We would generally avoid large units, though in especially big games two medium warbands can be combined into a single large one if that is felt to suit the battle in hand.

- Commanders that are slain cannot be used again, and are replaced according to the rules for Reserve Commanders on page 80 of the *Hail Caesar* rulebook. If new commanders are required due to army reorganisation, then use these rules as well.

The Roman gods receive their share

A Roman scorpio

A Roman optio

A Sarmatian warlord

Getting there in style – a Roman travelling coach

AN AMAZING STORY!

The Roman author and lawyer Pliny the Younger was an associate of Trajan, and many of his letters to his Emperor have survived to this day. In this excerpt, he describes the extraordinary story of Roman slave captured by the Dacians and gifted to the Parthians. That's a story that would be worth a few pints back in Rome!

"I received a letter, Sir, from Apuleius, a military man, belonging to the garrison at Nicomedia, informing me that one Callidromus, being arrested by Maximus and Dionysius (two bakers, to whom he had hired himself), fled for refuge to your statue; that, being brought before a magistrate, he declared he was formerly slave to Laberius Maximus, but being taken prisoner by Susagus in Moesia, he was sent as a present from Decebalus to Pacorus, king of Parthia, in whose service he continued several years, from whence he made his escape, and came to Nicomedia. When he was examined before me, he confirmed this account, for which reason I thought it necessary to send him to you. This I should have done sooner, but I delayed his journey in order to make an inquiry concerning a seal ring which he said was taken from him, upon which was engraven the figure of Pacorus in his royal robes; I was desirous (if it could have been found) of transmitting this curiosity to you, with a small gold nugget which he says he brought from out of the Parthian mines. I have affixed my seal to it, the impression of which is a chariot drawn by four horses."

Pliny the Younger, letters to Trajan, XXVI

TRAJAN'S LEGIONS

There were already around twenty-seven legions in existence when Trajan became Emperor, and he raised another two specifically for his campaigns. A number of legions had already been destroyed by this time, most famously the 17th, 18th and 19th Legions in the Teutoberg Forest in 9 AD.

The legions that are known to have been active during Trajan's reign are listed below. Those in italics almost certainly took part in his Dacian campaign.

NAME	FORMED
I Adiatrix pia fidelis	Nero
I Italica	*Nero*
I Flavia Minerva pia fidelis	*Domitian*
II Augusta	Late Republic
II Adiatrix pia fidelis	Nero
II Traiana Fortis	Trajan
III Augusta pia fidelis	Late Republic
III Cyrenaica	Late Republic
III Gallica	Late Republic
IV Flavia Felix	*Vespasian*
IV Sythica	*Late Republic*
V Macedonia	*Late Republic*
VI Ferrata fidelis constans	*Late Republic*
VI Victrix	Late Republic
VII Claudia pia fidelis	*Late Republic*
VII Gemina	Galba
VIII Augusta	Late Republic
IX Hispana	Late Republic
X Fretensis	Late Republic
X Gemina	*Late Republic*
XI Claudia pia fidelis	Late Republic
XII Fulminata	Late Republic
XIII Gemina pia fidelis	*Late Republic*
XIV Gemina Martia Victrix	Late Republic
XV Apollinaris	Augustus
XVI Flavia Firma	Vespasian
XX Valeria Victrix	Augustus
XXII Primagenia pia fidelis	Caligula
XXX Ulpia Victrix	Trajan

Legions' Names and Titles

The name of the legion often references the emperor who formed it (Augustus, Trajan, etc.) or his family (for example, Flavia, the family of Vespasian and Domitian). It may also refer to the legion's region of origin, such as Hispana (Spain) or Cyrenaica (a region between Numidia and Libya). Emperors often gifted legions with additional titles, such as Pia Fidelis (loyal and faithful) or Victrix (victorious).

Roman supply column

ROMAN & DACIAN SHIELD DESIGNS

Trajan's Column provides us with some of the best evidence for legionary shield designs, with at least five variations being discernable. Auxiliary and even Dacian shield designs are also visible on the column. How accurate these are, and to what extent these designs can be extended to the broader Roman army, is anybody's guess, but they certainly provide a good starting point for imagining how the Roman army would have actually appeared.

Roman legionary shields

Roman legionary shields

Roman marine's shield

Dacian shields

Praetorian cavalry shield

Roman auxiliary cavalry shields

Dacian shields

AGAINST THE ALANS

In 135 AD, the Roman governor of the Black Sea province of Cappadocia, Lucius Flavius Arrianus, fought a battle against an invading army of Alans, a Sarmatian tribe. He recorded his tactics and deployment in an essay known as *Ektaxis Kata Alanoon*, one of the few documents that describes Roman tactics in detail. The following passage describes his tactics for the joining battle.

"Once thus arrayed there should be silence until the enemies come within missile range; when in range the loudest and most intimidating war cry must be raised by the whole lot, and bolts and stones must be fired from the artillery pieces and arrows from the bows, and javelins by both light armed and shield bearing javelinmen. Stones must also be thrown at the enemies by the allied force on the overwatch position, and the whole missile rain must be coming from all sides to make it concentrated enough to panic the horses and destroy the enemies. And the expectation is that the Scythians will not get close to the infantry battle formation because of the tremendous weight of missiles.

If they do close in though, the first three ranks should lock their shields and press their shoulders and receive the charge as strongly as possible in the most closely ordered formation bound together in the strongest manner. The fourth rank will throw their javelins overhead and the first rank will stab at them and their horses with their spears without pause. After repulsing the enemy if there's a clear rout, the infantry units must clear lanes and the horsemen should advance, not all squadrons, but only half of them.

Those to the fore must be the first to advance. The other half should follow those that advance, in perfect formation and not in hot pursuit in order that they may continue the initial pursuit with fresh horses in case there is a complete rout, and in case they turn about to attack, they may assist those in pursuit. At the same time the Armenian archers must advance, shooting their bows in order to prevent those in flight from turning about, and the light armed javelineers should advance at the run. The infantry formation should not hold its ground, but should advance at faster than the normal step in order to be a base of defence for the cavalrymen if there is stronger resistance by the enemies."

It seems that basing is the one thing that causes the most angst for players new to *Hail Caesar*, whether they aren't sure how to start basing their first units or are worried that they will have to re-base existing ones. The good news is that basing is dead simple and in many ways not that important. As long as the frontage of all standard sized units is pretty similar, then the game will work fine.

A number of players in our group have large collections of figures based for the *Warhammer Ancient Battles* rules, usually individually on 20mm square bases for infantry and 25 by 50 mm bases for cavalry. These figures can be readily formed into units of any shape or size using movement trays, or small groups of individual figures can be used to represent skirmishers. Some of the more 'mature' members even dragged out old units based for WRG, with frontages of up to 60mm. All of these basing variants worked fine and in no way detracted from or impeded any of our games.

These days, when planning a new unit or division for *Hail Caesar*, I think of it in terms of bases rather than figures, a base being 40mm square for infantry and 50mm square for cavalry.

An infantry base will have between two and five figures, depending on what type of unit it is. For example, for skirmishers such as slingers I will use just two figures, whilst for formed infantry such as legionaries or auxiliary spearmen, I use four. I treat warbands a bit differently, using between three and five figures (though five can be a real squeeze!). This gives warband units a less uniform appearance as opposed to the more orderly Roman units. I also like to add casualty figures to my warband units to give them a bit of character.

Cavalry is more uniform, with two figures on each 50mm base. It's hard to get away from this convention, as one figure isn't enough and three just won't fit! War machines are the most flexible models to base. As they rarely get involved in close combat, and tend to get smashed when they do, frontage isn't so important.

A battery of two scorpios is definitely ideal for a standard unit of light artillery, but on occasion we have used just a single model when enough painted ones weren't available. I use a 50mm square base for my scorpios and associated crew, but anything between 40 and 60mm should be fine. Some people like to base the crew separately, but for convenience and aesthetics they look good on the same base. Finally, baggage is a unit type that you can have a bit fun with, using civilians, marching figures, carts and animals.

There are a number of advantages to basing models in groups rather than individually, not the least being that units are considerably easier to store, deploy and pack away! Changing the size of the unit is also straight forward, with the addition or removal of only one or two bases.

Commanders are by far the most fun when it comes to building your *Hail Caesar* army. You can indulge your imagination, practice your hobby techniques and use the full range of attractive character models that Warlord and other miniature manufacturers produce. I like to base my commanders on round bases, usually 60mm in diameter. This makes them readily distinguishable from the rest of the army, so I am less likely to forget to move them. Their size can create problems when there are large multi-unit combats going on, but this can be easily solved by the judicious use of counters. Command bases can have any number of figures on them, from just one to four or five. It really depends on what effect you are trying to achieve. Mixing and matching pieces from different models, using casualty or civilian figures, or scratch building bits of terrain are some of the options you can consider.

Unit sizes also tend to get people worked up, but again, it really isn't that important. Depending on the number of painted bases I have available, I tend to make standard units either three or four bases in size for both cavalry and infantry, with the exception of warband units which are double depth and therefore twice this size.

Roman auxiliary cavalry ride to battle

Legionaries advance

FURTHER READING

PRIMARY SOURCES

We owe much of what we know of Imperial Rome to the careful analysis of the writings of just a handful of men. All of these works are available in cheap paperback form or on-line.

Cassius Dio

Roman History. A very broad and valuable history of the first, second and early third centuries AD, and the best written background to the Dacian Wars that we have.

Tacitus

Annals, Histories, Agricola and Germania. These are all required reading for the early imperial period and are a wealth of information about Rome and its enemies

Suetonius

Lives of the Caesars. Gossipy, malicious and not completely accurate, but an entertaining account of the lives of some of the early emperors.

Josephus

The Jewish War. A Jewish traitor, Josephus gives a first-hand account of the great revolt in the first century AD, including Roman tactics and equipment.

Arrian

Array against the Alans. A valuable insight into the deployment and tactics of a Roman army in the field.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adrian Goldsworthy

The Complete Roman Army
In the Name of Rome
The Roman Army at War
The Complete Roman Army is probably the best introduction on this subject available, whilst *In the Name of Rome* provides essential background material on Rome's most successful generals, including Trajan. Highly recommended.

Stephen Dando-Collins

Legions of Rome
This massive book purports to draw together the history of every Roman legion, and also has a large amount of general history of the Roman Empire. Whilst the author's interpretations are often a bit fanciful, it is still a great read and will provide plenty of inspiration. The author also has a series of separate books focussing on specific legions and key historical events.

Terry Jones and Alan Ereira

Barbarians!
An entertaining history of the barbarian races, including the Dacians, written from the other perspective.

M. C. Bishop and J. C. N. Coulston

Roman Military Equipment
The single best book available on the range of Roman military equipment.

Osprey Books

WAR71 *Roman Legionary 58 BC–AD 69*
WAR101 *Roman Auxiliary Cavalryman AD 14–193*
MAA37 *The Sarmatians 600 BC–AD 450*
MAA129 *Rome's Enemies (1) Germanics and Dacians*
FOR43 *Roman Legionary Fortresses 27 BC–AD 378*
NVG78 *Greek and Roman Siege Machinery 399 BC–AD 363*

This is just a sample of the books that Osprey produce on the Early Imperial Roman period.

SARMATIANS IN BATTLE

"In the Sarmatian ranks, however, speech was not limited to a leader: man encouraged man not to permit a battle of archers; better to anticipate matters by a charge and a hand-to-hand struggle! The encounter, in consequence, wore a variety of aspects. For the Parthians, habituated to pursue or flee with equal art, spread out their squadrons and manoeuvred for room for their flights of missiles: the Sarmatians, ignoring their shorter-ranged bows, rushed on with pike and sword."

Tacitus, Annals, 6.35

Mine's longer than yours...

Roman legionaries storm the walls of a Dacian fort

Light cavalry makes a bad day even worse for the Romans