

• HAIL CAESAR •

™

BRITANNIA

ROME'S INVASION OF BRITAIN



Fighting Claudius's invasion of Britain with model soldiers



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Battle of Watling Street: British warriors pour across the valley towards the Roman line



Legionaries break into a sacred grove on the Isle of Mona



The wild Celtic charge

• HAIL CAESAR •

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ROME'S INVASION OF BRITAIN



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Thanks To:

Dave Bodley at Grand Manner for his kind donation
of terrain shown in the book & Shaun Murphy

With Special Thanks To:

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ISBN: 978-1-911281-14-6

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“No book was so bad but some good might be got out of it.”

Pliny the Elder, as quoted by Pliny the Younger



FOREWORD



Britannia – Rome's Invasion of Britain is a source book intended to facilitate wargames based on the Roman conquest of Britain using the *Hail Caesar* rules. It is meant to assist wargamers in devising their own enjoyable and challenging games. The supplement is very definitely not intended as a rigid 'this is how you do it', which would be against the whole spirit of the *Hail Caesar* system. To this end, I try to explain the thinking behind the suggestions included here to help players alter them as they see fit.

Use the ideas in this book as you see fit. Cherry pick what you like and ignore what you don't. The right way to wargame is whatever way you and your friends derive the most pleasure – and do not let any killjoy try to persuade you otherwise.

John Lambshead

INTRODUCTION

Inside the covers of this book you will find two campaign variants based on the Roman Invasion of Britain. One is map based, where success and failure depends on controlling as much of southern England and Wales as possible. Full details are given for Roman armies and for the various British tribal armies that they will encounter, as well as special rules for some of the more colourful military leaders.

The second campaign is narrative based, where players fight out six historically based scenarios taken from the real story of the invasion and simply see who can win the most points by displays of successful generalship.

Any of the historical battles can be played out independently as pre-packaged games for an evening's entertainment. I have chosen battles that present unusual and interesting challenges and that are different to each other. There is nothing wrong with a simple 'line up two equal point armies and fight' game on flat terrain, but you don't need to lay out hard earned cash on a supplement for that purpose.

I also offer some advice on designing your own scenarios. Please note, I am not claiming to be a wargaming guru with

some sort of deep insightful hidden knowledge. I am just relating my thoughts and conclusions based on my own experiences of successful, and not uncommonly unsuccessful, scenario design.

At the back, you will find an alternative basing system for those with smaller armies and tables but who still like to use 28 mm figures. I, myself am in this camp.

What you won't find here is detailed historical information, except where pertinent to explain my thinking behind a particular issue. There are so many internet sources freely available, as well as inexpensive popular history books in both dead-tree and eBook formats, so it would be tedious to rehash the information. Those who wish to grasp modern ideas about history would do far better reading books by professional and popular historians than by fellow wargamers.

History may not change but our interpretation of history is constantly changing as new material comes to light and old information is examined from new perspectives. Only professional academics have a hope of keeping up with this



British warriors defend their village

“Times are bad. Children no longer obey their parents, and everyone is writing a book.”

Cicero

and often only professionals have the detailed background knowledge to intelligently interpret new data.

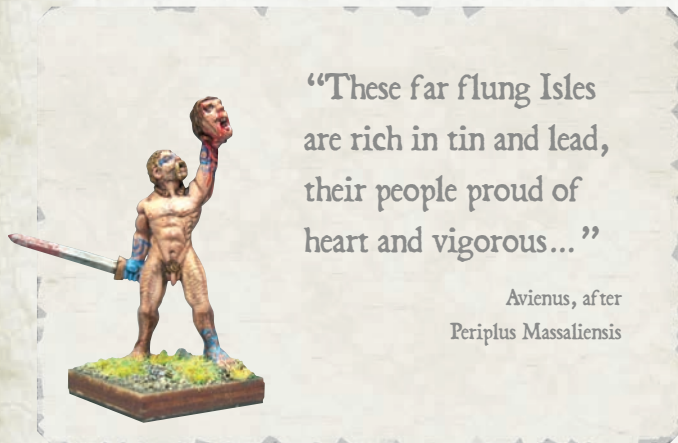
I do list a few books I found useful and also suggest words to put into your favourite search engine to start you off should you want to do your own historical research. In my opinion researching one's own scenarios is one of the many pleasures of wargaming.

But hey, that's me, and I'm a professional bio-geek and hence detail obsessed. I have every possible sympathy with the attitude of more balanced individuals who just want to have a fun game with friends without obsessing about the degree of curvature on a Roman shield or the colour of Vespasian's underwear.

I have used modern English or Welsh place names throughout rather than the original Latin or Celtic equivalents as this book is intended as an aide to wargamers not a history, and modern names are far easier to find on a map. One exception is Mona, instead of the Isle of Anglesey, because Mona was a concept as much as a place. It was a sacred site, possibly the sacred site, of the Druidic religion and a centre of resistance to Rome. Okay, I'm not always consistent, so report me to the style police.

The ancient names for modern places can be recovered by typing Roman <placename> into a search engine. Just don't ask me how you pronounce them. I have enough troubles with modern Welsh despite being a Cornishman, albeit one who now lives along the Medway Estuary.





THE ROMAN VIEW OF BRITAIN

Britain was an affront to the Roman world picture. By any reasonable standard it shouldn't have existed at all and most Romans would have been satisfied with that happy state of affairs. In Roman philosophy the world consisted of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa – all of approximately the same size.

These were set within a world ocean which contained islands – but islands are small, or should be. Britain, on the other hand was huge. Indeed, it was not clear that it was an island at all prior to the conquest and Agricola's campaigns. From the Roman point of view Britain was not so much the New World as the Other World, a place of mystery outside the natural order.

Ordinary Romans were predisposed to regard Britain as the home of monsters and supernatural beings and travellers' tales accentuated this view. Some of Germanicus' soldiers were washed up in Britain from the great storm in the North Sea that hit the Roman fleet transporting the army back from campaign in Germany. They were scrupulously repatriated by a British King but came bearing stories of monsters and of general Odyssean dangers at the edge of the world.

Legionaries therefore showed a marked reluctance to board British-bound invasion barges or to disembark on the island. The story of Julius Caesar's difficulties in getting his troops to hit the beaches of Kent is well known from his memoirs:

“And while our men were hesitating ... he who carried the eagle of the tenth legion, after supplicating the gods that the matter might turn out favourably to the legion, exclaimed, ‘Leap, fellow soldiers, unless you wish to betray your eagle to the enemy. I, for my part, will perform my duty to the commonwealth and my general.’ When he had said this with a loud voice, he leaped from the ship and proceeded to bear the eagle toward the enemy. Then our men, exhorting one another that so great a disgrace should not be incurred, all leaped from the ship. When those in the nearest vessels saw them, they speedily followed and approached the enemy.”

Caligula's British invasion never seems to have got much beyond the planning stage. The garbled stories of Caligula's madness in firing artillery bolts into the Channel and getting his soldiers to collect sea shells may hide a real story of a mutiny in the legions that were marked for the invasion. Possibly the soldiers were being humiliated as punishment or maybe the whole ceremony was a display of symbolic magic to overcome the soldiers' fears.

Claudius' invasion force is known to have mutinied at having to serve “outside the inhabited world,” as Dio puts it. The ancient writer uses the incident to recount an anecdote about the freedman Narcissus who was private secretary to the Emperor. The ex-slave attempted to address the obstreperous troops, who were of course freemen and Roman citizens. He was shouted down by cries of Saturnalia, the Roman winter festival where slaves and masters reversed roles for a day, to the vast amusement of the assembled sword-wielders who were free men and hence Narcissus' nominal social superiors.

The legionaries were so pleased with their wit that they were herded aboard the boats still chuckling, good humour entirely restored.





THE ANCIENT HISTORIANS

Ancient historians have to be read with great care and nothing they write should be taken uncritically at face value. They were not academics at all when judged by modern criteria. It should be noted that the Roman historians of the period were politicians, mostly from the senatorial class, who hated the emperors and despised the lower orders. For example, it is now impossible to disentangle truth from fiction about Caligula. He can't really have been as barking mad as he is depicted or he would not have survived a day, although he was undoubtedly a nasty piece of work.

The cultural gap between a Roman writer and a modern western reader is a gulf. So there is a significant lack of similarity between respective world-pictures that underlie the meaning of the words

used by the two cultures. One cannot just read a literal English translation of an ancient writer and assume that one grasps the writer's point.

History in the Ancient World was a branch of literature and a primary aim of an author was to show his literary skills and general educational superiority. In that sense, ancient writing resembled a Booker Prize novel. A secondary objective was to demonstrate moral and political points. To this end, ancient historians were highly selective in their use of detail and would alter the timing of events or even the events themselves for dramatic purposes. In short, they are closer to Hollywood as historians than modern academia, albeit they were writing for a more sophisticated audience than that to which Hollywood normally aspires.

For the invasion we are primarily dependent on two authors: Tacitus and Dio. Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (AD 56 - AD 117) was a man of modest family who reached senatorial rank with the support of the Flavian Emperors. He wrote about the invasion some fifty or sixty years after the event but was married to the daughter of Agricola - hence his famous history of the general - so may well have had access to private information about the Roman conquest. Cassius Dio (AD 163 - AD 230) was a consul and a friend of the Emperor Septimius Severus. He wrote his history of the invasion about one hundred and fifty years after the event but seems to have used different sources to Tacitus. He does not just précis the earlier author's account.



WHY DID THE ROMANS INVADE BRITAIN?

Roman politicians invaded Britain primarily for reasons of Roman culture and internal politics. They competed to obtain public offices along a hierarchical track known as the *cursus honorum*. In the late Republic the system was falling apart partly because the massive inflow of wealth from Rome's conquests had been concentrated in a handful of people, distorting the socio-political system. Reaching the top of the *cursus honorum* began to require considerable wealth.

Money was needed to bribe the electorate to get a plum political position. This could be borrowed on the understanding that the politician would use and abuse his position to amass funds to pay off his creditors, and to bribe juries to acquit when he was charged with corruption by his political enemies after leaving office. Cicero memorably remarked that a politician needed to extract no less than three fortunes from his office if he wanted to enrich himself, since two would be needed for bribery.

Politician and general were synonymous in Roman culture and the soldiers looked to the general not the state for their pay. Successful Roman politicians became warlords who fought a series of vicious civil wars against their political opponents. One way to amass money was by conquest for the acquisition of slaves and loot, and this is the route followed by Julius Caesar in his invasion of Gaul and his attempted invasions of Britain.

In the early Empire, the Principate, emperors also started wars for reasons of personal prestige. The Latin word *imperator*, emperor, was an acclamation given to a

successful general by his troops. The two first Princes, the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius, were highly successful generals, so the conflation of the words *imperator* and *princeps* was natural.

This left an almighty problem for the 'accidental' Julio-Claudian Emperors, Caligula and Claudius, who inherited the throne without ever having led a Roman army, let alone won a battle. Tiberius' throne was supposed to have been passed on to a member of the family with victories under his belt, such as Germanicus or Drusus the elder. Unfortunately the Julio-Claudian family suffered from a high casualty rate, not least from their own murderous rivalry.

Caligula and Claudius needed a great victory to cement their political position, but the low hanging military fruit had already been plucked by the time of the death of Augustus. Rome already controlled France, Spain, Asia Minor and the whole Mediterranean hinterland. To the east lay Persia, which proved far too tough an opponent when Julius Caesar's rival, Crassus, tried to win glory by its conquest.

Military adventures in the tribal badlands to the north-east had already proved worthless, as witnessed by Tiberius' famous letter to Germanicus upon withdrawing him from Germany. Tiberius noted that diplomacy, notably bribery, was far a far more effective and cheaper way of dealing with tribesmen than military action. You bribe one chieftain to attack another, hopefully setting off clan wars that will gainfully occupy their warriors for a couple of generations. The British Empire used the same approach when dealing with the Pathans.

That left just one potential target, Britain.



"Woad's the stuff to show men. Woad to scare your foemen. Boil it to a brilliant hue and rub it on your back and your abdomen." William Hope-Jones, Eton School



British warriors attack a Roman supply fleet

The Roman Principate was familiar with southern England through trade and various political interventions. There is evidence for Roman troops in Gosbecks Archaeological Park at Colchester, and Fishbourne near Chichester, well before the invasion. Cunobelinus, Shakespeare's Cymbeline, was an important British ruler based in either Colchester or St Albans whose writ ran across southern England. He appears to have been a Roman client king as his coins depicted a Roman emperor, Augustus or Tiberius. The Roman soldiers probably functioned as the King's bodyguard against rebels, but were also stationed there to generally look out for Roman interests.

Cunobelinus died in around AD 40 or shortly after, creating political instability as would-be successors and various relatives jostled for the throne. One of his sons, Amminus, fled to Rome when Caligula was still Emperor. This may have turned Caligula's eye towards Britain, but he was assassinated in AD 41 before any invasion plans came to fruition.

Another British Chieftain, Verica, who was a descendent of a British client of Julius Caesar, turned up in Rome requesting military aid from Claudius in AD 41 after being driven from his kingdom in Silchester. Claudius, like Caligula, needed a Triumph and he could easily persuade himself that an invasion of southern England was in the Emperor's best interests, if not the Empire's.

Rome knew that southern England had a relatively advanced urban civilisation and political structure that was similar to Gaul before Caesar's conquest. Such a society could be defeated by the superior Roman Army and integrated into the Roman system to make a successful province. Strabo, in the reign of Augustus, estimated that a single legion and some auxiliary cavalry could hold down Britain but that it was more economical to control it through client kings

Ironically, the Romans did not know that there were two quite distinct Britains, loosely separated by a line drawn from the Severn Estuary to the Wash. To the south-east of this line were the productive flatlands with a reasonably sophisticated urbanised population ruled by a hierarchical social system.

This was the Britain they were familiar with. But to the north and west were moors and highlands populated by a much more primitive tribal society not unlike Germania.

Primitive tribal societies were useless to the Romans. There was no strategic target for the army to attack and force a victorious battle. The tribesmen simply melted away after a reverse to fight another day. The disaster in the Teutoburger Wald showed that such a society could never be transformed into a functional Roman province.

Britain was economically a bad deal for the Romans. Strabo thought the need for one garrison legion uneconomic but, in the event, three legions based at Caerleon, Chester and York were required to defend the productive lowlands south of the Severn-Wash line. Britain was just not worth it. In comparison, only five legions on the Rhine frontier defended the much more valuable Gallia and acted indirectly as a shield for Spain and North Africa.

Amusingly, we still have a north-south divide in Britain and it still hinges on the Severn-Wash line.

"Plus ça change," as they say in modern Gallia.

"The desire for glory clings even to the best men longer than any other passion."

Tacitus







MAP-BASED CAMPAIGN GAME

This section of the book describes how the invasion of Britain can be recreated as a map-based campaign for two or more participants. The forces presented here are modelled on what we know of the actual Roman units and British tribes. Before I look at the mechanics of the campaign and the forces available it's worth taking a few moments to consider the advantages and challenges of playing a campaign of this kind.

Campaign games tend to fall into two camps: the story based system where the gamers write a narrative and then play out the battles from the story (see later), and the map based system where players compete to 'conquer the world', or at least as much of it as is on offer.

I have played in and devised many campaigns over the years and more than half of them were never finished. I have noticed certain features common to abandoned campaigns and I would like to share my observations.

Firstly, complexity is your enemy. Do not forget that a campaign is simply a framework in which to play table top battles with toy soldiers. It should not be a game in itself or it will bog down. Apply KISS, as in Keep It Simple Stupid.

Secondly any campaign that requires more than two people to meet regularly in the same place at the same time is probably doomed to failure, unless you have the organisational skills of Field Marshall Montgomery. I would note that even he only had to get one side to the beaches on time as the other side took care of their own arrangements. Campaigns are best with only two 'sides', irrespective of how many players are on each team. That way the campaign can proceed even if only one player from each side turns up.

Map-based campaigns offer an additional trap. Be wary of creating campaigns where significant resources for the next round are tied to victories in the current round. This system easily destabilises so that one side becomes an unstoppable force after a couple of wins.

"They ravage, they slaughter, they seize by false pretences, and all of this they hail as the construction of empire."

Tacitus

The simplest map arrangement is the node-based point to point movement system where attacks are made along axes represented by the lines linking nodes. This is a fair reflection of the behaviour of real armies which tend to follow roads or 'invasion routes' for purely practical reasons. Even today, modern armies attack along an 'axis'.

The campaign presented below is a map-based nodal system loosely representing the AD 43 Claudian invasion of Britain. I use British tribes rather than areas as the nodal points for the game as the ancients tended to think in terms of people rather than places, partly because of the inadequacy of maps and partly because peoples moved around. As an example, one visited or made war on the Athenians, not Athens.

Rome was always the strategic aggressor in the real invasion. The British lacked the political or logistical organisation to act strategically. Essentially, each tribe reacts to a Roman incursion by resisting, provoking a battle, or acquiescing. In the latter case, the Romans take control of the tribe without a fight.

However, Celtic politics was fickle and an allied tribe didn't always stay allied when the field army moved on. Troublemakers such as druids or angry queens could always stir up a full scale rebellion that might require a hurried return of the field army to settle matters on the field of glory. British tribes therefore exist in one of three states, *free*, *allied* or *pacified*, and the players will need to keep track of the current state of play for each tribe.



British warriors looking for trouble

TIMELINE FOR THE INVASION OF BRITAIN

- 55 BC: Julius Caesar invades southern England with a small army but his cavalry fail the crossing.
- 54 BC: Julius Caesar returns with larger invasion force but is unable to subdue the British.
- 5 AD: Cunobelinus recognised as Roman client king of Britain (i.e. south-east England).
- 40 AD: Caligula masses troops on the Channel coast and builds a lighthouse.
- 41 AD: Caligula assassinated and replaced by Claudius.
- 43 AD: Claudian Invasion under Aulus Plautius.
- 43 AD: Battle of the Medway.
- 44 AD (approx.): Vespasian's conquest of the West Country including the Battle of Cadbury Castle.
- 46 AD: Plautius replaced by Scapula.
- 47 AD London founded.
- 47AD: First Icenian revolt; Prasutagus recognised as Roman client King of the Iceni.
- 47 AD (approx.): Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes recognised as Roman client queen.
- 49 AD: Roman Colchester founded as British capital.
- 50 AD (approx.): Roman St Albans founded.
- 51AD: Battle of Caer Caradoc.
- 51 AD: Caractacus handed over to the Romans by Queen Cartimandua after he fled to her for sanctuary.
- 52 AD: Scapula dies and is replaced by Didius Gaullus who adopts defensive strategy.
- 54 AD: Claudius assassinated and Nero proclaimed Emperor.
- 55 AD (approx.): Nero's government considers abandonment of Britain as war continues.
- 57 AD: Decision to pacify Wales. Quintus Veranius Nepos appointed governor but dies soon afterwards.
- 58 AD: Suetonius Paullinus takes command and decides the pacification of Britain requires the elimination of the druids.
- 60 AD: Battle of Mona.
- 60/61 AD: Prasutagus dies starting a chain reaction leading to the Boudican rebellions. Colchester, St. Albans and London destroyed.
- 61AD: Battle of the Cambridge Road.
- 61 AD: Battle of Watling Street.
- 62 AD: British guerrilla actions and Roman reprisals accelerate spiral of violence; Paullinus recalled and replaced by Petronius Turpilianus who adopts conciliatory strategy, winding down the war.
- 63 AD: After two decades of near continuous conflict peace breaks out while the Romans digest their new province of Britannia (southern and central England, and parts of Wales).



Roman Pugio
(Ermine Street Guard)

BRITANNIA: ROME'S INVASION OF BRITAIN

MECHANICS

The campaign is played in a series of strategic turns, ten or some other number mutually agreed in advance (see *Winning and Losing*). A strategic turn consists of one Roman turn and one British.

The Roman field army consists of twelve units, six of legionaries and six of auxiliaries, plus occasionally some bonus units (see *The Roman Army*). Similarly, the British Tribal armies listed below (see *The British Tribes*) are around a dozen units. Each tribe has a different mix of units.

The Roman Army is a known quantity, being one of the best documented forces in the ancient world, but there are no records for British tribal armies, which probably varied anyway depending on who turned up on the day. An analogy is that the line up for a Premier League football team will be predictable, but who knows how many men will reach the sports ground behind the gas works on a wet Sunday afternoon to turn out for Coke Lane Wanderers, let alone what position they will insist on playing.

However it is possible to make intelligent guesses about the rough composition of British tribal armies based on what we

know about their wealth, likely demographics and social structure. For example, chariots are likely to be restricted to southern English tribes who have the social structure and wealth for expensive aristocratic toys and the flat topography necessary for their deployment. It's not good going for chariots in North Wales, even if the locals could afford them.

So don't worry if you don't have the right mix of models for the 'official' army listed for any particular tribe, play with what you have. The local chieftain would have had the same problem. Similarly, if you like to play bigger, or smaller, games than me then adjust the army sizes appropriately. Note that if you use more units you will need more commanders than the two used in my armies (see below). The *Hail Caesar* rulebook explains this in more detail.

The only other proviso on changing the number of units in the armies is that you should try to keep the Roman-British force ratio much the same and the Roman army should always be a roughly equal mix of legionary and auxiliary units.

At the start of the campaign, the Romans occupy two invasion zones (see map). They can never be driven from these zones and no battle is ever fought there.



Britannia campaign map. Roman beachheads are marked by arrows connecting to Cantium and Atreates. Links between tribes show potential Roman lines of attack.



The Roman beachheads in Kent, marked by dotted areas, along the Wantsum Channel where the invasion fleet was moored along with the location of the British town at Canterbury. The coastline and rivers reflects the geography of the period.

ROMAN TURN

The Romans always go first.

The Roman player may choose to attack one free tribe adjacent to a beachhead or pacified or allied tribe under Roman control. He starts by offering the tribe an alliance. The British player then decides whether the tribe will resist or agree to become a friend and ally of the Roman People.

If the British player elects to resist then the players fight a table top battle. If the Roman player loses, the tribe remains free. If the Roman player wins the tribe is pacified – an army can never be raised from a pacified tribe for the rest of the campaign, so a pacified tribe cannot rebel. A draw is treated as a British win

BRITISH TURN

The British player may choose to try to start a rebellion in one Roman allied tribe. He rolls a D6 and compares it with the Rebellion Number for that tribe. He must equal or exceed the Rebellion Number for the rebellion to start. If he is successful, the tribe reverts to free and is no longer under Roman control, otherwise it stays allied.

Pacified tribes never rebel.

WINNING AND LOSING

The Roman player wins if he captures Mona by the end of strategic turn ten **and** has a secure line of allied and/or pacified tribes back to a beachhead.

Alternatively set a fixed number of strategic turns before you start. At the end of the campaign compare the number of Roman controlled tribes, pacified and allied, to the number of turns. Use a calculator to display it as a percentage.

- 01-20%: If this is the fighting spirit of the Legions then the Empire is doomed
- 21-40%: Find out who thought invading Britain was a good idea and instruct him to commit suicide
- 41-50%: An even match so far, but British ahead on points
- 51-60%: An even match so far, but Romans ahead on points
- 61-80%: Romans rule!
- 81-100%: I thought these islanders were supposed to be proud and fierce warriors?



THE ROMAN ARMY

The Roman Army in this period was organised in ten legionary cohorts of around five hundred men each, a paper strength of four hundred and eighty to be precise, so a legion had around five thousand troops. The first cohort may have been larger, with eight hundred men, but note that no military organisation in the history of the world has ever gone into combat with a full complement. Attrition sees to that: attrition due to combat, accidents, sickness, corruption and a tendency for men to find quiet billets far away from the front line.

Each legion was normally accompanied by an equivalent number of non-Roman auxiliary cohorts of five-hundred men (or sometimes a thousand). These could be various types of infantry or cavalry specialists as well as 'standard' Roman auxiliaries.

Roman field armies usually consisted of around twenty thousand men at full strength. Communication problems in the ancient world made it difficult to control much larger armies operating on a wider frontage. For this reason, there was a tendency when large numbers were used simply to stack them deep rather than try to outflank an opponent.

Prior to industrial warfare, deeply stacked troops contributed little to combat power but added enormously to logistical difficulties, which were bad enough already. So for the purposes of this campaign, a Roman field army consists of two legions plus auxiliaries. In game terms, this works out as twelve units, half of which should be legionaries and half auxiliaries.

LEGIONARIES

I represent a two-legion army by six units of standard legionaries. One unit may be upgraded to 'veteran', if another is downgraded to 'raw recruit' to maintain balance.

One way to spice up any particular battle is to roll a die when a legionary unit is in combat for the first time. If the result is a six, the unit is upgraded to veteran for the rest of the game. If a one, it is downgraded to raw recruit. Otherwise it remains standard.

Good luck if you include this option because you'll need it. Personally I like to inject uncertainty into a game as I think it is more challenging, hence more fun, but also more 'real' - without getting into a sterile discussion about what that word means in wargames.



How the Roman beachhead site looks today. The Romans built a town, amphitheatre and triumphal arch there. The arch was eventually pulled down and a Saxon Shore fort put up to keep the English out. These walls are the remains of the fort.

In one battle only, the Roman player may announce that Claudius is personally present so that the troops can declare him imperator.

In this battle only the Roman player may add a small unit of Praetorians and one elephant model to his army. Claudius does not actually command, although it might be fun to model him watching the battle from an elephant.

1. **Legio II Augusta:** formed in 43 BC by Octavian, last known in Britain in the 4th century. Its emblems were the Capricornus, Pegasus and Mars.

2. **Legio IX Hispana:** formed by Pompey in 59 BC, last known in early 2nd century in the eastern Mediterranean. Emblem unknown.

3. **Legio XIV Gemina:** formed by Julius Caesar in 58 BC, last known in the Danube in the early 5th century. Its emblems were the Capricornus and the Crossed Thunderbolts of Jupiter.

4. **Legio XX Valeria Victrix:** formed by Augustus after 31 BC, last known in Britain in the early 5th Century. Its emblem was the boar.



Legionaries, backbone of the Roman army



The Emperor Claudius arrives on the battlefield

AUXILIARIES

A Roman field Army in the game includes six standard-sized auxiliary units. There is no official record of the auxiliary battalions in the Roman order of battle for the invasion, but archaeology has offered some hints. So here is a list taken from Peddie of auxiliaries that are thought to have fought in the invasion, or who may have fought, along with my suggestions of how to field the units in the game.

The following list comprises six cavalry, four equitata and 23 infantry units, or roughly one cavalry to every four infantry units. Each of our six auxiliary game units therefore represents a composite of three auxiliary cohorts. So I suggest the auxiliaries in a Roman field army should normally include one or two units of cavalry. If two are fielded one should be light cavalry and one medium. At least four auxiliary units must be infantry, of which at least one must be light and one medium. Archers can only be included if they are generated as extra forces as explained below.

Cavalry

- Ala Indiana Gallorum:** Cavalry recruited in Gaul with experience on the Rhine frontier. Field as auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins that are 'Valiant'.
- Ala I Hispanorum Asturum:** Cavalry recruited in north west Spain specifically for the invasion. Field as auxiliary light cavalry with javelins that are 'Freshly Raised'.
- Ala Hispanorum Vettonum CR:** Cavalry recruited from Vettones in Central Spain specifically for the invasion. Field as auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins that are 'Freshly Raised'.
- Ala I Pannoniorum Sabiniana:** Pannonian cavalry recruited in what is now Hungary. Field as auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins.
- Ala I Pannoniorum Tampiana:** Pannonian cavalry recruited in what is now Hungary. Field as auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins.
- Ala I Thracum:** Cavalry recruited from Thracian mercenaries from the Balkans. Field as auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins that are 'Eager'.

Cohors Equitata

These were mixed units thought to be of three hundred and eighty foot and one hundred and twenty horse.

The horsemen were not considered the equal of battle cavalry and were paid less.

- Cohors I Aquitanorum Equitata:** Unit recruited from Aquitaine, which was Basque in this period. Field as auxiliary light infantry or cavalry, with spears/javelins.



- Cohortes I & II Delmatarum Equitata:** Illyrians recruited from the Balkan Adriatic coast. Field as auxiliary light infantry or cavalry with spears/javelins.
- Cohors VI Thracum Equitata:** Thracians recruited from the northern Balkans. Field as auxiliary medium infantry or cavalry armed with spears/javelins that are 'Eager'.

Batavi

- Cohors I to VIII Batavorum Equitata:** These famous units are from Friesland in modern Holland that served with Paulus in Britain. For the purposes of the game, six units should be considered auxiliary medium infantry armed with spears/javelins and two auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears/javelins. Batavians are 'Elite' and 'Swimmers'.

Swimmer: May treat deep water rivers and creeks that are normally impassable as fordable.

Infantry

- Cohors I Alpinorum:** Gauls recruited from the Alps. Field as medium infantry armed with spears/javelins.
- Cohors III Bracaraugustanorum:** Lusitanians recruited from Northern Portugal. Field as auxiliary light infantry armed with spears/javelins.
- Cohors III Breucorum:** Pannonians recruited from the region now containing Hungary. Field as auxiliary light infantry armed with spears/javelins.
- Cohortes I, II & IV Delmatarum:** Illyrians recruited from the Balkan Adriatic coast. Field as auxiliary light infantry or medium infantry armed with spears/javelins.
- Cohortes I-V Gallorum:** Gauls recruited from what is now France. Field as auxiliary medium infantry armed with spears/javelins.
- Cohors I Hamiorum:** Unit of archers recruited from Syria. Field as auxiliary medium infantry archers. See Special Unit rules below.
- Cohors VII Thracum:** Thracians recruited from the northern Balkans. Field as auxiliary medium infantry armed with spears/javelins that are 'Eager'.

SPECIAL UNIT RULES

Two units of Batavians may be employed for up to two of the six auxiliary slots if the Roman Army is facing a deep water crossing in the scenario. At least one must be infantry.

If the Roman Army has to storm a fortified position then the player may roll a D6. On a 4, he adds a light artillery unit to his army. On a 5, two light artillery units, and on a 6, a light and medium artillery unit is added. Note these are in addition to the normal twelve units in the army.

The Roman player may roll a D6 before each battle to recruit archers. On a 6, he may add the Cohors I Hamiorum as a small unit of medium archers. Note that this unit is in addition to the normal twelve units in the army.



Roman auxiliary cavalry charge down the foe



Roman auxiliary infantry are supported by archers

THE BRITISH TRIBES

Below are the tribes that make up the nodes of the game and the British armies.



CANTIACI

Also known as the Cantii, this wealthy, civilised tribe lived in the tip of south-east England. Their name is still in use two thousand years later in the form of the County of Kent, and its city of Canterbury, formerly the Roman town of Durovernum Cantiacorum, now the religious centre of the Church of England.

Terrain

Battles take place on river crossings or in open fields with interspersed villages and small woods. An alternative is that the Romans could be attacking an unfortified Celtic town such as Canterbury.

Rebellion Number: 5+

Army

- Two light chariot units with crews armed with spears/javelins - Elite.
- Two medium cavalry units armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Three warbands - Wild Fighters.
- One large warband - Wild Fighters.
- Two small skirmisher units.

"All were eager to see the great man, who for so many years had defied our power. Even at Rome the name of Caractacus was no obscure one; and the emperor, while he exalted his own glory, enhanced the renown of the vanquished."

Tacitus



ATREBATES

A Belgic tribe, also found in Gallia, their territory lay in the region of the County of Hampshire. Their Roman centre was at Calleva Atrebatum, now Silchester. Wealthy and civilised, they issued their own coinage.



Terrain

Battles take place among rolling hills interspersed with patches of woods, villages and fields. An interesting alternative might be for either the Roman or British army to attack Fishbourne villa.

Rebellion Number: 6+

Army

- One light chariot unit with crews armed with spears/javelins - Elite.
- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Three light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Two large warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Two small skirmisher units.

DUROTRIGES

Centred on the county of Somerset, their Roman centres were at Durnovaria, Dorchester and Lindinis, Ilchester. They issued their own, somewhat primitive, coins. The famous hill fort of Maiden Castle, lies within their territory and they were enthusiastic hill fort builders.



Terrain

The battle should involve a Roman army attacking a British hill fort. An alternative might be a battle where one of the ancient trackways crosses a river by means of a ford.

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Two large warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Three small skirmisher units, one of which must be slingers.

DUMNONII

These were the inhabitants of Devon and Cornwall, the two most south-westerly counties of England – poor, peripheral, upland districts. We know they spoke P-Celtic because it did not die out in Devon until the 14th century and Cornwall in the 18th. Their Roman centre was at Isca Dumnoniorum, now Exeter.



Terrain

Ideally a battle on bleak moorland, interspersed with stream-cut gullies lined with small patches of woods. A hill fort might be involved.

Rebellion Number: 4+

Army

- Three light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Three small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One large warband – Wild Fighters.
- Four small skirmisher units, one of which must be slingers.

TRINOVANTES

The Trinovantes were a powerful tribe located in southern East Anglia who had Belgic links. They minted their own coins and had centres at Camulodunum (Colchester), Braughing and Caesaromagus (Chelmsford). Their most famous chief was the fictional Badvoc, from the TV series *Chelmsford 123*.



Terrain

The battle should occur on the countryside of northern Essex and southern Suffolk. There will be rivers, tidal estuaries, villages and fields.

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- Two light chariot units with crews armed with spears/javelins – Elite.
- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One large warband – Wild Fighters.
- Three small skirmisher units.

ICENI

Also known as the Cenimagni, this tribe was located in Norfolk, at the time a marshy peripheral zone. Their Roman centre was at Venta Icenorum, Caistor St Edmunds, and they are remembered in the modern name for the ancient trackway to the Chilterns, the Icknield Way. They were unreliable Roman allies who were quick to revolt.



Terrain

The battle should be placed in the fen country of Norfolk before it was drained. There will be shallow lakes, bogs, streams and all round wetness, with fields and villages on the drier areas.

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- Two light chariot units with crews armed with spears/javelins – Elite.
- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands – Wild Fighters.
- Four small skirmisher units.

DOBUNNI

The Dobunni were an undistinguished peripheral tribe centred on the northern West Country. Their Roman centre was Corinium Dubunorum, Cirencester. Their main importance seems to have been in the area of religion. The cult centre at Bath is within their territory.



Terrain

The battle might occur in an area of forested hills, with fields and villages in the valleys.

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One large warband – Wild Fighters.
- Three small skirmisher units.

BRITANNIA: ROME'S INVASION OF BRITAIN

CORNOVII

Three tribes were known to go by this name in Iron Age Britain. The one described here lived in the region of the county of Shropshire. Their Roman centres included the populous Virconium Cornoviorum, Wroxeter, and the massive military base at Deva Victrix, Chester, one of the largest in the Empire.

Terrain

The battle should involve a Roman army attacking a British hill fort, but there will be villages and fields around, and possibly a river.

Rebellion Number: 5+

Army

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- One large warband - Wild Fighters.
- Three small skirmisher units.

CORIELTAVI

The Corieltavi (also known as the

Corieltauvi or Coritani) occupied a large swathe of the east midlands. Their Roman centre was at Ratae Corieltauvorum (Leicester). They had a royal mint at Sleaford. The Fosse Way ran through their territory.

Terrain

Ideally a battle on bleak moorland, interspersed with open-cut gullies lined with small patches of woods. A hill fort will probably be involved.

Rebellion Number: 4+

Army

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Two large warbands - Wild Fighters.
- Three small skirmisher units, one of which must be slingers.

CATUVELLAUNI

The name Catuvellauni is derived from the Celtic words for 'battle leaders' or perhaps 'warlords'. They lived up to their name, producing such warrior chiefs as Cassivellaunus who fought Caesar, Cunobelinus who was Shakespeare's Cymbeline, and the great Caractacus. Their dynastic politics drew Roman intervention and was a trigger for the Claudian invasion.

Terrain

Forested Hills

Rebellion Number: 5+

Army

- Two light chariot units with crews armed with spears/javelins - Elite.
- Two medium cavalry units armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- One large warband - Wild Fighters.
- Two small skirmisher units.

DECEANGLI

These were an obscure British tribe living in north-east Wales between the Rivers Dee and Clwyd. Their Roman centre was grouped around the Roman fort at Canovium, Caerhun, but they did not seem to live in towns before the invasion. Scapula conquered them with little difficulty in 48 AD.

Terrain

The battle is likely to take place on a coastal strip between mountains and sea.

Rebellion Number: 4+

Army

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins.
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters.
- One fanatic warband - Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge.
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers.





ORDOVICES

The Ordovices were an important tribe from north and central Wales who fought hard against Scapula. They rebelled in the AD 70s, wiping out a Roman cavalry unit. According to Tacitus, Agricola exterminated them in retaliation.

Terrain

The battle will be in mountainous country, with steep valleys and streams.

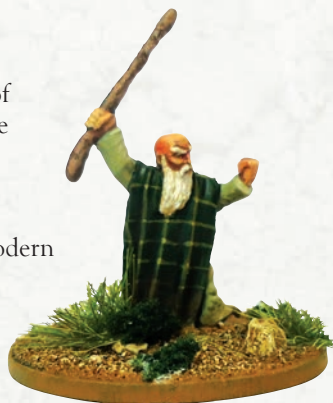
Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins.
- Four small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Five warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One fanatic warband – Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge.
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers.

MONA

Mona is not a tribe but a low island off the north-west tip of Wales. It was important to the druids and hence a centre of defiance to Rome. Its Welsh name is Ynys Môn but it was Monez to the Saxons. The modern English name, Anglesey, is derived from Old Norse.



Terrain

This is an invasion of an island involving a sea crossing with boats. The players can also let themselves go with sacred groves.

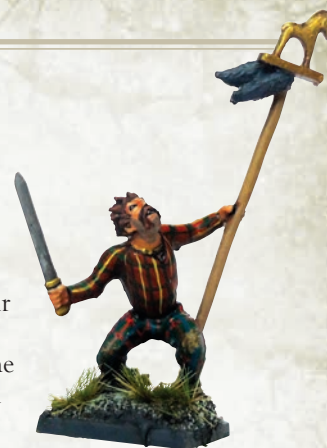
Rebellion Number: 2+

Army

- Two druids.
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Five warbands – Wild Fighters.
- Three fanatic warbands – Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge.
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers.

SILURES

The Silures were a powerful tribe from south-east Wales who were only pacified in 78 AD, apparently unconquered. Tacitus records that they were indifferent to both clemency and cruelty. Their Roman centre was Venta Silurum, Caerwent, and they gave their name to the Silurian geologic period and a popular Dr Who monster.



Terrain

Mountainous, Fortified

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins.
- Four small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Five warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One fanatic warband – Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge.
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers.

DEMETAE

The Demetae were the tribe living in the far south west of Wales in the Pembrokeshire/Carmarthenshire region. They gave their name to the later Welsh kingdom of Dyfed. The Romans mined gold in their territory at Dolaucothi.

Terrain

The battle should be placed in mountainous terrain and it is quite likely that the British will be defending a hastily built loose-stone fortification blocking a valley or along a ridge or hilltop.

Rebellion Number: 3+

Army

- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins.
- Four small light cavalry units armed with javelins.
- Five warbands – Wild Fighters.
- One fanatic warband – Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge.
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers.



COMMANDERS

An army has two commanders at the start of each battle. One of these may be a named commander. A named commander killed in battle may not be used for the rest of the campaign as he is, um, dead. Wounded named commanders may not be used for the next battle as they are recovering from their wounds, but they are available thereafter. Note that only one commander can be Leadership 9 in any battle.

Two commanders imply that the armies are organised into two divisions, which I have found properly challenging for a twelve plus unit army. But players are completely at liberty to reorganise their armies into three divisions and add a third commander if they prefer. If you play this option it should apply to both sides, unless you want to handicap one side, perhaps to add balance by aiding an inexperienced player faced with a more experienced opponent, as in golf.

ROMANS

AULUS PLAUTIUS

General commander of the invasion force, Plautius was an experienced, effective commander who was awarded an ovatio (a kind of junior triumph for non-members of the Imperial family) on his return to Rome.

Leadership: 9

SUETONIUS PAULLINUS

Quintus Veranius Nepos' replacement as Governor of Britain, Paullinus was an experienced general considered one of the two best of his generation.

Leadership: 9

ORTORIUS SCAPULA

Plautius' replacement as Governor of Britain.

Special Rule: Scapula was elderly, exhausted and in poor health so he may not join in hand-to-hand combat.

Leadership: 8

PETILIUS CERIALIS

A decisive but impetuous leader.

Leadership: 8

VESPASIAN

Commander of the II Legion Augusta, he had an independent command in the conquest of the West Country and at the Battle of the Medway; astonishingly, he survived the Julio-Claudian Emperors to become Emperor in his turn after the 69AD Civil Wars.

Special Rule: Vespasian was a siege expert. He may join an artillery piece and add one die to its firepower.

Leadership: 9

ROMAN COMMANDER

Unnamed leader.

Leadership: 8

PRAEFECT, COMMANDER OF AUXILIARIES

Unnamed leader.

Special Rule: May only command auxiliary units.

Leadership: 8



“There, tribune, is your enemy; there are your Britunculi.”



Boudica rides out to lead the Iceni

BRITISH

ARVIRAGUS

A shadowy figure mentioned by Juvenal as a successful British resistance leader; linked to Glastonbury via the Joseph of Arimathea legends, he may be a confused memory of Caractacus.

Leadership: 9

BOUDICA

Wife of King Prasutagus of the Iceni, we know next to nothing about her except that she led a bloody revolt against the Romans in AD60 or 61; she may have been queen in her own right or she may have had a connection with the Druids and been some sort of priestess or oracle.

Leadership: 9

CARACTACUS, SON OF CUNOBELIN (CYMBELINE)

Rome's sworn enemy, he was a genius at asymmetric warfare who conducted a ruthless campaign against the Romans for the best part of a decade only to be finally betrayed by Queen Cartimandua of the Brigantes in AD51.

Leadership: 9

BRITISH COMMANDER (UP TO 2)

Unnamed leader.

Leadership: 8

DRUIDS

Britain, notably the Isle of Mona, was the stronghold of these charismatic cultural and spiritual leaders of Celtic society.

Druids can only be included in the narrative scenarios as indicated, or up to two can be included in the map campaign in battles upon Mona only.

Druids are permanently attached to a unit and share the fate of that unit. A Roman unit must take a hand-to-hand combat break test, adding plus 2 to the dice roll, before charging a Celtic unit to which a Druid is attached and apply the results. A 'Hold Your Ground' result allows the unit to charge normally.

Druids may add up to +3 to a British unit in hand-to-hand combat just like a division commander. Roll 2D6 to see if the Druid is wounded or killed using the rules for a commander.



NARRATIVE CAMPAIGNS

This section of the book presents six scenarios complete with force lists, objectives, and playing hints. The first three battles cover the Caractacus years, when the British warlord fought the Romans for nearly a decade, proving himself a master of guerrilla warfare.

The second phase, the Boudican Rebellion, was all over in two years, but it was bloodier than the previous eight and was decisive. Boudica nearly drove the Romans from Britain but, in the end, the legions prevailed and Roman rule was not seriously challenged again for centuries.

These six scenarios can be played quite independently or can be linked together into a narrative campaign. If played as a narrative campaign then dead leaders have to be replaced by a suitable unnamed commander in following scenarios where they might appear. Wounded commanders are assumed to recover in time for the next battle.

Players are awarded victory points as follows:

- For each strategic victory: 5 points
- For each tactical victory: 3 points
- For each named commander killed: 1 point
- For winning The Battle of Medway: +3 points
- For winning The Battle of Watling Street: +3 points
- For winning all three scenarios from The Caractacus War: +2 points
- For winning all three scenarios from The Boudican Rebellion: +2 points

And the highest score wins.

Real life is messy and usually unfair so historical scenarios will often be unbalanced and capricious. We should regard this as part of their charm and never forget the opportunities for claiming that one did as well as could be expected, given the impossible situation. As an excuse for losing, it is almost as handy as blaming the dice.

There is absolutely no point in devising historical scenarios that involve lining up two equal point armies on a flat plain. There is nothing wrong with games like this, but you don't need to spend time reading wargaming supplements to create them.

Don't hesitate to play fast and loose with history in order to make an historical game more fun by rebalancing it to present a unique challenge to the players. Remember that no one knows what really happened in any ancient history battle. So if your interpretation is challenged, stand your ground, adopt a serious demeanour and be prepared to prevaricate.

"Yes, I know that is what Tacitus says but I prefer to follow the brilliant analysis in Jacorobkovsky's pivotal out of print work: *What Tacitus Really Meant*."

No pedant will admit to being unfamiliar with Jacorobkovsky's pivotal work. Indeed, Milord Rick of Priestley claims to be a personal friend.

Don't get seduced by numbers and by trying to translate them into units on some fixed ratio basis. Army sizes quoted by the ancient authors are likely to be guesswork as no one was keeping records. Also, the *Hail Caesar* system is not particularly number dependent. A unit of Romans would not have the same number of soldiers as warriors in a Celtic Warband. And how many warriors did make up a warband?

As Michael Pezzella, a Korean War USMC veteran replied when asked how many men made up a horde: "A lot of Chinese".

On the following pages are six historical scenarios that attempt to recreate battles from the invasion. If you haven't the exact figure mix for a scenario then change the army list to fit your collection.

Note that we have added Claudius' Elephant and Praetorians to the list to take account of their inclusion in the map-based campaign game. Neither Claudius nor these units appear in the narrative games.



Form Testudo!



Skirmishing chariot warriors harass the Roman line



Roman auxiliaries force a bridge

ARMY LISTS

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	4+	6	Drilled, Elite, Testudo, Tough Fighters, Stubborn
Legionary raw recruit heavy infantry armed with pila and swords	6	6	3	0	4+	6	
Auxiliary medium infantry armed with spears	6	6	3	0	5+	6	
Auxiliary light infantry armed with spears and/or javelins	5	5	3	0	6+	6	
Auxiliary medium infantry archers fielded as small units	3	3	2	2	5+	4	
Auxiliary medium cavalry armed with spears and/or javelins	8	5	3	0	5+	6	
Auxiliary light cavalry armed with javelins	7	5	3	0	6+	6	
Light artillery bolt throwers	1	1	2	2	0	3	Drilled
Medium artillery onagers	1	1	0	3	0	3	
Elephant with crew armed with spears, javelins and bows	4	3	1	1	4+	6	Elephant. Only available if Claudius is present (see page 17)
Praetorian elite heavy infantry armed with pila and swords, fielded as small unit	5	5	2	0	4+	4	Drilled, Elite, Testudo. Only available if Claudius is present (see page 17)

British Troop Values

Unit	Combat				Morale Save	Stamina	Special
	Clash	Sustained	Short Range	Long Range			
British warband armed with swords and javelins	9	6	2	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters
Large British warband armed with swords and javelins	11	8	3	0	5+	8	Wild Fighters
Naked Fanatic British warband armed with swords and javelins	9	6	2	0	5+	6	Wild Fighters, Fanatic, Frenzied Charge
Skirmishers with javelins fielded as small units	3	2	2	0	0	4	
Skirmishers with slings or bows fielded as small units	2	2	2	2	0	4	
British light chariots with crews armed with spears or javelins	6	5	4	0	4+	6	
Medium cavalry armed with spears or javelins	8	5	3	0	5+	6	
Light cavalry with javelins	7	5	3	0	6+	6	
Light cavalry with javelins as small units	5	3	2	0	6+	4	

“On this spot we must either conquer, or die with glory.”

Boudica, according to Tacitus



“Send the auxiliaries to attack on the right flank.”



British noble warriors race through a village to display their martial skills and prowess

THE CARACTACUS WAR

SCENARIO 1: BATTLE OF THE MEDWAY

The Battle of the Medway illustrates the sheer professionalism of the Roman army. They forced a defended river crossing while at the same time carrying out a double envelopment, pocketing their opponents in a cauldron to create a battle of annihilation.

It also illustrates the incoherence of a British army in that they allowed themselves to be 'surprised' on their own territory. The British performance on the Medway occupies a proud position in the annals of military incompetence.

One suspects that they may have been blind rip-roaring drunk to somehow fail to notice Roman troops crossing a sizable river on each flank. Actually, a ride through Chatham on a Saturday night will illustrate that many of the old Celtic traditions are still observed by the southern English.

The battle at the river between Plautius' invasion force and the British is the only one from this period that we can recreate with a degree of certainty because its location is obvious. The only river it could be is the Medway, and the only place to cross near to the Thames is at the Medway Gate near Rochester, where the river cuts through the chalk ridge of the North Downs.

East of the gate were salt marshes where the Medway opens into the Thames estuary and to the west was the Weald of Kent, a tangled forest impenetrable by armies (weald from the Old English for forest, cf wild in modern English or Wald in modern German). This crossing is the primary strategic route connecting the English Midlands and London to the Channel Ports, and hence the continent. A Celtic trackway led across it, later replaced by the Roman road of Watling Street and the rail lines. The M2 motorway and High Speed Rail Line from Paris now cross here. Rochester is so strategically important that it has remained a military base for two thousand years.

Caractacus clearly chose it as a defensive line to pen the Roman Army in Kent, relying on the strength of the topography to offset the Roman advantage in set piece battles. The strategic danger for the British was that the north bank is a land bridge between the Medway and Thames and so is surrounded on three sides by water. It has the potential to become a trap. No doubt Caractacus relied on the trackway at his rear that passed through the Thames Marshes on a causeway to ford the river somewhere near Tilbury. This would offer a secure line of retreat to Essex, should it be needed.

The Romans built a permanent bridge at Rochester soon after the battle and there may have been an earlier Celtic construction. If so, Caractacus pulled it down before the battle.



British warriors race to block a stream crossing before the Roman army can secure it



Medway Gate showing the three Roman crossing points. (V) Vespasian is thought to have crossed upriver near the location of the M2 and High Speed Rail bridges where he was out of sight of the British army, (L) marks where Paullinus' main force of legions crossed on a pontoon bridge near the old bridges, and (B) is where the Batavians crossed downriver near the Royal Dockyard. The rusting Russian submarine is a modern feature.

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

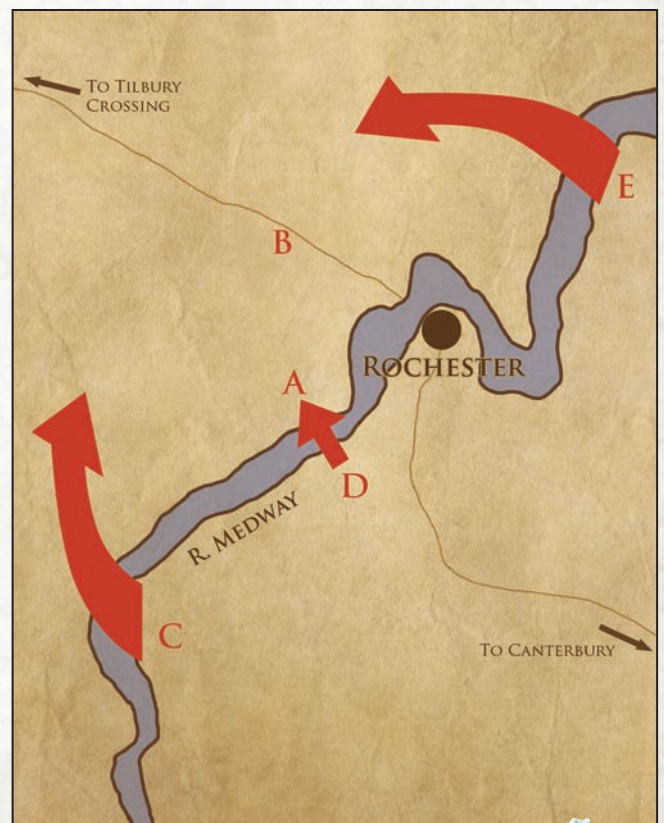
Plautius moved his main force of three legions plus auxiliaries up to the south bank of the river at Rochester where they demonstrated to fix the attention of the Celts (D on the map). A Celtic army was not exactly strong on discipline, so it is probable that the aristocrats and their warbands lined the north bank of the river shouting insults and making rude gestures (A).

Caractacus seems to have kept his cavalry, including the chariots, back from the bank in reserve in the region of Gad's Hill, possibly to protect the horses from artillery (B).

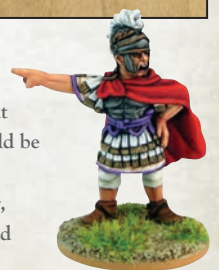
Vespasian led the II Legion Augusta along the track now known as The Pilgrim's Way, to the south-western edge of the Medway Gate. He achieved this seemingly without attracting British attention (C). Astonishingly, given that they were defending home territory, the British seem to have had no scouts south of the Medway monitoring the movements of the Roman forces.

Meanwhile, Plautius detached Batavian auxiliaries to move downriver roughly to where the Royal Dockyard now stands (E). The Batavians now did their party trick, swimming across the Medway fully armed and landing in the region of Hoo. They circled unseen behind the high ground overlooking Stroud. Simultaneously, Vespasian crossed the river in the region of the modern M2 bridge.

Surprise seems to have been complete. The Batavians caught the cavalry in disarray and Vespasian swung in from the left flank to create a double envelopment. It only remained for Plautius to feed the main force across the Medway before the Celts rallied and massacred the outnumbered Romans on the north bank.



The Romans at the Battle of Medway carried out one of the most difficult operations an army can face: a double envelopment battle of annihilation at an opposed river crossing. A modern example would be the Battle of Stalingrad and the destruction of the 6th Army. A: British Warbands, B: British Cavalry, C: Vespasian's Division, D: Roman Main Force, and E: Batavian Division.



THE BREDGAR HOARD

In the summer of 1957, a cache of thirty seven Roman gold coins was dug up at the village of Bredgar near Junction 5 of the M2 motorway. The most recent coins were four Claudian aurei in near mint condition dated 41 AD. They would represent about three months' pay for an ordinary soldier. Presumably they were buried before the battle for safekeeping. The soldier never returned to claim them, which is suggestive as to his fate.

Plautius' problem was the same facing German Panzer Generals after their mobile pincers enveloped Russian armies. Celtic warriors in the pocket, like Russian soldiers, were not going to meekly sit around waiting to be captured but could be expected to attack the arms of the pincers with all the force at their disposal. The issue is whether the units lining the edge of the pocket can hold the ring until the slower main force catches up to reduce the troops inside.

This leaves me wondering how the main Roman force made an opposed crossing of the Medway. In my recreation of the battle, I assume that Roman engineers built a temporary pontoon bridge under cover of artillery. This was well within their capabilities: one of Caligula's merry japes was to have a pontoon bridge two miles long built across the sea from the upmarket holiday resort of Baiae to the port of Puteoli.

The slow movement of Plautius' units one by one over the bridge may explain why Dio suggests the battle took two days, or he may be conflating the second battle at the Thames, or he could be making it up for dramatic effect.

In the event, the Celts were soundly beaten and only Caractacus and a handful of warriors, probably mainly mounted aristocracy, broke out of the pocket to escape up the trackway to the Thames crossing. The Batavians made it across the Thames and engaged the surviving British on the north bank without a decisive result.

Caractacus' brother, Togodumnos, was killed in the fighting or died soon after from his wounds. Southern England had fallen, but the Romans were to discover over the next decade that Caractacus slipping through their fingers was a significant defeat in itself.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

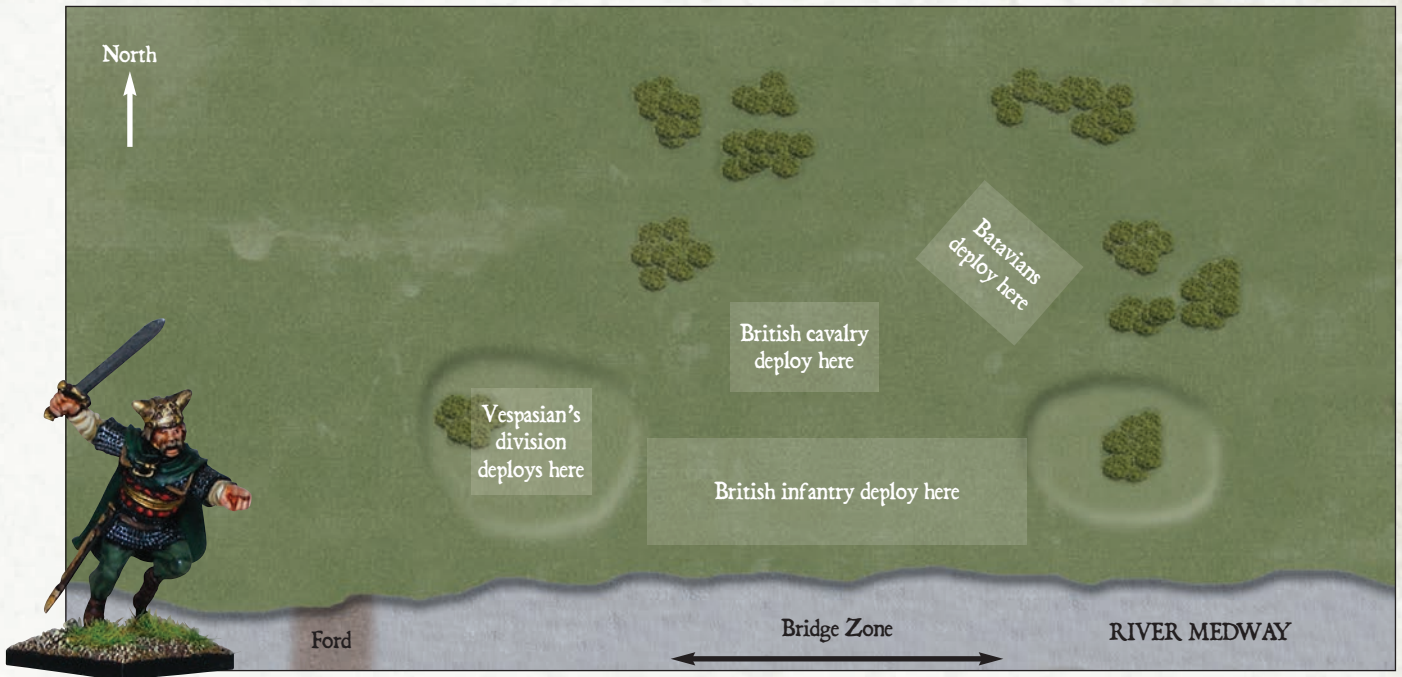
Wargaming the Medway creates some challenges if the battle is to follow its original course. It is a good example of how we need to modify the *Hail Caesar* rules for historical scenarios.

The British fought under two leaders, Caractacus and his brother Togodumnos and their army appears to have been split into infantry lining the river bank and cavalry (chariots are cavalry as far as the scenario special rules are concerned) back up on Gad's Hill. As Caractacus escaped, I assume that he commanded the cavalry while Togodumnos commanded the infantry. So let's create a special rule that Caractacus can leave the battlefield at any time by the northern edge, but in this specific event he is NOT replaced by a subordinate leader. He is replaced in the normal manner if he is killed, as is Togodumnos.

Plautius commanded the main Roman force but he split off two divisions, a Batavian auxiliary group under the command of a praefect and the Legion II Augusta under Vespasian with its accompanying auxiliaries.



The River Medway, photo taken looking upriver from where Paullinus' Legions crossed. The estuary is tidal and this picture was taken at high tide. Low tide reveals glutinous mud flats.



Wargame terrain for the Battle of Medway showing the River Medway, the woods, hills, the ford, the zone in which the pontoon bridge can be deployed, and the initial set up of the divisions.

The game should start with the Batavians and Vespasian already across the river, otherwise it will likely bear little resemblance to the historical battle. The Batavians, in particular, completely surprised the British cavalry with their commando raid and this must be accounted for in the scenario rules. I suggest that the Batavian units should start the game close enough to the British cavalry to stand a reasonable chance of initiating combat on the first turn.

We have to consider what the Celts were doing while the Batavians and Vespasian were getting into position. They clearly had no scouts out at all so were either not expecting an immediate battle or were just simply utterly disorganised. To simulate this we need another special rule. I suggest British units start the game 'inactivated' and cannot move or shoot, while Roman units are in normal battle array.

The British cavalry was so discomfited by such a small force of attackers that I suspect the horses were grazing. So let's start the game with British cavalry units 'In Column' as well as 'inactivated'.

Inactivated British infantry units have their full combat values as Celtic warriors did not fight in particularly organised formations at the best of times. A British unit becomes fully 'active' and behaves normally on the turn after it has been attacked or on the British turn 2.

The Roman main force advances across the pontoon bridge in linear battle order, i.e. one unit behind the other. The Roman player places the end of the bridge on the north bank of the Medway anywhere within the bridge zone (see map).

I suggest that Plautius groups his most experienced cohorts together as a veteran unit for the spearhead. Whether, this powerful unit is used in this way is up to the Roman player.

Infantry units attacking off, onto, or on the bridge may not be supported. Combats are strictly one friendly unit against one enemy unit. This simulates the restricted space on the bridge.

A light artillery unit may be mounted on each side of the bridge. Heavier artillery if present is off table eight inches behind the bridge. Assume it is mounted on a hill.

The Roman Player has the first turn.

Note that I often use a different model to troop ratio for historical scenarios compared to the Campaign Game as the situation requires. I strongly recommend that readers should be similarly flexible.

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and kill Caractacus.

Roman Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules, but Caractacus survives.

British Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and Caractacus survives.

British Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules, but Caractacus is killed.

Roll a die if Caractacus ends the game wounded. On a 4+ he survives his wounds, otherwise he is killed.

ROMAN ARMY

Main Force

- Plautius (commander)
- Four legionary units (one veteran)
- Two auxiliary units (infantry)
- Two artillery units

Vespasian's Legionary Division

- Vespasian (commander)
- Two legionary units
- Two auxiliary units (cavalry & infantry)

Batavians

- Auxiliary Praefect (commander)
- Two auxiliary cavalry units
- Two auxiliary infantry units

BRITISH ARMY

Cavalry Force

- Caractacus (commander)
- Two light chariots units with crews armed with spears/javelins - Elite
- Two medium cavalry units armed with spears/javelins
- Two light cavalry units armed with javelins

Warbands

- Togodumnos (commander - Leadership 8)
- Four warbands - Wild Fighters
- One large warband - Wild Fighters
- Two small skirmisher units



"[Plautius] advanced farther and came to a river. The barbarians thought that Romans would not be able to cross it without a bridge, and consequently bivouacked in rather careless fashion on the opposite bank; but he sent across a division of Germans, who were accustomed to swim easily in full armour across the most turbulent streams. These fell unexpectedly upon the enemy, but instead of shooting at any of the men they confined themselves to wounding the horses that drew their

chariots; and in the confusion that followed not even the enemy's mounted warriors could save themselves. Plautius thereupon sent across Flavius Vespasian also (the man who afterwards became emperor) and his brother Sabinus, who was acting as his lieutenant. So they, too, got across the river in some way and killed many of the foe, taking them by surprise.

The survivors, however, did not take to flight, but on the next day joined issue with them again. The struggle was indecisive until Gnaeus Hosidius Geta, after narrowly missing being captured, finally managed to defeat the barbarians so soundly that he received the ornamenta triumphalia, though he had not been consul.

Thence the Britons retired to the river Thames at a point near where it empties into the ocean and at flood-tide forms a lake. This they easily crossed because they knew where the firm ground and the easy passages in this region were to be found; but the Romans in attempting to follow them were not so successful. However, the Germans swam across again and some others got over by a bridge a little way upstream, after which they assailed the barbarians from several sides at once and cut down many of them. In pursuing the remainder incautiously, they got into swamps from which it was difficult to make their way out, and so lost a number of men."

Cassius Dio



A parma – a small shield carried by Roman standard bearers (*Ermine Street Guard*)



Roman heavy infantry clears a path through a British warband

SCENARIO PLAY THROUGH

I played the Romans and my regular *Hail Caesar* opponent, Shaun took the side of the British. We played the game in a building that must be very close to where Plautius had his HQ up on the North Downs on the south side of the River Medway, which seemed appropriate somehow.

I decided to deploy the pontoon bridge right into the centre of the Celtic warband detachment with a view to splitting it in two so that my attacking pincers north of the river could grind the British to destruction against Plautius' Legionaries.

The Batavians got off to a cracking start. I decided to use individual unit order, as I wanted to move the infantry onto a different target to the cavalry. One Batavian infantry unit failed the command roll, but the other proceeded steadily towards the British warbands. The Batavian cavalry ploughed into the near defenceless British light cavalry, breaking two units in two turns.

Plautius' legionaries surged across the bridge and the veteran unit in the lead hit the British like a clenched fist. After two turns it was shaken but it had shattered a warband. Vespasian had further to go and was not yet engaged, but his troops presented a solid wall threatening the British right flank. I had made all but one of my command rolls.

Frankly, I was convinced that my two turn 'surprise' attack had been a resounding success. I had shattered three British units and had the rest pocketed on three sides. I had already started to offer Shaun mock sympathy on his ill fortune and in general behave as insufferably as a wargamer is capable when he thinks he has it in the bag.

The British army was released from its restrictions at the start of its second turn and Shaun responded with alacrity, attacking the enfolding arms of my army. He threw his warbands against Vespasian, shattering an auxiliary infantry unit, and his chariots against the Batavians, putting a cavalry unit to flight.

Worse still, the legionaries from Plautius' division that I used to replace the shaken veterans as my spearhead in the centre, broke under the attack of a warband and fled into the Medway to escape. Shaun had to roll sixes to save his warband and rolled five sixes out of six dice. Who can fight the Gods when they decide to punish you in such a manner? Even my opponent had the grace to look embarrassed. Naturally I rolled a two and a one on my morale check. Disaster followed disaster. A unit of Vespasian's legionaries shattered and I could no longer seem to make my command rolls.

My brave lads struck back and put to flight a unit of British light cavalry and a warband. My opponent in his turn shattered another of the legionary units in Plautius' division, which I could withstand, and two more of the Batavian units, which I couldn't. I had hoped that only having two leaders would handicap Shaun, but he had the advantage of interior lines so was able to juggle the placing of his commanders to keep his forces under control.

Three of the five units in the Batavian division were shattered so the whole division was obliged to retire by the rules. This was a catastrophe, freeing up Shaun's cavalry to re-engage my other divisions. The only chink of light was that Shaun had thrown Caractacus into the melee with Vespasian's units and he had been killed. I came very close to breaking Shaun's cavalry division in the following Roman turn but, alas, failed by a whisker. The whole grisly affair then ground on to the inevitable conclusion. Vespasian lost more units and his whole division had to withdraw, chased by the British cavalry. That, of course was the end of the game.

So what did I learn from this? Well, hubris is followed by nemesis as the ancients put it. Or as we would say, don't count your chickens, sunshine. I took my eye off the ball in the middle of the game. Even so, when I look back at all Shaun's shaken and shattered units I can't help but think that I was so, so, close to snatching a strategic victory. As it was, I had to congratulate Shaun on his meagre tactical victory: bitter, me? Surely not!

SCENARIO 2: BATTLE OF CADBURY CASTLE

After the Battle of the Medway, Vespasian seems to have been left south of the Thames with the II Augusta while Plautius took the main force north to Colchester. Vespasian probably spent the rest of 43 AD mopping up any resistance in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. From AD 44-47, the future emperor conquered the West Country in a steady advance, hill fort by hill fort. The West Country tribes were probably split into largely independent subgroups, so there was no single strategic target for a decisive battle.

This scenario recreates one of those battles at a hill fort where the British put up resistance. I have chosen the hill fort at South Cadbury for a number of reasons. It is easily accessible from the A303 for visitors and has always attracted enormous interest from its traditional identification as the site of Camelot.

It is a classic large multivallate fort on an isolated hill rising some five hundred feet above sea level. There is evidence for a Roman attack on the hill fort and a massacre of the inhabitants whose remains were unburied. Whether this occurred during Vespasian's conquest, as was originally thought, or in the later Boudican revolt is unclear. But no matter, it will serve as an example.

HILL FORTS

Anyone who visits the West Country, the Cotswolds or Wales, cannot fail to be impressed by the remains of hill forts generously dotted around the countryside. Some thirteen thousand and sixty-six have been found in southern Britain, but many are not on hills and few were probably forts. They may have been protected areas for villages and livestock, religious centres or aristocratic castles with grain silos. Most lacked a water supply, gatehouses, towers or any of the features associated with serious fortifications.

At the time of the Claudian invasion, hill fort banks were topped by a glacia rather than a palisade or stone wall and two thirds were univallate, i.e. with one ring of bank and ditch. Most seem to have been constructed between the sixth and early fourth centuries BC.

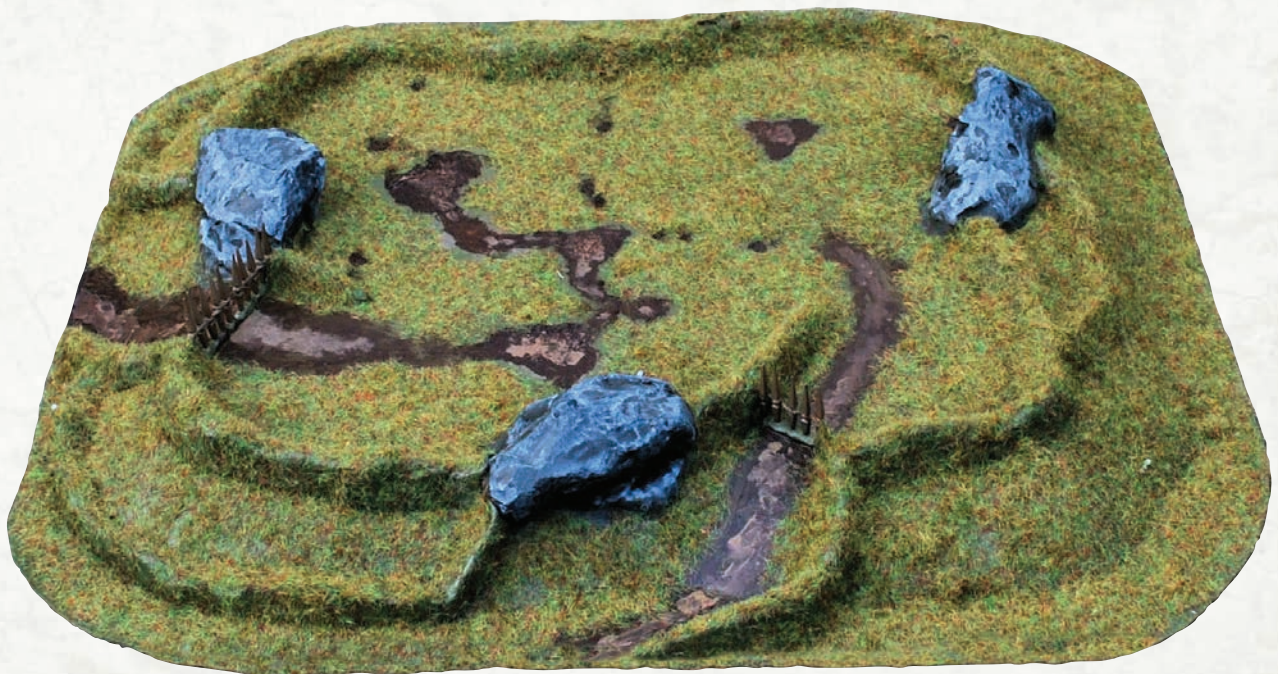
Hill forts could be thrown up quite quickly; a hill fort with a thousand metre circumference could be built in about one hundred days by a workforce of two hundred men.

The Roman army undoubtedly attacked a number of British hill forts during the conquest of the island, but there are no signs of specialist siege technology, such as ramps. The field army seem to have simply assaulted them with light artillery support.

Although hill forts offered some measure of protection. they should be treated as a building rather than a fortification.



"Come on if you think you're hard enough!" The British defy Vespasian's soldiers



BUILDING A HILL FORT

Fear not if, like me, your modelling skills are rudimentary because you can easily make a passable hill fort provided you settle for something representative rather than a fully-in-scale model. When it comes to modelling terrain I have found two pieces of advice useful. The first is 'KISS', or Keep It Simple, Stupid, and the second is that a lick o' paint and a bit of static grass or flock covers a multitude of sins.

I started by purchasing a modest plastic hill from a commercial supplier and two packs of Milliput epoxy resin clay. Other raw materials included three stones from my garden, well washed, and some spare plastic fortifications from *Warlord Games'* Roman plastic sprues.

A model roughly twelve inches by eight makes a good hill fort. I used one inch high clay strips to represent the banks and ditches. Most of the model is covered with static grass held on with PVA 'white' glue, suitably thinned with water, but pathways can be left bare and painted brown. I found it convenient to make the model loosely rectangular so it has four clear 'faces', like a building, for the purposes of gaming.

This simple model took me about a day to make, cost under twenty pounds, and is easily stored in a shoe box.

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

The Romans won. Okay, that's a bit laconic, but it is all we know. Now am I going to let that stop me devising a scenario? Am I heck!

I have visited this site a number of times so I am familiar with the topography. But I also looked it up on maps and satellite pictures. I discovered some useful historical maps on the internet that showed where the old trackways went, and discovered that I had parked my car on one of them.

After that, it's simply a matter of imagination.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

Cadbury Castle stands at the intersection of ancient roads. To the west, a trackway links to the Ilchester paved ford where the ancient road of the Fosse Way crosses the River Yeo. The northern trackway leads to Glastonbury, whose Tor is visible from the Castle. It is known as Arthur's Lane or The Hunting Causeway as, of course, the ghostly wild hunt uses it on winter nights.

As an aside, all these old roads tend to be haunted every couple of miles or so. England has the lot: headless highwaymen, lost legions, ghostly hands that reach through your car's windscreen to seize the steering wheel or change the channel on the radio. I am almost tempted to write a 'ghostly wraith rule' into any scenario with a trackway, but I suppose that is going too far.

Anyway, a stream to the south connects with the Yeo drainage system. These waterways would have probably been bigger in ancient times as we extract a great deal of water from the system in modern Britain.

I suggest, given we have no historical data, that this battle should be recreated as a meeting engagement for maximum fun. I assume the local tribesmen have a garrison in the Castle and have summoned the local warriors. They will also have lit signal fires to plead for help from their fellow tribesmen at Glastonbury and sent messengers west to the Durotrige towns of Ilchester and Dorchester.

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and hold the hill fort at the end of the game.

Roman Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules.

British Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and prevent the Romans entering the hill fort.

British Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar*, but the Romans capture the hill fort at some point in the game.

PLAYING HINTS

Roman

The Roman player has two objectives in this scenario. The first is to win the battle by defeating the British Army, but the second is to take and hold the hill fort. Your advantage at the start of the game is that your army is concentrated and can move swiftly down the road in column.

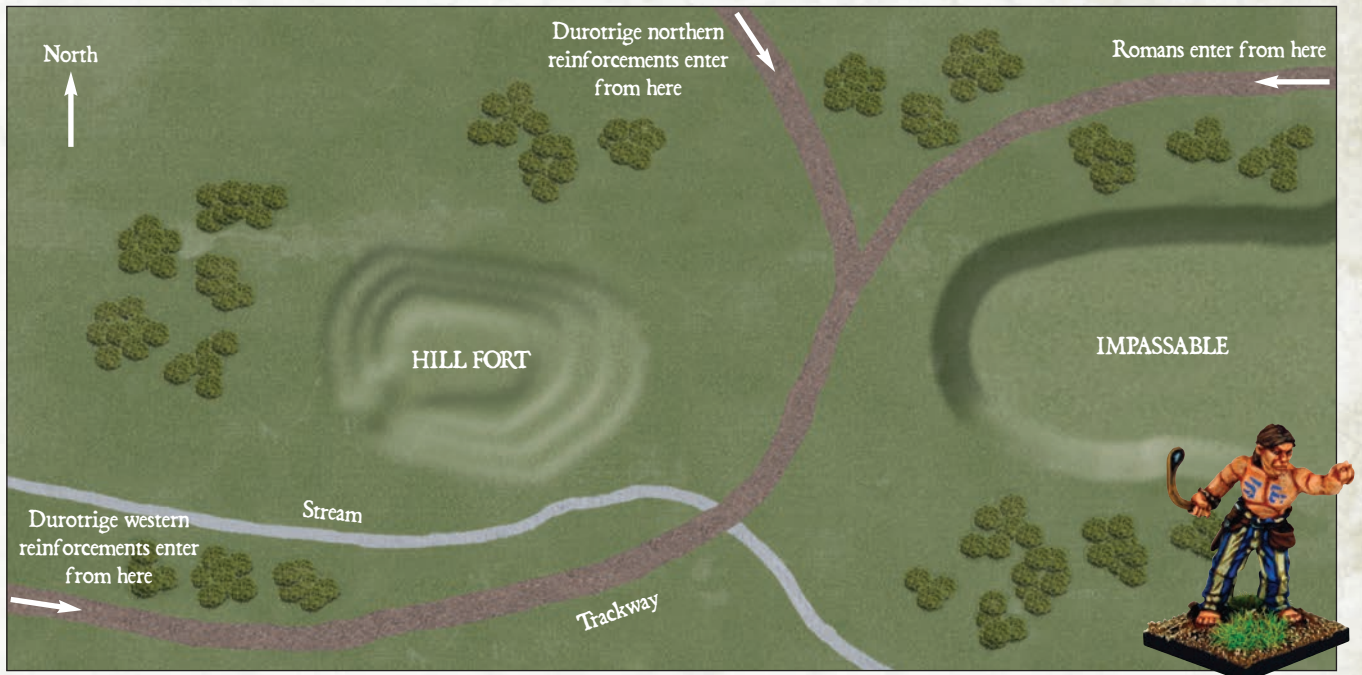
A key decision will be when to come out of column into battle formation. You most certainly do not want to get caught in column by an attacking British unit. The Roman player should aim to grab the hill fort and destroy the British division on the table before reinforcements arrive. Then all you have to do is defeat them in detail while holding the fort – easy peasy.

British

Defend like your life depends on it and hold that fort. If you can suck all the Roman units in, your northern reinforcements may just catch the Romans in the rear. Try to bog the Romans down by involving them in time consuming, indecisive combats and manoeuvres. To a large degree, your role in this scenario will be reactive, but if you can hang on long enough your western reinforcements could be decisive against the tired Roman army.



Cadbury Castle: A Roman's eye view of the hill fort as they march along the trackway from the north east. It would have been treeless and the ramparts would have been higher.



Wargame terrain for the Battle of Cadbury Castle showing the hill fort, stream (linear obstacle), woods trackways (roads) and steep cliffs (impassable).

ROMAN ARMY

The Roman forces enter from the trackway to the east on turn 1. They start off-map and enter along the trackway in column, one unit behind the other.

- Vespasian (commander)
- Unnamed Roman (commander)
- Unnamed Praefect (commander of auxiliaries)
- Six legionary units
- Three medium auxiliary units (infantry)
- One light auxiliary units (infantry)
- One small medium archer unit
- Two auxiliary cavalry units
- Two artillery units (one must be light artillery, the other light or medium artillery).

- One medium cavalry unit armed with spears/javelins
- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins
- Two warbands - Wild Fighters
- Two small skirmisher units

WESTERN REINFORCEMENTS

These forces enter from the trackway to the west on turn 3, one unit behind the other in column.

- Unknown Celt (commander)
- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins
- Two warbands - Wild Fighters
- Two small skirmisher units

DUROTRIGE ARMY

LOCAL FORCES

These start on the table in or around the hill fort.

- Unknown Celt (commander)
- Three warbands - Wild Fighters
- Two small skirmisher units, one of which must be slingers

NORTHERN REINFORCEMENTS

These forces enter from the trackway to the north, or any point further west on turn 2. If they enter along the trackway they do so one unit behind the other in column.

- Arviragus (commander - Leadership 8)
- One light chariot unit with crews armed with spears/javelins - Elite

“[Vespasian] fought thirty battles with the enemy. He reduced to subjection two powerful nations, more than twenty towns, and the island of Vectis [Isle of Wight], near Britain, partly under the leadership of Aulus Plautius, the consular governor, and partly under that of Claudius himself.”

Suetonius



CAMELOT

Cadbury Fort was used as a base by the Roman army for a while. It was reoccupied and rebuilt after the collapse of Roman Britain by a powerful Romano-Celtic leader who had trading contacts with the Byzantines until about 600AD, hence presumably the Arthurian associations. By about 650AD, the area was under the rule of the West Saxons.

SPECIAL RULES FOR HILL FORTS

British hill forts in *Hail Britannia* are treated as buildings and all the rules in *Hail Caesar* pertaining to buildings can be applied to hill forts. They are summarised here for convenience but players should consult the *Hail Caesar* rulebook for more comprehensive explanations.

1. Units in hill forts ignore all break test results of 'Retreat' or 'Gives Ground', which are converted to 'Hold Your Ground', although 'Disordered' results still apply.
2. Victors may move into a hill fort and occupy it after combat only when the garrison has been broken and destroyed.
3. Note that only infantry can enter or assault hill forts.
4. Assume the garrison is spread along the defences.
5. It takes one move to enter or leave a hill fort, and it can be to or from any face, gates are just modelled for show.
6. Units can charge out of a hill fort if they can reach an enemy unit.

7. Units garrisoning hill forts are limited to a maximum of two dice from any face in ranged combat, up to their total maximum value.
8. Units garrisoning hill forts are limited to a maximum of two dice from any face in hand-to-hand combat, up to their total maximum value.
9. Units garrisoning hill forts add +2 to their morale value.
10. Note that an attacker is fighting 'uphill' against a defender garrisoning a hill fort so gets a +1 bonus on his 'to hit' modifier for hand-to-hand combat.
11. In *Hail Caesar*, a building may be garrisoned by an artillery unit, a standard unit of infantry and a tiny unit of infantry. The British lacked artillery so I usually allow one standard warband, and one small unit of slingers to garrison hill forts.

RULES FOR COLUMNS

These rules are given in full in the *Hail Caesar* rulebook but are summarised here for convenience.

1. Units in column move once if they fail an order.
2. Units in column cannot charge the enemy. They must be given an order to reform into a fighting formation before charging. (Hint: remember Division Orders.)
3. Units in column cannot move to join an engagement as a support.
4. Units in column cannot make ranged attacks.
5. Units in column have a combat value of one die regardless of their size.
6. Units in column deduct -2 from their morale value.



A British hunting party on the prowl for the Roman fox...



British warriors sally forth from a hill fort



Roman cavalry breaks into a British settlement and is attacked by Celtic women

SCENARIO 3: BATTLE OF CAER CARADOC

Ostorius Scapula took over the governorship of Britain from Plautius in AD 47. His overstretched forces were immediately faced by a series of revolts from the Iceni, the Deceangli and the Brigantes, in addition to constant raids from the Silures into Roman territory. He first put down the rebellions and then marched against the Silures with a two legion army. Caractacus relocated north, into Ordovician territory. Scapula followed with a single legion, possibly the XIV Legion Gemina, leaving the XX Legion Valeria to prosecute the war against the Silures.

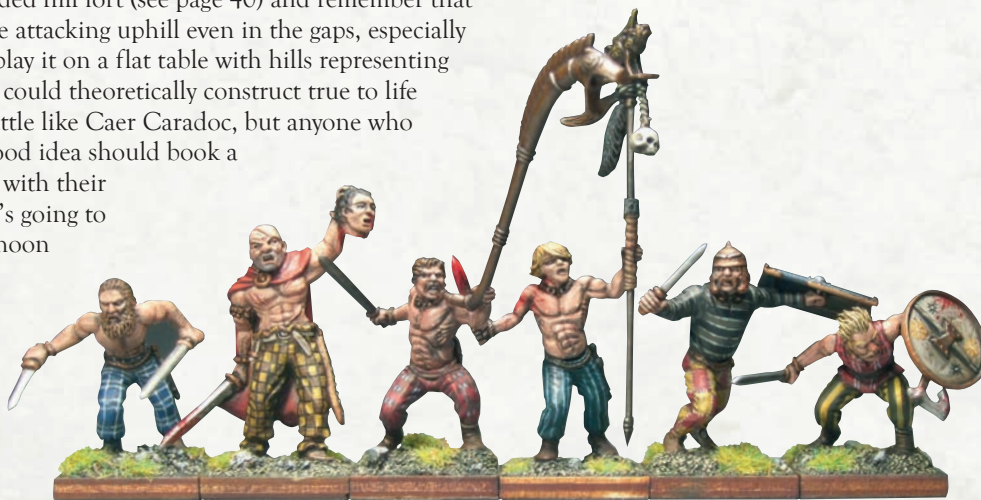
After nearly a decade of successful asymmetric guerrilla warfare against the Romans, Caractacus fortified a strong defensive position and offered the Romans a fixed target. We don't know why. Maybe he was out of political options, or simply tired. Perhaps the Ordovicians were determined to offer battle and Caractacus was obliged to lead them or suffer a collapse of his prestige. The fact that his family were with him at the battle site shows that this was intended to be his last throw of the dice, death or glory in a final stand.

Tacitus appears to give quite a decent tactical description of the terrain, but his description of the fighting is poetic rather than accurate so we do not know where the battle took place. Caer Caradoc simply means Fort Caractacus in English. However, Dr JK St Joseph suggested a place near Caersws (Fort Sws), on the upper Severn, near Newtown. An old east-west trackway crosses the River Severn at this point and the remains of earthworks have been discovered. A later Roman fort was built to command the region.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

The Romans start the battle south-east of the Severn, and the Celts to the north-west. Treat the Severn as a linear obstacle, but ignore the stream. The ford for the trackway allows free movement for one unit at a time in battle formation.

Consider the ridge as impassable to Roman troops but passable to Celts, albeit as rough ground. Treat the fortified wall as a one-sided hill fort (see page 40) and remember that the Romans are attacking uphill even in the gaps, especially if like me you play it on a flat table with hills representing the ridge. One could theoretically construct true to life terrain for a battle like Caer Caradoc, but anyone who thinks this a good idea should book a double session with their psychologist; it's going to be a long afternoon on the couch.



LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES

Scapula was awarded the *insignia triumphalia* for his victory. He set about fortifying the edge of the highland zone to create a stable frontier. This involved dispersing his troops, to which the Silures responded by a new wave of raids and guerrilla warfare on the working parties. Scapula died of natural causes so never saw Rome again, but Caractacus so impressed Claudius that he was allowed to live on with his family in exile in the Imperial capital.

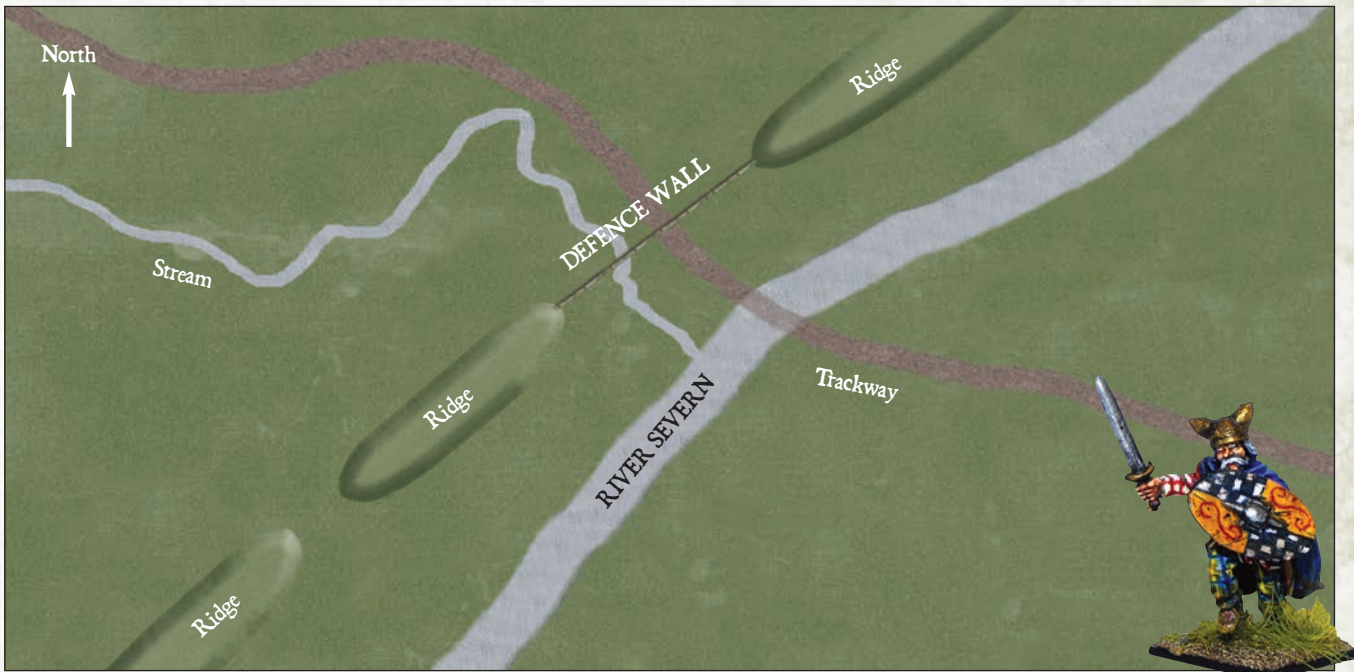
I suggest a few civilian figures with warrior escort be placed behind the main line at the fortified wall to represent Caractacus' family. This unit does not move, fire or charge into combat but defends with the following stats: Clash 3, Sustained 2, Short Range 1, Morale 5+, Stamina 3.

ROMAN ARMY

- Scapula (commander)
- Unnamed Roman (commander)
- Unnamed Praetorian Praefect (commander)
- Six legionary units
- Four medium auxiliaries units (infantry)
- Two auxiliary cavalry units
- One light artillery unit

ORDOVICIAN ARMY

- Caractacus (commander)
- Unnamed Celt (commander)
- One light cavalry unit armed with javelins
- Four small light cavalry units armed with javelins
- Five warbands - Wild Fighters
- One fanatic warband - Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge
- Four small skirmisher units, at least two of which are slingers



Wargame terrain for the Battle of Caer Caradoc showing the ridge line defence wall, stream (no effect), woods, River Severn (linear obstacle), trackway (road) and ford: see text for more details on how the ridge affects the game. The land rises to the north west of the Severn so armies attacking that way are attacking up hill.



Roman legionaries adopt testudo formation to attack the defensive wall

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

The Roman Army had to cross the Severn and attack uphill against a defended stone rampart. The Severn in this area would have been a small fast-flowing river lined with marshy ground. It was crossed by the trackway at a ford.

There are two potential routes across the ridge above the river for troops in battle formation. The main route, probably used by the trackway, is to the east where a small stream flows into the Severn. A smaller second gap lies to the west. The Ordovicians had prepared a fortified position of loose stone at the main gap. There is no mention in Tacitus of a second wall at the western gap.

The legionaries formed testudos (see the *Hail Caesar* rulebook to discover how to game testudos) and made a frontal assault on the fortified wall. I suggest the lighter armed auxiliaries, especially cavalry, forced the small gap and rolled up the British right flank. It was clearly a decisive victory as Caractacus' brothers and family were captured even if the wily general did a runner.

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules, and kill Caractacus or capture his family (destroy the unit).

Roman Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules.

British Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and Caractacus survives.

British Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and Caractacus is killed.

Roll a die if Caractacus ends the game wounded. On a 4+ he survives his wounds, otherwise he is killed.

PLAYING HINTS

Romans: This is going to be a brutal frontal attack, something your legionaries are rather good at. The British player is likely to bombard you from slingers on the Ridge. The testudo formation is your answer to this tactic. You must at least threaten the western gap in the ridge to draw off enemy formations from the main battle. Keep your cavalry in reserve and pass them through a gap onto the top of the ridge at the first opportunity to hunt down Caractacus' family.

British: Ideally, keep the Romans pinned on the ridge line where they have to attack uphill and against your defensive wall. This is easier said than done, but your goose will be microwaved if strong Roman forces get onto the ridge. Caractacus is an issue. You may have to throw him into battle but do remember to cross your fingers as you do it. You may also wish to tie some sacred mistletoe around your dice cup in this event.



Roman Pugio
(Ermine Street
Guard)

“The army then marched against the Silures, a naturally fierce people and now full of confidence in the might of Caractacus, who by many an indecisive and many a successful battle had raised himself far above all the other generals of the Britons. He selected a position for the engagement in which advance and retreat alike would be difficult for our men and comparatively easy for his own, and then on some lofty hills, wherever their sides could be approached by a gentle slope, he piled up stones to serve as a rampart. A river too of varying depth was in his front, and his armed bands were drawn up before his defences.

Ostorius having ascertained by a survey the inaccessible and the

assailable points of the position, led on his furious men, and crossed the river without difficulty. When he reached the barrier, as long as it was a fight with missiles, the wounds and the slaughter fell chiefly on our soldiers; but when he had formed the military testudo, and the rude, ill-compacted fence of stones was torn down, and it was an equal hand-to-hand engagement, the barbarians retired to the heights. Yet even there, both light and heavy-armed soldiers rushed to the attack; the first harassed the foe with missiles, while the latter closed with them, and the opposing ranks of the Britons were broken, destitute as they were of the defence of breast-plates or helmets.

When they faced the auxiliaries, they were felled by the swords and javelins of our legionaries; if they wheeled round, they were again met by the sabres and spears of the auxiliaries. It was a glorious victory; the wife and daughter of Caractacus were captured, and his brothers too were admitted to surrender.”

Tacitus



“I don’t like the look of them Brits, centurion.” “Wait until they get close enough to smell, lad.”



Legionaries leave it too late to throw pila as British warriors jump from ambush



A Roman legion thrusts inexorably forward

THE BOUDICAN REBELLION

SCENARIO 1: THE BATTLE OF MONA

The Boudican revolt may be said to have started not in East Anglia but in north west Wales at Mona, the Isle of Anglesey. Mona was a sacred Druid site, possibly the centre of the religion. It had also become a centre for resistance against the Romans, attracting fanatics. From the Imperial perspective, Mona was a terrorist training camp.

Paullinus advanced along the North Wales coast, driving insurgents in front of him until he had them penned up on the island. The Menai Strait is about fourteen miles long and varies from about 200 metres to two miles wide with strong tidal currents that precluded the use of a pontoon bridge. The stage was set for a contested sea landing by Legio XIV Gemina plus auxiliaries, the second such that the Roman army undertook in Britain.

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

Roman cavalry crossed the straits by wading or swimming at low tide and the infantry used flat bottomed landing craft constructed on site by Roman engineers. The Druids worked to undermine Roman morale, freezing units in place until

“Suetonius Paullinus ... prepared to attack the island of Mona which had a powerful population and was a refuge for fugitives. He built flat-bottomed vessels to cope with the shallows, and uncertain depths of the sea. Thus the infantry crossed, while the cavalry followed by fording, or, where the water was deep, swam by the side of their horses.

On the shore stood the opposing army with its dense array of armed warriors, while between the ranks dashed women, in black attire like the Furies, with hair dishevelled, waving brands. All around, the Druids, lifting up their hands to heaven, and pouring forth dreadful imprecations, scared our soldiers by the unfamiliar sight, so that, as if their limbs were paralysed, they stood motionless, and exposed to wounds. Then urged by their general's appeals and mutual encouragements not to quail before a troop of frenzied women, they bore the standards onwards, smote down all resistance, and wrapped the foe in the flames of his own brands.”



Tacitus

CELTIC TWILIGHT

The battle of Mona marked the turning point in the war because it destroyed the last centre of Celtic culture which had dominated Western Europe for so long. The future of Europe lay with Latin-Germanic cultures.

their general spurred them on. Resistance was fanatical, but the army battered its way ashore and proceeded to smoke out insurgents and burn the sacred groves until nothing was left.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

Everything hinges on recreating a landing. The British had no artillery or boats so there was no sea battle as such. Therefore we can start the wargame with Roman units actually landing on the coast. I simplified the map of the coast of Mona enormously for my game. It essentially consists of a landing beach broken into sections by zones where landings are not possible. British units should be set up first, anywhere the player wishes – okay, not in the sea.

The currents must have played havoc with the navigation of the boats, despite the narrowness of the strait. I therefore suggest that the following special rules be used to simulate this confusion factor. Roman units start at sea. The player may try to land up to half the units he has in this floating reserve each turn, rounding fractions up.

He selects a unit, places it on the coastal edge and rolls a die. The unit successfully lands on a 4+. On a score of 3, the unit lands but drifts off course, and on a 1 or 2 it fails to land but goes back into the reserve to be available next turn.

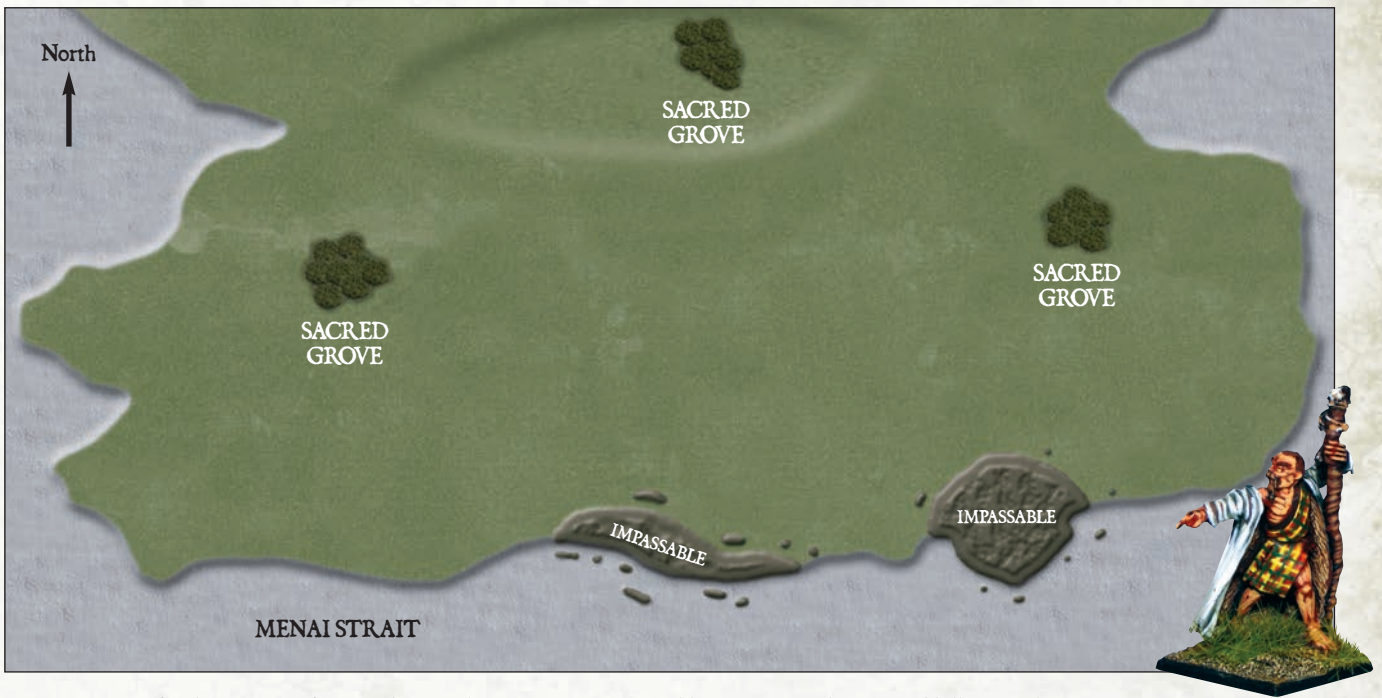
Roll a die if a unit drifts off course: an odd number indicates a drift to the left and an even number a drift to the right. Roll two dice and add the results to get the distance in inches by which the unit diverts.

Units cannot land with any part of the base on an impassable zone. A unit that drifts into one goes back into the floating reserve. Units are disordered on the turn that they land. They may land touching a British unit, initiating an immediate hand-to-hand combat – as if they had charged ‘across the sea’. Consider this a charge as far as the rules are concerned. (This is an exception to the normal situation where ‘disordered units cannot charge’.) A Roman unit driven backwards into the sea from such a combat is destroyed.

A Roman unit attached to a commander on a ‘follow me’ order ignores the baleful influence of druids.

A Roman unit destroys a sacred grove by moving across it.

The British Army is also subject to a special rule. The British Division/Army never breaks. This is the last stand.



Wargame terrain for the Invasion of Mona, showing the Menai Strait, impassable terrain, sacred groves and hilly ground.



A view of Anglesey across Lavan Sands at low water, during which time the sands are passable on foot. However, at certain intervals of the tides, this stretch of the Menai Straits can be extremely hazardous. Scholars postulate that Lavan Sands may have been a potential crossing point for the Roman army.

ROMAN ARMY

- Paullinus (commander)
- Unnamed Roman (commander)
- Unnamed Praefect (commander of auxiliaries)
- Six legionary units.
- Two medium auxiliary units (infantry)
- Two light auxiliary units (infantry)
- Two auxiliary cavalry units

BRITISH ARMY

Note: the British army is in one division with one leader

- Unnamed Celt (commander)
- Two druids
- Two small light cavalry units armed with javelins
- Three warbands - Wild Fighters
- Three fanatic warbands - Wild Fighters, Fanatics, Frenzied Charge
- Four small skirmisher units, two of which must be slingers

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Destroy all three sacred groves.

Roman Tactical Victory

Destroy two sacred groves.

“Most of the inland inhabitants (of Britain) do not sow corn, but live on milk and flesh, and are clad with skins.”

Cicero

British Strategic Victory

Save three sacred groves

British Tactical Victory

Save two sacred groves.

PLAYING HINTS

Romans

Read the victory objectives. The groves are the target, get stuck into them. Nothing else matters. Stretch the British army out by making landings all along the beach. Remember they only have one commander.

British

Your problem is the one that faced Rommel on D-Day. Do you defend the beaches to try to stop the Romans getting ashore or pack yourself deep in the hinterland around the strategic objectives, the groves? Command limitations are going to be your Achilles heel. Keep that in mind when you plan your initial set up.



The last doomed stand of Celtic Britain

“A terrible disaster occurred in Britain. Two cities were sacked, eighty thousand of the Romans and of their allies perished, and the island was lost to Rome. Moreover, all this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman, a fact which in itself caused them the greatest shame.

But the person who was chiefly instrumental in rousing the natives and persuading them to fight the Romans, the person who was thought worthy to be their leader and who directed the conduct of the entire war, was Boudica, a Briton woman of the royal family and possessed of greater intelligence than often belongs to women. This woman assembled her army, to the number of some 120,000 and then ascended a tribunal which had been constructed of earth in the Roman fashion.

In stature she was very tall, in appearance most terrifying, in the glance of her eye

most fierce, and her voice was harsh; a great mass of the tawniest hair fell to her hips; around her neck was a large golden necklace; and she wore a tunic of divers colours over which a thick mantle was fastened with a brooch. This was her invariable attire. She now grasped a spear to aid her in terrifying all beholders.”

Cassius Dio



Boudicea
Triumphant!

SCENARIO 2: AMBUSHED ON THE CAMBRIDGE ROAD

News of the Boudican revolt must have come as an unpleasant shock to Paullinus, who no doubt regarded Mona as the climactic battle of his campaign to subdue southern England. The only reserves he had in England north of the Thames were the IX Hispana with its auxiliaries, but they were spread out to police the region.

Petilius Cerialis the commander of this Legion had probably been ordered to crush the revolt. Cerialis was an experienced officer, but his later career reveals him to be somewhat over-decisive to the point of being rash. He gathered the forces he had available around his HQ at Longthorpe, near modern Peterborough, and made a forced march.

We do not know how large this ‘rapid reaction force’ was, but Cerialis would probably have had the first cohort, his most experienced troops, and one or two other cohorts of legionaries. He also had one or two units of auxiliary cavalry.

Cerialis would have known that Colchester was undefended and he probably considered that an energetic response was

the best chance to nip the revolt in the bud before it spread and became serious. He had no reason to suspect the careful planning that had gone into the Boudican revolt and that it was already out of control.

The Roman force would have marched south to Godmanchester where they could join the transverse supply road to Colchester. This road went out of use fairly rapidly when London became the most important city in Roman Britain and hence the centre of the road hub, something that persists to this day. We only know where odd stretches of the road ran, which does not help us locate the battle. About all we can say is that Cerialis ran into the British somewhere near Cambridge.

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

The Battle of the Cambridge Road has all the hallmarks of a well-planned ambush by a mobile division screening Boudica’s main army. This sounds very unBritish, but it is the most likely explanation of the little information that we possess.

Cerialis’ legionaries were cut to pieces. We should bear in mind that this was the first cohort of the Ninth, a crack unit. This couldn’t have been achieved just by force of numbers as might happen in a modern battle, where the sheer firepower of a large insurgency group can destroy a smaller elite unit of professionals. Celtic warfare was up close and personal.



Wargame terrain for the Ambush on the Cambridge Road showing the Roman Road and woods.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

I suggest that the Romans were surprised by hidden British while they were in column, marching along the road. I have found this works as a passable recreation of the battle. The British player places markers, such as scraps of paper, on each side of the road. The name of the unit(s) represented by any marker is written on the face-down side. Note that British units must be positioned seven inches or more from the road.

The Roman player marches his army with the units in column formation in a continuous line along the road from the western edge. He continues until the British player activates his army. This may be done at the start of any of the British player's turns. Once the British army is activated, the scraps of paper are turned over and the units revealed placed on the table. The British player then takes his turn normally, with one proviso.

I suggest you use a special rule that British units cannot make an Initiative Move on their first turn. They must receive an order from a Commander to move. The logic to this is that the tribesmen are waiting for the signal from their chief. In game terms it means that the British units start close to the Romans but there is an element of chance involved in which units move. It recreates the ragged nature of a Celtic army and gives the Roman player a chance.

After British activation, the Roman player is released to issue orders and move his units as he wishes.

Cerialis can leave the table at any time, but is not replaced if this option is chosen: see the earlier Battle of the Medway.

The woodland is rough terrain.

Like many real historical scenarios, this is a pig of a game to balance. So much depends on leadership die rolls on that first turn of British activation and the following Roman turn and, of course, these are subject to the whim of fortune. The bright side is that unlucky key die rolls provide a wonderful excuse for defeat.

“Surprised, as it were, in the midst of peace, the people of Colchester were surrounded by an immense host of the barbarians. All else was plundered or fired in the onslaught; the temple where the soldiers had assembled, was stormed after a two days’ siege. The victorious enemy met Petilius Cerialis, commander of the ninth legion, as he was coming to the rescue, routed his troops, and destroyed all his infantry. Cerialis escaped with some cavalry into the camp, and was saved by its fortifications. Alarmed by this disaster and by the fury of the province which he had goaded into war by his rapacity, the procurator Catus crossed over into Gaul.”

Tacitus



ROMAN ARMY

- Petilius Cerialis (commander)
- Unnamed Praefect (commander of auxiliaries)
- **1st Cohort:** Three veteran legionary units
- **2nd Cohort:** Two legionary units
- **3rd Cohort:** One legionary unit of raw recruits
- **Cavalry:** Two auxiliary medium cavalry units and two auxiliary light cavalry units, all with spears/javelins

BRITISH ARMY

- Unnamed British commander
- Unnamed British commander
- Unnamed British commander
- Four light chariot units with crews armed with spears/javelins, two of which are Elite
- Two medium cavalry units armed with spears/javelins
- Four light cavalry units armed with spears/javelins
- Two warbands – Wild Fighters
- Four small skirmisher units

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and Cerialis survives.



A blood-soaked Medicus tends a fallen legionary

Roman Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules.

British Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and kill Cerialis.

British Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules but Cerialis survives.

Roll a die if Cerialis ends the game wounded. On a 4+ he survives his wounds, otherwise he is killed.



SCENARIO PLAY THROUGH

It seemed to me that Boudica might well have volunteered her Trinovantes allies (also known as the Essex boys) for the tricky task of blocking the Cambridge Road and ambushing the Roman relief force. Her motivation would be partly because their name means 'Vigorous', but mostly she would want them out of her sight, somewhere where they couldn't steal all the loot from Colchester.

There was also the matter of the traditional Trinovantes BO. Either the Romans would slaughter the Trinovantes or the Trinovantes would slaughter the Romans, a win-win scenario without a downside from Boudica's point of view.

A coin toss determined that I would be controlling the British Army while my regular opponent Shaun took control of the Roman column.

My problem as the British was that my warriors could not match the Romans in anything resembling a fair fight, so I wanted to make it as unfair as possible. I had to do as much damage as possible to my opponents while they were in column and incapable of properly defending themselves.

I had three commanders, which I decided to call Badvoc, Mungo and Blag, so I split the British army into three divisions. If you want to know where I got these names from then put Chelmsford 123 into an internet search engine. You may be interested to know that it is now available on DVD.

Badvoc commanded the Chariots, skirmishers and a warband of his best warriors, which he hid in the woods and bogs south of the road. The idea was that the chariots would act as the strike force, smashing into the centre of the Roman column to break it into unsupported sections, while the warband would seal off the rear.

Blag commanded three heavy units, two medium cavalry and the second warband, hidden around a small village north of the road. They were ordered to hit the front of the Roman column. The warband was to command the road to the front of the column.

Mungo had command of light units, foot and horse behind a hill to the north of the road. The plan was for Mungo to charge into the rear of the Roman units when they turned to engage the chariots. My best hand-to-hand combat units were the warbands, so I intended them to attack along the road from each end, rolling up the Roman line.

The plan was perfect. Everything had been thought through. Nothing, but nothing, could go wrong.

Shaun split his army into two unequal divisions, the Praefect commanding three cavalry units in the vanguard, while Cerialis took charge of the legionaries and a unit of light cavalry bringing up the rear. The Romans have no scouts out in this scenario so can do nothing but march down the road. However, springing my ambush presented me with an agonising decision. My troops could not use an initiative move on turn 1, as they are in hiding waiting for Badvoc to give the signal. Should I use divisional orders or individual unit orders?

BY FIRE & SWORD

The destruction of Colchester and Cerialis' relief force gave Boudica enhanced power and prestige and warriors flocked to her banner. Next would come the burning of London, the sack of St Albans, and finally the road north to Mancetter to meet her fate.



Normally I would try to keep my units together for as long as possible on the kick 'em don't spatter 'em principle, which would mean using divisional orders. But, what if the whole division failed its movement order? I really, really needed to get stuck in on turn one with whatever I could muster. So after much agonising and a cup of coffee I decided to use unit moves.

Of course Badvoc went first. As he is the big cheese, the Chief of the Trinovantes, he has to give the signal. I got off to a good start when the warband charged out of hiding and scattered the rear guard Roman cavalry, cutting the road. Unfortunately, things were not quite so sparkling with my chariot units. Only one charged home, pushing back a unit of legionaries. Another tried its best, but got bogged down and did not quite make it: I only rolled an eight on the command dice. The other two chariot units just sat around brewing tea, presumably from nettles as real tea hadn't been invented yet. How can anyone fail twice to roll an 8 or less on two dice?

Blag got one of his medium cavalry units away and it charged into the vanguard Roman cavalry, eventually breaking the unit. Unfortunately, Blag then got a bit confused and failed to give orders to his other two units: more failed command die rolls. Why can't I roll ones when I need them? Yeah, I know, that's a why question.

I was panicking a bit now. My ambush was falling apart on turn one. I'd managed to alert the Romans without doing them much damage. Taking a deep breath, I elected to change tactics and use divisional orders to get Mungo's lads stuck in en masse. I needed the whole division and with Mungo's command value of eight the odds were in my favour.

I rolled an eleven and Mungo's light brigade stayed hidden behind the hill. I can only think that the silly little Briton had forgotten to post a lookout. Fortunately, they must have heard the fighting as they charged over the hill on turn two: I finally rolled a six. Even more fortunately, Cerialis also had command control die-roll problems and most of his legionaries stayed in column.

It was about this time that I discovered that I had spread the units of Badvoc's division too far apart. I found it near impossible to give orders to the troops at the periphery: I had forgotten the implications of the cursed Distance Modifier

rule. Badvoc's warband was left standing guard, facing the wrong way for turn after turn as I failed test after test.

At the other end Blag was still confused and failed more command die-rolls, something that was very much in character if you watch Chelmsford 123, but not terribly helpful to yours truly. Still, the chariots did the biz under Badvoc's watchful eye and broke the rest of the Roman cavalry. One Roman Division down and Cerialis and the Roman legionaries were on their own.

My initial set up was undoubtedly not quite as perfect as I had fondly imagined and I just couldn't get the warbands into action. I was forced to use the chariots as my shock troops. Not unexpectedly, they proved unequal to the task and two units broke and fled. With my warbands still out of the battle forming roadblocks I decided to pin everything onto a massed cavalry charge. All three British commanders led from the front, hurling themselves into the fray. Or, to put it another way, they joined the combats and rolled the maximum number of dice allowed.

Sensing that the moment of decision was at hand, Cerialis rallied his troops and placed himself at the head of a cohort. Shaun was taking a risk as killing Cerialis was one of my objectives, while I could afford to lose British commanders with impunity. No one was going to miss Badvoc or Mungo and I quite looked forward to losing Blag. His replacement couldn't be any worse.

Wouldn't you just know it? The goddess Fortuna transferred her favours to me. I rolled an eleven for the Commander's

Risk From Hand-To-Hand Combat and Cerialis fell. Another die roll test for the result and Cerialis was mortally wounded to the point of final, ultimate, terminal death. Unfortunately, that was the last time that Fortuna smiled upon me, the fickle, um, lady. Mungo's light brigade was cut up by the legions and fled, Mungo leading the retreat: they had lost more than half their units.

Blag's troops soon followed when he lost his second unit out of his initial force of three; I am afraid this was another example of my weak set up. So Badvoc was also obliged to quit the field as I'd lost two divisions out of three. Apparently my battle plan was not entirely as perfect as I had anticipated.

Shaun and I had rather lost sight of the victory objectives in the heat of battle so we had to hastily check the scenario instructions. A Roman win with Cerialis dead counted as a Roman Tactical victory. Strategically, we agreed that the tribune who had taken over from the dead general would probably march his infantry back up the Cambridge Road to take shelter in their last marching fort. So Boudica wouldn't be entirely displeased. She could claim to her warriors that her magic was still working.

This had been a really exciting scenario. Six Roman legionary units survived but three were shaken. I had come very, very close to breaking the Roman army. The warband in Badvoc's division had charged into the Roman rear just too late to influence the result and the other one never got into combat, but it had still been a close run thing. With a better set up or just a little better command control dicing...next time, Shaun, next time!



The Trinovantes ambush Petilius Cerialis' troops on the Cambridge Road. Badvoc himself leads the chariot charge

SCENARIO 3: THE BATTLE OF WATLING STREET

After sacking London and St Albans, the Boudican Army is thought to have moved north west along Watling Street (the modern A5). One may assume that they looted and destroyed as they went but there is little archaeological evidence for the passage of such a large army. And it was large, presumably continually swelled by the continuous arrival of new supporters who wished to associate themselves with Boudica's magic and win some loot. Tacitus suggests they bypassed forts and garrisons, which may explain why we cannot now detect their advance.

Boudica had little option but to maintain momentum and try to force an engagement with the main Roman force in the northwest as quickly as possible. Her army would melt away

as warriors wandered off in search of food and went home with their loot. The British had little logistic capability. She would also wish to force a decision before Roman reinforcements arrived from the continent.

Suetonius Paullinus personally made a fast reconnaissance down Watling Street to London just before its destruction so, unlike Cerialis, he would have had no illusions about the danger facing his province. He had to play a delicate balancing act between his need to concentrate forces for battle and the inadvisability of denuding the countryside of troops and possibly setting off more revolts.

The core of his field army was the battle hardened XIV Gemina, who had just taken Mona. He marched the Fourteenth back through North Wales and down Watling Street to the assembly area, which was probably around Mancetter, Warwickshire. This was an important British ritual site: its Celtic name meant 'place of chariots'. A number of roads converged near this point, including the Fosse Way from the West Country.



Paulinus' men stand under the Celtic onslaught

Paullinus sent word to the II Augusta at Exeter to march a division up the Fosse Way to join him, but they never arrived. He was more successful with the XX Valeria Victrix, whose legate despatched a powerful force from their base around Gloucester including, if we are to believe Tacitus, the First Cohort. What was left of the Ninth after the Battle of the Cambridge Road was left guarding against intervention by the Brigantes in Northern England.

Dio suggests that Paullinus was short of food, which may be true as he was cut off from his supply bases in the south. So both sides had reason to seek a swift decision. The two armies met on Watling Street but, short of the miraculous discovery of an inscription or something like a coin hoard, we will probably never know exactly where.

COURSE OF THE BATTLE

Tacitus appears to describe the battle quite fully, but his account is stylised and short on detail. The Roman Army was small, about 12,000 men. The British force was larger, but by

how much is uncertain. Dio suggests nearly a quarter of a million and Tacitus gives the British losses at eighty thousand. We should treat both figures with considerable scepticism. In any case, half the British force seems to be non-combatants, including women and children along to cheer on their side like spectators at a cup final.

Paullinus selected the battlefield, choosing a narrowing defile where his rear and flanks were secure and where the British would have to attack uphill into a funnel. This would not bother the Romans at all, given their small numbers, close order tactics and their use of the stabbing sword, but it would seriously hinder the British, who required room for their wild Celtic style of fighting involving slashing weapons.

The Romans let the British take the initiative and exhaust themselves running uphill into a shower of pila that stripped the front rank of their shields. When the Romans advanced in their turn, the Celtic warriors were compressed helplessly together, trapped by their own carts and slaughtered. Many probably died in the crush.



“Suetonius had the fourteenth legion with the veterans of the twentieth, and auxiliaries from the neighbourhood, to the number of about ten thousand armed men, when he prepared to break off delay and fight a battle. He chose a position approached by a narrow defile, closed in at the rear by a forest ... His legions were in close array; round them, the light-armed troops, and the cavalry in dense array on the wings. On the other side, the army of the Britons, with its masses of infantry and cavalry, was confidently exulting, a vaster host than ever had assembled, and so fierce in spirit that they actually brought with them, to witness the victory, their wives riding in wagons, which they had placed on the extreme border of the plain.

At first, the legion kept its position, clinging to the narrow defile as a defence; when they had exhausted their missiles, which they discharged with unerring aim on the closely approaching foe, they rushed out in a wedge-like column. Similar was the onset of the auxiliaries, while the cavalry with extended lances broke through all who offered a strong resistance. The rest turned their back in flight, and flight proved difficult, because the surrounding wagons had blocked retreat. Our soldiers spared not to slay even the women, while the very beasts of burden, transfixed by the missiles, swelled the piles of bodies.”

Tacitus

Watling Street demonstrates the futility of mere numbers stacked deep as a way of combating a smaller better army and also that Paullinus' reputation as a general was not exaggerated. It is difficult to see how he could have improved upon his choice of battle site or the handling off his troops.

Boudica was not a combatant so she survived the disaster, but it was the end of the rebellion. According to Tacitus, the Queen took poison and died free, cementing her position in popular history. Paullinus harried the British unmercifully until his replacement by the conciliatory Turpilianus. It was a famous victory.

WARGAMING THE BATTLE

I suggest we follow Webster in selecting Mancetter as the battle site, as is traditional. This puts Paullinus' chosen battle ground in a defile splitting the steep escarpment of quartzite over-looking the valley of the River Anker along which runs Watling Street. The forested escarpment would give Paullinus secure flanks and rear, and force the British to attack into a funnel.

The British non-combatants in carts are placed in a semicircle on the open ground to the north of Watling Street, sealing off the battleground until it resembled a great amphitheatre, although more were to die here in a few short hours than ever gave their lives in the Colosseum.

To represent the danger posed by the carts I propose a special rule that the cart line is impassable to Celtic units. Any unit whose retreat would take it onto the cart line is destroyed (rather than the usual disorder: see page 75 of the *Hail Caesar* rulebook).

Boudica is a battle commander in the scenario, which I confess was highly unlikely to have been true in reality. But I have lovingly painted up Warlord's sumptuous model of Boudica in her chariot and I am determined to use it. So there - history, smistory! British command control seems to have been next to non-existent in the battle so I have only given them two commanders.

Remember that the British are attacking uphill.

ROMAN ARMY

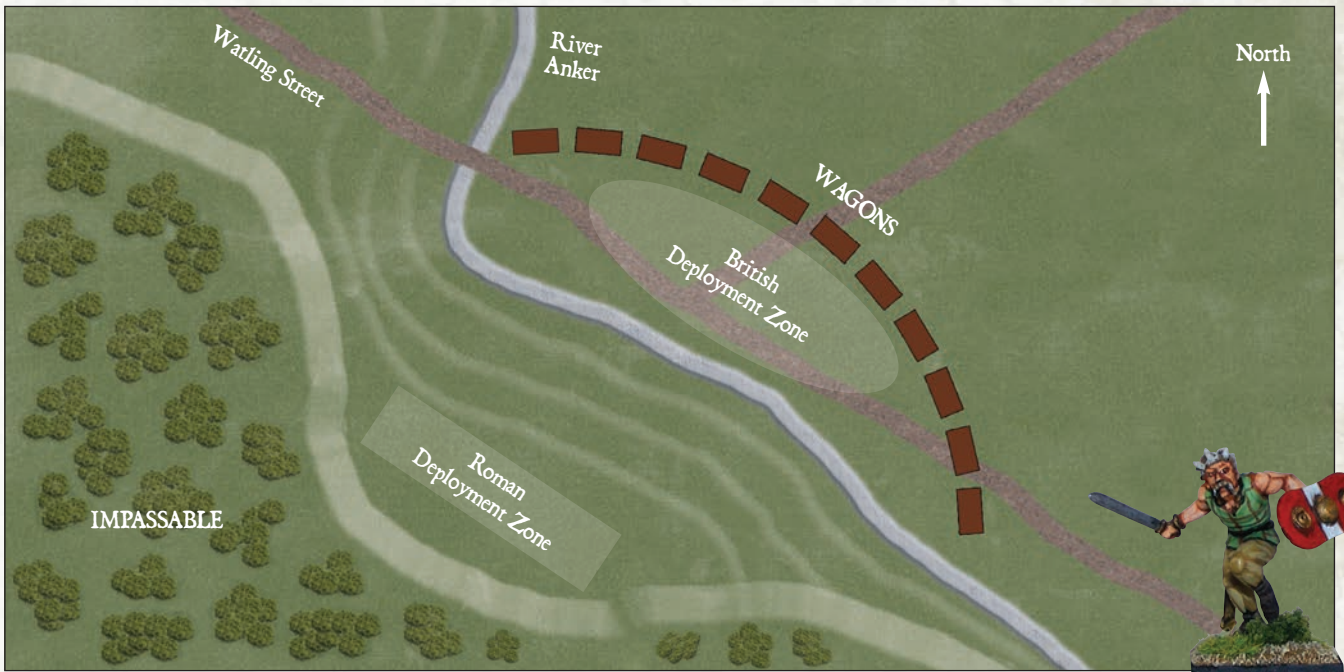
- Suetonius Paullinus (commander)
- Unknown Roman commander
- Unknown Praetorian Praefect (commander)
- **XIV Gemina:** 1 veteran legionary unit, 3 legionary units
- **XX Valeria Victrix:** 1 veteran legionary unit, 1 legionary unit
- **Auxiliary Infantry:** 4 medium infantry units with spears
- **Auxiliary Cavalry:** 2 medium cavalry units with spears

BRITISH ARMY

- Boudica (commander)
- Unknown British commander
- 6 warbands - Wild Fighters
- 2 light chariot units
- 1 medium cavalry unit with spears/javelins
- 2 light cavalry units with javelins
- 4 small skirmisher units



Paulinus gives the order to counter-attack



Wargame terrain for the Battle of Watling Street showing the Roman Roads, forested ridge (impassable), River Anker (linear obstacle), line of British wagons (see text), and the initial starting positions of the two armies. Note that the ground from the River Anker slopes upwards towards the Roman position so armies attacking in this direction are attacking uphill.

WINNING AND LOSING

Roman Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules and kill Boudica.

Roman Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules.

British Strategic Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules, and Boudica survives but Paullinus is killed.

British Tactical Victory

Win the battle according to the usual *Hail Caesar* rules.

Roll a die if a named commander ends the game wounded.

On a 4+ he/she survives, otherwise he/she is killed.

PLAYING HINTS

Romans

It would be madness to charge into the British army, so start the battle on the defensive. The pivotal decision of the game will be when to switch to the offensive and try to force the British into the cart line. I can't advise when that moment will come as so much will depend on circumstance. You will need to be able to 'read the battle', the way Paullinus did.

British

Make sure you do not charge in one great mass. Boudica tried that and it didn't end well. Wear down the Romans before the critical engagement by engaging with small battlegroups. You will face command problems as you only have two commanders.

A SOLDIER'S HONOUR

Paullinus requested a division from the II Augusta Legion, with its headquarters at Exeter, to join him but they never came. As Tacitus relates:

"Poenius Postumus ..., camp-prefect of the Second Legion, when he knew of the success of the men of the Fourteenth and Twentieth, feeling that he had cheated his legion out of like glory, and had contrary to all military usage disregarded the general's orders, threw himself on his sword."

A camp prefect, *praefectus castrorum*, was a legion's most senior 'NCO' (Roman ranks do not translate well into those of a modern army) in a legion. Only the legate senior tribune outranked him. He wasn't some posing young gentleman who panicked but a grizzled veteran who had probably worked his way through the ranks of centurions to the highest military position to which an ordinary Roman could aspire.

It is most unlikely that such man succumbed to physical fear any more than the RSM of a British regiment might be overcome by terror of the enemy. One might wonder where were the Second's Legate and Senior Tribune? The Boudican revolt was probably more widespread than implied in Tacitus and Dio, so the two senior officers of the Second were probably leading sizable detachments to snuff out revolt among the local tribes. The Battle of Cadbury Hill might have occurred in this period rather than in the initial invasion.

Postumus may have had few troops and firm orders from his superiors to stay put and hold down Exeter. Who knows?

DEVisING YOUR OWN GAMES

One of the great pleasures of historical wargaming is researching and creating one's own scenarios. There is now a wealth of information on the internet; Wikipedia is particularly useful for this sort of information, especially as it often gives a bibliography and hot links to other relevant websites. Below you will find some suggested internet search engine key words. I would give web page addresses, but the net is in constant flux so such a list would date rapidly.

There are three productive areas for the wargamer to research. The first is the different opinions of the battles described in this book. We have such little hard information that it is possible to recreate these battles in widely different ways, often depending on where they are assumed to have taken place.

For example, the Battle of Watling Street is traditionally associated with Mancetter because no less an authority than Webster places it there. But other authors have suggested equally plausible locations at sites near Atherstone, Towcester, Arbury Banks and Silchester. Waite's recent (2007) book makes a case for a site near High Cross and John Pegg has a new (2010) and fascinating web site complete with maps which examines the archaeology around Church Stowe and shows that this could be the location of Paullinus' famous victory.

A second source of new scenarios consists of the battles I haven't covered. Julius Caesar's invasions are a good start and then there are Agricola's campaigns.

Finally there are the 'what if' alternative histories. What if Caractacus had attacked the Roman bridgeheads in Kent at Reculver and Richborough (The Thanet Map)? What if Queen Cartimandua of the powerful Brigantes tribe of Northern England had sided with Caractacus rather than handing him over to the Romans? What if she had swept south during the Boudican revolt? Would she have been an ally of Rome, Boudica, or neither?

The Romans may have had a presence in the Dublin region, as they had in southern England before the invasion, and the glory-hunting Agricola speculated that he could conquer Ireland with a single legion. The island would have been as economically useless to the Romans as the highlands of Britain, but glory was to be had and economics can't be translated into Latin.

An idea for a new campaign game would be Agricola's invasion of Ireland. Ireland was known in Classical times by a number of names, such as Hibernia or Scotia (Scotland). The Greek geographer, Ptolemy, refers to the island as Mikra Bettania, Little Britain. He gives a detailed description of Ireland's topography and inhabitants with longitudes and latitudes, then names ten towns and sixteen peoples.

Type <Protohistory> and <Ireland> into Wikipedia and you will find a superb map of modern Ireland with the sixteen Irish peoples overlaid, just like I did here for southern England and Wales. Download it and you have an

immediate campaign map which you can use for Agricola's invasion of Hibernia.

Putative Roman battle sites can be argued for almost anywhere in the island of Britain, and with a little imagination interesting scenarios can be written. Pick a noteworthy spot near where you live and imagine how a Roman and British force might have come into conflict there. I used to commute every day to London with a friend and we used to plan how we would conduct military campaigns on the rolling North Downs passing by our window.

If you have the misfortune not to live in Britain then look up large-scale maps and satellite/aerial photography on the internet. That is how I designed the Caer Caradoc terrain map as I have to confess I have never been to that battlefield site: my home stamping ground is Southern England and the West Country.



Do not be reluctant to make up your own special rules to cover unique features of your own scenarios. The use of these, as well as interesting terrain and army lists, will offer novel challenges maintaining interest in the period for you and your friends and allowing you to get the most out of the time you have invested in the rules and models.

Sometimes the scenarios will not work too well, but that is okay. Revise them and try again. Sometimes they will turn out to be wildly unbalanced but that, as the old aphorism goes, is love and war. My little daughters used to complain, "It's not fair, daddy." To which I replied, "Get used to it dear, life isn't fair."

KEY WORDS

'Battle' + 'Watling Street', 'Caer Caradoc', 'River Medway', 'Mona'

'Roman Invasion Britain'

'Roman Conquest Britain'

'Roman Army' + 'Principate'

'Boudica'

'Boudicca'

'Boadicea'

'Caractacus'

'Paullinus'

'Vespasian' + 'Britain'

'Julius Caesar' + 'Britain'

'Ancient Britons'

'Protohistory' + 'Ireland' + 'Ptolemy'.



The wild charge of a British army

AN ALTERNATIVE BASING SYSTEM

Hail Caesar is an astonishingly flexible game system. Any scale models could be used, but I vastly prefer 28 mm. As senility overtakes, my aged eyes cannot cope with painting tiny models and I confess I like the grandeur of 28 mm troops. Wargaming is, after all, a visual hobby.

A vast number of inexpensive and good looking plastic 28 mm miniatures are available from Warlord Games and other suppliers to form the bulk of armies. So the 28 mm option is way more affordable than it was even a few years ago.

In the core rule book, Rick and friends play in teams with large numbers of models per unit on a fair sized table. I tend to play my games on more modest sized tables with fewer models, in fact at roughly half scale. The advantage of a fifty per cent reduction is that one simply has to double up units to get back to the original basing when required.

I also tend to mount my models en masse on plastic card rather than on individual bases. This is partly for convenience of storage and transport, large stands sit nicely in trays in cheap plastic utility sets of draws, but mostly because it speeds up play. Plastic card is easily cut with scissors should one ever need to go back to a more individual basing.

For example, my cavalry units consist of six models on two bases, mounted three to a base, each with a 75mm frontage and 50 mm depth. They can be used in wide formation, with the bases side by side, or deep, with the bases one behind the other. British chariot units consist of two models, each on an individual base, with a 40 mm frontage and around 90 to 100 cm depth.

My Roman infantry units consist of ten models on a single base in a two deep battle line with 100 mm frontage. Similarly, British warbands are on bases with 100 mm frontages but 70 mm deep, rather than the 50 mm I generally find adequate for Romans.

The Britons are mounted ten to twelve models per base in a somewhat irregular fashion, as one would expect from wild undisciplined warriors. I have found it looks good to put the more heavily armoured and armed figures at the front



“Of all these (British tribes), by far the most civilised are they who dwell in Kent, which is entirely a maritime region, and who differ but little from the Gauls in their customs.”

Julius Caesar

of the stand to represent the British warrior aristocracy thrusting forward to lead the common herd and so win personal glory.

Light artillery is mounted one model per unit on a base 40 mm wide and 60 to 70 mm deep. I tend to mount troops capable of skirmishing, such as slingers, individually and in twos and threes on bases with 10 mm frontage per model, and 10 mm deep, so that they can disperse to, well, skirmish.

However, I stress that this is merely the system that suits me and my regular opponents. None of this is carved in stone and players should feel free to use Rick Priestley's basing or a completely new one of their own devising. It's your game and there is no right or wrong. It helps if all players in a game adopt more or less the same frontage convention, depth is far less important, but *Hail Caesar* is surprisingly flexible even in this regard.

Do not be concerned about using the basing system you already have for your models if you lack the free time to re-base, a job that personally I find exceptionally tedious.

One tip is to paint the bases a dark natural 'autumn' colour, such as brown ochre or olive green. This de-emphasises the base, drawing the eye's attention to the models. Similarly, I decorate the bases in a dark brownish-green autumn-coloured flock or static grass, stuck on with diluted PVA white glue.



The future of Britain is decided on the blood-soaked field of glory



After conquest the legionaries face garrison duty in the rotten British weather

LAST THOUGHTS

“So much for affairs in Britain.”

Writing more than a hundred years later, Dio concluded his account of Boudica’s rebellion with the dismissive line quoted above.

That wasn’t the last word, of course. In history there is never a last word. The Romano-British monk, Gildas, in the sixth century after the fall of Rome wrote: ‘A treacherous lioness butchered the governors who had been left to give fuller voice and strength to the endeavours of Roman rule.’ Boudica had become a figure of evil to her descendants.

In case anyone thinks that ancient history is irrelevant to modern politics try putting <Romans in Ireland> into a search engine. The question of whether a fort near Dublin was Roman led to an academic spitting contest in 1996 that had little to do with Romans and everything to do with modern British/Irish/Northern Irish politics. Only now after the peace settlement in Northern Ireland can a balanced view be taken of Roman influence in Ireland: see www.irishtimes.com - ‘So what have the Romans ever done for us’.

Ironically, it was a new British people, or perhaps just a new British culture – the English – who rediscovered and reinvented Boudica as a Great British Queen of the newly formed United Kingdom of Great Britain. Her stock peaked in the reign of Victoria: Boudica is a Latinised version of the Celtic feminine word for victory, i.e. Victoria.

Prince Albert commissioned a statue of her, complete with anachronistic scythed battle chariot. It stands on the banks of the Thames in the centre of the Imperial capital of London, the

city she hated and burnt. So the Gods mock we mere mortals. On the statue are a few lines taken from Cowper’s poem, Boadicea. Let him have the last word – for the moment.

“Rome shall perish – write that word

In the blood that she has spilt;

Perish hopeless and abhor’d,

Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome for empire far renown’d,

Tramples on a thousand states,

Soon her pride shall kiss the ground -

Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

Then the progeny that springs

From the forests of our land,

Arm’d with thunder, clad with wings,

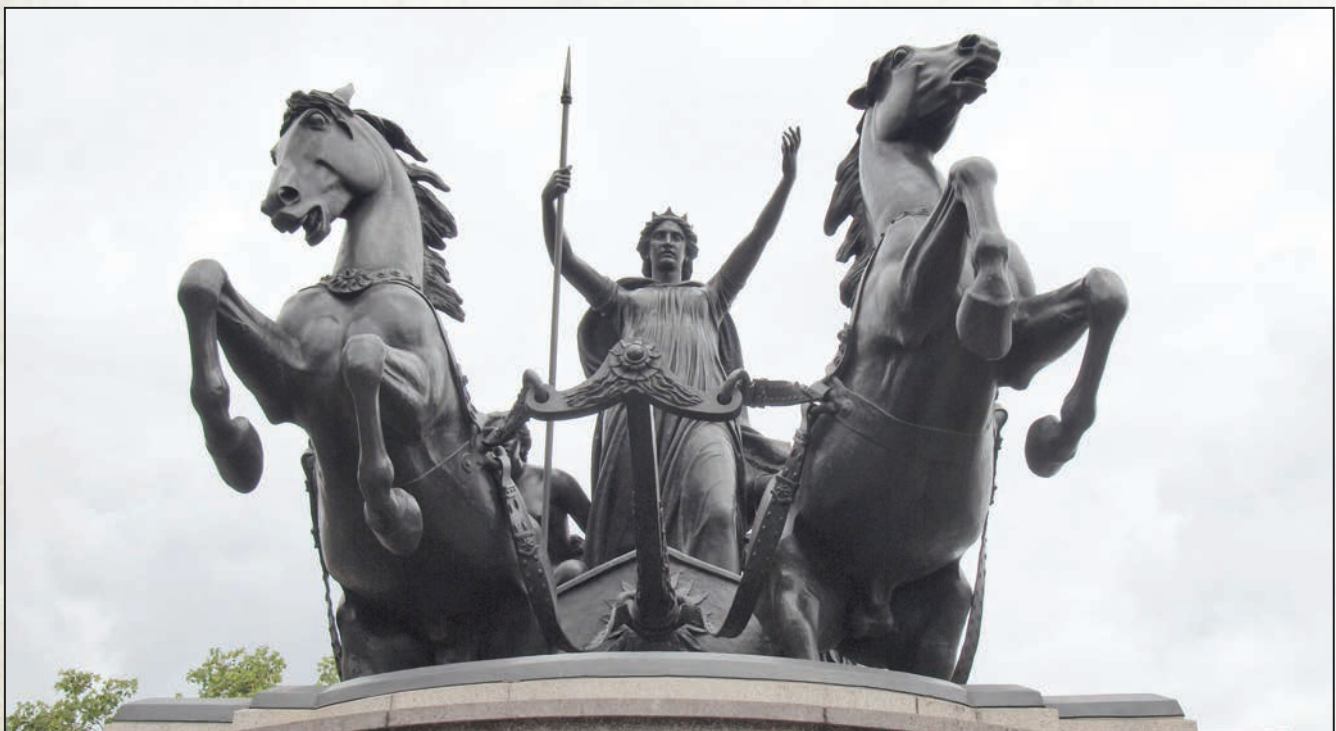
Shall a wider world command.

Regions Caesar never knew,

Thy posterity shall sway,

Where his eagles never flew,

None invincible as they.”





“Have no fear whatever of the Romans; for they are superior to us neither in numbers nor in bravery.”

Boudica, according to Cassius Dio



BOOKS

There are more works on the Roman Army than you can shake a stick at, as a brief perusal of Amazon will demonstrate, so I am not going to attempt to list them. However there are some specific books on this period that I have found useful for wargaming.

Classic academic studies:

- Webster, G., 1978. *Boudica*
- Webster, G., 1981. *The Roman Imperial Army*
- Webster, G., 1981. *Rome Against Caractacus*

Modern popular histories in paperback:

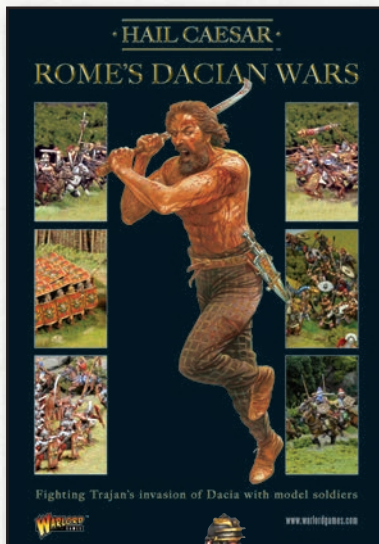
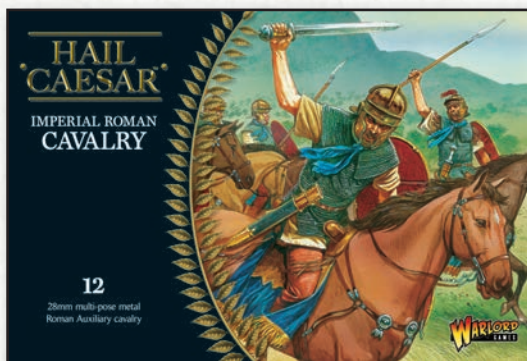
- Peddie, J., 1987/1997. *The Roman Invasion of Britain*
- Waite, J., 2007. *Boudica's Last Stand*

Ospreys:

- Fields, N., Dennis, P., 2011. *Boudica's Rebellion, AD60-61*



Civilisation comes to Britain



Most of the miniatures on the pages of this book are designed and manufactured in Great Britain by Warlord Games. We have several growing Ancients ranges, in addition to other historical periods:

Thirty Years War, English Civil War, French & Indian Wars, Plains Wars, Napoleonic Wars, Crimean War, Anglo Zulu War, and World War II.

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This supplement for Hail Caesar focuses on Rome's wars under Trajan against the Dacians and their Sarmatian allies. Featured battles include the Battle of Adamclisi, the Battle of Tapae and the Siege of Sarmizegetusa Regia. Also included are rules for playing skirmish games, fighting sieges and using warships, as well as campaign and hobby ideas.



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Village life in Celtic Britain: how to get a head

· HAIL CAESAR ·

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BRITANNIA ROME'S INVASION OF BRITAIN

In 43AD Aulus Plautius led the Roman legions to the edge of the known world: to the mysterious land of the Britons. The Emperor Claudius demanded a victory, and what better way of doing it than to bring this savage nation under the Roman yoke.

Rome commanded huge armies of professional soldiers with the infrastructure needed to feed, transport, equip and command them. Opposing this mighty military machine was a mere patchwork of tribes and wild barbarian warriors.

Refusing to yield to the conquerors, one man emerged as the champion of the Britons: Caractacus! Defeated in open battle, Caractacus turned to guerrilla warfare: raiding and ambushing enemy troops on the march. No Roman could defeat him; in the end it was treachery that overcame the Briton's greatest champion: the treachery of Queen Cartimadua of the Brigantes.

It was another Queen of the Britons who, ten years later, led the greatest rebellion of all against Roman rule: Boudica, Queen of the Iceni. Years of resentment and oppression boiled over into a war that almost drove the Romans from Britain altogether, burning London and humbling even the mighty legions.



This then is the story of the Roman invasion of Britain, from the Claudian Conquest and wars of Caractacus until the defeat of Boudica and the destruction of the druids upon Mona. Included in this supplement is a map-based campaign game recreating the invasion, as well as historical scenarios covering the wars of Caractacus and the Boudican revolt.

A copy of the *Hail Caesar* rulebook is required to use this supplement.



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ISBN: 978-1-911281-14-6

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