

BACK TO THE HEYDAY OF IMPERIAL ROME

FORUM TRAJANUM

HARD WORK IN THE "PROVINCES" FOR INFLUENCE IN THE FORUM

Forum Trajanum refers to the life of Marcus Ulpius Traianus, the first Roman emperor to be born far from Roma (his family at that time lived in Baetica, in Spain, that corresponds to the actual Andalusia). Emperor Nerva adopted him as a "son" as he needed his skill as a veteran general of the Army, in order to control his own Guardia Pretoriana. When Nerva died, Traianus receive an already well-organized nation and he was able to add Dacia and Parthia thus reaching the maximum expansion of the ancient Roman Empire.

Therefore, he celebrated his victories getting the title of *Optimus Princeps* (the best of emperors) and building a new Forum and the famous *Colonna Traiana* that can be seen even today in Roma's city center. That column has been built with 21 marble blocks (and it is empty in the middle where it hosted Traianus's sarcophagus and where 185 steps bring the visitors to the top): 2500 figures are sculpted in 154 scenes in a spiral of 220 meters that describe the different battles fought in Dacia

(today Rumania).

Details on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XL-P-XSWFc>

Stefan Feld takes this historical background as a base for his game **Forum Trajanum**: the box contains a main board, four personal boards, six smaller ones, a bag of colored meeples and tokens, a deck of cards and a lot of cardboard tiles. It is highly suggested to carefully divide and store in different bags all the components in order to facilitate the set-up which may otherwise become very long.

To play **Forum Trajanum** you need a large rectangular table because the personal boards are quite big and you will be obliged to place them on the sides of the main board (see Picture 2). Explaining how this game works is not an easy task, as the designer often uses different mini-games in each of his works, so I will try to be the shorter possible and to avoid describing many of the (boring) details of the rules..

The set-up is, so to say, quite laborious as you need to first divide the building tiles per color and dimension (there are "one square" tiles and "two square" ones): then turn on the back (grey) half of them on each color and dimension, placing them all on the main board where are also placed the small 3x4 squares boards to form the "Forum", an area of variable dimension (the one depicted on the picture is for four players).

Pietro Cremona

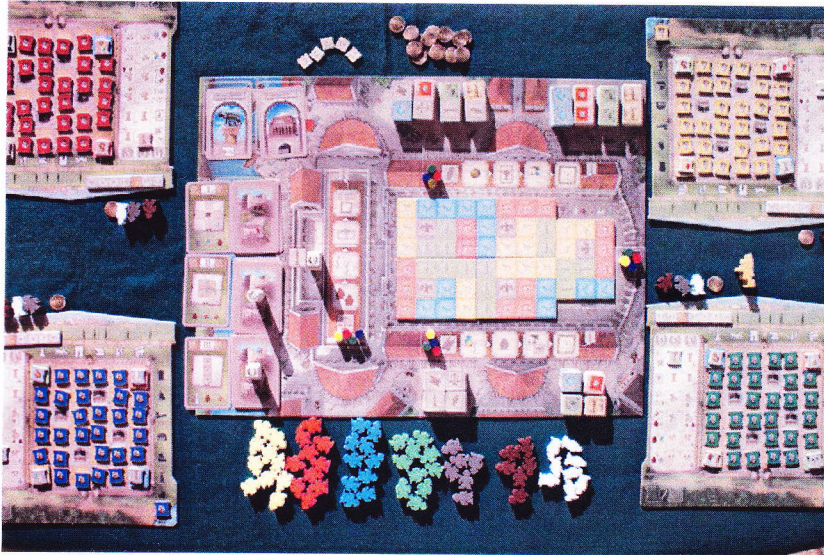
A particular game, not the best from Stefan Feld but a very intriguing one that oblige the players to program their moves with the help of some luck.

The 24 "Streets" cards are then divided in three smaller decks (of 8 cards for each era: I-II-III) and should be used to start and execute the turns, while three "Trajan" (objective) cards - one each for era I-II-III - are placed next to them.

The colored meeples (builders, assistants and 4 types of workers) are then placed on the table near the board, together with the money, while the Trajan Column is divided in three parts (basement, column and capital) and is also placed on the main board.

The players now must prepare their "Colony" (their personal board, in game terms, see picture 3 for an example): these are





printed on both sides and side "A" is used for the first games, while side "B" is suggested with players already expert on them. They are the "Governors" of their colonies and their first act is to fill the central 6x6 grid, starting with four colored "cranes" (for the buildings) on the four corners and placing in each square one population tile (called "envoy"), with exception of the four temples already printed on the board. The last one should be placed on the "Port" (bottom right of the board).

There are also three tiles "Woman", one of which is randomly taken at the begin-



ning of the game and placed in one of the three different zones on the left part of the board (the Roman citizens quarter, with their special privileges), depending on the discovered symbol. If it is a "column" it should be placed on one of the two lines "patricians"; if it is a "money bag" in one of the two "merchant" lines; if it is a "hammer"

on the "artisan" lines. More on that later. The remaining two "women" are placed in two corners of the 6x6 grid onto the cranes placed previously.

On top of the Colony there is a 17 cases "road" that connects it to Roma (as you know ... all roads lead to Roma): a long tile is placed to the left of this track and will be used to calculate part of the Victory Points (VP) as we will see later.

Finally, the players' markers are placed on the main board, one on each different area: Library, Market and Basilica. Then each player takes one "Constructor" (grey meeple), one "Assistant" (brown), one "Tribune" (white) and one currency. After 20-25 minutes we are ready to start.

A game of **Forum Trajanum** lasts 3 "Cycles" (Era), each one composed of 4 rounds that are "cadenced" by the use of the "Street" cards (see Picture 4).

Each card has a name (on top), a picture (in the middle) and, on the bottom, one of the symbols that appear on the 6x6 grid of each Colony (white or black). On every turn 2 cards are turned and they indicate on which column and/or line of the 6x6 grid you may "work".

The players must select one "Envoy" tile for each of the two symbols (line or column) on their grid: they look at the back of both tiles and decide which one they intend to use. The second tile is passed (covered) to the player on the right. Finally, all the players look at the received tiles and then they decide which of the two they will use: it is



My lines for WIN

Dagmar de Cassan, Editor-in-Chief

We are happy to present the latest issue of WIN, 527/528. This issue already has quite a few new releases from 2019 and also features a glimpse on the winners of the French games award, As d'Or at the Festival International des Jeux at Cannes. The season for more game awards is approaching, the Jury Spiel des Jahres will soon announce its nominees and we are approaching the final decision about our winners of Spiel der Spiele and Spiele Hits. We have already found a few outstanding games that we are sure will be interesting for you, too.

Of course, we will inform you about potential winners and actual winners. Please stay with us and continue to read our WIN and to inform yourself on the newest games and trends.

Current issues of win can be found on

<http://www.gamesjournal.at>

and for Games Companion Game by Game see

<http://www.gamescompanion.at>.



also possible to use both tiles paying two "tribunes" (white meeples).

Each "envoy" tile has an icon on the back that shows which use to make of it: getting new workers, or builder, or tribune, or assistant; move the tile on the road to Roma; getting some money; getting a Roman Citizen (to place on the related quarter to receive his bonus); or different other combinations.

During the first game it seems that this ... half-random selection of tiles has been decided to give some variability to the game, but soon the players will realize that the selection is guided by their strategy: in other words you will select the tiles to prepare the "ground" on the grid for the buildings and to get the special bonus of the "Trajan" cards.

In effect, before ending his turn the player has the option to build something in his Colony: there are four types of buildings (green, yellow, red and blue) and each type has two dimensions (one or two squares). Furthermore each "one square" tile may be used on the front side (colored) or on the back (grey), while the "two squares" tiles have the same color on the front side and the back with one colored and one grey square.

The colored tiles are necessary to place a building on your grid and to send an "Envoy" to Roma in order to occupy one of the

cases in the Forum that has the same color of the just installed building (yellow square if you placed a yellow building, etc.). The forum gives VP at the end of each turn. The colored buildings on your grid may also grant you some VP extra if you fulfil the request of the "Trajan" card of the current Era (see Picture 5).

Each building needs a certain number of workers:

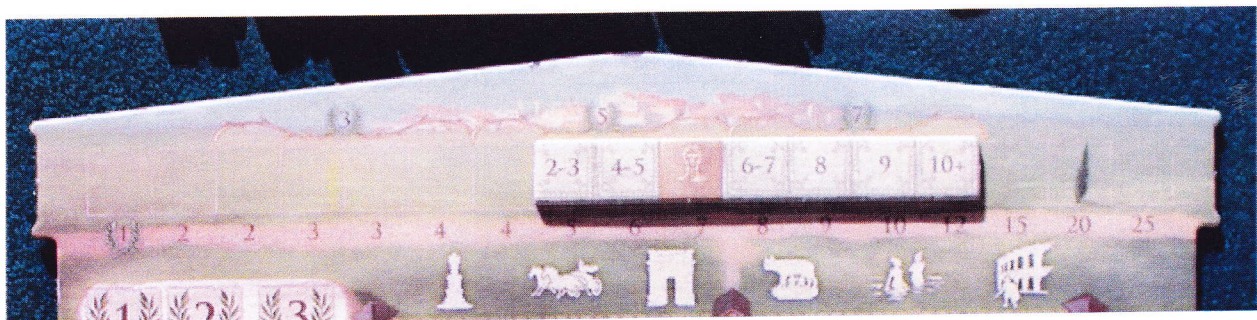
- I – A one square grey building needs a builder (grey meeple)
- II – A two squares grey/colored building needs one builder and one worker of that color.



If you send an Envoy to Roma you must place it in the same color of the building that you just erected, but you are obliged to place the tile in an already opened area of that color, unless you already have a Roma Citizen tile in the Patrician area.

- III – A one square colored building needs a worker of that color
- IV – A two squares colored building needs two workers of that color

You may always use an Assistant meeple in the place of any colored Worker (but you



must discard another worker from your reserve)

The COLOURED BUILDINGS are used to send Envoys in Roma to occupy cases of the same color, while the GREY BUILDINGS are used to move the markers in the Library, Market and Basilica tracks, thus earning the bonus indicated in each case.

When the 8 "Street" cards of the first deck are used the players pay one coin for each Roman Citizen already installed on the left part of the personal board and then mark the VP for the First Era:

- Each "crane" gives 3 VP (2 VP on Era II and 1 VP on Era III) for each building of its color already installed in the 6x6 grid. Then the crane is overturned and cannot be used again;
- The the number of buildings on the grid is multiplied by the value (1-2-3 VP) of the Roman Citizens already installed on the left of the same line (1= no citizens; 2= one citizen; 3= two citizens);
- Each Envoy in Roma's Forum adjacent to an "Eagle" case assign 1 VP
- Then each player counts the highest number of his adjacent envoys and check how many VP they assign
- Finally, each player checks how many times he satisfied the request of the Trajan Card and gets VP accordingly

The game proceeds with the second and third deck, when the final count is made and the player with most VP wins.

Placing Roman Citizens on the 6 lines of the left part of the personal board gives some benefits (but remember that each of them costs 1 coin at the turn's end):

- Patricians* allows you to freely place your Envoys in any area of the selected color (first line) or to double the bonuses on the different tracks on the main board (second line);
- Merchants* allow you to turn the tile on the Road to Roma in order to make more points at the end of each turn (third line) or to exchange 1 coin for 1 tribune or 1 assistant (fourth line);
- Artisans* allows to exchange twice per turn one assistant against a worker of any color (fifth line) or to exchange once per turn one assistant for a builder (sixth line).

As you see is not a very good idea to place too many citizens as you must pay them (with money) and their use is limited: I usually tend to place a patrician (for the freedom in the Forum) and an artisan (to get

builders instead of assistants) and sometimes a merchant to turn the tile over on the road to Roma. Remember that at the end of the turn you get some VP multiplying the number of buildings by the value of the Roman Citizen on the same line, so remember this when you take tiles from the grid in order to free the right cases on which to build later.

We arrived at the end and I hope to have been able to give you a general picture of this game. I decided not to go into more details as they will be probably boring for readers not interested in this kind of games. Stefan Feld has the ... habit to oblige the players to test different strategies before they can find a good one (if only it exists ...) and Forum Trajanum is no exception. Probably this is not his best game, but it is surely a very interesting one and we were happy to test it so many times as all the games were different and you must stay "tuned" until the last turn if you wish to have the opportunity to win. Of course, this is a game for expert players

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION	
Designer: Stefan Feld	PLAYERS: 2-4
Artist: Michael Menzel	AGE: 12+
Price: ca. 47 Euro	TIME: 120+
Publisher: dV Giochi/Huch! 2018	
www.hutter-trade.net	

EVALUATION	
Development, Eurogame Users: For experts Version: it Rules: de en es fr it jp kr pl In-game text: no	
Comments: Planning ahead is necessary * A certain degree of luck is to be considered with the street cards * Very long set-up * Good rules but you need a couple of games to learn it	
Compares to: Abstract development/positioning games	
Other editions: Angry Lion Games (kr), dV Giochi (it), Games Factory (pl), Huch! (jp), Milito Games (es) Stronghold (en/fr)	
My rating:	

GAMES BUYER INFORMATION SYSTEM - GABIS

STRUCTURE

Each game review also features an evaluation which can help you to find the game that best suits your tastes. The color accompanying each game title represents the USER Group. The headline also contains icons for age and number of players. The BAR in the evaluation box displays color codes for up to 10 features of a game.

USER GROUP

We have defined 4 target groups (color accompanying the head line)

Kinder:

Games for children an educational games. Adults can play in a guiding function.

Familien:

Children and parents play together, all have the same chance to win and have fun.

Freunde:

Young people and adults play together as equals

Experten:

Games with special demands on rules and playing time. Especially for game geeks

Please note for the user groups **Children, Family and Friends**: Children who love to play can be ahead of their peers! Please note that our target group "families" does not imply the classical concept of „family games"! Furthermore, our user groups can overlap. The choice of suitable games always depends on your playing partners and your fun with games!
Games that are especially eligible for **Solo** play or for **2 players** or **Large groups** of players are marked with an icon.

FEATURES

Each game targets preferences for different features in a player, therefore each game is not suitable for each player. We have listed 10 features players note when deciding on a game. Only if a player finds his preferred features in a game he will enjoy the game. The color code marks the dominant features. Educational games train the highlighted preference.

Empty boxes: This feature is neglectable or not present
One colored box: This feature is present, but not essential
Two colored boxes: This feature is present and important in the game
Three colored boxes: This feature is dominant and essential

Chance:

The game is influenced by dice, cards or any other form of random generator

Tactics:

Take decision, short-term planning, planning based on one move

Strategy:

Think ahead, long-term planning, planning for several moves

Creativity:

The player has to provide words, phrases, images and other creative efforts

Knowledge:

Cultural and educational knowledge, long-term memory

Memory:

Remember, learn by heart, short-time memory

Communication:

Talk to each other, negotiate, inform

Interaction:

Influencing each other, bluffing, auction

Dexterity:

Motor skills

Action:

Body movement, balance and reaction

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Version: The edition of the game on which the review is based

Rules: This lists the languages in which rules are available or are included in the game, often even more translations can be found on the web.

In-game text: A YES marks a game with language-dependent components that cannot be played without translation or knowledge of the language