

ROME VS. CARTHAGE

ANTIKE DUELLUM

GREECE VS. PERSIA



As many readers surely remember, Mac Gerdt's game ANTIKE was a very successful one but it had a few small problems if played with only two players, despite the suggested special rules.

So the designer decided to create a specific two players version of that game and presented it at Essen 2011 under the name CASUS BELLI: you had to borrow the wooden pieces from Antike in order to play this game, so Mac was still not completely satisfied and, immediately after Essen, he was already working with a better and improved version. I had the pleasure to test this version with the designer during his stay in Italy in March 2012, when he came for the bigger Italian gaming convention (PLAY, held in Modena) and I was more than happy to know that Mac finally reprinted Casus Belli in this complete new version, with his own box and all the components, under the name of ANTIKE DUELLUM

Opening the box you immediately note that the map is printed on both sides:

Side A shows the Mediterranean area where the struggle between Roma and Cartago took place during the three Punic wars (an area going from Hispania to Italia and from Gallia to Numidia). Side B shows the Aegean area where the struggle between Greece and Persia was fought during the two Persian wars (from Greece to Persia and from Macedonia to Crete).

A very interesting Historical Background booklet was added to the game with a summary of the history of those wars and their most important leaders.

Before proceeding with the review let me clearly explain that Antike Duellum IS NOT a real war game, but a very nice strategy game that will keep very busy two players for 60-90 minutes. In the following comments I will try to underline the main differences between this game and Antike, adding a few specific notes.

The maps are divided into REGIONS of three types: sea, land and mixed (with sea and land). Blue and red border lines are printed around the regions to regulate the movements: legions may only move through the RED borders while fleets may just cross the BLUE lines. Some borders have both colors so you may move both fleets and/or legions but you are not allowed to transport legions with fleets. Most of the Regions also have a walled town drawing: here you may create a new city during the game. Cities produce resources of three kind: gold, iron and

marble. We will see later how to use those resources.

Printed on the map are also a Science Chart (where each Country may develop her "know-how"), two Recruitment Boxes (one for each player, to stock the available units), a Victory Point track and the well know Mac Gerdt's ROUNDEL (used to program the game's actions).

ANTIKE DUELLUM is offered complete with two sets of 24 UNITS each (12 legions and 12 fleets per player, identical to those of Antike), 12 TEMPLES, three sets of RESOURCES (Gold, Irons and Marble), a set of CITY TOKENS (Gold, Irons and Marble Cities, with a different color on each sides), a few coins, 12 FORTIFICATIONS (called in the game Town Walls), a deck of 25 EVENT CARDS and a deck of 21 PERSONAGES CARDS. There are also two special units (one Admiral and one Commander) used for a variant offered at the end of the rules

Each player starts the game putting three Cities on the map (one for each kind of resource), a Legion and a Fleet on his Recruitment Box, a supply of 3 gold, 3 iron and 3 marble resources, 1 Fortress, 1 marker on the roundel, 1 marker on the VP track and 5 extra discs of his color ready to be used on the Science chart. You select which conflict you wish to play and you place your three cities on the corresponding town locations of the map (the starting cities are highlighted on the map with a white color). Reveal the first three EVENT cards and you are ready to go.

A typical "Mac Gerdt's" game is played moving a marker on the roundel and executing the related action: ANTIKE DUELLUM is no exception. On the first turn you decide in which of the 8 cases of the roundel you want to place your marker and you immediately activate it.

Three of the cases allow you to PRODUCE resources: you get 1 resource for each of your cities that shows the same symbol (marble, iron or gold) and you also get 1 coin any time that you collect one or more resources. (Note that difference with Antike, where you collected 1 coin every round).

Two cases (DUELLUM) allow you to MOVE your units and eventually ATTACK if you enter a region with enemy units and/or cities. One case (TEMPLUM) allows you to spend your "marble" to build temples (6 marbles each) and/or fortifications (1 marble each). Note that in ANTIKE the cost of temples was 5 marbles only and Fortification were not allowed. Temples allows you to collect 3

resources (instead of 1) in that City and you will also have a defense value of "3", instead of "1". Fortifications give you an extra +1 in Defense.

One case (MILITIA) allows you to bring on the map some of the units that you have in your recruitment box, spending 2 irons for each unit (legion or fleet): you are allowed to place max one NEW unit on a single city. (The cost in Antike was only 1 iron per unit). Finally one case (SCIENTIA) allows you to "purchase" new units from your reserve (Legions will cost 1 gold and Fleets 2 gold each): you place them in your recruitment case on the map and you will be able to play them later, visiting again the case "militia". But SCIENTIA gives you also the very

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Antike Duellum is a very interesting combination of war game and board game for two players. Two Big Ancient Powers (Rome and Carthage or Macedonia and Persia) develop their countries' trade networks until they arrive to the final confrontation where armies must clash!

important opportunity to improve your civilization buying one of the following five "KNOW HOW":

STRATA allows your Legions to move 2 Regions instead of one (cost: 5 gold)

NAVIGATIO allows your Fleets to move 2 Regions instead of one (cost: 6 gold)

MONETA allows you to get one resource extra when you take them (cost: 7 gold)

RES PUBLICA allows you to have an additional defense value of +1 (cost: 8 gold)

COMMERCIMUM allows you to exchange lots of 3 resources for 2 different ones (cost: 9 gold)

In Antike the prices are all different and the fifth Know How (Commercium) is not available.

Players alternate turns moving their markers clockwise on the roundel (as usual you may move 1 to 3 cases for free and you must pay 1 resource for each extra case) and executing the related actions.

You may found new cities during your turn (paying 1 marble, 1 iron and 1 gold per city), provided that you have at least one unit (Legion or Fleet) in regions where a town symbol is still available. The players may decide the "type" of city (marble, gold or iron) and they place the related counter on the map, showing the appropriate player's color (brown or white). This is again different from ANTIKE. If cities of the same type already exist in adjacent regions you have to pay 1 COIN for each of them, even if they are under enemy control.

The goal of the game is to be the first to collect 9 Personages. Players will get PERSONAGE CARDS doing the following actions:

1 "KING" (Leonidas, Dareios, etc.) every 5 cities that you built on the map

1 "SCHOLAR" (Pythagoras, Archimedes, etc.) every time that you are the first to buy a new know how. The other player may still buy the same know-how (at a lower cost) in order to use the same benefit, but he will not receive any card.

1 "CITIZEN" (Cato, Perikles, etc.) every 3 temples that you built on the map

1 "GENERAL" (Hannibal, Scipio, etc.) for every enemy temple destroyed (when conquering a city)

1 "NAVIGATOR" (Hanno and Pytheas) when you control 7 sea regions. Note that in DUELLUM all the regions without a city are marked with a galley symbol that count double, so it is possible to control 7 regions with only 4 fleets.

Each new conquered PERSONAGE card allows you to move one case up your marker on the Victory Points track. If you enter a case with a fortification symbol you receive a new Fortification in your reserve. But every time that you take a new Personage Card your opponent will get an EVENT CARD that he may select between the three revealed cards always available beside the map. Those cards allows you to make some ... dirty tricks or to improve your performances (examples: Corruption = your opponent loses 1 resource per type; Gold Mine = your "gold" cities produce an extra gold; etc.)

The first part of the game is a sort of race to collect enough resources to found new cities and therefore to get more resources, etc. For a few rounds you are not compelled to attack your opponent: remember that "peace is important to ... prepare war" so the best that you can do is to select a defensive line and send there the minimum number of units that will be able to block a potential invasion while you are busy in reaching new regions to create new cities. Then players have to think well about their strategies:

- Being the first to get a new Know-How cost much money, but you immediately get a benefit and a Personage card. STRATA and NAVIGATIO are absolutely necessary if you wish to be ready for a war in the middle and end game rounds, so it is quite common to see players get one of each very soon (prices of 4 or 5 gold are still reasonable) and then adapt their strategy (buyer of STRATA will recruit more Legions that fleets, and NAVICATIO is ... exactly the inverse).

- Rushing for the Temples also is very important, not only because they give you those TWO extra resources in each city, but mostly because they are interesting strongholds against a fable enemy menace (a City with a temple has a defense value of 3). And do not forget that you will get a Personage card every 3 temples.

- Of course if you find an opportunity to attack and destroy a City with a Temple you

have to take it because you immediately gain one Personage and you reduce the production capacities of your opponent.

- Early attacks in the game are rare, but if you see the possibility to conquer a City in the "heart" of the enemy kingdom ... never hesitate to do it: you certainly lose some extra units but your opponent will be obliged to divert important forces to re-conquer as soon as possible this City. Otherwise you may recruit new units there and menace his interior lines, a thing that must be avoided at all costs.

- In Duellum, contrary to ANTIKE, all the units lost in battle are returned to the Recruitment box, and NOT to the reserve, so a good "combo" will be to make an attack when you have the marker in the second DUELLUM case (the one just before the FERROM case): in the following turn you will get new iron resources and in the turn after you may enter the MILITIA case to take your lost units back in the map.

As most of our tests were made on the Mediterranean map I will end this review with a few comments on the Punic Wars. Carthage and Rome usually play in a different way, and this is due to the starting regions that they have. Carthage will try to get predominance in the Mediterranean Sea and in Iberia, while Roma will try to submit all the Italian, Gallic and Illyrian regions. The clash between the two opponents usually starts in the Massilia/Tolosa vs. Numantia/Tarraco borders: in most of our games Carthage tried an early invasion of Gallia with a combined attack (legions supported by fleets) while Rome was still trying to conquer the north-east Regions of Cremona (thanks Mac ...) and Aquileia. After a few turns Rome is usually able to arrive at a status quo there, retaking the conquered regions before preparing an attack to the Pyrenaei, the real key to Iberia. When this will happens Carthage will know that she has to defend at her best in Iberia and attack the South of Italy (Croton, Neapolis, Brundisium) with her fleets: a blitz against Rome may also be possible, if it is not too much defended (but usually the Roman player will build his first temple just here).

Roma must try to make an early defensive line (Syracusae or Croton/Neapolis/Rome) to stop a possible invasion of the southern Italy: she needs more legions than Carthage to get the control of the North-East regions, so she will be always backwards on the race for the seas. Towards the end game we will typically see Roma with 14 regions against Carthage 12 so pressure will rise in Iberia and a growing fleet in the Mediterranean may become a real menace: everything now will depend on the Personage cards already acquired.

The Aegean map shows a more balanced

initial situation, with the starting cities of each player very closes each other: here control of the sea is even more important because the central part of the map is completely "water". The Persian player has the advantage of being able to invade Macedonia early in the game, and thus the opportunity to attack Greece from the North, but a clever Greek player will build a powerful fleet since the beginning and take all the islands: in effect only Pylos and Chios may be attacked also by land, so the main task of the Greek player will be to immediately destroy every fleet built by his enemy, if possible. The Persian player must maximize his initial rounds to create new cities in the North of Greece and to build there a maximum of Legions: then he must try to attack the defensive line Delphi/Oreos (don't care if Thermopylae is just there, you should be too powerful at that moment) and start to build as many fleets as possible. The Greek player must use the power of his fleets to attack the cities on the back of the Persian armies and even on the other side of the Aegean Sea, in order to oblige his opponent to spend resources to create defensive units. All in all a very interesting game that will oblige you to program well in advance your strategy. ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: Mac Gerdts

Artist: M. Fahrenbach, M. Gerdts

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Publisher: PD-Verlag 2012

www.pd-verlag.de

PLAYERS:
2

AGE:
12+

TIME:
90+

EVALUATION

Cosim
For experts
Version: de
Rules: de en
In-game text: no

Comments:
Two different maps * Two-Player version of Antike * Rules differ in details * Long-term strategies necessary

Compares to:
Antike, Casus Belli

Other editions:
Rio Grande Games, USA; Oya, France



