



CRISIS IN BRITANNIA

Tribal Politics in First Century Britain

THE MEGAGAME

Everyone knows about the second Roman invasion. We learnt at school how Claudius led four crack legions and finished off what Julius Caesar had started nearly a century before - adding a wealthy new province to the Northwest frontier of the Empire.

Most of us remember this as a military walkover - disciplined Roman Legionaries defeating disorganised barbarian hordes and imposing the benefits of civilisation on them.

And this was the historical view when many of us went to school. More recently, however, the view has modified.

Many historians and archaeologists take the view that far from being barbarians, the Celtic inhabitants of Britain had a thriving and sophisticated culture at the time of the invasion, which was almost completely destroyed by Roman colonisation and cultural (as well as political) imperialism.



There are still gaps in the story of the invasion - but it now appears that it was far from the military walkover that it seemed from hindsight.

Certainly at the time the Romans thought it was an extremely dangerous expedition, and fraught with risk. And winning set-piece battles is not the same as winning the war.

So, Crisis in Britannia is a megagame about the cultural, economic and political situation in Britain, starting just at the point of arrival of the Romans. You may find that it challenges some of your mental images of both the Romans and the Britons of the period.

BRITONS

If you choose to be an ancient Briton then you will be working in a tribal team. This part of the game is primarily about personal interactions - politics - leadership - honour - bravado.

Depending on your personalised objectives, you might hate the Romans, you might not

care about the Romans.

Whatever your view on the Romans, you will most certainly have a strong view about your tribal neighbours. The tribal players will be working in a melange of internal and external tribal politics - old enmities and old alliances all impact on the players.

The Romans? - well, they're just another newcomer tribe, aren't they?

You might find you are fighting the Romans, or making deals with them - it all depends on the outcome of crucial tribal council debates which will form one of the main activities of players. So much so, that the tribal players will have a day of entertaining gaming even if the Romans do not invade.

So, to summarise the Tribal game roles:

- **Senior Tribal Chieftains** : Many of these will have particular functions such as; King, Tribal Emissary, General of a Warband. However, the King is just a first among equals, and can be easily deposed if the tribe (=the other players) will not follow.
- **Druid**: essential for the spiritual and moral well-being of the tribe. This is quite a complex role with your own rules for religious practices and divination.



ROMANS

If you choose to be a Roman player you can expect to have a very demanding time of it - both on the political and military level. You have some technological and organisational advantages, but Britain is huge - and the tribes numerous.

On the political front, Claudius and his advisors need to ensure that this is a victory for the 'folks back home' - this is a highly political as well as a military operation.

Also, Claudius has an Empire to run, even when on campaign - so there will also be a steady flow of demands for attention from the rest of the world to keep the Roman political team well and truly distracted.

These are not trivial either - if the Empire is mishandled or ignored then an attempted coup in Rome or a serious war in another part of the Empire could force Claudius to withdraw all or part of his invasion force.

So, to summarise the Roman game roles:



- **Roman Military: Legionary Commanders.** Organising and maintaining a heavily outnumbered invasion force in a hostile and frightening frontier land.
- **Roman Command Staff:** Emperor Claudius and his staff. Will Claudius come back to Rome with his politically vital victory?
- **Roman Diplomat/Trader:** Often the main point of contact between the Empire and the British tribes - traders were employed as emissaries by the Romans. This is a difficult role because traders have few resources and are personally vulnerable so it requires subtle play.

