

# **A Woman's Resolve**

*Designed by Evan D'Alessandro*

## **Designer Notes**

The goal of this design was to create a simple game, with no new components, that simulates Boudica's uprising against the Romans and demonstrates how her drive on Londinium, lack of supporting uprisings, and overconfidence in battle, led to a poor result historically. It is my hope that players use the game to develop superior strategies to Boudica's and to develop a better understanding of the conflict.

Population leaning was determined by utilizing a map of Iceni and Trinovantes homelands, along with a map of the Roman conquest of Britannia (as a general rule the older the conquest, the more Roman-aligned the population). As tribes to the north never participated in the uprising, and likely wouldn't, it was assumed they were against the Romans, but not for Boudica, and hence the lack of support for the Briton player from seemingly anti-Roman forces. The same reasoning applies for the Welsh, who despite many Welsh fighting in a recent rebellion against the Romans did not show great will to rise up to help Boudica, but likely harbored anti-Roman sentiments.

Town markers were determined by a map of colonia in Britannia and the bases of legions. This also influenced the population leaning in some cases.

The possibility for Roman-aligned chief markers was based on a map of Roman civitas in England, while Briton chief markers were based on the rebel's homelands, and possible sympathizers in neighboring regions.

Roman army starting positions and strengths are based on known home bases and deployments at the time of the uprising. The Briton army starting positions reflects the plan by the rebels to attack Camulodunum.

The Roman recruitment pool is based on a loose approximation of the total number of garrison forces in Britannia minus the forces called up, plus additional auxilia or levies. Recruitment for the Romans functionally means calling in the garrisons and gathering up various loose units to bring the legions up to full strength.

Agents are more of a historical invention, intended to represent spies on the Roman side and rabble-rousers on Boudica's side. The Roman agent and one of the Briton agents start in Londinium as it is the hub of Britannia at the time. The second Briton agent can be placed in any Rebel homeland or adjacent province letting them be a 'traveling recruiter' for Boudica and her rebels.

## **Gameplay**

The game is played in five phases. The first phase deals with attempts to change the leaning (sympathy) of the population. This phase takes into account many factors including: 1. the local chieftains' power, who, while often appointed by the Romans, were often less popular than other regional chiefs, or represented a different opinion than their population, 2. the power of agents (rabble-rousers) bringing news (and propaganda) to the people, 3. the power of Boudica and her armies to raise local soldiers dissatisfied with Roman rule, and 4. the majority view of one's neighbors and family on one's own opinions. As stories of victories and

losses travel quickly, players may find it harder to find support among a populace who perceive them as losing.

In the movement phase, the armies and agents move. Romans, able to make good use of roads and with heavy training in route marching have the ability to reposition quickly over long distances. The rabble of the rebels, however, moves much slower and is more a lumbering beast than the Romans quick pace. Boudica has the ability to conceal her true position, only having to move her army when Roman agents (spy's) or Roman armies (scouts) find her trail. This grants her the powerful ability to reposition in a flash to threaten multiple targets at once.

In the battle phase, armies attempt to bring their opponents into battle, a difficult task if the enemy does not wish to fight. Once in battle, the Britons will often have the advantage of quantity, but the Romans will have the advantage of quality. While battles themselves tend to be bloody affairs, they pale in comparison to the slaughter that follows when the victorious army pursues them after defeat. In victory, the enemy's towns can be burned, and for the Britons, that provides fuel to their fire, while for the Romans it turns the population even more against them. However, if the Romans choose not to destroy the warrens of rebel infestation the rebels may pop up yet again. Units are placed back randomly into armies, and if an army ends up with no troops in it, it is destroyed; highlighting the randomness of battle to kill commanders and leave their side short the all-important quality of a true leader of men.

In the recruitment phase, the Britons recruit from local populations supportive of them; a smart player can pre-plan to change the local populations leaning and support for a larger recruitment post-battle and allow a small army to become a major threat in just one turn. The Romans rely on trained troops, scattered in garrisons throughout Britannia, and while many legions start quite powerful, they can also be topped up in cities by calling in troops from around the country. Still, the Roman player does not know the Briton armies strengths until an agent detects them, allowing for feint and deception by the Briton player.

In the victory phase, the Romans win if Boudica has been killed, which is a distinct possibility in the din of battle. The Britons on the other hand have the slightly more daunting task of destroying all Roman legions, or destroying 4 of the 6 Roman towns, either of which would convince the Emperor that Provincia Britannia is no longer worth holding onto, giving the Britons their freedom. An optional VP rule is included as well, with more historical objectives for players who want to use it.

## **Strategy**

The Roman player faces a defensive battle at the outset of the game, and is also confronted with a initial tough choice: do you move the Legio XIV Gemina from Ordivices to the south towards Londinium to begin to concentrate forces to face Boudica and regain the initiative, or finish killing the druids in Ordivices, preventing the Britons from sending an agent up to the north to Ordivices to fill it with strength points?

The Britons have a slightly easier start, with their combat power concentrated in the east. Boudica's ability to build up movement and then use it in one burst allows her to threaten multiple locations and armies at once, tying down Roman forces. The Briton's ability to raise units with agents to block Roman movement (and be subsequently picked up by armies), and the destruction of towns giving the Britons more units should also support the Briton player to keep moving and fighting, forcing the Roman player to continually react.