



COMITATUS

Warfare in the Dark Ages

3rd-11th C AD

Game Scenario

Warlords & Rebels

AD 430

Historical Background

In Roman Gaul circa 430, the Visigoths were pushing north from their base in modern Bordeaux. The patrician Aetius was using Huns and Alans to keep order and campaign against the Burgundians on the Rhine.

Franks and Saxons were moving down from the north while the Gallo-Roman natives hung on to a precarious existence. Some entered into voluntary serfdom exchanging their freedom for the protection of immensely powerful landowners. Others took to the greenwood in a Robin Hood sort of way — becoming known as the *bacaudae*. Particularly prevalent in Armorica (roughly modern Brittany), their ranks were swelled by refugees from Britain.

The Game

This is a multi-player game which attempts to recreate the chaos and confused loyalties in the last years of the Roman Empire in the West.

Up to 8 player-characters (minimum 4) — names in bold below — have different objectives. None have sufficient forces to accomplish their objectives — they will need to make alliances with other players. This makes for a fun, lively game which is a sort of cross between *Diplomacy* and a miniatures' wargame. An umpire is essential.



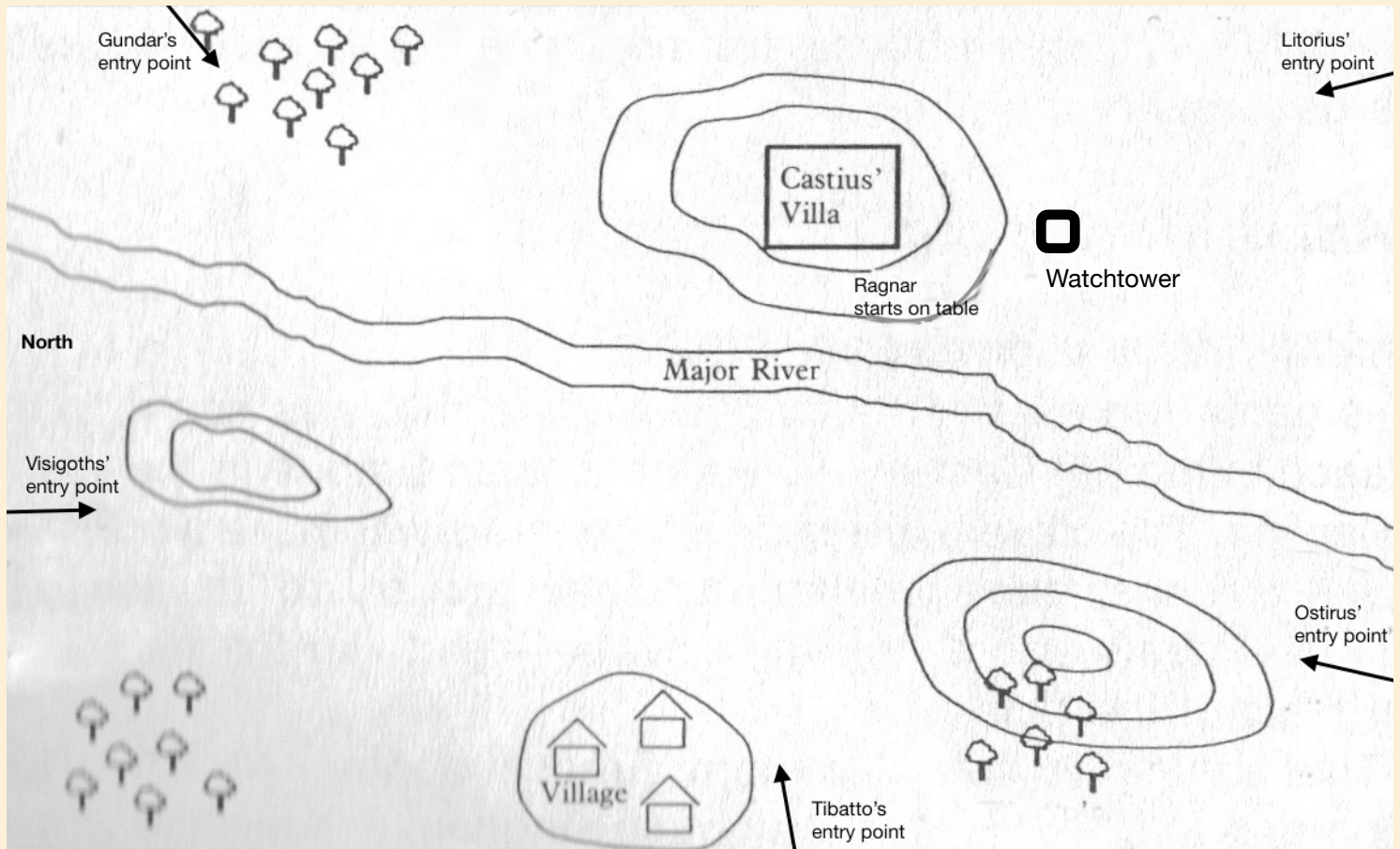
The Backstory

Analosus, a minor Visigothic noble has moved north, busy accumulating wealth and prestige. He has with him **Dietrich** (a young firebrand) and **Atulf** (an older wiser head). **Ragnar**, a Frank, has been hired to protect the villa of the unpleasant local landowner — Castius, who happens to be a personal friend of Aetius and takes advantage of this to live above the law.

One of Ragnar's thugs raped a local woman and the villagers are up in arms. **Ostirus**, the Roman garrison commander is doing his best to keep order with locally recruited men who are more than a little upset with Castius and Ragnar. **Tibatto**, leader of the Armorican Bacaudae shows up on the scene to avenge the villagers and gain new recruits. A Saxon — **Gundar** — is in the area with a band of freebooters looking for gainful employment. Meanwhile Aetius has sent **Litorius** with a Roman field army to crush the Bacaudae and make sure that everyone else behaves themselves. Litorius' 'Roman' army is almost entirely composed of Huns and Alans. Analosus, Tibatto and Litorius are all historical characters — the others fictitious.

Analosus, Ragnar, Ostirus and Tibatto require players. The subordinate Goths could be played by the Analosus player while Litorius and Gundar could be controlled by the umpire.

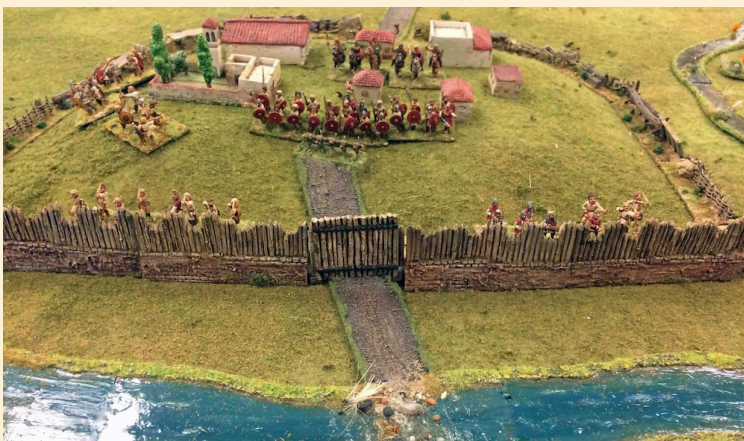
The Set-up



You need a good sized table — 8x5 foot for 15mm figures works well, 10x6 for 28mm figures. Ragnar's men are defending the villa on-table. The village should contain a number of hastily armed peasants and non-combatants. All other forces are off-table at the start, their entry points marked on the above map. The river is fordable in places. Ostirus, Ragnar and the villagers know where the fords are and can cross at will, others will have to find them (die roll of 5 or 6).

The game begins with the Visigoths coming on-table at the start of the first turn. Thereafter player turns are determined by drawing cards or rolling dice. Apart from Ragnar who starts on-table, and the Visigoths who enter automatically on the first turn, all other players must roll 5 or 6 on a die to come on-table. If they fail they must wait until the next turn +1 to the die roll for each succeeding turn. When they roll successfully they may choose to enter immediately or delay their entry until later.

In the command phase of their turn, player characters may send messengers to other player characters and/or read or listen to messages sent to them. The players should not reveal which characters they are playing and the umpire should cagey about revealing too much. Some player-characters have an amount of gold which can be used to bribe or bargain with other player-characters (see briefings below).



Ragnar's men defending the villa.



The Village

Anaolsus' Brief

You are a minor Visigothic noble with no great standing at Theodoric's court. Frustrated by the lack of action, you yearn to emulate the exploits of Alaric. So you have struck out on your own against the Romans in Gaul.

Technically King Theodoric is at peace with the Roman warlord Aetius but he is not displeased by your attempts to expand Gothic influence. Officially he does not sanction your actions but he has placed the experienced warrior Atulf with your force to mentor you. Although you respect Atulf, you feel he is too cautious for your liking. Also in your warband is a young firebrand called Dietrich who is anxious to make a name for himself. You see Dietrich as a potential rival.

You have been raiding Roman territory north of the Loire for the past few months, dodging Roman armies and their Hun mercenaries. It is almost time to head home but you have decided on one more raid first.

The area you have picked out contains a Legionary fort, a rich walled villa and a small village. The fort is too strong to capture although there is little to fear from the garrison in the open. They are typical pathetic Romans, afraid to stand up to valiant warriors like yours in battle. The village will be easy but not likely to yield much loot, perhaps only a few slaves and livestock. The villa on the other hand is rumoured to be one of the wealthiest in Gaul but it is probably well protected.

You have information that other bands of adventurers are also operating in the area and it is possible that they will attempt to seize the loot before you do. It is unlikely that any of them will be as powerful or numerous as your warband. There are also reports of a Roman field army of good troops in the neighbourhood so you will need to move quickly to avoid contact with it.

You have made an arrangement to link up with the Saxon Gundar who is probing down the Loire valley in search of profitable employment and loot. He has promised to help you fight the Romans in exchange for a share of the loot. You will probably need his help if a Roman field army shows up but you are not entirely sure of his trustworthiness. You are approaching from the South while he will be approaching from the West. You may wish to consider sending a messenger with to agree a rendezvous point in advance.

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus. 2 stands Equites, B Grade, exceptional morale. This is the only unit you personally control. All other troops are controlled through subordinates.

Atulf. A wise old warrior who commands his Comitatus (4 stands) of well equipped mounted warriors like yours. Also 4 stands of good shieldwall infantry on foot supported by 4 stands of archers. He also commands the baggage train which is laden with loot from your previous exploits.

Dietrich. He commands 4 stands of mounted warriors in addition to his own mounted comitatus of one stan).

Victory Conditions

Your objective is to raid at least one target and get back safely with your loot. The loot in your baggage train is valued at 150 gold solidi. You have the option of offering some of this as bribes or inducements to others.

Each soldus gained in loot or bribes	+1 point
Each soldus paid out or lost	- 1 point
Each new stand of recruits to your force	+ 5 points
Each Gothic archer stand lost	- 5 points
Each Gothic spearman stand lost	-10 points
Each of your comitatus stands lost	-30 points
Each other mounted stand lost	-20 points
Saxons lost	who cares?

Ragnar's Brief

You are Ragnar, a Frank. You command the private army of Johannes Castius, a powerful Gallo-Roman aristocrat. Your employer is selfish and arrogant but he pays well. Castius has placed you on alert as there has been trouble with the local villagers. There are rumours of rebellious *bacaudae* in the neighbourhood (escaped Roman slaves and adventurers). One of your men allegedly raped a village woman a few days ago. You placed the man under guard but Castius released him for lack of evidence. You are worried that the villagers will rise up against you and join the *bacaudae*, blaming you rather than Castius for the incident.

The nearby legionary commander Julius Ostirus is also concerned about the incident, several of his officers have been seen coming and going from Castius' fortified villa. Castius tells you not to worry but you fear something serious is brewing.

Meanwhile Gundar, a Saxon war leader, has been raiding to the north of you and has been in contact. He is looking for some land to settle and gainful employment for his warriors. He might be a very useful ally.

You and your men begin the game inside Castius' fortified villa. The villa has a large storehouse of coin and precious objects valued at 150 gold *soldi*.

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus: 1 stand shock infantry, B Grade, High Morale — Frankish warriors utterly reliable and well equipped.

Heavy Infantry: 6 stands, C Grade, shieldwall infantry, poor morale — a mix of Roman army deserters, Gallo-Romans, Armoricans, adventurers and a few other unsavoury characters. It was one of these men who was alleged to have committed the rape. Self-serving and ill-disciplined they are not the most reliable of troops but they can hold ground as long as their position is good.

Archers: 4 stands, C Grade, poor morale — local Gallo-Roman archers.

Artillery: 1 light catapult manned by ex-Roman soldiers (B Grade, poor morale) in a nearby watch tower

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to try to diffuse the situation and avoid conflict. Failing that, get the best deal for yourself and your comitatus. You are quite prepared to sacrifice Castius and even your own men (except of course your loyal comitatus).

End the game with secure employment	+50
Become involved in combat other than defending the villa	- 30
If the villa is looted by others	- 20
Each <i>soldus</i> gained in loot or payments (maximum +50)	+1
Employment deal given to the Saxons	- 10

Tibatto's Brief

You are the leader of the Armorican *bacaudae*. The *bacaudae* are a mix of Gallo-Roman farmers, adventurers, army deserters and even a few local magistrates who have banded together to live a free life without paying taxes nor owing allegiance to any powerful warlord. Your power has been steadily growing and more and more people are joining your cause. You have even begun to mint your own coins. Eventually you know that Aetius will force a show-down but you are not yet strong enough to stand up to his Hun and Alan mercenaries in open battle. First you need to increase your support base and recruit new fighters.

Just north of the Loire, not far from your heartland, the Gallo-Roman aristocrat Johannes Castius has been oppressing his people. He is hated by the local villagers and viewed with suspicion by the Imperial authorities, although he is a personal friend of Aetius. He maintains a strong private army and lives in a walled villa. One of his thugs recently raped a local woman and the villagers want justice. This has had an impact on relations with the garrison of the nearby legionary fort as many of the men come from the same village. It seems like a perfect opportunity for you to expand your resources and influence.

Your spies report that several barbarian war bands are roaming the area including Goths, Huns, Alans and Saxons. So you will have to be careful. You do not know if any of these will be hostile or friendly to you. There may well be opportunities to strike a deal with some of their leaders.

You have a purse of 10 gold *soldi* which can be used to induce others to join you or to stand aside. You can be certain of winning over the villagers (without the need of financial inducements) and there is a good chance of getting the commander of the local garrison on side. Julius Ostirus, the garrison commander, is a descent man and your spies report that he would very much like to get rid of Castius.

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus: 2 stands Equites, B Grade, High Morale. They are ex-Roman soldiers and utterly loyal to you.

Fighters: 3 stands, Light Infantry Javelinmen, B Grade, High Morale. Reasonably well equipped men with a high proportion of Roman army deserters and Germanic warriors as well as outlaws and escaped slaves.

Followers: 2 stands, armed rabble, C Grade, Average Morale. Escaped slaves and farmers.

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to win the support of the villagers; gain new recruits and funds

The village is not looted and at the end game is sympathetic to you	+50 points
Each stand of new recruits with fighting experience	+25 points
Each stand of fighters lost	- 25 points
Each Comitatus stand lost	- 50 points
Net increase or decrease in personal wealth	+/- 1 per <i>soldus</i>

Ostirus' Brief

You are the Roman officer charged with the defence of southwestern Gaul. Barbarian invaders are about and local intelligence indicates that Goths, Saxons and Franks may be planning excursions into your region. You have notified higher authorities of this. Word has reached you that the Patrician Aetius has dispatched a detachment of the Gallic field army to deal with any trouble.

This news is not entirely comforting as the local landowner, Johannes Castius had been a thorn in your side and he is a personal friend of Aetius. Some of his thugs raped a local village woman and the villagers want reparations. They have asked you for justice but you have no civil authority and none at all over Castius. The civil authorities have been unable to collect any taxes from him and he seems to live above the law thanks to his strong private army.

If you take no action the villagers may well rebel and join the *bacaudae* - bands of escaped slaves and peasants who have chosen to live as outlaws. One of the most prominent *bacaudae* leaders — Tibatto — is rumoured to be active in the region. As most of your men come from the local area, there is a very real danger that they will join in any rebellion. In which case your head will be on the block.

One of the pillaging bands of barbarians are Saxons led by Gundar. He is less interested in plunder than land to settle and employment for his warriors in the Roman army. He has contacted you and seems willing to fight for you if the price is right. Unfortunately you have no cash and no land to give, unless you seize Castius' estate. You do have a small amount of private funds amounting to 20 gold *solidi*. Castius' estate is walled and protected by mercenaries commanded by the Frank Ragnar. He may well be susceptible to bribery. The village is not protected.

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus: 1 stand, Equites, A Grade, High Morale. Recruited from Goths, Franks, Burgundians and Alamanni. Absolutely loyal to you.

Legionaries: 2 stands, Shieldwall Infantry, C Grade, Average Morale. Recruited from the local peasantry they are not the best soldiers in the world but are reasonable steady in defence.

Archers: 2 stands, C Grade, Average Morale.

Foederati: 3 stands, Light Javelin Cavalry, B Grade, Average Morale. Better troops than the legionaries as they include a number of Germanic warriors. They know the local area and are best suited to fast movement and skirmishing rather than hand to hand combat.

Light Infantry: 4 stands, Skirmishers, B Grade, Average Morale.

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to maintain the peace. Failing that you must retain the loyalty of your men. To do this the villagers will need to believe that justice has been served. The legal system will not help you if it becomes known that you took unauthorised action against Castius. In all likelihood Aetius will have you executed in that case.

Castius is killed and your hands are clean	+75 points
The villagers do not join the <i>bacaudae</i>	+25 points
Your troops mutiny	-100 points
The village is looted	- 25 points
Your men attack the Roman field army	- 50 points
Each 10 <i>solidi</i> spent from your private funds	-10 points
Each 10 <i>solidi</i> gained through loot or bribes	+ 5 points
Each stand of new fighters recruited	+ 5 points

Litorius' Brief

Note: *If not enough players are available, Litorius could be umpire-controlled.*

You are Aetius' most trusted general. He has given you command of an army of Alans and Huns and has charged you with keeping order in southwestern Gaul while he campaigns on the Rhine. Your main task is to crush the rebellious *bacondae* (escaped slaves and rebels) but you are also to keep an eye on the Visigoths. Although the Visigothic King Theodoric is still technically an ally, some of his hot-blooded younger warriors have been striking out on their own.

Tibatto, self-proclaimed 'king' of the *bacondae* has been sighted in the vicinity of the villa of the Gallo-Roman aristocrat Johannes Castius. Castius is a personal friend of Aetius so it is in your interests to keep him happy. Visigothic and Saxon raiders are also reported to be in the area.

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus. 2 stands, Lance & Bow Cavalry, A Grade, High Morale. Mostly of Hun and Sarmatian origin but completely loyal.

Alan Warriors. 4 stands Lance & Bow Cavalry, B Grade, Average Morale.

Alan Archers. 4 stands, light horse archers, B Grade, Average Morale.

Huns. 4 stands, light horse archers, B Grade, High Morale.

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to protect Castius and crush any *bacondae*. You may make a deal with any Goths or Saxons you meet. It is the *bacondae* you are after not the barbarians who in future may well furnish recruits for the army. You have a pot of 50 gold *solidi* which can be spent to encourage others to join you or stand aside.

Tibatto is killed	+ 25 points
Each stand of <i>bacondae</i> destroyed	+ 20 points
Each stand of <i>bacondae</i> sympathisers destroyed	+ 10 points
Castius alive and sends a good report to Aetius	+ 20 points
Every <i>solidi</i> spent or gained	+/- 1point
Each new stand of fighters recruited	+ 10 points

Gundar's Brief

Note: *If not enough players are available, Gundar could be umpire-controlled.*

You are the leader of a Saxon warband. After plundering the Gallic coast you have sailed down the Loire, beached your ships and now you are looking to carve out a new home for yourself and your followers. You have received messengers from the Visigothic leader Anaolsus who is planning a raid on a rich Roman villa in the Loire valley. He has proposed sharing the loot with you in exchange for your support. There are rumours of a Roman field army operating in the region and if it shows up it will be a formidable opponent.

After sending scouts into the area you have learned that the villa, owned by Castius, is protected by walls and is defended by Ragnar, a Frank. He is having trouble with the local villagers and peasant rebels known as *bacaudae*. He may be willing to do a deal in exchange for your help.

There is also a local garrison. Their fort will be too strong to attack but the garrison is too weak to stand up to your men in open battle. You understand that their commander, Ostirus, wants to put Castius in his place and force him to pay taxes.

Clearly there are opportunities for you. You have a tentative deal with the Visigoth Anaolsus but you are open to better offers. It would be good to secure a cushy job as a settled ally of the Romans in sunny southwestern France. It beats the North Sea any day!

You have under your command:

Your Comitatus: 1 stand Shieldwall Infantry, Armoured, B Grade, High Morale.

Warriors: 3 stands Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade, Average Morale

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to secure a deal which will give you land to settle and gainful employment for your men.

Actively support the Goths to loot the villa	+25
Loot the villa yourself (and keep the loot)	+50
Obtain a deal with Goths or Romans which gives you employment	+50
Each gold soldi gained other than from loot	+1
Comitatus stand lost	- 50
Other stand lost	- 20

Atulf's Brief

Note: *If not enough players are available, Atulf could be controlled by the Analosus player. The umpire should intervene if Analosus tries to get Atulf to do anything that would go against this brief.*

You are a wise, experienced Gothic warrior sent by King Theodoric to keep an eye on the firebrand Anaolsus who has been striking out on his own against the Romans north of the Visigothic kingdom. King Theodoric does not want to openly break with the Roman Aetius who is the power in Gaul but he has let you know that he is not unhappy to let Anaolsus expand Gothic influence north of the Loire as long as this does not cause a major diplomatic incident. It is your job to ensure that the latter does not happen.

After a successful summer of raiding, the baggage train (which is under your protection) now holds loot valued at 150 gold solid. Anaolsus wants to conduct one more raid on a rich villa owned by Johannes Castius who happens to be a personal friend of Aetius. This worries you, as does the information that bacaudae (Gallo-Roman peasant rebels), Saxons and Franks are also eyeing up the territory and a Roman field army is rumoured to be close by. You advised Anaolsus not to attack but he has ignored your advice. There are three possible targets: a legionary fort, which is too strong to attack; an unprotected village which should be easy but the amount of loot will be minimal; and Castius' walled villa which is rumoured to contain a fortune but is well protected by ruffians commanded by the Frank Ragnar.

You have sworn allegiance to Anaolsus. As part of his army you have the following forces under your direct command:

Your Comitatus: 4 stands, Equites, B Grade, High Morale. They may dismount counting as 2 stands, Shieldwall Infantry.

Warriors: 4 stands, Shieldwall Infantry, B Grade, Average Morale.

Archers: 4 stands, B Grade, Average Morale. They can either skirmish or form up behind shieldwall infantry to shoot overhead.

Baggage Train: No combat capability. It is laden with loot from your previous exploits but still has room for more. At the start it contains loot valued at 150 gold soldi.

Victory Conditions: Your reputation is more important than loot or even your life. Your objective is to maintain or increase your reputation and avoid an unnecessary diplomatic incident with Aetius.

Kill an enemy commander in combat	+ 10 points
Anaolsus is killed and you survive	- 20 points
If any Goths engage the Roman field army	- 20 points
If the baggage train contains less than 150 soldi at the end	- 1 point for each soldi less
Each warrior stand lost	- 10 points
Each comitatus stand lost	- 25 points

Dietrich's Brief

Note: *If not enough players are available, Dietrich could be controlled by the Analosus player. The umpire should intervene if Analosus tries to get Dietrich to do anything that would go against this brief. If there are enough players for one additional Visigoth, Dietrich should be a player-character while Atulf is controlled by the Analosus player.*

You are a young upcoming Visigothic warrior anxious to make a name for yourself. You have joined Anaolsus' warband as you are frustrated by years of peace and inaction. Your forefathers made a name for themselves by waging war against the Romans, even sacking Rome. You hope to emulate their exploits. You have had a successful summer raiding northern Gaul but you worry that Anaolsus will gain all the glory. There will be one more raid before you head for home and this is your opportunity to establish your reputation.

Also in Anaolsus' warband is the old fool Atulf. He always advises caution but he had his opportunity decades ago. Now it is your turn for glory.

You have sworn allegiance to Anaolsus. As part of his army you have the following forces under your direct command:

Your Comitatus: 1 stand, Equites, B Grade, Exceptional Morale.

Warriors: 4 stands, Equites, B Grade, High Morale.

Your men may dismount as 1 shieldwall infantry stand per two cavalry stands. However, they prefer to remain mounted. If dismounted they drop one morale level — Exceptional Morale becomes High Morale, High Morale becomes Average Morale.

Victory Conditions: Your objective is to enhance your reputation and amass as much loot as possible. You start the game with a purse of 10 gold soldi which can be used to bribe or induce other players.

Kill an enemy commander in combat	+ 20 points
Break or destroy an enemy comitatus	+ 10 points
Loot the villa	+ 60 points
Loot the village	+ 10 points
Increase in personal wealth	+ 1 point per soldi
Decrease in personal wealth	- 1 point per soldi

