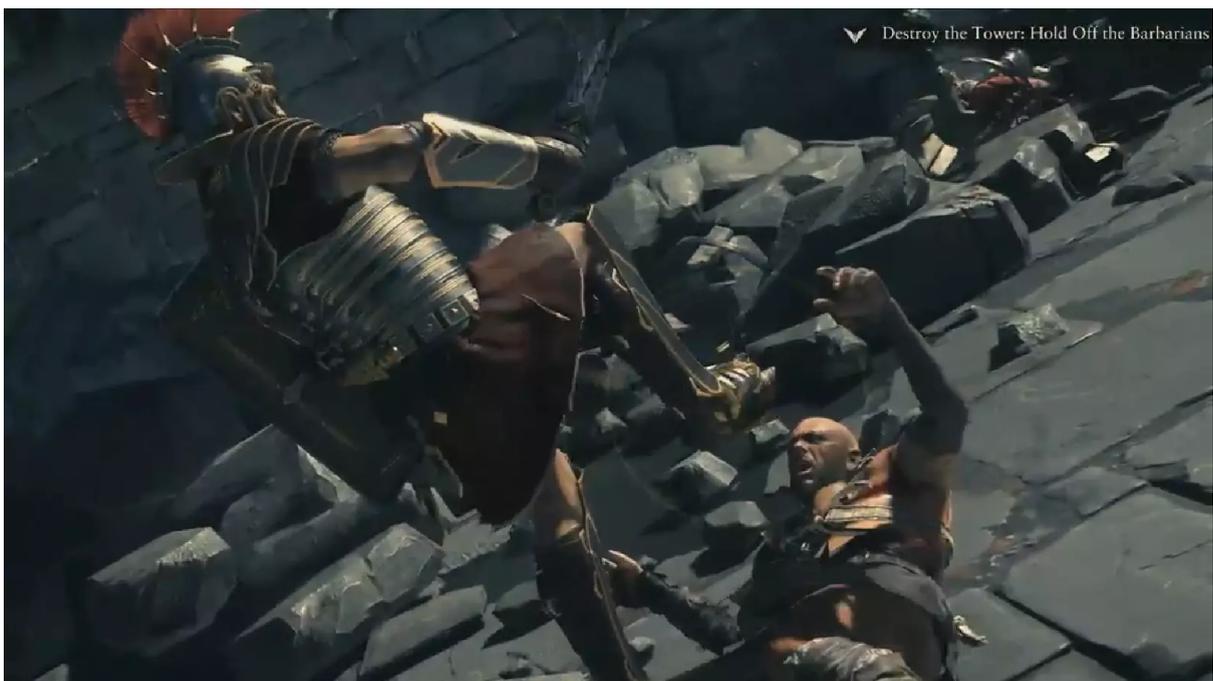


# Losers of history: the representations of conquered peoples in video games



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30-06-2021

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Words (excluding footnotes, appendices and bibliography): 31,772.

## Abstract

Video games continuously become more popular, and the number of historically themed games is ever-growing. Only relatively recently has more attention been granted to the topic from the history discipline. This thesis positions itself within this new and dynamic field, and focuses on the question of how cultures conquered by the Roman Empire are represented in video games, what sources are used for this representation, how this history is treated, and what function this representation fulfills within a video game? The two most often encountered cultures in games featuring Romans will be analyzed: barbarians and Carthaginians. The sources partly consist of multiple video games, *Legionnaire*, *Annals of Rome*, *Ryse: Son of Rome*, *Old World*, and *Imperator: Rome*, partly of primary literature by authors as Julius Caesar, Diodorus Siculus, Livy, Virgil, Polybius, and finally, some archaeological or epigraphic sources are used. The representations are analyzed partly by studying the game but also focusing on the game files that hold more information. Then, an analysis is made of what sources are used for the various representations of these cultures. To determine the function within a video game, the theory around heroes and villains by Scott Allison and George Goethals, and the theory around the hero's journey by Joseph Campbell and Christopher Vogler, are employed. The representation of barbarians is predominantly based upon Caesar's *Bello Gallico* and the text of Cassius Dio. The barbarians are portrayed as violent and cruel but also easy enemies that require very little redeeming qualities. Carthaginians, on the other hand, are most often based on the works of Polybius and Livy. They are portrayed as rich, having naval superiority, and honorable and powerful enemies. The ancient texts that portrayed the different groups proved powerful enough to withstand the test of time and influence the digital representation of these peoples millennia later.

## Acknowledgments

For everyone, the corona crisis caused their ordinary lives to be put on hold. Completing the last year of this Research Master's Programme has been challenging, as well. This period truly proved to me just how crucial external motivation is from teachers, peers, and friends. For me, this thesis concludes multiple important phases in my life. Firstly, of course, the end of the Research Master, and that of my time being a student at University Utrecht, and finally, the (hopefully) ending of the most significant impact of corona and the beginning of more people being protected by the vaccines. I could not have written this thesis without a great deal of support and help, and some thanks are in order.

I would like to thank my colleagues at VALUE Foundation for their insights and ideas. They showed me how academic research within video games can, and should, take place, which motivated me to pick the topic in the first place. A special thanks to Dr. Angus Mol and Tirreg Verburg, who took the time to read and comment on parts of my thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Ortal-Paz Saar, for giving great tips about literature, helping me improve my thesis tremendously but also for the moral support when stressful situations occurred.

In addition, I would like to thank my friends. Samantha, for her helping me improve my thesis, maintain my physical health by working out together, and offering kind words when the stress got to me. I would like to thank Anouk and Iris for stimulating discussions, and welcome distractions to interest my mind outside of my research.

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## Introduction

In 2014 there were an estimated 1.82 billion video gamers, and in 2021 this number is expected to rise to a staggering 2.7 billion, according to Christina Gough.<sup>1</sup> Especially during the coronavirus crisis, the number of gamers and sold games has expanded exponentially.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, at least a part of the academic world is still falling somewhat behind on the enormous popularity of video games. Only recently, this field has received more serious attention, making it a notable new and dynamic field.

Quite a number of games are historically themed, with millions of players experiencing history through this medium.<sup>3</sup> Christian Rollinger's newest collected work about ancient history in video games, *Classical Antiquity in Video Games: Playing with the ancient world*, still justifies the writing of such a book while simultaneously acknowledging that this justification should not be necessary; video games *require* true academic research.<sup>4</sup> This thesis operates within the dynamic field of history within video games as well, introducing a new perspective centered around the representation of two historical cultures. While most games centered around the western Mediterranean in antiquity feature Romans as protagonists, this thesis sets out to explore two of their most common enemies in games: barbarians and Carthaginians, who were the 'losers of history', in a sense.

Game studies became a separate field of research in the nineties of the previous century and it was the first discipline to conduct academic research on video games. It aimed to create an analytical appreciation and enhanced understanding of video games. The main framework that was employed focuses on the distinctions between gameplay and representational aspects of games. This was done employing three separate but overlapping fields of interest: the study of games, a study of the players, and a study of the context of the previous two. Game studies was, from the onset, a multidisciplinary field. Researchers from computer science and a more technological background were mostly active in the study of games, game mechanics, and the new technologies that made them possible; scholars from a psychological and sociological background were more prone to study the players, and lastly, academics from literary and film and media studies were mostly interested in the context of the study of games and the players.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gough (2019). For summary open access; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/748044/number-video-gamers-world/> (accessed 26-08-2020).

<sup>2</sup> Witkowsky (2020). <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/videogames-are-a-bigger-industry-than-sports-and-movies-combined-thanks-to-the-pandemic-11608654990> (accessed 23-02-2021).

<sup>3</sup> On Steam, one of the biggest digital distribution services, 1229 video games are listed with the tag 'historical'; [https://store.steampowered.com/tag/browse/#global\\_3987](https://store.steampowered.com/tag/browse/#global_3987) (accessed 23-02-2021).

<sup>4</sup> Rollinger (2020) 2-5.

<sup>5</sup> Mayra (2008) 1-8.

Soon after the development of this field of research, researchers with a background in humanities realized that their method was agreeably applicable to in-game texts. Three influential articles represent the different perspectives that were created by the textual method. The first was by Theodor Nelson, who wrote about the importance of hypertext, a form of non-sequential writing that presents itself when players are confronted with textual choices.<sup>6</sup> Related to this study is that of Aarseth, who talks about cybertext. He means to expand the scope of literary studies to include the phenomena of texts that appear outside of the traditional field of literature but are, according to Espen Aarseth, in need of the same treatment.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, Nick Montfort perceives text in video games as interactive fiction to control the revelation of the narrative, and thus the interactive process itself generates narrative.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to name these textual perspectives within the field of game studies because this appealed to more disciplines within the humanities. Historical research into video games was slower to form than game studies themselves, but they brought their own perspectives to the field, resulting in three distinct areas of research. Firstly, the depiction of historical ‘accuracy’ and/or ‘authenticity’, secondly, the way historical processes or history itself is presented or simulated, and thirdly, the didactic potential and public engagement.<sup>9</sup> These perspectives are still dominant in this field of research, although newer ones are slowly emerging as well. The last few years have seen rapid growth in the number of archaeological, historical, and Classical studies on Rome and other ancient Mediterranean cultures in games — these works are published both in traditional academic outlets and on online blogs and social media.

While all of the approaches offer valuable perspectives on video games, in this thesis, I choose to employ a perspective new to the field of Classics: *How are cultures conquered by the Roman Empire represented in video games, what sources are used for this representation, how is this history treated and what function does this representation fulfill within a video game?*<sup>10</sup> This steers away from the discussion: is this game historically accurate? A suboptimal question since the answer will be a resounding ‘no’ in most cases. By focusing on *how* certain representations appeared in games, a better understanding of

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson (1990) 2.

<sup>7</sup> Aarseth (1997) 1, 3, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Montfort (2003) 2, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>10</sup> This was my main question while doing research for VALUE Foundation, in a video series about the game *Imperator: Rome* this question has been answered for Etruria, Delphi, Carthage, Icenia, and Byblos. In my video’s the results of this research have been presented in an informative, but entertaining way. VALUE, ‘Exploring Imperator Rome’, <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKbRwyeu6RQu9ivDLD5Ewy3hhS3bzERYd> (accessed 01-04-2021).

the ideas about history that are shared by a large (predominantly western) demographic can be achieved, since video games undoubtedly reach more people than the average academic article.

Most of the games set in (West-)Europe in the period 300 BCE to 400 CE feature Romans as protagonists. This is most likely the result of people's familiarity with the Roman Empire, as well as the continued popularity of the empire in various other popular media.<sup>11</sup> As a result, most of the academic research is focused on the portrayal of Romans.<sup>12</sup> In history, as well as in most games, the Romans are not the only player in the world, it is therefore just as important to examine their adversaries.

One of the most used, as well as the first virtual enemy the Romans ever had to face, were the barbarians.<sup>13</sup> This is why chapter I focuses on the representation of barbarians in four selected video games. Another big player in the digital world for the Romans is Carthage, both because they are a powerful adversary, but also because they remained popular in modern culture. These two cultures were both conquered by the Roman Empire, and thus are 'losers of history', in a sense. How is this position and history represented in a game?

### *Sources*

This thesis utilizes two types of primary sources, of a divergent nature. First and foremost, video games are explored using both the game that is presented to the player, and the game files. Secondly, these sources are compared to more traditional primary sources; ancient historical texts. The sources that are used in this thesis were mostly written in the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE, with a majority from the 1st century BCE. Primarily Caesar, Tacitus, Livy, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Vergil and Cassius Dio appear in this thesis, with a mention to other authors in some instances. Additionally, this thesis makes a number of references to archaeological, iconographic, and epigraphic sources.

In the first chapter centered around barbarians, a number of games could have been analyzed. I decided to begin this chapter with the first game to ever feature Romans, and barbarians were their premier virtual adversaries. The real-time strategy game, *Legionnaire*,

<sup>11</sup> To get an idea about the number of movies that appeared about the Romans or the Roman Empire, take a look at this list; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_films\\_set\\_in\\_ancient\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_set_in_ancient_Rome) (accessed 23-02-2021). In Steam, a digital distribution system for video games, at least 82 games are listed under the tag 'Rome', <https://store.steampowered.com/tags/en/Rome/#p=0&tab=TopSellers> (accessed 23-02-2021). A list of 340 of the top-voted Roman fiction novels on Goodread shows many recent titles: [https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/14958.Best\\_Historical\\_Fiction\\_About\\_Ancient\\_Rome](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/14958.Best_Historical_Fiction_About_Ancient_Rome) (accessed 23-02-2021).

<sup>12</sup> For example, Machado (2020) 93-105; McCall (2020) 107-125.

<sup>13</sup> While this term has negative connotations, it will still be used for the simple reason that the video games choose to do so. In general, this refers to any group of people that is non-Roman and appears to the North of the borders of the Roman Empire. Further reflection upon the word will be made in chapter I.

was released in 1982 by Avalon Hill Company.<sup>14</sup> It is important to include this first Roman themed video game since this precluded the beginning of the real-time genre but also influenced later representations of both Romans and barbarians. Then, the third-person action-adventure game *Ryse: Son of Rome* is analyzed. This game was released by Crytek in 2014, and the player follows a set narrative around the centurion Marius Titus who defends the Roman Empire against the barbarians.<sup>15</sup> Thirdly, the barbarians in *Old World* by Mohawk Games will be examined. This 2021 turn-based strategy 4X game represents a type of barbarian often used in video games.<sup>16</sup> *Imperator: Rome* is a 2019 grand-strategy game by Paradox Interactive Studios in which the player chooses a political state to play as and gets to manage this as the ruler.<sup>17</sup> The game is rich in possibilities and information, and attempts to create multifaceted cultures. This means that you, as the player, can actually choose to be a 'barbaric tribe'. The comparison will show how barbarians are differently portrayed and how the type of game plays a role in this.

For chapter II, the first turn-based strategy game featuring Romans will be analyzed. *Annals of Rome* was released only a few years after *Legionnaire*, in 1986 by Personal Software Services.<sup>18</sup> The geopolitical environment simulated in this game set the tone for many games hereafter, and *Imperator: Rome*, though much complexer, still shows the same basic principle. The major adversary in this game are the Carthaginians, which is also an element that consistently appears in games hereafter. Secondly, Carthage in the game *Old World* will be analyzed.<sup>19</sup> This game is important because it uses a very popular format, known from the *Sid Meier* games, but completely focused on the ancient world. Lastly, *Imperator: Rome* will be extensively studied, focusing on multiple aspects of the grand-strategy game. Since the Carthaginians received more attention, and have more unique features, this part will consider more aspects than in the case of the barbarians.

The games selected for this research are primarily well-sold games because more people interact with these than lesser known counterparts.<sup>20</sup> The exceptions here are the two

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<sup>14</sup> Avalon Hill Company (1982); for a list of all game terminology and accompanying definitions see Appendix A: Game terminology.

<sup>15</sup> Steam, 'Ryse: Son of Rome', [https://store.steampowered.com/app/302510/Ryse\\_Son\\_of\\_Rome/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/302510/Ryse_Son_of_Rome/) (accessed 25-02-2021).

<sup>16</sup> Mohawk Games, 'Old World', <https://www.mohawkgames.com/oldworld/> (accessed 03-06-2021).

<sup>17</sup> The term 'political state' is loosely used here. In the game this comprises every playable geographical separate political entity. For more information see the Steam-page; [https://store.steampowered.com/app/859580/Imperator\\_Rome/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/859580/Imperator_Rome/) (accessed 23-02-2021).

<sup>18</sup> Steam, 'Annals of Rome', [https://store.steampowered.com/app/1148670/Annals\\_of\\_Rome/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1148670/Annals_of_Rome/) (accessed 16-04-2021).

<sup>19</sup> Mohawk Games, 'Old World', <https://www.mohawkgames.com/oldworld/> (accessed 03-06-2021).

<sup>20</sup> According to 'Steamspy', a website that tracks the number of games sold and their overall rating, *Ryse: son of Rome* is owned by over two million players, with a popularity of 85%, and *Imperator: Rome* is owned by over one million players, with a popularity score of 76%. *Old World* is officially still in 'early access' which means no definitive numbers exist of the game. For the oldest two games it is difficult to establish how many people have played it, since it has been re-released in a modern

games from the 1980s, simply because games and the consoles you played them on were expensive and not as accessible as video games today and *Old World*, because this has just been released. The reason for including the first two nonetheless is that they had a significant impact on how some elements would be represented in later games and thus are the starting point of the chapters. There is a heavy focus on (grand-)strategy games in this thesis since they lend themselves well for this type of research. They are more textual-based and have more elements and multiple political entities appear in the same world. Secondly, there are simply more strategy games about this historical period than action games. To balance this, I also included the action-adventure games *Ryse*. I would have liked to also include one in the chapter about Carthage, but unfortunately, no such game with the selected criteria is currently available.

After the game analysis, the text and information shown in a game will be compared with ancient sources. Caesar's *Bello Gallico* is popular as an inspiration for video games that portray Roman warfare, for example. These sources often do not have the intention to show non-Roman peoples in a neutral light, especially not when they are enemies. Caesar is preoccupied with his own political and popular image, and he makes sure to use language that would justify his military campaigns in Gaul, for example making the barbarians seem overly aggressive, while minimizing the losses he suffered.<sup>21</sup> While the academic world would usually not take these sources at face value nowadays, video game developers do not necessarily share these concerns. This can cause certain elements to show up in games that are usually regarded as (partly) untrue by the academic field. This thesis attempts to demonstrate what results this approach yields.

Lastly, the representation about the adversaries of the digital Romans, come from earlier historiography. Sometimes the ideas became popularized by other media, like literature or movies and find their way into the video games. Mainly the 18th and 19th century have played an enormously influential role in creating certain ideas about history in general, and some of those ideas stuck.

### *Method*

To be able to answer the research question put forward, I have employed both traditional methods of historical research as well as novel ones. First, I played the games and captured the footage using Open Broadcast Software (OBS) for later research, and made notes throughout the game.<sup>22</sup> I tried to focus on both what was visually depicted, but also tried to be aware of what was lacking. While the game *Ryse* is very visual, *Legionnaire*,

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format, next to their old physical copy. For the first two games see; Steamspy, 'Search Rome', <https://steamspy.com/search.php?s=Imperator%3A+Rome> (accessed 26-06-2021).

<sup>21</sup> Dimitrova (2017) 2-14, 69-73.

<sup>22</sup> Open Broadcaster Software, 'OBS Studio', <https://obsproject.com/> (accessed 02-04-2021).

*Annals of Rome*, *Old World*, and *Imperator: Rome* are more text-based and lend themselves well for textual research.

Secondly, I used ancient sources to analyze what they mentioned about a specific tribe or culture. Literary sources are most important, but sometimes a material source is used. Then I would look into later historiography with the aim to find similarities to the game. Video games are also very visual representations, of course, and they are sometimes influenced by other visual media as well: tv-series and movies. For this reason, some trends in other visual media are also included.

Thirdly, it is impossible to encounter all possibilities while playing a game. A better and quicker way to find all possibilities and understand them is by looking at the game files. I have developed this method myself, and while I believe there is probably an even faster way to conduct this type of research, it proved itself quite helpful in extracting information. When a game is installed, it stores certain files and folders on your computer that are used to run the game. Simply put: everything you see in a game must be stored somewhere in these game files. A number of these files are text-based, which means that information can be extracted without the need for coding skills. The newer games (this excludes both *Legionnaire* and *Annals of Rome*) use so-called 'high-level programming language', which means they use natural language elements, in other words, phrasing that is easier to grasp since it is more descriptive.<sup>23</sup>

I opened the files with a program called Notepad++ that allows for quick searching and cross-referencing of different text-based files. In these files, there is information about all cultures, names, events, and game mechanics. While it is easier to read, for people who are not familiar with it, it might seem daunting at first. I will present here a small example of what this might look like in *Imperator: Rome*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> 'low-level programming language' in contrast, uses abbreviations and hard-to-grasp coding for anyone who was not involved in making the code. This means that the 'high-level programming language' is, in general, easier to understand and change.

<sup>24</sup> For good measure, the files in this example can be accessed by going to the following location when the game is installed: Steam>Steamapps>common>ImperatorRome>game>common>heritage>country\_Specific. For readability purposes, I have chosen to display this example in regular Notepad.

```
carthaginian_heritage = {
  modifier = {
    #good
    global_export_commerce_modifier = 0.1
    navy_maintenance_cost = -0.1
    max_mercenary_stacks = 1
    |
    #bad
    levy_size_multiplier = -0.025
  }

  trigger = {
    tag = CAR
  }
}

antigonid_heritage = {
  modifier = {
    #good
    siege_ability = 0.05
    diplomatic_reputation = 2

    #bad
    global_defensive = -0.1
  }

  trigger = {
    tag = PRY
  }
}
```

Figure 1: Example of text-based game files.

In Figure 1, I looked for Carthaginian heritage.<sup>25</sup> It helps when one is familiar with the game when examining these files since the player would already know what ‘heritages’ are in this game and what they do. Heritages give bonuses or penalties to a political entity, and this file tells us that Carthaginian heritage gives three bonuses (#good) and one penalty (#bad). The bonus allows Carthage a 10% boost in export (global\_export\_commerce\_modifier = 0.1), lower navy maintenance costs (navy\_maintenance\_cost = -0.1) and the player can have more armies of mercenaries (max\_mercenary\_stacks = 1). The penalty for Carthage is that the levy sizes will shrink (levy\_size\_multiplier = -0.025).<sup>26</sup> This information can also be found in the game, which looks like Figure 2. This particular file consists of a whole list of all the heritages, as you can see for the Antigonid heritage below the Carthaginian one.

<sup>25</sup> All images are screenshots of the video games by the author, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>26</sup> Negative multipliers indicate continued shrinking.



Figure 2: Carthaginian heritage in *Imperator: Rome*.

While the heritages can be found quite easily in the game *Imperator: Rome*, there are plenty of other events, missions, and descriptions that the player will only encounter in specific circumstances. For example, when a player makes a choice between two options, they will not see where the other option would have taken them. Secondly, some effects and consequences might actually be hidden within the game but can be found in the game files, a preliminary 'HIDDEN' shows these effects. Lastly, even though it is possible to find all information in a game in principle, it would take many hours to do so, and this method is reducing that time drastically.

I will include a small part of these game files as an appendix, but not in its entirety. The reason for this is a pragmatic one. On average, one file of one folder will take up to five pages. One folder usually contains about three files, although it can be as many as forty, and in total there are 77 folders for *Imperator: Rome* alone, which would come down to over a thousand pages full of text-based files.

Summing up, the methodology employed in this thesis combines an original method created for the purpose of this research with traditional historical analysis. The primary sources of the player's experience of a video game and the game files behind the game will be compared to the ancient sources mentioned before.

### *Theoretical Framework.*

The type of research I present here makes use of reception theory, a concept used predominantly as an interpretative aid in literary studies. Recreating ancient history by creating that particular world in games is a form of classical reception. According to Charles Martindale, whose writing influenced the development of classical receptions greatly, the meaning of such creation is 'always realized at the point of reception'.<sup>27</sup> In this theory, our own sociopolitical context and worldviews play a role in how we give meaning to the content

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<sup>27</sup> Martindale (1993) 3; Holub (1984).

we see, in this case, video games. In this theory, our own sociopolitical context and worldviews play a role in how we give meaning to the content we see, in this case, video games. Thus, this will create a dialogue between both the ancient world and its representation within the digital world.<sup>28</sup> There is, however, an extra element to be added: the expectations of history, and of a historic game, by the player. If games present history in a too unfamiliar way, there is a chance that the player will reject this representation.<sup>29</sup> This is why it is also important to look at other contemporary media, such as movies, since they have standardized some ideas of ancient history before games did this.

Secondly, it is necessary to realize that in most games about antiquity that feature the Romans, they are the stories' protagonists. The other peoples are often there to fight the Roman Empire and to be defeated by the player. Often the virtues and strengths of the protagonist are mirrored in the vices and weaknesses of their adversary.<sup>30</sup> These types of antagonists are also known as 'foils', this concept is applied broadly to contrast differences. Not only between individuals, but also between groups, cultures or countries, for example. Thomas F. Gieryn divides these into three categories. The first category emphasizes the heightened contrast and places focus on the part which is perceived as different. The second revolves around exclusion, which bears a resemblance to othering. The third category assigns blame, something goes wrong and the blame falls upon the antagonist, which instantly also points out what the problem is with them.<sup>31</sup>

While this type of adversary is predominantly encountered when looking at the barbarians in the first chapter, a broader theoretical framework must be used overall. The work of Scott Allison and George Goethals focuses on heroes and villains.<sup>32</sup> In their research, they asked people to name heroes and villains, and 34% of these were fictional, which indicates that even stories, whether those are written in a book, were presented on the screen, or indeed, encountered in video games, made a lasting impression on the audience.<sup>33</sup>

Heroes, as well as villains, possess specific traits, according to Allison and Goethals, which they refer to as the Great Eight and the Evil Eight that consist in case of the former part of 'Smart, Strong, Selfless, Caring, Charismatic, Resilient, Reliable and Inspiring' and in case of the latter 'Smart, Resilient, Violent, Greedy, Mentally Ill, Immoral, Egotistical and Vengeful'.<sup>34</sup> Evidently, some of these traits are the same, and the character's behavior can then make the difference between the fine line between villain or hero. However, the more

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<sup>28</sup> Bakogianni (2016) 97-8.

<sup>29</sup> Lozano (2020) 55.

<sup>30</sup> Pötzsch (2018) 59-68.

<sup>31</sup> Gieryn (1983) 788-790.

<sup>32</sup> Allison and Goethals (2011).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 61, 161.

boxes a character ticks on one of the sides, the more chance you are dealing with a superhero or supervillain. Throughout this thesis, I will reflect on the theories of Allison and Goethals where applicable.

Lastly, it is important to note that these ideas put forward about heroes and villains are still part of an older tradition, most famously written down by Carl Jung. His archetypes and theories are still in use in media studies, end up in movies, and, thus, in video games. The hero archetype had as archetypal motif to overcome obstacles and achieve specific goals that are almost unattainable.<sup>35</sup> For the reader, or player in this case, it becomes a long-hoped-for and expected triumph of consciousness and the defeat of evil. What is even more important when playing video games is not necessarily the grand finale, the inevitable triumph, but the journey to that climax, since this is the most interactive part of a game. Joseph Campbell, and later Christopher Vogler, put emphasis on the heroes' journey and compared those to human lived experiences.<sup>36</sup> Often players identify to a degree with the main character of a game, or maybe with an important side character. Players have to put in the work, even though their character might already possess one or multiple character traits, to triumph and thus achieve hero status. This might be part of the appeal of video games. They allow the player to feel like a hero.

These theories about heroism and villainism are evidently best applicable when dealing with persons, and this seems to exclude at least part of the games that will be analyzed in this thesis. However, I will use these theories about heroism and villainy to a lesser or greater degree when talking about the adversaries of the Romans in general. A certain chapter in the book of Allison and Goethals inspired me to do so. In one of their experiments, they showed their participants a circle moving along a horizontal line, which turned into a slope.

They created four different scenarios: the first one showed the circle moving on the slope at the same speed, the second one the circle's speed noticeable declined as it moved up the hill, in a third condition the circle slowed as it traversed the hill and was passed by a second circle that did not slow down, and lastly, a speedy second circle that not only passed the first slower one, but it even bumped the slower one down a bit. When they asked the participants to indicate how much they *liked* each circle, the participants sympathized, even rooted, for circles when they struggled, mostly so when a circle was bumped down by a second one.<sup>37</sup> This proves that people react emotionally to even a simple animation. For this reason, I think it is only logical to assume that people experience the same type of emotional

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<sup>35</sup> Jung (1969) 48-49.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell (1949) 20-27; Vogler (2008) 3-6.

<sup>37</sup> Allison and Goethals (2011) 129-132.

responses when not only dealing with persons, but also, for example, with struggling states in grand-strategy games.

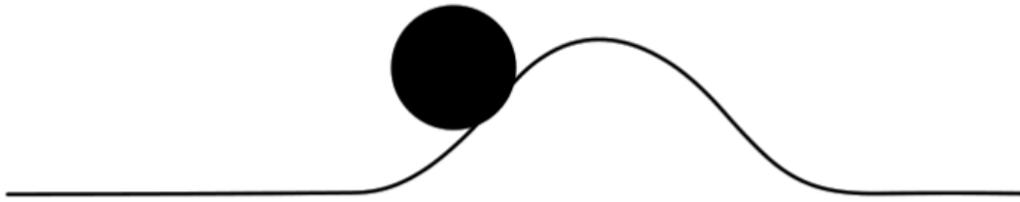


Figure 3: The circle used in the experiments by Allison and Goethals. Participants liked, rooted for, and sympathized with this circle. Allison and Goethals (2011) 30.

As is evident from this brief overview, I used theories outside the field of ancient history. Reception studies, game studies, literary studies, and social studies are all incorporated in my thesis to a certain degree since it is impossible to write a study about video games without being multidisciplinary. There is simply not a whole body of historiography about the specific topic I present here, and as my method shows, sometimes I had to develop new strategies myself. The most helpful secondary source I have used was undoubtedly by Christian Rollinger, mentioned earlier. This book is both brilliant and covers a broad scope of games, perspectives, and aims. Secondly, I had the privilege of working for VALUE Foundation, which focuses on researching history in video games. I wrote articles in cooperation with other members, and also performed my own research with the support of my colleagues. Lastly, VALUE organized a conference on the topic of research of video games with a variety of topics and speakers within this theme.<sup>38</sup> Most of the presenters have yet to publish their research, so I cannot refer to their articles here yet.

### *Structure*

This thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is centered around the barbarians, and the second one around the Carthaginians. Both chapters will begin by offering a short overview of the reception of the different peoples throughout time, to be able to place the video game content in a broader context and to provide an idea of where certain representations stem from. Secondly, the representations within games will be analyzed to answer the question of how historical sources influenced these. Hereafter, the video games will be compared to the receptions sketched at the beginning of the chapter.

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<sup>38</sup> The Interactive Pasts Conference Online 2 in particular was very insightful. Two full days of speakers and discussions helped me gain insight in the developments within the field, and what questions could and should be asked. For more information see: VALUE Foundation, 'The Interactive Pasts Conference Online 2', <https://interactivepasts.com/the-interactive-pasts-conference-2-online/> (accessed 4-06-2021).

The chapters will start with the oldest games, since these show how cultures were represented using the least technological possibilities, and were nonetheless highly influential. The games *Ryse: Son of Rome* and *Old World* follow and, lastly, *Imperator: Rome* is analyzed. At the end of each chapter, the different video games will be compared to one another, and to the broader theoretical framework about reception studies, 'foils', and the Great or Evil Eight. In this way, the representation of the different peoples will be analyzed.

## **Chapter I: The Perfect Enemy; the Representation of Barbarians in Video Games.**

In many games centered around the Roman Empire, the player will encounter ‘the barbarian’ as an enemy. Although this term is not a neutral one, it is still used throughout this chapter because the video games themselves also use this word. Therefore, a reflection upon the term is warranted first. Various dictionaries define barbarian in different ways and I would like to present some examples here: ‘ignorance of arts, learning, and literature; barbarousness’, ‘the absence of culture and civilized standards’, and finally, ‘a member of a group of people from a very different country or culture that is considered to be less socially advanced and more violent than your own’.<sup>39</sup>

Inherently, the term has negative connotations. A barbarian is less advanced, more violent, less civilized. This is the most important reason modern historians do not use this word in academic settings to refer to a member of a tribe in antiquity, apart from when they want to quote a source perhaps; it is not neutral. In popular culture, this word is still often used, however. The video games studied in this chapter, still use this word, and in doing so, either deliberately or accidentally, grant a particular value (or rather lack thereof) to both ‘the barbarian’ and the ‘other’. This implies that the worth of the barbarian is less than the one they are up against, in whatever way a game decides to showcase this. As a result, barbarians appear as enemies in video games. This chapter will point out that the barbarians in video games fulfill one of the ‘foil’ roles and tick quite some boxes on the Evil Eight list introduced earlier.

Firstly, this chapter will offer a quick overview of the position of barbarian tribes in the European intellectual imaginary from the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>40</sup> It demonstrates how the appreciation of the barbarian tribes is subject to change and how the video games that are central to this study position themselves within the different possibilities. Then, the barbarians in the game *Legionnaire* are analyzed by studying the extensive game manual. The Atari 8-bit system did not have the same technological possibilities as modern games, which caused manuals to be more informative, helping the player imagine what was being represented in the video game.

Hereafter, the game *Ryse: Son of Rome* will be studied. The visual elements will be discussed first, and next the role the barbarians play within the game will be considered. The analysis of the religious elements of the barbarians in this game will follow, and finally, the

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<sup>39</sup> Webster’s New International Dictionary (1913); Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus (2003); Cambridge Dictionary, ‘Meaning of barbarian’, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/barbarian> (accessed 25-02-2021).

<sup>40</sup> The word ‘imaginary’ is used here to refer to the intellectual landscape of the period in Western Europe, in which certain values and ideas were shared, but were subject to developments across time, and possibly had divergent regional elements. This term derives from the concept of ‘social imaginary’, but is here used in a way only referring to the intellectual areas. Moyn (2014) 112-114.

role of an individual barbarian will be analyzed: Boudica. The third game that is studied, is *Old World*. The particular way the barbarians in this game are represented is often used in various video games to represent enemy barbarians. In the last part of this chapter, the barbarian tribes of *Imperator: Rome* are examined. Military traditions, visual aspects, religion and government are all incorporated in the analysis. This part is more extensive, since *Imperator: Rome* offers more possibilities and elements than the other games. Every player has to follow the same narrative in *Ryse*, for example, while in *Imperator*, choices can be made that will influence the game.

Finally, in conclusion, the representation of the barbarian within these video games and the historical sources that inspired them will be compared. This will present two main ways barbarians can be employed and how different sources create distinct barbarians. These representations of barbarians will then be compared to the theoretical framework offered in the introduction.

## **1.1 Short Overview of Barbarians in the Intellectual European Imaginary**

The word barbarian is derived from the Greek word 'barbar', which in origin, referred to a non-Greek speaking person. In antiquity, this term was quickly used negatively and thrown at people who were perceived to be less civilized than the person uttering 'barbar'.<sup>41</sup> The negative definition of the word in modern times has already been discussed in the introduction. In this part, a brief overview of the perspectives on the Gallic and Germanic tribes in Roman antiquity in general is offered.

One of the most influential books about the Romans, maybe even to this day, was Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon states that the Roman Empire was weakened by decadence and a lack of civic virtue, allowing the barbarian invasions to triumph over the empire.<sup>42</sup> Barbarians were a hostile people upon the empire's frontiers and were uncivilized savages in his view.<sup>43</sup> Obviously, the barbarian tribes are presented in a negative light both by the choice of words, and because they are the perpetrators of the fall of a great empire.

In the same century, the 'barbarian invasions' started to take up an important position in the European imaginary, when some historians saw potential in using them to political effect. The constructed myth of barbarian invasions, based on alternative facts, became

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<sup>41</sup> Boletsi (2013) 117-119.

<sup>42</sup> Gibbon (1776) 303-306.

<sup>43</sup> Pocock (2005) 10-15; Gibbon does not reserve the word 'Barbarian' (with capital 'B' in his printings) for only European tribes, but uses the term for Near Eastern peoples as well. I am now only referring to his mentioning of the first, however.

powerful enough to change the history of Europe.<sup>44</sup> The idea was in large part a romantic invention, inseparable from the formation of nation states since these considered the barbarian tribes to be their ancestors.<sup>45</sup> They believed in a principle of continuity of peoples through time, both in physical aspects and moral traits, and wanted to know more about their descent.<sup>46</sup> This meant that the barbarians had to be 'debarbarized'. In discourse, the different tribes received new attention, intending to learn the 'true history' of the different new nation states, without believing all of the negative propaganda the Romans had asserted about the barbarian tribes. The barbarians were now seen as freedom fighters, constantly battling the Roman yoke.<sup>47</sup>

As a result, the admiration for classicism diminished in parts of Europe during the period of Romanticism. Roman models were once again associated with decadence, while the barbarians stood for something simple and pure. This positive view can, for example, be found in the work of Jules Michelet, an influential French historian of the early 19th century. In the preface to his book *History of the Roman Republic*, his words reflect this new view:

'If you seek life and freshness, go to the north (...). The barbarian races, with their blond hair, their ruddy cheeks, their eternal youth, are still there. It falls to them to revive the green age of the world; Rome was once renewed by the invasion of the men of the north; and there was needed, too, a man of the north, a barbarian, to revive the history of Rome.'<sup>48</sup>

The Roman Empire was portrayed as a stagnant entity, something that required new impulses and reinvigorated energy. Since the Roman people could not provide this themselves, they needed the barbarian tribes to 'revive' Rome, as Michelet puts it. Friedrich Nietzsche is another influential writer and philosopher who shared this idea. In his view, the barbarians were energetic individuals with the will and possibility to regenerate European culture by disregarding moral inhibitions.<sup>49</sup> All these positive associations of barbarian tribes must be seen in the light of growing nationalism.

Even though the barbarian tribes received more positive attention for a time, after the influence of the Romantic period diminished, the tribes also received less attention. For some decades, the studies of the academic world shifted to some centuries earlier. They occupied themselves with the 'romanization' of the tribes within the empire and those close

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<sup>44</sup> Part of these alternative facts is, for example, the attributed ever growing number of barbarians that most certainly became too great to be realistic, and who in huge masses were believed to take over the Roman Empire. Michaud (2015) 10.

<sup>45</sup> Michaud (2015) 1-9.

<sup>46</sup> Geary (2002) 49.

<sup>47</sup> Michaud (2015) 97-103.

<sup>48</sup> Michelet (1831) 6.

<sup>49</sup> Nietzsche (1901) 464.

to the border.<sup>50</sup>

The word barbarian still held and holds negative connotations.<sup>51</sup> The associations of both civilization and barbarism, established by Gibbon, with regard to moral values and behavior modes remained viable to today.<sup>52</sup> Especially in the visual media of popular culture, barbarians can embody a kind of evil that holds no morals, can be villainized, and serves as a heightened contrast 'foil' for the protagonist.

## 1.2 The Beginning of the Game-Barbarian

The first video game that featured Romans was *Legionnaire* (1982). On an Atari 8-bit, a Commodore 64, or the Apple II, the player could take on the role of Julius Caesar and command their generals and legions to victory in one of the first real-time strategy games, 'This game presents a fanciful representation of the battles fought by Caesar during the conquest of Gaul'.<sup>53</sup> There are sixteen different barbarian tribes, all known from Caesar's *Bello Gallico*, and each of them has different strengths and weaknesses. As stated before, the visuals of this game are underwhelming to our modern eyes, and to balance this, the player was provided with a manual to aid their imagination. There is plenty of hyperbolic language to help the player envision they are crushing the enemies with their brave legions while they are actually looking at a few pixels bumping into one another (Figure 4).

In this game, the barbarians appeared for the first time as *the* adversaries for Rome in video games, but by no means the last. *Legionnaire* acknowledges they are making the barbarians fit in their enemy framework, 'The descriptions and properties of the barbarian tribes are entirely fictitious'.<sup>54</sup> This, however, is not entirely true. The sixteen different tribes are not merely coincidental in their strengths and weaknesses, and also their overarching difficulty is no mere accident. The given description of every tribe proves this point. For example, the Aedui, or Haedui, are the easiest opponents for beginners. They are described as being slow, disorganized, fighting poorly and having bad leadership.<sup>55</sup> At the beginning of Caesar's *Bello Gallico*, he states that the Haedui 'are unable to defend themselves, ask Caesar for help'.<sup>56</sup> This seems to corroborate placing the Haedui as weaker opponents. However, there are enough instances in *De Bello Gallico* that show the tribe in a different light. A few paragraphs later, Caesar mentions that they were at a time 'the people most

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<sup>50</sup> For an overview of the views on 'romanization' studies see Garnsey and Whitacker (1978) 1-6.

<sup>51</sup> There is another entire discourse on 'barbarians' or 'barbarism' with the perspective of colonialism. I will not be discussing this, since this research is focusing on the barbarian tribes that lived in Gaul, Germania and Britannia.

<sup>52</sup> Boletsi (2013) 104.

<sup>53</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 16.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Caes. Gal. 1.11.

powerful in Gaul' and 'the greatest influence had long belonged to the Haedui'.<sup>57</sup>

It seems more likely that the Haedui were chosen as the weakest tribe because they 'befriended' the Romans first of all the Gauls, and the game translates this as the first who were conquered.<sup>58</sup>

Another example is the strongest barbarians tribe the player can encounter in the game, the Helvetii. 'The Helvetii are the most feared infantry in barbarian Europe. They are in all ways excellent soldiers. They march fast and do not tire; (...) What little havoc is wreaked in battle is quickly and smoothly repaired.'<sup>59</sup> For the player, beating the Helvetii is the highest triumph they can achieve in this game. As is the case with the Aedui, the Helvetii thank their rank within the game to Caesar's book. From the first book onwards, Caesar states that these people were 'easily the strongest in Gaul', 'they outdo other Gauls in courage', and that they 'were very unhappy when they were not fighting'.<sup>60</sup> The entire first book is centered around the battles and struggles with the Helvetii, who were migrating and proved a thorn in the eye of Caesar as well as an opportunity for him to engage in battles with the tribes.

The third example is again of one of the weaker enemies of the game. The Auscii are described as 'clay pigeons' for beginners to learn the game 'if the Auscii give you problems, perhaps you had better go back to PAC-MAN'.<sup>61</sup> In Caesar's *Bello Gallico* the Auscii became scared after a battle the Romans won decisively, according to Caesar. This fear urged them to voluntarily bring hostages to Crassus.<sup>62</sup> This image is not one of strength, and so Caesar's words cause the Auscii to end up as a weak tribe in the game as well. These examples show that the descriptions of these tribes were not 'entirely fictitious'. They are very much based upon Caesar's statements about these peoples, whether true or simply fitting well in his narrative.

### 1.2.1. *Discipline*

Another critical point to be made is that overall the choice of words when describing the barbarians is meant to contrast Roman generals. While the Romans are described as efficient, steady, and disciplined, it is emphasized how the barbarian tribes are disorganized, lack discipline, and fight in a primitive manner. What makes them dangerous is their way of fighting; they are fearless, aggressive, and 'fight like demons'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 1.31, 6.12.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.11.

<sup>59</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 8.

<sup>60</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 1.1, 1.2, 1.3.

<sup>61</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 9.

<sup>62</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 3.27.

<sup>63</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 7-10.

Even the worst-performing Roman general, Sabinus, is described by seemingly objective words: poor leadership, weak, slow, and very badly demoralized.<sup>64</sup> The weakest barbarians, on the other hand, are described as 'clay pigeons', which makes the 'worst' Roman general still seem superior to the 'worst' tribe.

In this manual, the most prominent contrast is that of Roman generals being organized and disciplined, and the barbarians are lacking these virtues. The discipline of the Roman army is often emphasized, in both ancient and modern writings, as well as in movies.<sup>65</sup> This trait is highly admired and is often linked to the ability to withstand stress in the face of battle.<sup>66</sup> In the case of Caesar's *Bello Gallico*, the importance of discipline to Caesar is also evident. In the majority of incidents in which one of his generals is caught in trouble, Caesar makes sure to let the reader know that this is caused by a lack of discipline, which is unacceptable in his army.<sup>67</sup>

'Next day Caesar called an assembly to rebuke his impulsive and greedy soldiers (...) he still had to reproach their indiscipline and arrogance for thinking they knew better than the general about victory and how things would turn out. He expected restraint and self-discipline from soldiers no less than courage and spirit.'<sup>68</sup>

In this instance, the Roman soldiers followed the centurion Lucius Fabius over a wall, were confronted with too many enemies and could not win. Fabius, along with forty-six other centurions, was slain. This slaughter was then framed by Caesar as caused by a lack of discipline, and the men who made it out alive had to be punished.

The emphasis on discipline and punishment led some modern scholars to believe that the only reason the army was so disciplined was the severity of Roman military punishment.<sup>69</sup> Some researchers believe that the discipline of the army was exaggerated.<sup>70</sup> They emphasize the moments of the battle in which the opposite sides would clash and how fear would reign on this line. Whether discipline was as common among Roman soldiers as Caesar would have us believe, might always remain a point of discussion. What we can know without any doubt is that Roman discipline was and still is idealized, as is indisputable in this game manual. The generals and their accompanying legions are disciplined, and their barbarian enemies are not. So in this instance, an ideal presented by ancient sources and

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<sup>64</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 6.

<sup>65</sup> For example, the battle in the opening scene of the popular movie *Gladiator* (2000).

<sup>66</sup> For an overview of sources see: Currie (1928).

<sup>67</sup> According to the man himself, Caesar is not guilty of this, neither are the men directly under his command, his loyal tenth. The only time he loses men or loses a battle, it is because one of his generals made a mistake.

<sup>68</sup> *Caes. Gal.* 7.52.

<sup>69</sup> Le Bohec (2013) 60-62; Southern (2007) 146-148.

<sup>70</sup> Sabin (2000) 13-14; Gabriel and Boose (1994) 25-27.

perpetuated by later historiography and popular culture, finds its way into a video game. The disciplined Romans receive contrasting disorganized barbarians and the player should think of the barbarians as lesser.

That barbarians are valued less, is also evident from the number of legions at the beginning of the game. The player can choose a number of legions from two to five for the Romans to begin with, and the barbarians will always receive twice as many.<sup>71</sup> This shows how the barbarians were thought to need way more manpower to stand a chance against the disciplined Romans.

The focus on discipline ties in with the ideal of the 'Western way of war', which revolves around the idea that from antiquity onward there has been a distinct and reappearing manner in which 'the west' battles. This idea stems from the Greek peoples fighting the Persian Wars. The ultimate goal is a decisive battle that should annihilate the enemy, and victory is brought partly from training and discipline, and partly from 'civic militarism'.<sup>72</sup> These very ideas can be found in the ideology of the Roman generals and armies. While the Greeks may have had the scoop, the Roman army received more admiration for the same features. This could be due to the everlasting impact of the Roman Empire and its military successes that still receive admiration. While it is debatable whether there is actually a continuity of this way of war, at least from Machiavelli onward, there is a surge in interest in and idealization of Roman military tactics.<sup>73</sup> The strategies were enthusiastically studied from this time onward, even resulting in deliberate attempts to return to 'Roman military traditions' in the seventeenth century.<sup>74</sup>

It was a rare occurrence that the ideal of one decisive battle, with clear legions moving like blocks over the land and men completely organized and stoic amid battle, was actually achieved.<sup>75</sup> This did not matter for the idealization of this 'Western way of war'. It was so powerful that even after the world has been introduced to a different kind of warfare, like World War I, the romanticization of the ideal is still prevalent in popular culture.<sup>76</sup> One example that comes to mind is *300*, in which an organized, disciplined group of Spartans used their superior tactics to fend off their enemies in the first battle.<sup>77</sup> They are willing to be sacrificed while fighting a larger force, and in the end, they are. The movie frames this as the decisive moment in the war against the Persians. The game *Legionnaire* functions within this ideal 'Western way of war' as well, although in a rudimentary way, since the technology did not allow all the possibilities we have today. The player has to confront the enemy on a field

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<sup>71</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 14-15.

<sup>72</sup> Lynn (2003) 15-22

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 22-23; Gat (2001) 7-10.

<sup>74</sup> Phang (2008) 81-83.

<sup>75</sup> Lynn (2003) 101-112.

<sup>76</sup> Howard (2009) 106-115.

<sup>77</sup> Snyder (2007).

and use superior tactics to win the decisive battle (Figure 4). The ideal way of Roman fighting is still used in popular culture, in this case to portray the battles of the virtual Romans.

To sum up, the manual reveals that the barbarian tribes in this game are based on Caesar's *Bello Gallico*. Not only their names are picked from this book, but their assigned strengths and weaknesses are based upon Caesar's words as well. The Aedui needed help and thus are weak in the game. The Auscii voluntarily gave hostages to the Romans because they were scared and thus are weak in the game as well. The Helvetii were aggressive, and it took Caesar quite some effort and battling to come out on top eventually, so this tribe receives greater strength. Secondly, the manual touches upon a fundamental theme reoccurring in all sorts of media: Romans have superior discipline and organization. To contrast this, the barbarians in the manual are constantly described as having no or little discipline, which means they serve as a foil of the first category. By stating what is wrong with the adversaries, it is implied that this is the virtue of the protagonists. The emphasis on them being primitive, disorganized, 'less civilized' as you will, functions here to directly contrast the Roman legions.

Moreover, although the manual is just too short to create an extensive analysis of this, the barbarians tick at least two of the Evil Eight boxes. They are violent, often stated with words as 'fight like demons', and they are immoral because they desire to fight just for fighting's sake, and not like Caesar, who 'had a goal' and 'would never give up'.<sup>78</sup> Further in the manual, there is also a part 'chronology of the battles', in which it is explained how the Helvetii would keep attacking Caesar, implying that the barbarians are also vengeful, which would add one extra evil trait.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Avalon Hill Game Company (1982) 3-8.

<sup>79</sup> There is no minimum of traits a hero or villain must possess for being divided within one of the categories. Allison and Goethals (2011) 61-64, 161-162.



Figure 4: *Legionnaire* by Avalon Hill Company. The square will allow the player to select their legions (pink). The orange, green, blue, and pink lines indicates hills that can give a tactical advantage. The blue swords are the infantry of the barbarian enemies approaching, and the pink sword, horse's head and eagle symbolize the Roman legions.

### 1.3 Ryse: son of Rome

In the game *Ryse: Son of Rome* (2014), the protagonist is centurion Marius Titus in a third-person action-adventure setting.<sup>80</sup> Immediately when the game begins, the player is placed in alternative history. They are greeted by a cutscene of a cowering middle-aged Nero in his Domus Aurea, suggesting that the year is around 90 CE.<sup>81</sup> Within the first five minutes, the player learns that Rome is under attack by British barbarians. They bring death and destruction to the heart of the Roman Empire, and Marius Titus is the man to fend them off.

Even though it should be clear that this game does not try to accurately depict history, it is still imperative to study the representation of barbarians in this game. First noticeable are the visual representations of the barbarians. While games often duplicate enemies since creating a separate individual for every single foe that needs to be defeated is too time-consuming, *Ryse* takes this to a whole new level. There are literally only three different 'standard' barbarians in the game, and you end up killing hundreds upon hundreds of duplicates (Figure 5).

<sup>80</sup> Steam, 'Ryse: Son of Rome', [https://store.steampowered.com/app/302510/Ryse\\_Son\\_of\\_Rome/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/302510/Ryse_Son_of_Rome/) (accessed 25-02-2021).

<sup>81</sup> A cutscene is a scene that develops the storyline and is often shown at the beginning or on completion of a certain level. The player is usually unable to interact with anything in the game world during such scenes.



Figure 5: Crytek, *Ryse: Son of Rome*, barbarian enemies.

The weapons they swing are axes, some use big war hammers, and others a one-handed sword, explicitly contrasting the Roman gladius. None of the barbarians is wearing clothing on their upper body, only some type of shoulder armor can be distinguished, and the man on the right wears blue paint on his torso. Marius Titus, on the other hand, is wearing what most people would describe as a standard Roman military outfit (Figure 6). These barbarians function in the same way that the barbarians in *Legionnaire* do, but much more explicitly. They function to contrast the Roman civilization and moral high ground by being the primitive brutes.



Figure 6: Crytek, *Ryse: Son of Rome*, Marius Titus.

The first way this is done is by constantly referring to them as barbarians. There is only one important named barbarian, Boudica, who will be discussed later in the chapter. The other (male) Roman characters are significantly more likely to receive a name. The player only learns one reason why the barbarians attack Rome: Boudica seeks revenge when her father is killed. How they assembled the manpower they have, how they were transported, how they even managed to walk into Rome without any problem whatsoever is never mentioned. They show up with war elephants and siege material and pop up into the streets of Rome.<sup>82</sup>

Secondly, the barbarians are a lot weaker than the average Roman soldier. On average, it only takes a few cuts with a gladius to bring absolute havoc on the enemy. This is inherent to these types of game since the main character is supposed to stack up their kill-streak. In this case Marius rarely ever gets a scratch himself, however, when dealing with 'regular' barbarians. In this sense, the barbarians in this game are simply cannon fodder *avant la lettre*.

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<sup>82</sup> For an impression of the opening invasion see: Youtube, 'Ryse: Son of Rome - Opening cinematic', <https://youtu.be/ETFStVUcDoA> (accessed 02-04-2021).

The game still attempts to make the player feel that their actions are heroic, their fighting is glorious, and their killing of barbarians is a necessary evil. The Roman Empire needs this slaughter, and the barbarians brought it upon themselves. The game purposely gives the barbarians as little backstory as possible, to make the Roman main character appear more righteous in his actions. Secondly, the barbarians are said to fight unnecessarily cruelly, both by Marius and his fellow soldiers, and they have no honor in their fighting. To underline this point, Marius does not only speak about honor and justice often, but the barbarians look even worse for a nice contrast.

One of the best examples that comes to mind is the sacrificial habits of the barbarians in this game. In Figure 7, a wickerman is shown, a figure made out of wood, to burn and sacrifice to the gods. When taking a closer look, living human beings can be seen, who are tied to the structure. This idea of human sacrifice can be found in Caesar's *Bello Gallico*:

'So those who suffer serious illness or face battle and danger either sacrifice human victims or promise to do so and use the druids as ministers of these sacrifices (...) They conduct sacrifices of this kind publicly. Some have immense artificial figures whose frames made of wicker they fill with living people. Set ablaze, the people die swallowed in flames.'<sup>83</sup>

The translation from the ancient description to the game is quite a literal one, and here it serves to show the savagery of the barbarians.

This thesis is not focused on historical accuracy, but a few side notes about human sacrifice must be made in this case. First of all, Caesar was by no means the only Roman writer who mentions human sacrifice. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny also wrote about human sacrifice, and are seemingly fascinated with the practice.<sup>84</sup> This created a debate among later scholars; were human sacrifices actually conducted, and to what degree? While it is believed to have appeared in specific contexts, its frequency among the tribes is almost certainly exaggerated.<sup>85</sup> What is even more interesting is that Caesar's quote is almost the same as another, one by Strabo.<sup>86</sup> Strabo is already using the past tense, possibly suggesting that the practice had died out.<sup>87</sup> It is possible that Caesar used the exact words because he encountered it as well, but on the other hand, the *Bello Gallico* is not written to be an accurate description of Gallic uses and tribes. It is a product of propaganda, and

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<sup>83</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 6.16.

<sup>84</sup> Tac. *Germ.* 9; Suet. *Aug.* 15; Plin. *Nat.* 30.3-4.

<sup>85</sup> Cunliffe (2018) 282-284.

<sup>86</sup> 'They used to shoot men down with arrows, impale them in the temples, or, making a large statue of straw and wood, throw into it cattle and all sorts of wild animals and human beings and thus make a burnt offering' Strab. 4.4.6.

<sup>87</sup> Cunliffe (2018) 283.

Caesar knew how abhorrent Romans thought human sacrifice was, immediately giving him a better moral standing than the tribes who needed 'appeasing', in his words.

What is important here is that, apart from its questionable existence, Caesar and Strabo are talking about the occurrence of this in Gaul, not Britain. Both of these authors write about Gaul, while in *Ryse: Son of Rome*, it appears in Britain. It is unlikely then, that they used the same method of human sacrifices here since the authors that are so fascinated with the topic would most likely go out of their way to describe such an occurrence. Apart from a sense of shock value and theatrics, the aim of the appearance of the wickerman in the video game then serves the same goal as Caesar had with his description of the sacrifice; to villainize the enemy, to emphasize their abhorrent rituals, and to provide the Romans with the moral high ground.



Figure 7: Crytek, *Ryse: son of Rome*, the wickerman of the barbarians.

When looking at the Evil Eight, these barbarians score a bit higher than the previous ones. First and foremost, they are violent. They have war, fighting and hurting their fellow humans constantly on mind, which is shown plenty in the game. Secondly, they are vengeful. The only reason they are there in the first place is that Boudica's father, leading most of the tribes in this story, was taken and murdered by the Romans, and no amount of blood will stop the quest for revenge. Thirdly, they are immoral. Not only because Marius talks about the morality of Romans a lot, constantly implying the lack thereof in his adversaries, but also because the example of human sacrifice is supposed to showcase an abhorrent lack of morality in the barbarians. Fourthly, they are greedy. In one scene they take the rings and other valuables of the bodies of both their deceased brothers in arms as well as their enemies (which is, of course, also immoral, but this time caused by greed).

### 1.3.1 *Boudica*

In this section, a specific barbarian is studied: Boudica. First a few aspects must be established about gender both in Roman military history and in the world of video games. War, and the acts and values associated with it, were in antiquity and later scholarship, regarded as features of masculine identity. Women were usually seen as the victims of war both directly, when they were raped, killed, or enslaved, and indirectly when they lost male relatives to war.<sup>88</sup> More recently, however, there is more discussion about active female participation in wars. Mainly because of a re-evaluation of sources, some argue that women were more active in battle than previously thought. Roman authors tried to diminish the role of women in conflicts, would attack them harshly for transgressing conventional gender roles, or tried to emphasize their male aspects to such a degree that they practically turned them into men.<sup>89</sup> In the case of Boudica, there is also specific attention for her gender in the texts of the Roman authors, because she was not the norm.

On the other hand, gender in video games, and the world surrounding it, is a hot topic as well. For a long time, it was assumed that only boys and (young) men were interested in video games, and most of the games were made with this demographic in mind.<sup>90</sup> Especially with the rise of 'casual gaming' in the 2000s, the awareness that video games appealed to a much broader audience was firmly established. This caused more female main characters to appear in games in general, even though most games still decide to feature a male main character.<sup>91</sup> The simple fact that more female and other marginalized groups were added as protagonists caused a considerable backlash, with perhaps as

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<sup>88</sup> Fabre-Serris (2015) 2-5.

<sup>89</sup> Hallett (2015) 247-248.

<sup>90</sup> Cote (2020) 1-6.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

all-time low Gamergate of 2014.<sup>92</sup> Hereafter, there has been more attention for the representation of genders, and the sexism that can be encountered in some video games.<sup>93</sup> In both chapters I included at least one example that features a woman in video games. Both because they appear more regularly in the video games I have chosen, and because I think this representation is vital.

As mentioned before, Boudica is one of the main antagonists, and one of the few named barbarians. She is a historical figure, who indeed posed a problem for the Roman Empire in 60 CE, when she led the Iceni and other tribes in rebellion. She was fascinating to Roman authors and received attention and admiration throughout the centuries.

‘a terrible disaster occurred in Britain. Two cities were sacked, eighty thousand of the Romans and of their allies perished, and the island was lost to Rome. Moreover, all this ruin was brought upon the Romans by a woman, a fact which in itself caused them the greatest shame. (...) directed the conduct of the entire war, was Boudica, a Briton woman (...)’<sup>94</sup>

According to Cassius Dio, she delivered a speech about how she and her people should receive freedom and rid themselves of the Romans.<sup>95</sup> These speeches and texts made her popularity survive through time. Roman authors like Cassius Dio were occupied with emphasizing her incredible cruel sides.

‘Those who were taken captive by the Britons were subjected to every known form of outrage. The worst and most bestial atrocity committed by their captors was the following. They hung up naked the noblest and most distinguished women and then cut off their breasts and sewed them to their mouths, in order to make the victims appear to be eating them; afterwards they impaled the women on sharp skewers.’<sup>96</sup>

This text clearly lets the reader know why you should not be on the side of Boudica. She is performing atrocious violence upon other women in this example. She even chooses to attack a part of the body that distinguishes men and women, the breasts, which draws more attention to the gender of both the perpetrator and the victim.

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<sup>92</sup> Gamergate is a term used for an explosion of misogynistic, anti-lgbtq+, and in general anti-progressivism in video game culture, expressing itself in an online harassment campaign. For more information see: Poland (2016) 123-158.

<sup>93</sup> *Ryse: Son of Rome* was released shortly before gamergate in 2014, but was in production multiple years prior to that. This game still caters very much to the ‘male gaze’ and this might contribute to the fact that *Ryse* did not manage to remain popular. The sexism in this game is analyzed by Beavers (2020).

<sup>94</sup> Cass. Dio 62.1.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 62.3-6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 62.7.

Centuries later, British sources started painting Boudica in a different light.

‘We need not go out of England to seek heroines, while we have annals to preserve their illustrious names... let it suffice to name a Boadicea, who made the most glorious stand against the Romans in defence of her country (...) And if her endeavours did not meet with the success of an Alexander or a Cesar; her courage and conduct were such as render’d her worthy to be consider’d equal.’<sup>97</sup>

This high praise exhibits the popularity of Boudica from the seventeenth century onward.<sup>98</sup> Instead of the cruel barbarian, she became a heroine fighting for freedom. Unsurprisingly, this image of Boudica also found its way into our popular culture of today. Two things here interplay, first of all, Boudica has always remained a popular character, and secondly, in our current society, there is growing interest in depicting women in leading roles. This resulted in a few movies and miniseries that feature Boudica, such as *Boudica* (2003), *Warrior Queen Boudica* (2006), *Barbarians rising: Boudica, Warrior Queen* (2016), and *Boudica: Rise of the Warrior Queen* (2019). In these media, she is shown as a great leader, a good fighter, and a just woman.

In the game *Ryse: Son of Rome*, she is also portrayed as a good fighter, and no matter the player’s skill, they will not be able to kill her in their first encounter. In this confrontation, she also speaks some lines. Marius yells at Boudica that she ‘broke your oath to Rome, you killed the innocent, women and children’, to which replies ‘how do you think your empire was built? We didn’t ask for you to come here. I will do anything to protect my people’. Even when the Roman, Marius in this case, points to her slaying of innocents, which the ancient sources also did, she immediately reacts by telling him his beloved empire is not so different. This is precisely the type of reaction that could be given to the ancient sources. They accuse her of all kinds of brutality, as if the Roman army was never guilty of killing a few innocents.

Later in the game, Boudica again shows her great skill in fighting by killing a centurion befriended by Marius. At last, there is one final battle between Boudica and Marius in Rome. The player drains her health bar by fighting, and in the end, there is a cutscene, in which she tells Marius ‘we are not so different, you and I, fate has made us enemies, but in another life...’ to which he replies ‘in another life perhaps, not in this one’, and she agrees ‘not in this one’. Marius raises his gladius, ready to strike down upon his unarmed enemy, but then hesitates. Boudica notices this and tells him ‘Do it Roman, do it!’. He strikes down, decapitates her, and orders her head to be set on a spike. As soon as the barbarians lay eyes on her severed head, they lose hope and flee in despair.

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<sup>97</sup> Robinson (1745) 54.

<sup>98</sup> For further reading of Boudica’s reception throughout these centuries see; Vandrei (2018) 51-145.

This exchange contains a few aspects. To begin, for the first time, Marius and Boudica can be perceived by the player as being not so different after all. Although the intonation in Marius' voice when he tells her 'perhaps' does leave it quite open whether he believes this, and his actions hereafter once again show that he perceives the Romans to be morally superior to the barbarians.<sup>99</sup>

Boudica, then, is not portrayed as just a barbarian, but as a human with a backstory and motives. Secondly, Marius hesitates in killing her. It is not clear from the context whether this is because he pities her, or whether he thinks she might have a point in them being similar, or because he does not wish to kill a woman. The point is that *she* tells him to kill her, absolving him from blame. The player can leave with their conscience intact. Even when they do kill someone who is not merely a barbarian, she accepted her fate and even encouraged Marius.

Boudica, both her historical character and her in-game character, takes up a position right in the middle of the villain and hero distinction. Allison and Goethals write how some characters can first seem to be either a villain or hero. However, since these two types share characteristics, a person can change from one side to another, if extra information is revealed, or when their behavior changes.<sup>100</sup> First up is the reflection on the Great Eight. Her in-game character is smart because she manages to get to the heart of the Roman Empire with her tactical thinking. She is a strong and skilled fighter. She is inspiring to the barbarians since she could convince them to follow her in battle, and once she is killed, the barbarians stop fighting. She is resilient because she keeps trying and persevering in her ambition of bringing justice for her father's death. This gives her a score of four out of eight, only lacking the charismatic, caring, reliable and selfless traits.<sup>101</sup>

Two of those traits, smart and resilient, are also traits of the villain. Next to that, she is also violent, killing multiple of Marius' acquaintances. Her reason for murdering is revenge, so she also is vengeful.<sup>102</sup> This creates an exciting antagonist, and she even had the

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<sup>99</sup> The hero Marius is a superhero, when looking at the Great Eight, he is smart (a tactical thinker and problem solver), resilient (even after the death of his whole family he still wants to fulfill his duty), strong, selfless (in this case, he constantly has the moral high ground), charismatic, caring (for both his wounded men and all of his friends and family), reliable (Romans would be proud of his sense of pietas) and finally inspiring (as leader he can always motivate his men).

<sup>100</sup> Allison and Goethals (2010) 135-141.

<sup>101</sup> To a certain degree, the case could be made that she might even possess more of these traits, but I only picked those who are most prominent and least open for debate. These traits cannot be applied with complete objectivity. What might be caring to one person might not strike another as particularly so. I have not attributed her with the trait charismatic since she talks little in this game and not enough to showcase an abundance of charisma. I have not credited her with 'selfless', because, in the end, her reason for going to Rome is the death of someone close to her whom she wants to avenge, and secondly, because when men die in her name, she does not appear very stricken, unlike Marius. I have not attributed her with reliable, partly because she does not show interest in her men dying for her or any other person besides her dead father, perhaps.

<sup>102</sup> Thus only lacking the traits greedy, mentally ill, immoral and egotistical.

potential of becoming a hero in the game; if she would have had a moment of redemption and condemned her earlier behavior in the end scene. Because she tells Marius to kill her, she admits that she will not change and would not stop before her ambition, revenge on the Roman Empire, was fulfilled. This is what eventually seals the deal and turns her into a villain, even though she possessed other traits as well.

### 1.3.2 *Conclusion*

*Ryse: Son of Rome* presents their barbarians in an unapologetic barbaric manner. They are portrayed as brutal, violent, but often easy enemies that the player, as a Roman, heroically slashes down upon. While the game suggests that multiple tribes joined forces, the game has literally only three different barbarians to kill, and the player ends up slaying hundreds of duplicates. It is never explained how or why exactly the barbarians came to Rome, instead of simply throwing the Romans out of Britain and being done with it.

Secondly, through certain scenes and events, the game tries to make the barbarians seem extraordinarily savage, shown by the use of human sacrifice. This game mirrors the description and aim of Julius Caesar when he is writing about human sacrifice. While it is questionable whether it happened in the first place, Caesar used it to establish the Gauls as cruel tribes. The Romans are clearly too civilized for human sacrifices, and the average Roman reader would not pity those tribes with such 'primitive' and 'barbaric' rituals. In the game, the wickerman fulfills the same function. On the modern audience, it will have the same effect. Most of the players would think that human sacrifice is absolutely horrifying, and the dread that Marius displays when laying eyes on this scene, would be shared by the player. Thus this will create a stronger connection with the main character and establish that the Romans have the moral high ground.

The historical figure Boudica is used differently for several reasons. The Roman authors, especially Cassius Dio, emphasize some of her (alleged) horrible practices, for example, putting women on a stake. In later centuries, especially from the seventeenth century onward, she was continuously more celebrated as a kind of freedom fighter, a warrior queen that wanted her people to be free of the yoke the Roman Empire put on them. In our popular culture, she is seen as a warrior queen and is predominantly depicted as a positive figure. In the game, she also appears in positive ways. She is a good leader (she brought the British tribes to Rome after all, with elephants and siege equipment included), fights well, and is the only barbarian to get a proper motive for her actions, namely her father being killed by Romans. This then creates a problem since she is not the standard barbarian that is only cruelly fighting for the sake of killing. The game does not want Marius to lose his just character and makes Boudica command her own death at the hands of the centurion, so Marius, and the player, are both absolved of any true guilt. The barbarians can still be seen

as a foil of the first type, to make the protagonist appear better by contrasting his virtues. The action of Boudica makes her, in the end, a villain, while she has traits from the Great Eight and the Evil Eight alike. Since she did not complete redemption in condemning her actions in the final scene, but rather telling Marius she preferred to die, she sealed her fate as a villain.

#### **1.4 Old world**

This 2021 historical turn-based strategy 4X video game takes place in antiquity.<sup>103</sup> The player has to manage cities, deal with families, research technologies, and finally bring their realm to victory, which can be achieved by multiple different strategies. The barbarians in this game demonstrate a typical way of portraying them in video games. The barbarians in this game are not a playable group but are enemies by default. This renders them more generic. They only appear in the game to be a nuisance to the player and be killed, or to result in a 'game over' for the player.

The scenario that is called 'Barbarian horde' gives the player a mission to fulfill.<sup>104</sup> The explanation for the scenario is only one sentence long, 'Fight to survive as the only civilized Nation in a world filled with envious and distrustful Tribes', and this is all the backstory a player would need. Similar to *Ryse*, this is portrayed as a fight between civilization versus barbarization. The other states in the game, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Carthage, Rome, Greece and Persia are civilized, and barbarian tribes are not. Moreover these 'hordes' are envious and distrustful, which means there is no possibility for the player to establish any kind of peace or truce with them, which is possible with the other nations. In the scenario, the player gets a set number of turns, before the barbarians show up and the player needs to fend them off, and 'to win, eliminate the Barbarian horde'. Around 60-100 barbarian units will spawn, that all need to be killed for civilization to survive.

When the scenario starts, the player is introduced into the *Old world* in which they learn that the civilization the player chose had to start anew because they were driven from their homelands. In this new world 'we are not the first to call these lands home. There is talk of unrest from the surrounding tribes (...) To reassure the people, you make it your sole ambition to prepare for and ultimately defend against the impending horde. Our way of life must endure!'. The way this conflict is framed is typical for many games, for example, the popular *Sid Meier's Civilization* series. The barbarians do not get a specific backstory or redeeming qualities. They are 'the bad guys', a kind of evil that does not need explanation.

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<sup>103</sup> A 4x game is the abbreviation of Explore, Expand, Exploit, Exterminate. This is a subgenre of strategy games and include both turn-based and real-time strategy games that revolve around the creation of an empire, with emphasis upon economic and technological development.

<sup>104</sup> A scenario is a long-term mission, usually consisting of several tasks. They are usually explicitly stated to a player, whether through story or as formal win conditions.

This is very different from the civilizations that do receive a name, a leader, and a backstory. Those give the player a certain appreciation for the leader or culture they chose. By not granting barbarians the same options, they are automatically a more one-dimensional enemy. This type of enemy does not result in any moral conflict of the type set out by Boudica. When the barbarians, after a set number of turns, get ready to attack, the player is met with the message “campfires cover the entire plain. They light up the night as if the stars had fallen to the ground and multiplied. The whole world has risen up against us, my liege! There are barbarians without end, and they are making ready to attack’ and one of the options that the player can click on is ‘(...) defend our civilization’. This means that whatever civilization they choose to play, the player here is framed as being a specific hero type: the underdog position. Remember the circle going uphill mentioned in the introduction that people sympathized with? As Allison and Goethals prove in this experiment, the best liked circle was the one that was ‘bumped’ by the other, quicker circle moving effortlessly over the hill. This leads them to argue that the tendency to root for underdogs is deeply engrained in us.

The language in this scenario constantly reminds the player hereof: ‘horde’, ‘Barbarians without end’, ‘stars fallen to the ground and multiplied’, and the emphasis on defending from the barbarians. It is not so much that the Evil Eight comes into play here since there is simply not enough text about the barbarians. What is more important is the possibility of the player becoming a hero by completing a task that is framed as almost impossible. They have to fend off waves of barbarians who want to destroy their cities and seek to end civilization. The player thus gets to be the hero that saves the day against all odds.



Figure 8: *Old World* by Mohawk Games, beginning of the 'Barbarian horde' attacks.

Even though the barbarians do not receive much text or motive in this scenario of *Old World*, it is essential to look at their representation. Firstly, as was mentioned before, because of the popularity of these types of barbarians. Secondly, because it still represents the barbarians in a certain way, that influences the player and possibly their perception of barbarians. This type of 'reasonless' evil, thus an enemy that has no other goal except for destroying, and one that cannot be bargained with, can also be found in movies, although not necessarily in the form of barbarians. It is a type of evil, or villain, that is used to create a conflict with two opposing sides in which the 'evil' side is rendered a lot less complex than the other, making a stark contrast between the 'good' and 'evil'.<sup>105</sup> There is absolutely no incentive for the player to sympathize with these barbarians, making the annihilation of this group not something 'evil', but rather even something morally preferable.

This representation also echoes the negative connotations mentioned previously.

<sup>105</sup> Norden (2007) 12-17.

The barbarians are used as an antonym for the civilization of the other groups in the game, indicating that barbarians do not have civilization, which renders them less worthy in a sense. This idea can be found in many ancient sources. For example, in Caesar's *Bello Gallico*. He writes about specific tribes, and their worth is based upon a couple of elements, but being 'civilized' is a crucial concept within this discourse. When Caesar mentions a tribe in Britain he writes 'The most civilized of all these nations are they who inhabit Kent' and he continues to paint them in a more positive light than the most uncivilized of all, the German tribes, who were less civilized than their Gallic neighbours and that they were 'wild and savage men who would not be likely to restrain themselves'.<sup>106</sup> Much later, Gibbon echoes this idea in 'the savage nations (...) are the common enemies of civilized society' and to make clear here that being civilized is indeed better 'the empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind'.<sup>107</sup>

These are just two examples of two wildly different times, but illustrate an image that was constructed a long time ago, remained influential and converted itself into various different media, and also in this game. The constant emphasis on barbarians being savages who come in hordes and who are uncivilized, created a continuously lesser complex enemy that is worth less than their opponents. So much so, that in this case they do not receive their own text. This dichotomy between civilized and uncivilized, thus good and evil, is easily converted to video games and lends itself for an easy enemy.

## **1.5 Emperor: Rome**

In 2019 Paradox Development Studio released the game *Imperator: Rome*, which is a grand-strategy game.<sup>108</sup> The player can select any political entity on the available map (Figures 9 and 10) in the year 305 BCE.<sup>109</sup> Hereafter, the player has to manage their chosen state's politics, religion, army, technology, economy, and more. The game tries to incorporate a wide variety of aspects, events, and decisions a ruler at that time would have to face. As the player starts the game, they are presented with a brief historical explanation of their state or geographical area, so they can plan their strategy accordingly. This game provides the opportunity to play as one of the many Gallic, Germanic or British tribes. While the game

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<sup>106</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 5.14; Caes. *Gal.* 1.33.

<sup>107</sup> Gibbon (1776) 577; 3.

<sup>108</sup> Grand-strategy games are games where the player takes the role of the leader of a nation or empire, and has to compete with other nations or empires in military and economic struggles. Grand-strategy games are typically played on a map, with a focus on the theaters of operation, rather than single military units or representations of battles.

<sup>109</sup> Steam, 'Imperator Rome', [https://store.steampowered.com/app/859580/Imperator\\_Rome/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/859580/Imperator_Rome/) (accessed 02-03-2021).

refrains from directly putting these tribes as barbarians on the map, the word still pops up in some places (Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 9: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, all the coloured and named areas are playable.



Figure 10: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, close-up of the Iberic, Gallish and British tribes that are playable.



Figure 11: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, in the last paragraph, there is a reference to barbarians in relation to the fall of the Roman Empire. This shows how barbarian hordes plundering Rome is still a popular topic.



Figure 12: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, barbarian military traditions.

### 1.5.1 *Military Traditions*

The army is one of the crucial aspects the player needs to manage in the game. This allows the player to defend themselves, aid their allies, or violently expand their territory. One of the ways the army's potential can be boosted is by using military traditions, in the case of the tribes, the barbarian military traditions. These are unlockable bonuses that can improve the army, thus the potential to expand territory. There are 24 different traditions, and each of them has a small text that gives information about the bonus and explains what the tradition is about. The 'Barbarian Traditions' reads they 'encompass the fighting styles of the peoples of Hispania, Gaul, Britannia, and Germania among others'. This means that many different cultures and peoples are regarded as having the same military traditions (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, all green territory on this map (Druidic) has barbarian military traditions.

Needless to point out that this generalizes a large part of the western-European area and disregards their individual differences. This means that in the game, it does not matter what tribe is played. They are interchangeable. This while all Italic cultures, for example, are given unique features.<sup>110</sup>

At this point, it becomes important to look into the game files. While *Ryse: Son of Rome* is the same for anyone who plays it narrative-wise, with only one playable protagonist, *Imperator: Rome* has more possibilities, and thus the game files hold a lot more background information. When looking at the ‘barbarian military traditions’ as the player reads in the game, ‘behind the scenes’ it is possible to see how this is divided. In the game, it does not

<sup>110</sup> When the game starts in the year 304 BCE, Etruria, Rome, Boi, Senonii, Umbria, Sabinia, Picenia, Marsia, Frentani, Samnium, Lucania, Messapii, and a handful smaller states can be found on the Italic peninsula.

tell the player that the barbarian traditions have been divided among three geographical paths: Britannic, Germanic, and Gallic. In Appendix B, in the first example, it shows how each tradition is named, what the description is and what it unlocks. The first, for example, is 'Scythed Chariots' in the Britannic branch and in the next line a description is given.<sup>111</sup>

The 'Barbarian military traditions' are the only ones in this game that get the option to fight using chariots. The description states, 'The use of chariots in warfare stems back many thousands years, and holds strong affiliations with nobility and class. Chariot inhumations speak to the honor that can be won through battle (...).' This text shows a hint that the developers of this game try to incorporate actual historical knowledge wherever they can. Chariot inhumations are attested by archaeological evidence, although this is encountered predominantly in Britain.<sup>112</sup> Julius Caesar attests to the tribes he is fighting using chariots as well.<sup>113</sup> These sources explain why the barbarians get this 'chariot culture'. For the Britannic paths, it is then possible to unlock eight military traditions in a specific order. Some of these traditions are quite unspecific in nature, such as 'the glory of the hunt'. This tradition will boost both enslavement efficiency and national slave output, and it tells the player that this is a 'time-honored practice we ought not to forgo'.<sup>114</sup> Others are a bit more specific, for example, the 'scythed chariots', which gives a big bonus to chariot offense. This practice was thought to have origins in the Persian wars, and it lost popularity in later centuries, and had gotten out of favor with the Romans well before Caesar wrote his *Bello Gallico*.<sup>115</sup> The reason the barbarians get these types of chariots is at least partly based on this quote from Pomponius Mela, 'They make war not only on horseback or on foot but also from two-horse chariots and cars armed in the Gallic fashion - they call them covinni - on which they use axles equipped with scythes.'<sup>116</sup> Pomponius writes here about the way the Britons fought. The problem is that not only is there no archaeological evidence for this, but no other writer also mentions this use. This could well be a Roman invention to make the tribes from Britain seem more advanced, thus their struggles with them less detrimental to their image.<sup>117</sup> The scythed chariot is a popular element to depict in movies, however, which also could contribute to the decision of including it here.

The absolute majority of the military traditions stem from Caesar's *Bello Gallico* for both the Germanic and Gallic paths. For example, the 'strike and withdraw' tactic is used

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<sup>111</sup> I have put the rest of the game files in Appendix B, since otherwise it might break up the text too much and they are not as easily readable.

<sup>112</sup> Halkon (2020) 169-171.

<sup>113</sup> Caes. *Gal.* 4.24, 4.32-33, 5.9.

<sup>114</sup> One of the population groups in *Imperator: Rome* are slaves. Even though this is a problematic topic within today's culture and with modern ideas, the game decides to include this part of ancient history as well, while other games sometimes choose to not depict this.

<sup>115</sup> Rop (2013) 176-180.

<sup>116</sup> Pompon. 3.52.

<sup>117</sup> Hudson (2021) 53-54.

against Caesar multiple times. He describes the enemy tribes using slings ('Hail of Stones' tradition), and on several occasions, he mentions what tribes are allied ('Confederations' tradition).<sup>118</sup> Not only Caesar's words are reflected in the military traditions. The 'Ambush' tradition refers to another famous event, the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest since the description starts with 'Quintili Vare, legiones redde!'

The real problem with this division is that the Britannic, Gaulish, and Germanic peoples did not share a single way of fighting. Moreover, some areas that might have had some shared way of fighting are not even included. All of Iberia shares the same traditions yet does not receive one 'based' on their history.

A third point is the use of language within the descriptions. This echoes some of the essence of the *Legionnaire* manual, 'whether it be a chance for glory, an opportunity for loot, or merely to revel in the slaughter', and 'Thus, by expanding our stock of horses bred and trained for war, our bold warriors will excel at their true purpose; carnage.' These once again emphasize the brutality of barbarian warfare and this would be their 'true purpose' according to the game. Indeed, these people fought wars and killed people in the process, but this was no different from other wars being fought at the same time in other places. When going through all the military traditions of the different cultures in this game, no others get described by words like 'carnage' or 'slaughter', these words are reserved for the barbarians.

The opposition between barbaric and civilized is also something that is referred to in the tradition 'Adaptability', which states 'Our brave soldiers may be the fiercest the world has seen, but true humility comes in learning from our defeats. By adopting tactics we encounter on the battlefield, from those who consider themselves more 'civilized', we may outdo any fighting force we meet.' By putting the civilized between quotation marks and stating that these people consider 'themselves' as such, this game emphasizes that the term is not neutral and that the barbarians are not necessarily on the other side of the spectrum. However, it does imply that by taking over the tactics from 'civilized' peoples, their army will be more effective, thus still implying that the 'civilized' peoples have superior military tactics.

### 1.5.2 *Visuals and Religion*

As mentioned before, *Imperator: Rome* tries to be a nuanced video game. While the military aspect might be what most players are focusing on the most, there are many other elements there. In this part, the visual aspects of the barbarian tribes and their religion will be analyzed.

Visually, the first noticeable thing is the character portraits. While Romans are

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<sup>118</sup> For examples of strike and withdraw tactics see; Caes. *Gal.* 8.10, 8.13; For examples of slings being used by enemy tribes see Caes. *Gal.* 5.35, 7.81; For examples of allied enemy forces see Caes. *Gal.* 1.45, 1.51, 2.4, 5.39.

wearing togas and their men wear their hair short, most of the people in tribes wear their hair long and have checkered clothing. Even the flags of the absolute majority of the tribal cultures have a checkered pattern.<sup>119</sup> While, once again, the tribal cultures might be generalized, Diodorus writes ‘The clothing they wear is striking — shirts which have been dyed and embroidered in varied colors(...) and they wear striped coats, fastened by a buckle on the shoulder, (...) in which are set checks, close together and of varied hues’.<sup>120</sup> On the one hand, it is good for the tribes to have their own visual characteristics different from the Hellenic world. On the other, it is generalizing at least their flags, since they are all the same, only the colors differ.

In this game, every state, character, and population has a particular religion. This affects individuals’ loyalty and the happiness of the population. Every deity has a passive modifier on the state (the first line of text under each god in Figure 14, for example, for Nantosuelta, this is discipline +3.00%), but also has a modifier that can be activated by veneration. Every five years, the player can choose one of the four deities to focus to activate this modifier, for the next five years. There are four available deities within a pantheon for all of the states, one for war, culture, economy, and fertility. This mold does not fit all of the gods as well in the game, but this is created to have a framework that is the same for each and every state. It helps the player understand the game mechanics easier.

The religion of all of the barbarian tribes is Druidic, and these regions match the historical spread of Druidic religion.<sup>121</sup> In the game, this translates not without problems, however. In Figure 13 the spread of the religion is shown in Europe, which is a vast geographical area, and all of them share one and the same pantheon (Figure 14).

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<sup>119</sup> Each playable state in this game has a ‘flag’ with or without a symbol on it. It is unlikely that all the tribes had their own flag that they continuously used, however, from a game perspective it is a logical choice. The flag symbolizes the nation, making it easy for the player to distinguish their or their enemies’ troops, navies, and alliances in a single glance.

<sup>120</sup> Diod. Sic. 5.30.

<sup>121</sup> Ellis (2002) 2-18.



Figure 14: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, The druidic pantheon featuring Toutatis, Belinus, Nantosuelta and Artio.

To show how this could be problematic, I will use the example of Artio. In the Gallo-Roman religion, Dea Artio was a Celtic bear goddess, and her name was derived from the Gaulish word for 'bear'.<sup>122</sup> Evidence of her cult and worship, however, has been found in Bern predominantly.<sup>123</sup> While it is true that bear-shaped deities were found in a much broader geographical area, and that they were quite popular, the lack of variation of the name Artio and her constant appearance in every part of the druidic world, is at least a huge generalization.<sup>124</sup> Even more so, because sometimes the bear-god was a man, Artaios, which the Romans equated with Mercury, and was most likely not a fertility god.<sup>125</sup>

What makes this even more interesting is the proof that the game developers were aware of the names of local deities from Britain. When looking at the game files, and cross-referencing all first names in different cultural groups, not surprisingly, many cultures shared the same first name pool: Brittanic, Belgae, Celtiberian, Celto-Pannonian, and

<sup>122</sup> Kaufmann-Heinimann (2002) 4-5.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>124</sup> Crummy (2010) 37-39;

<sup>125</sup> MacCulloch (2005) 18.

Gallic.<sup>126</sup> The only difference here is the last line of the female name pool for only Britain.<sup>127</sup> All of these names are either characters from medieval Welsh legends or are Gallo-Roman or Romano-British deities.<sup>128</sup> The Roman names can be found on epigraphic sources, and it is fascinating to see that these names were not only used by deities, but actually served as personal names as well.<sup>129</sup> These types of details, Britannic names for women, show that these aspects received proper research and, at least in this regard, give the Britannic cultures some uniqueness.

### 1.5.3 Government

The state's government in this game defines its basic political framework and power structure, how the ruler is selected, what laws can be enacted, the national ideas that can be adopted, and the available offices. The offices in the Hellenic part of the world are often tailored to specific cultures. For example, the Romans and Etruscans have different offices, but those of the tribal world are once again all the same.



Figure 15: Paradox Development Studio, *Imperator: Rome*, the lighter green are 'settled tribe' governments, the darker green 'migratory tribe' governments.

<sup>126</sup> See Appendix B, example 2. In the game files for *Imperator: Rome*, there is a folder titled 'cultures'. This contains the information of all of the political entities that belong in the same culture group. Secondly, it lists certain aspects of these entities, like a first and last name pool: this means that the game can randomly pick any name from this list and give them to randomly generated characters.

<sup>127</sup> The last line contains the names: Rhiannon, Andraste, Iouga, Ricagambeda, Satiada, Senuna, Sulis, Verbeia, Modron, Arianrhod, Goewin, Ceridwen, Donwen, Awen, and Brigantia.

<sup>128</sup> Welsh names can all be found in Williams (2016) 325-391.

<sup>129</sup> For example, when looking for epigraphic evidence for the name 'Brigantia', *EDCS-07800913* shows a votive offering, while *EDCS-14500777* shows the wife of a Vibius having this as a personal name.

There are eight different offices for each state, which all fulfill a particular role. While the non-tribal government forms usually get a specific name for an office, for example, 'augur' and 'pontifex maximus', the tribal government form has to suffice with the names 'bodyguard', 'high priest', 'warchief', and 'elder'. These titles are more descriptive and give a clear indication of what job they fulfill. It is likely that even though they might not have had these offices, they had individuals fulfilling those purposes.

There are some indicators on the same government tab that the game is not optimized for the tribes. For example, the 'hold games' option is also available for the tribes, but the description has not changed, so it still reads 'The common folk love gladiators, chariot races and athletes (...)', and gladiators probably did not visit so far up north. Some of the technologies are also clearly out of place for many barbarian tribes in 304 BCE, such as 'proxenoi', 'Pythagorean Mathematics', and 'Opus Caementicium'.

This lack of optimization for the non-Hellenic world, ties in with another problem: the idea of development. A lot of the events that can randomly pop up while playing are centered around centralization for the tribes.

'After seeing our people slowly moving towards the tribal centers of our nation, [Official X] has suggested certain measures we can take to increase the unification of our society. Though [Official X] suggestion seems well-considered it would cost us a noticeable amount of gold, but not taking [their] advice would certainly frustrate [him/her].'<sup>130</sup>

'The ongoing war has meant that most of our unruly tribesmen are no longer home to cause trouble. Tribal feuds have been put to rest, at least for now, and things are in general more stable than is common. This may be a good time to resettle some of our peripheral tribes to the center of our country, where we can keep them under better control, and use them to control older clans.'

Out of forty events in total, a staggering nine of them focus on centralization, like the two examples presented here. This great emphasis on centralization, for the tribes, is caused by the possibility of government change: once a tribe has high enough centralization and civilization they can change their government form. While tribes only get two 'national ideas', which are a bunch of modifiers the player can choose from, all other government

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<sup>130</sup> The words between brackets have been changed for readability purposes. The original line in the game files reads: "After seeing our people slowly moving towards the tribal centers of our nation, [SCOPE.sCharacter('randomized\_official').GetOffice.GetName] [SCOPE.sCharacter('randomized\_official').GetName] has suggested certain measures we can take to increase the unification of our society.\n\nThough [SCOPE.sCharacter('randomized\_official').GetHerHis] suggestion seems well-considered it would cost us a noticeable amount of gold, but not taking [SCOPE.sCharacter('randomized\_official').GetHerHis] advice would certainly frustrate [SCOPE.sCharacter('randomized\_official').GetHerHim]."

types get three of them. Increasing the number of modifiers by 50% is obviously very attractive to any player and will usually automatically become the goal of playing as a tribe. When centralization increases, civilization levels will also rise. This gives the idea to the player that centralization is needed for higher civilization and that, in order to become a monarchy or republic, both must be at a high level. This kind of deterministic projection of history is often found in games, primarily with regard to technology trees, and is the aim of criticism.<sup>131</sup>

Changing the tribe to a monarchy or republic will cause all tribal technologies, events, and offices to change. They will now function the same as a generic monarchy or republic, having more modifiers than the previous tribal form. There is a clear hierarchy, and the tribal governments are at the bottom. One of the reasons for this is to create a certain power balance. This can best be perceived in this game by using the 'observer mode'. In this mode, the player does not select a state to play as but simply looks at the computer running the game by itself. This shows what happens when there is no player to disrupt any power balances. A few observations can be made. First of all, the states in *Imperator: Rome* all tend to grow and annex their neighbors in the process, creating bigger but fewer states. Usually, within a fifty-year time frame, Britain will be united under one tribe and Gaul under a couple of big ones, although which ones will come out on top varies from time to time. Secondly, some states' military is far superior to any of the surrounding ones, allowing them to swiftly take over their neighbors, such as Rome and Carthage. Rome has by far the most efficient army in the game because of several military modifiers, and can quickly conquer the Italic peninsula, whereafter they turn their gaze north. The barbarian tribes are usually no match for the Roman military machine.

#### 1.5.4 Conclusion

The game *Imperator: Rome* puts forward a much more nuanced depiction of the Gallic, Germanic and British tribes in terms of warfare than *Ryse: Son of Rome* does. This is probably caused by the fact that the tribes are playable, and do not have to fulfill the role of the enemy. However, even though the tribes get their own names and are not simply known as 'the barbarians', they all still share the same barbarian military traditions. These traditions are shared with way too many different tribes, from Spain, to Gaul, to Britain, to Germania. The idea that all of these people fought in the exactly same way is way too simplistic. The traditions can be traced back to various Latin texts, but mainly those of Julius Caesar. This means that while the player begins the game in 304 BCE, the events and texts that the traditions mention are over two centuries away from happening. This gives the idea that the war traditions did not matter in the third century BCE or were even non-available.

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<sup>131</sup> Ghys (2012).

It ties in with a second important point. All of these barbaric military traditions come from books written by Romans. So the player still views the barbarian tribes through the eyes of the Romans. To them, a lot of the tribes were interchangeable, and so are they in this game. Even though the player gets the chance to experience playing as a tribe, they still play a Roman version of it that can wildly differ from their own experiences.

Furthermore, in the example of the religion within *Imperator: Rome*, the barbarian tribes are too generalized as well. The Druidic pantheon is shared with a way too vast geographical area, while the example of Dea Artio points out that many deities were very local in nature. Moreover, the name pool shows that Britannic deities were known to the game developers, but they chose not to implement these as goddesses but only as unique names to the British isle.

Thirdly, the tribal government bears witness to the disadvantage the barbarian tribes have compared to the Hellenic world. The game is not optimized for playing these tribes, as certain Hellenic technologies out of place at this time in these areas prove. This is why there is a great emphasis on losing their 'tribal' government form. A lot of events revolve around increasing centralization. This, in turn, can increase civilization, with the goal to become a republic or monarchy. These government forms have access to more modifiers, which is evidence for a certain hierarchy in the game with the barbarian tribes dangling at the bottom. While the barbaric tribes in this game do not necessarily fall into any category of 'foil', since they can be played as a protagonist, they still form an easy target for the Roman Empire to conquer.

A fourth point that needs to be made refers once again to the theory about heroes and villains. While we are not dealing with a specific person in this case, but with a state, some points can still be made. Firstly, since the players get to make all the decisions in this game, in theory, they can be as villainous or heroic as they want themselves. However, as noted before, we expect the barbarian tribes to be conquered by the Romans, and when a player is playing as Rome, they will most certainly do so. When a player decides to play as a barbaric tribe, they choose to become the underdog.

A player can make the defining difference in whether they will be conquered, or against all odds and history itself, be victorious over the Romans. This type of victory, one that seems almost unattainable, but is just in grasp, makes for a stronger feeling of victory, according to the hero's journey theory of Campbell and Vogler.<sup>132</sup> The game does hint at certain traits of the Evil Eight, for example, violent, when using words like 'carnage' and 'slaughter' in their descriptions, this does not have to be their position in the *Imperator*:

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<sup>132</sup> Campbell (1949) 20-27; Vogler (2008) 3-6.

Rome world. This ultimately depends on the viewing point and the goals that the player chooses.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter revolves around how cultures conquered by the Roman Empire are represented in video games, what sources are used for this representation, how this history is treated and what function does this representation fulfill within a video game. This function is explained by theories of heroes and villains by Gieryn, Campbell, Vogler, Allison and Goethals. In this chapter, the barbarians of the video games *Legionnaire*, *Old World*, *Ryse: Son of Rome*, and *Imperator: Rome* were analyzed.

First of all, the barbarians are often described in non-neutral terms. In *Legionnaire*, *Ryse*, and *Old World*, the emphasis is clearly on the brutality, cruelty, and savagery of the barbarian tribes. In *Legionnaire*, this is partly done to create an idealized version of a battle in the style of 'the Western way of War'. The discipline of the Roman legions is emphasized and often repeated in the manual, and tactical hints are given. The enemy, the barbarians, are described as ferocious and aggressive, but also as not having discipline.

Secondly, the barbarians are used as a 'foil' of the first type, to reflect the protagonist. The language used in the manual of *Legionnaire* exemplifies this. By emphasizing the disorder and lack of discipline of the barbaric legions, they stress how the Roman generals are the opposite of this. In *Ryse*, this is also the case. The barbarians fight 'cruelly' and 'savagely', but the Roman protagonist that kills his enemies is portrayed as heroic. The only time this proves problematic is when one of the few named barbarians, Boudica, is pointing this out. However, this is resolved by making her encourage the Roman centurion Marius to kill her, absolving him and the player of any guilt. In *Old World* the barbarians are a foil to civilization, which they wish to destroy without reason.

*Imperator: Rome* also uses some words as 'savage' and 'carnage', but refrains from making the barbarian tribes into foils, perhaps because they are actually playable in this game.

Thirdly, in all four games, we see the barbarian tribes through the eyes of the Romans. The entirety of *Legionnaire* is based on Julius Caesar's *Bello Gallico*, the experiences he had with the Gallic tribes. This causes the game to make some tribes weaker than others, based on Caesar's words. In the example of the Haedui, this means that this is the weakest tribe in the game, possibly because Caesar states in his first book that they were in need of his help. For *Ryse*, this means that the texts have been selected that would turn the barbarians into contrasting foils the most. They are trying to make the barbarians appear as cruel as possible, which the Wickerman scene shows. The game mirrors not only Caesar's words when he is describing human sacrifice but also his aim. Caesar wanted to create a moral high ground for the Romans, justifying his warmongering,

and in the game, this functions in a similar way. The modern audience will mostly disapprove of human sacrifice and share the disgust with the protagonist, Marius. Thus this will create a stronger connection with the main character and establish that the Romans here have the moral high ground. *Old World* does not use a specific source, but frames the barbarians in a negative way that remind of the world of Caesar, only more dramatic. *Imperator* shows the Barbarian tribes through Roman eyes as well. The military traditions can all be traced back to Latin texts. Specifically Caesar's *Bello Gallico* is overrepresented. This means that, even though the player can play as a tribe beginning in 304 BCE, almost all of the traditions will refer to events over two centuries away from happening and all in relation to the Romans. This gives the idea that the war traditions did not matter in the third century BCE or were even non-available. Secondly, *Imperator* generalizes their tribes in a lot of ways, not depicting any individual differences between those of Iberian, British, Gallic, or Germanic origin. This is clear from the Druidic Pantheon, military traditions, and offices. The tribes are interchangeable, just as many Roman authors viewed them.

Fourthly, in *Legionnaire* and *Ryse*, the barbarians have some overlapping traits when focusing on the Evil Eight. They are violent, immoral, vengeful and the barbarians in *Ryse* also throw greedy in there. They have little characteristics that give them any redemption, apart maybe from that they are eager to show their strength and fight. This is different for Boudica, the only barbarian who shows both villainous and heroic traits in about the same measures. She is smart, resilient, strong, and inspiring. The first two can be found in both the Great and Evil Eight. In the latter category, she is also violent and vengeful. She seals her own fate by, instead of admitting her wrongdoing, choosing to cling to her actions and reasons. By doing this, she refuses the redemption arch that could have made her a hero and, thus, remains a villain. Finally, in the case of *Imperator: Rome*, the player can choose their own actions. By choosing to play as a barbarian tribe, however, they place themselves in an underdog role, according to Allison and Goethals we have a deeply ingrained tendency to like and root for this role. The journey to triumph is harder but more rewarding, according to Campbell and Vogler. Even though some words in the description for the Evil Eight more, the player, in the end, decides what function they shall fulfill.

Fifthly, the Barbarians in all of these games are simply fighting an uphill battle. In *Legionnaire*, this is evident from the fact that the barbarians will standard receive twice as many 'legions' than the Romans, indicating that they are weaker. In *Ryse*, all of the barbarians, with the exception of Boudica, can be killed with just a few slashes of the player's sword, and even Boudica is no match in the end for Marius. *Old World* lets a player take on 60-100 barbarians against about twenty troops, and depending on the difficulty setting the barbarians are absolutely slaughtered to just defeated. In *Imperator*, the 'observer mode' shows how easily the barbarian tribes can be taken over by Hellenic states as Rome,

or Etruria, or Phoenician ones as Carthage. The barbarian tribes receive only two national ideas, whereas the other government forms get three, making a massive difference in modifiers. The tribes can gain another national idea, but the only way to achieve this is by increasing centralization and civilization with the goal to change the government form to a monarchy or republic. This clearly showcases the hierarchy of government form, with the tribes all the way at the bottom. This means that in all these games, the barbarians are basically put there to be defeated. They are facing their unwinnable virtual battle.

The player perceives, in most cases, an enemy that is not complicated and does not need sympathy. Barbarians are portrayed in these video games a similar way the Romans presented them, and this is combined with the later historiography, which emphasized the lack of morals of the barbarians. An adversary is then created that has many similarities with nameless 'bad guys' from movies. They are evil without redemption and require no sympathy. The victors, the Romans, wrote the history of themselves and the losers in that story, and the image was powerful enough to surpass centuries and create a digital villain that fits the perfect enemy mold.

## **Chapter II: The Best Frenemy; the Representation of Carthaginians in Video Games**

This chapter is concerned with the representation of Carthage in video games first, what this representation is based upon second, and finally, what function it fulfills within a video game. To investigate these aspects, this chapter will first offer a brief overview of the position of Carthaginians in the ancient Roman sources and later the eighteenth and nineteenth-century writings. This will show how these enemies, although also conquered by Romans, have a different position than those of the barbarian tribes observed in chapter 1.

Secondly, the Carthaginians are analyzed in three video games. The first is *Annals of Rome* (1986), in which a critical game mechanic is introduced that remained highly influential throughout the decades. Subsequently, the Carthaginians in *Old World* are discussed. Particular emphasis will be placed on female leadership. Lastly, certain aspects of the game *Imperator: Rome* are studied, such as what type of sources are primarily used for these games. In conclusion, the representation of Carthaginians within these video games, the use of history, and the historical sources are compared. The representation will show a distinct role for the Carthaginians within the games and game mechanics. These portrayals of Carthage will then be compared to the theoretical framework offered in the introduction.

### **2.1 Overview of the Carthaginians in History**

Offering an overview of Carthage in just a few paragraphs will always suffer from oversimplification and generalization, but it needs to be provided regardless. While I am aware of these problems, I want to highlight some of the ideas and representations of Carthaginians in older writing before examining them in popular and newer media.

Carthage earned respectful praise from Greek observers, notably Aristotle, and from many Romans, even from the man insisting ‘Carthago delenda est’.<sup>133</sup> Carthage was influential and powerful. It matched the strong city-state of Syracuse both in strength and ambition, and for the Romans, it was possibly the biggest threat to their rise to power.

Carthage was also known for its trade and riches. Both Greek and Roman writers often and admiringly stressed Carthage’s wealth. For example, in the early 5th century BCE, Thucydides wrote that ‘they have the most silver’.<sup>134</sup> Over 250 years later, Polybius wrote about ‘the wealthiest city in the world’.<sup>135</sup> This universal idea about the riches of Carthage was shared throughout the classical world and remained intact even when the Carthaginian Empire was slowly losing its sphere of influence. The origin of this wealth was thought to be trade. This can be seen, for instance, in Cicero’s words when he talks about how Carthage

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<sup>133</sup> Hoyos (2010) 2-4.

<sup>134</sup> Thuc. 6.34.

<sup>135</sup> Plb. 18.35.

had a 'craving for mercantile voyages and commercial profit.'<sup>136</sup> According to Dexter Hoyos, only after the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE, was Carthage depicted as more alien, harsher, gloomy, and bloodstained. This was done to ease the embarrassment of Rome's aggression.<sup>137</sup>

Both of these traits, the wealth of Carthage and its power, were preserved throughout time. Similar as in the last chapter, I will now skip over some historiography and situate Carthage within the European imaginary of the eighteenth century. As some historians of that century found a political use for the barbarian tribes, some also saw Carthage as a tool they could use, for the British Empire. To a degree, some British historians started to compare the Carthaginian Empire with the British one because both of them were maritime empires in a very strong position, and Carthage's 'dominions extended about 2,000 miles in length, all bordering about the sea'.<sup>138</sup> However, Carthage had clearly been beaten in history, so some thought that the British Empire would have to combine the spirits of trade and merchants and their commercial superiority with the militaristic merits of the formidable Rome to not become 'a republic of merchants, who understood the value of money, but not the merit of brave soldiers'.<sup>139</sup>

Those British historians believed that the Carthaginian and Roman Empires succumbed to the same structural problem: a continuous loss of virtue and an embracement of decadence. Rome managed to beat Carthage because they saw the merits of commerce, but at the same time, they were 'free from all those corruptions that an intercourse with foreigners might probably have brought into fashion'.<sup>140</sup> Romans were contaminated by Carthage, by the fall of it, and in the end fell themselves to the same errors.<sup>141</sup> These viewpoints served a political agenda, which warned against the corrupting influence of foreigners. Moreover, this was a much-debated topic in Britain at the time, and, in general, perceived loss of morals.

The British Empire saw themselves as having inherited Rome's power, but they also wanted to side with Carthage at times when they saw similarities, showing a mix of divided alliances. Multiple versions of Carthage were then constructed. In one sense as great admirable merchants with considerable maritime power, on the other hand as effeminate peoples, prone to decadence, and in the end, weak.<sup>142</sup> This showcases a selectivity in the use of the past, but also points to the ambivalence in the sources themselves.

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<sup>136</sup> Cic. *Rep.* 2.7.

<sup>137</sup> Hoyos (2010) 2-4.

<sup>138</sup> Echard (1718) 181.

<sup>139</sup> Hooke (1745) 66.

<sup>140</sup> Kennett (1704) 232.

<sup>141</sup> Wotton (1701) 245-246.

<sup>142</sup> Davies (2018) 284-286.

The greatest admiration, however, is not for the city itself, but for some individuals whose stories have proven to withstand the test of time. First and foremost, unsurprisingly, is Hannibal. From the first moment Hannibal and Romans stepped onto the field of battle, his name became a synonym for fear: ‘Dread Hannibal’, ‘Traacherous Hannibal’, ‘Hannibal at the gates’. The man and his epithets became an obsession for Rome’s authors as they granted him near mythical status in their texts.<sup>143</sup> He captured Rome’s imagination and received enduring popularity well into our day and age.<sup>144</sup> The second figure who embodies Carthage and whose popularity is still visible today is Dido. Plays, operas, books, and movies have portrayed Dido in their own ways.

Carthage is then, on one side, a loser of history, conquered by the Romans, seen by some historians as a warning against decadence and foreign influences, but on the other side, admired for its vast size, wealth, and power both in antiquity and in modernity. The importance of Hannibal and Dido and their lasting influence on the European imagery can hardly be overstated. They have become synonymous with the Carthaginian Empire itself.

## **2.2 The First Appearance of the Carthaginians on the Virtual Battlefield**

*Annals of Rome* (1986) is a turn-based strategy video game, released for the ZX Spectrum, Atari ST, and Commodore 64, among others. The game focuses on developing the Roman Empire, or simply surviving as a state, and it begins when Rome only controls the Italic peninsula. As is the case with *Legionnaire*, introduced in the last chapter, which was released in the '80s, *Annals of Rome* seems quite dated to our modern eyes and does not have a user-friendly interface. When the game was first released, it was positively received, and only the graphics were criticized. The game is important to this thesis because it introduces two important concepts. The first was a highly influential form of geopolitical environment for video games, and second concept tried to incorporate *all* of Rome’s history in code, which is nowadays even surpassed by the code of a smart coffee machine.<sup>145</sup>

The game begins in the year 273 BCE as Carthage is situated in North Africa. This game is turn-based, which means the players get to play a turn, and in sequential order, all of the other political entities on the map will then play a turn. In this manual, the Carthaginians are described as ‘deadly’, and a few pages later, the relative strengths of each power are stated. Carthage gets a 10 out of a possible 10 in strength, making it a more than

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<sup>143</sup> Hor. *Carm.* 2.12.2 (dirus Hannibal), Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.49 (perfidus Hannibal), and Cic. *Fin.* 4.22 (Hannibal ad portas).

<sup>144</sup> Consider movies and documentaries like *Scipio Africanus; The Defeat of Hannibal* (1937), *Hannibal* (1959), *Hannibal: The man who hated Rome* (2001), *The True Story of Hannibal* (2005), *Hannibal* (2006), and the long awaited trilogy that is still in development *Hannibal the Conqueror*.

<sup>145</sup> The code of a DeLonghi Esam 4000 is 31 mb worth of code (according to the manual), while *Annals of Rome* takes up 5 mb of code (can be found when installing on Steam).

competent adversary. They can appear in this game from 273 BCE to 525 CE, in order to challenge the player throughout the centuries. At the beginning of the game, Carthage has slightly more men than the Roman Empire, making Rome the underdog in this story. As the player progresses, they will make more chances of survival since Italia will get 1,000 land and 1,000 income per turn, while Africa (i.e., Carthage) will only get 750 land and 500 income. These numbers help determine the number of men a player gets to control. The more turns Rome can hold on to Italia, the more men they will get and a bigger chance of beating Carthage.

There is an element not mentioned in the manuals, which can only be learned by playing the game, or reading reviews. When Rome manages to capture, even for a brief moment, the heartland of Carthage, they will receive an enormous treasure. This is not generated by the slow accumulation of income from turns, but rather a characteristic of Carthage: they are rich. This indicates that the game wants to point out one of the essential elements often contributed to Carthage, that they were good traders. As the brief overview pointed out, this is also a trait often showed in media.

The game is called *Annals of Rome* after Tacitus' work. The particular years that Tacitus covers in his annals are also the ones that are the most rocky for the Roman Empire to endure. However, the backstory before the game begins, is not based on Tacitus' texts, but rather on other sources, such as Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* and Polybius' *Histories*. Since this is quite a dated game, there are limited ways to encounter these histories. For example, when the Punic Wars occur according to Polybius, the game simulates those by making Carthage act more aggressive towards Rome by constantly attacking the empire with their strong units and usually conquering Hispania.<sup>146</sup> The treasure within Carthage can be traced back to multiple sources. For example, Polybius states 'a city so rich'. Furthermore, when Gnaeus beats an army of the Carthaginians he gets a 'rich booty', and he calls Carthage the 'wealthiest city in the world'.<sup>147</sup>

According to the manual, the very first thing that a player must do in order for the Roman Empire to survive is to defeat the Carthaginian Empire in order to secure the foundation of the Roman Empire.<sup>148</sup> Obviously, this storyline is based upon the idea of the Punic Wars, and that one of the two powerful political entities needed to win, or else the wars would continue indefinitely. On the one hand, the way this is assimilated in the game is by a representation of the struggle of the Punic Wars. On the other hand, it is introducing an influential game mechanic that continuously appears in other games. Within the game, the Romans are relatively strong, and most of the enemies they face are weaker. To make the

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<sup>146</sup> Polybius records the Punic Wars in book 1, 3-15, and 35-39.

<sup>147</sup> Plb. 2.7, 3.76, 18.35.

<sup>148</sup> Personal Software Services (1988) 8.

game interesting, to create a challenge, and to prevent the player from finishing the game within an hour, a more substantial competitor needs to enter the world. Right from the first virtual introduction of the Carthaginians, they are the ones that fill this role. They are the ones to beat. For this reason, the game also lets the Carthaginians challenge the player until 525 CE.

Although this game is in modern eyes quite dated, and might lack some refinement, some historical events still can be observed. Carthage has, for example, a preference for two pieces of land; Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula. It might be reasoned that these are the two places that are simply geographically the most logical. However, Egypt refutes this theory. At the beginning of the game, the Egyptians have 4 in strength, while the Carthaginians have 10, thus, the latter have quite an advantage. Egypt also has an income of 400 each turn, while Hispania has 300 and Sicily only 100. Despite Egypt having weaker characteristics, Carthage rarely chooses to take over Egypt. Instead, Carthage rather fights whoever is in charge of Sicily (usually Rome). The game mechanics are not designed for Carthage to make a more *logical* choice, based on the values mentioned above, but a historical one.<sup>149</sup>

Carthage fought at least eight wars to bring Sicily under their rule. The First Punic War started because Rome attacked Carthage's holdings in Sicily. Rome won this war and took over the island. In the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians tried to recapture Sicily, but the expedition was to no avail.<sup>150</sup> Even when the game is taken outside of the time frame of the Punic Wars, Carthage continuously seeks to take over Sicily, perhaps echoing the resolve shown in the other eight wars for the island. There is no real incentive for Carthage to do so in the game. They will not receive a significant number of levies of gold, and Sicily does not offer strategic advantages. The only reason for making this decision, is that historical Carthage chose to do so as well. In history Carthage had many incentives for this choice that could not be included in this game, and their choice for Sicily would only make sense in light of historical knowledge.

Hispania is often acquired by Carthage not long after the game begins.<sup>151</sup> This expansion into Hispania was completed under the Barcid family's leadership after the first Punic War.<sup>152</sup> Even though the profits of Hispania are lesser than Egypt's, the virtual Carthage will still conquer this part first. If Carthage succeeds in conquering both these

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<sup>149</sup> While later games use an AI to make choices, the low level programming language did not facilitate the game to 'think' in this manner. Thus here a choice was made to target two pieces of land before acquiring other parts of the map.

<sup>150</sup> Hoyos (2010) 181-184.

<sup>151</sup> In what year varies, based on choices the player makes.

<sup>152</sup> Plb. 10.6-7.

regions, they continue onward focusing on Italy and Sardinia, challenging the Romans at every turn in time.

Within the narrative of heroes and villains, the Romans are the underdogs in this story. However, historical knowledge cannot grant them this position completely. When a player manages to conquer the Carthaginians, they feel a more significant triumph than beating the Gauls, who only have 3 out of 10 possible strength. The game presents the Carthaginians as powerful enemies. The journey of the player, or maybe hero in this case, is a difficult one, but therefore more rewarding, since they lead Rome to victory.

With these types of games, a specific kind of geopolitics comes into focus. Geopolitics can comprise all types of (international) political or power relations influenced by geographical factors. Carthage is remembered as a maritime giant, while the Romans are notorious for their infantry. They are on opposing sides of the Mediterranean Sea. In video games, they often receive opposing colors.<sup>153</sup> They are each other's strongest competitors. They are not like barbarians, who can easily be defeated, instead they create a power balance in which the other political entities in the world play only a lesser role.

The way these games are made invite players to, what sometimes is referred to as, 'color the map'. The player can see their realm steadily growing under good leadership by conquering more territory. The game displays this by more territory 'colored' in the shade of the political entity the player is ruling. In the case of *Annals of Rome*, this would mean that the bright pink would spread over the map (Figure 16). Even though the manual clearly states that the goal of the Roman Empire is to *survive*, the player will most likely try to take over all of the map. This phenomenon of players desiring to take over as much land as possible, thus coloring the map in the color of their political entity, can be found in numerous games. Most of the Paradox development studios games are great examples of this: *Europa Universalis I-IV*, *Crusader Kings I-III*, *Hearts of Iron I-IV*, and *Imperator: Rome*. Even when the game does not explicitly encourage the player to do so, this desire for absolute world domination most likely lies in a desire to be an *ultimate* hero. This does not refer to 'hero' as in the theory of the Great Eight, but to a much more core trait of heroes: to do something incredible.<sup>154</sup> The player plays a game to such an extent that no further triumph can be reached, and with that, beating all historical individuals and realms in the process.

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<sup>153</sup> For example, In *Imperator: Rome*, Rome is colored red (which is most often the case) and Carthage is green.

<sup>154</sup> Allison and Goethals (2010) 48-50.



Figure 16: *Annals of Rome*, the symbol of a gate is the capital: Rome. The even pink signifies the territory of the Roman Empire, while the dotted green is Carthage (Colors for this game varied depending on what console it is played on.)

In conclusion, *Annals of Rome* portrays the first virtual Carthaginians and introduces the gaming world to an essential aspect of this empire. This strategy game introduces Carthage as the most potent enemy of Rome. In this game, Carthage gets a 10 out of a possible 10 strength. Carthage not only appears in a historical time frame, namely leading up to and during the Punic Wars, but also centuries after that, up until 525 CE. From *Annals of Rome* onward, in these types of games, Carthage fulfills a vital game mechanic: to counterbalance the strength of Rome. This creates a power balance within the game that is both enjoyable for a player and yet challenging too. *Annals of Rome* depicts the Carthaginians as extremely wealthy, but the homeland in which they live is not particularly contributing to that. Instead the game indicates the wealth is acquired through trade.

This game is based most strongly on the writings of Polybius, Livy, and Tacitus. Before and during the years that the Punic Wars take place, these ancient scholars credit Carthage with a lot of strength and wealth, which the game simulates by having Carthage attack Rome perpetually.

Lastly, the idea of 'coloring the map' is introduced, in which the player wants to become the greatest hero possible by conquering all that there is in the game, even when the game does not explicitly encourage this. In *Annals of Rome*, for example, the player is

simply tasked with making Rome survive. A player can feel the urge to complete the ultimate hero journey and do what nobody in history could.

## **2.3 Old World**

In this very recent game that is completely set in antiquity, the player can choose one of seven ancient civilizations. It is a historical turn-based strategy 4X video game, and a player has to manage cities, deal with families, research technologies, and hopefully bring their realm to victory. This can be achieved by multiple strategies, such as focusing on culture, converting everyone to their religion, or simply beating all of the opponents through military might. The player takes on the role of head of the dynasty. In Carthage's case, this is Dido. This part will first focus on her representation in the game and look at her hero potential. Subsequently, I analyze the scenarios of this game, and study Carthage's unique units and families.

### **2.3.1 Dido**

'I am a Phoenician princess who fled her home in Tyre, carrying the name Elissa. Escaping my brother pygmalion who murdered my beloved husband Acerbas, a priest of Hercules, I arrived in North Africa.

With my husband's riches, I bargained with the Berber king Iarbus who wanted to marry me. He mockingly promised me all the land that I could cover with the skin of a dead ox. I cut the skin into the thinnest pieces and, along with my Tyrian settlers, laid out the borders of my beloved city. I am ready to become Dido the wanderer, Queen of Carthage, goddess to my people.'



Figure 17: Dido of Carthage introduces herself to the player

With these words, Dido introduces herself to the player (Figure 17). Herein she displays characteristics of the Great Eight. First of all, she is resilient. She has to flee from her home city Tyre because her beloved husband was murdered, but she does not give up and instead builds a great city. Secondly, she is intelligent, proven by the narrative of the skin of the dead ox with which she laid out the land of her new city. Thirdly, it hints at her being inspiring, so much that her people will venerate her. Perhaps a fourth trait can be discovered in the way she is represented visually. Her pose is powerful with both her hands on her hips with her feet slightly apart, and she has a stern look for the player. This, together with her resilience in her story, points to a strong character, and thus, at least four out of the Great Eight boxes are checked. Even if the player is not familiar with Dido or her story, the brief introduction portrays her as an authoritative and resourceful leader, a hero of her own story.

The representation of Dido is based mainly on the accounts of Virgil. He was not the first ancient author who mentioned Dido, neither the only, but his account is likely the most influential. Most of these sources are written well after Carthage's founding, and her historicity remains a topic of discussion.<sup>155</sup> The understanding of Dido's chronology is placed in the second half of the ninth century BCE, while Virgil wrote about her only in the first century BCE.<sup>156</sup> This makes Dido, regardless of her historicity, a created figure and, moreover, an image partly constructed by the enemies of Carthage.

This does not mean that Dido is portrayed in a negative light, quite the contrary. The

<sup>155</sup> Hoyos (2010) 7-12.

<sup>156</sup> The historicity of Dido is still a topic for debate, thus the chronology of her life even more so. For a proposed time frame of her life see: Cross (1972) 13-19.

beginning of the *Aeneid* is quite literally represented within the game: 'Dido wields the sceptre, Dido, who fleeing from her brother, came from the city of Tyre'.<sup>157</sup> Her capability to lead is emphasized as well as her gender for that matter: 'The wealth (...) is borne overseas, the leader of the enterprise a woman'<sup>158</sup>. She is also very welcoming and caring of the strangers that wash up on her beach. For example, she tells Aeneas and his men 'Free your hearts of fear, Teucrians; put away your cares (...) I protect my frontiers far and wide with guards (...) I will send you hence guarded (...) The city I build is yours; draw up your ships; Trojan and Tyrian I shall treat alike.'<sup>159</sup>. Dido cares for the fate of these strangers and is compassionate and kind, which grants her another one of the Great Eight in Virgil's representation. This representation of Dido shows the same strength, resilience, and intelligence as the concise introduction of Dido in the game. Within only a few sentences, the core elements that Dido is attributed with in Virgil's *Aeneid* are conveyed to the player.

While the word 'goddess' might seem a bit out of place in her introduction, or perhaps it even hints at overestimating herself, this is actually a direct citation of Virgil's words. On multiple occasions, Aeneas compares the queen to a goddess, 'in her step she was revealed a very goddess'.<sup>160</sup> Virgil's Dido then is placed in a very positive light. Her end, however, is tragic. Lovesick, hopeless, and with a feeling of betrayal, she takes her own life because her lover Aeneas has left her.<sup>161</sup>

In the game, no mention of Aeneas is made or Dido's tragic fate following the unfortunate encounter. This is not only done because the game portrays the beginning of the colony of Carthage, and the story of Dido is at the very start. As evident from the last chapter, female representation in video games is constantly developing, and Dido is an example of this. She is a strong female leader, and her story is not built around the presence of a man other than her husband's death that caused her to flee Tyre. Women can create stories on their own and in video games they definitely should, especially since attention for this is a too recent development.<sup>162</sup>

### 2.3.2 Scenarios

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<sup>157</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 339-341.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 363-364.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 561-570, 573-575.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 370, 405.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 615-665.

<sup>162</sup> The game developer of *Old World* is Leyla Johnson, an indie developer who occupies herself with the representation of gender in this game. She wanted the female leaders appearing in this game to not come across as too sexualised or weaker than male leaders, which is sometimes stereotypically used for women in games. She was a keynote speaker on 'The Interactive Pasts Conference Online 2' hosted by VALUE. The video of her talk can be viewed here: VALUE 'TIPC Online 2: Leyla Johnson (Mohawk Games)', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wcCNLTQpSo&list=PLKbRwyeu6RQvPnZmB3gFCkftbE4YMdhYg&index=12> (accessed 05-06-2021).

The single-player mode also has specific game-play scenarios.<sup>163</sup> In these, the player sets out to complete a distinct goal, and follows a set narrative. Two of the three scenarios deal with Carthage. The first is called 'ox hide' and focuses on the beginning of the Carthaginian Empire, and features Dido.

'Queen Dido lands on the shores of North Africa with her followers (...) Thus begins Carthage, a small colony that will have to strengthen its economy and defenses, and carve out a place for itself in history. Can you survive as a newly-founded colony and sit it on the path to greatness?'

Even though the greatest adversaries of the Carthaginians, the Romans, are very much present in the game, the game-play scenarios do not focus on the exchange between these two powers, but rather on the humble beginnings of Carthage. It begins as just a small colony and needs to 'carve out' a place for itself in history under the guidance of Queen Dido.

The description of this mission also refers back to a point made in the previous chapter. The player has certain expectations from historical video games. It is possible to play with those expectations and to create variations, but not all of them can be disregarded. The knowledge of history creates specific goals that must be fulfilled within this virtual world. Carthage was at one point in time, one of the most powerful empires in antiquity, and the player is asked to recreate this, to lead Carthage to victory.

The second scenario in this game is called 'riches and influence' and continues the previous mission of beginning the new colony.

'Continue the rise of Carthage campaign by leading Carthage in its expansion in the Mediterranean (...) the time has come for Carthage to become the most powerful and richest Phoenician civilization.'

This representation of Carthage echoes that of *Annals of Rome*, that Carthage must become both powerful and wealthy. The realm must be expanded in order to win and a certain amount of wealth must be acquired by the player. At the beginning of chapter, it was already stated that this was the reputation of Carthage. What is extra in this game is that Virgil's *Aeneid* was used for the characteristics of Dido and his work also played a role in shaping these missions, which paid special attention to both the power of Carthage 'It is the Punic realm you see (...) unconquerable in war', and of the wealth present in the city 'Aeneas marvels at the city's fortune, the handicraft of several artists and the work of their toil'.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> At the time of writing (05-06-2021), there are three scenarios but a new one is added every week.

<sup>164</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 338-339; Verg. *Aen.* 454-455.

### 2.3.3 *Unique units and Carthage's families*

In this game, the player does not have to fight their way to victory, but it would be advisable to have some resemblance of a standing army since neighboring states can decide to wage war upon the player's. The armies are represented by special military 'units' that are, for the most part, 'generic', such as axemen, slingers, bowmen, and swordsmen. There are, however, also some units unique to Carthage. These are the Sacred Band and the Balearic Slingers.

The Sacred Band is an infantry unit within the game. Diodorus Siculus first mentioned the name in the first century CE. He states that the Sacred Band was 'drawn from the ranks of those citizens who were distinguished for valor and reputation as well as for wealth'.<sup>165</sup> The units described here are known for their valor, and when Diodorus mentions this band again, the Greek army that is fighting the Carthaginians, places strong hoplites to balance the Sacred Band, implying that they were acknowledged as effective enemies.<sup>166</sup> After a battle at the end of the 4th century BCE, the Sacred Band was mentioned for the final time. Hereafter the elite unit seems to have been replaced by Carthaginian citizen infantry, which were larger in number but less selectively chosen for their skills in battle.<sup>167</sup> The units in the game echo this elite status of the Sacred Band. The units must first be researched to learn this 'technology', and only then can they be formed. This means that a considerable amount of time must be sacrificed by the player for them to gain these units. Although the Sacred Band is stronger than the average axeman and swordsman, this unit is also more costly. Even though the game mechanics do not allow for nuances such as choosing the wealthiest and bravest to be in the band, their costs, both in terms of research time and actual creating costs, show them to be precious units.

The Balearic Slingers is a ranged unit in the game, meaning that they can deal with enemies from a distance. For the historic Carthaginians, these were small but highly valued groups of mercenaries. They were employed by them on multiple occasions, most famously against the Romans during the Punic Wars. They were highly skilled slingers and also admired by the Romans. Ovid states how quickly 'a Balearic sling can send its whizzing bullet' and Annaeus Florus remarks 'who can wonder that their aim is so accurate, seeing that this is their only kind of army and its employment their sole pursuit from infancy?'.<sup>168</sup> Not surprising then, this unit also appears with very high damage and cost (in both research time and creation costs). In *Old World* this unit does not appear as mercenaries because it is not a supported feature, rather this game translates this as high costs, which is the same as for the Sacred Band.

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<sup>165</sup> Diod. Sic. 16.80.4.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 20.11.1.

<sup>167</sup> Hoyos (2010) 154-173.

<sup>168</sup> Ov. *Met.* 4.709; Flor. 1.43.8.

Both of these units are unique to Carthage. The admiration of the ancient authors for both the Sacred Band and the Balearic slingers shines through in the game by making them quite powerful units. Secondly, their high quality is evident from the time it takes to research this 'technology'. The player has to wait and develop their empire before they are able to create these powerful units.

Also in *Old World*, each player has to deal with four families when they play the game. These families potentially give bonuses when they are granted a city. If they are 'unhappy', however, the player might be presented with a virtual civil war. There are four types of families for Carthage: 'riders' (which are a military type), 'artisans', 'traders', and lastly 'statesman'.<sup>169</sup> Carthage receives the families Barcid, Hannonid, Didonian, and Magonid. Why are these chosen?

The first family, the Barcid family, is perhaps the most famous family from Carthage. During the third century BCE, they became one of the leading families in Carthage. Although they were active in many sections of society, they are best remembered for their contribution to the Punic Wars. Hamilcar Barca served as general in the first Punic War, and after his death, Hasdrubal took over command. However the most famous individual of this family was Hannibal Barca, the general who crossed over the Alps.<sup>170</sup> It is exactly this legacy of Hannibal that makes the Barcids appear in this game, as well as in what way they appear. They are the family that fulfills a militaristic function. They give bonuses to military units, have a higher chance of having good generals within their family, and allow more types of military units to be built. In general, the historical Barcid family was not solely occupied with warring; However, Hannibal's contribution is almost mythical in size, which makes it impossible for this family to not be associated with war.<sup>171</sup>

Next, there is the Hannonid family. This is not a historical family, but rather, it is named after a person.<sup>172</sup> Hanno the navigator was a Carthaginian explorer of the fifth century BCE, known for his expeditions along the western coast of Africa. He described various places and how to navigate there, which was very beneficial for the Carthaginian trade.<sup>173</sup> Pliny tells us, 'While the power of Carthage was at its height, Hanno published an account of

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<sup>169</sup> The types that can be encountered in this game are Riders, Artisans, Traders, Statesman, Clerics, Patrons, Hunters, Champions, Sages and Landowners. Each political entity receives four families with unique names.

<sup>170</sup> For Hamilcar's achievements see Plb. 1.24-44, 1.60-87; in book 3 Hasdrubal receives more attention; see Gabriel (2000) 114-120 for an appreciation of the tactics used in the Punic Wars by the Barcid commanders from a modern point of view.

<sup>171</sup> For example, Hasdrubal the fair constructed a new city in Hispania, Carthago Nova, Liv. 21.2, 21.18-19; Plb. 2.13.

<sup>172</sup> There are also four monarchs, ruling after the Magonids, sometimes referred to as the Hannonian monarchs. Here a deliberate choice is made to not choose the *Hannonians* but rather call this family the Hannonid, referring to a more famous person.

<sup>173</sup> A Greek text, supposedly Hanno's report, remains extant, but it has a lot of contradictions and most likely a later copy of the original lost Carthaginian text. Warmington (1960) 61-66.

a voyage which he made.’ This means that the name of Hanno and his accomplices were known to the Romans at least four centuries after his achievement.<sup>174</sup> In the game, this family is known as ‘traders’ and gives bonuses that facilitate a city’s export. They give the player more gold, and unlock the function ‘court merchant’. Instead of choosing a known family name from the Carthaginian Empire, this game decides to pick the name of an individual who has a well-known achievement, admired by his contemporaries and even centuries after. Since he contributed to the trade power of the Carthaginians, his name is picked for the ‘traders’ in this video game.

The third family is known by the name ‘Didonian’. Which refers to the founder and leader of ancient Carthage: Dido. This family fulfills the function of ‘statesmen’, giving the player more orders per turn, unlocks the ability to issue decrees, and lets the player earn more civics.<sup>175</sup> This family allows the player to develop Carthage politically and emphasizes the statesmanship of Dido herself. There are various archetypes in the game, and Dido is one such archetype called a ‘Diplomat’. This type often has the traits ‘courteous’ and ‘regal’, and it gives a bonus to leadership. In this case, we see how the perceived image of Dido, as was stated before in this chapter, influences the family named after her. The Didonian family is great at politics and they give the player bonuses in these areas.

The fourth family is the Magonid family. Historically, this family was politically active before the Barcid family became one of the leading families. Most of the recorded activities of the Magonids were military and the rulers of this family were important generals.<sup>176</sup> This game does not allow one political entity to have two ‘rider’ (i. e. military families). This is why the Magonids and Barcids cannot both be a military family. Thus the achievements of Hannibal make the Barcids take up that position and the Magonids are left with the ‘artisan’ function. The ‘artisans’ grant a bonus to civilization points and allow the player to create new ship units. They start with ‘ingenuity’ as technology which is already researched, and also give a bonus to output of mines and lumber mills.

Unlike the other families, the Magonids do not have a historical reason to end up with this function. Rather one of the most famous families’ names from Carthage is incorporated here for the classification of artisans. Thus, for Carthage to become as rich as is expected, ‘the time has come for Carthage to become the most powerful and richest Phoenician civilization.’ In the scenario, a considerable output must be reached in order to be able to trade more efficiently. The artisans fulfill this role by being one step ahead in technology and having bonuses towards the output of industries. In this case, game-mechanics rather than history inform the choice of the function for the Magonids.

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<sup>174</sup> Plin. *Nat.* 2.67.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Civics’ are points that can be used to develop specialists and finish projects and give your civilization a boost.

<sup>176</sup> Hoyos (2020) 41-43.

#### 2.3.4 Conclusion

The first encounter of the player when entering the video game with Carthage is Dido introducing herself. In just a few lines of her introduction as well as in her visual representation, she embodies the Dido of Virgil's *Aeneid*. She is smart, strong, resilient, and above all, an inspiring female leader. Even though the Romans were the enemies of Carthage, the portrayal of Dido in the *Aeneid* is a very positive one. The video game version of Dido showcases at least four of the Great Eight traits. The story of her fleeing and founding a city makes her resilient, the use of the ox hide proves her intelligence, her stance proves a strength within her, and she is a goddess to her people, which makes her inspiring.

The scenarios in this game are also based on Dido's story from Virgil. These scenarios place Carthage, and thus the player, in the position of the 'underdog', since it focuses on the beginnings of the city as a small colony with Dido washing up on the shores just having fled Tyre. The winning conditions of the scenario point to the representation of Carthage as 'the most powerful and richest Phoenician civilization.' This creates a hero's journey that the player must accomplish. Carthage must be built.

Lastly, the unique military units and families of Carthage attest to how history is incorporated in this game. The military unit the 'Sacred Band' was an elite unit, attested in sources like Diodorus Siculus, and the Balearic slingers were mercenaries often employed by Carthage. Both of these units are costly, with the time it takes to research their 'technologies' and in creating the units. Even though the game mechanics do not show that the Sacred Band was thought to be extraordinarily brave or that the slingers were mercenaries, the game shows that these units are elite by the costs and by their power. The families attest that Carthaginian individuals were important. The achievements of individuals are acknowledged by granting them a family name. General Hannibal's family is military, Dido's family are statesman, Hanno the navigator's family excels in trade. Only the Magonids receive a position based on game mechanics rather than history.

#### 2.4 **Imperator: Rome**

In this section I will explore the representation of Carthage in the game *Imperator: Rome*. First, the military traditions and the sources used for the descriptions are analyzed. Secondly, the government, political system, religion and families of Carthage will be discussed, in which it will be shown how games handle gaps in our knowledge and what effect this has on historical representation. Thirdly, the missions will be analyzed and will be compared to the players' expectations of history. Lastly, the position of Carthage within the theoretical framework of Allison and Goethals is considered and what this means for the representation of Carthage.

#### 2.4.1 *Military Traditions.*

In this video game, Carthage receives 'North African military traditions'. The description of these traditions in general states the following:

'North African traditions concentrate on the strengths of the Phoenician merchant state of Carthage and the surrounding nations. The Carthaginians had a strong naval tradition built on centuries of Mediterranean trade, and made use of heavy infantry and African war elephants supported by light infantry and cavalry to smash through enemy formations'

The North African traditions are thus actually Carthaginian military traditions that thus focus on a strong naval tradition facilitated by their centuries of trade. The idea that Carthage was supreme on the water, while Rome had the best army on land, was already briefly discussed earlier in this chapter. I would like to add here that not just later historiography made this distinction, but the ancient sources also emphasize this point. For example, Polybius states that the Carthaginians were 'more exercised in maritime affairs than any other people'.<sup>177</sup> While he believed that the Romans had superior man power, he admitted that Carthage had the science: 'nautical science contributes largely to success in sea-fights (...) still the fact is that Italians (...) are by nature superior (...) in physical strength and courage'.<sup>178</sup> Unlike the barbarians, who do not receive any naval traditions, Carthage is credited with eight traditions, and in comparison, Rome only receives one.

While similar to the barbarians, the Carthaginians also received some more generic descriptions of military traditions, such as 'Sure-footed, as Wild Horses', 'call to arms' and 'local knowledge', some refer to a specific historic event, unit, or character.<sup>179</sup> For example, we find a tradition that was named earlier, the Sacred Band. The description states, 'Unlike the rest of the predominantly mercenary forces, the Sacred Band were a group of Carthaginian citizens, possibly of noble birth, armed and equipped with heavy armor and spears. This elite group operated in a similar style to the Greek phalanxes, but due to their small number, were destroyed (...)'. These words directly echo those of Diodorus Siculus, who said 'drawn from the ranks of those citizens who were distinguished for valor and reputation as well as for wealth'.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Plb. 6.52.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> 'Sure-footed, as Wild Horses' - We have no need for theft or ownership, but live in harmony with the land around us. Where the oases and watering holes are, there will we find the wild beasts which will bear our armies; 'Call to arms' - The fortunes of our people are called into question every time we are threatened - all must rise in defense of our culture. We live, or die, as one; 'Local knowledge' - None know better than our people, the ways of the desert. Where others see a desolate plain, we see potential.

<sup>180</sup> Diod. Sic. 16.80.4, 20.11.1.

Another example of the military traditions is 'Maneuverability Above All' with the description:

'The Greek penchant for huge ships was not shared by the Carthaginians. Experts in naval warfare, they favored smaller craft with enhanced adaptability, leading to numerous victories over their enemies. The Battle of Catana in 397 BC resulted in a crushing defeat for the Syracusan forces, who were outnumbered and outperformed by the Carthaginian armada.'

This description is also referencing the words of Diodorus Siculus. In his fourteenth book, he describes the Battle of Catana, where the Carthaginians were indeed using smaller ships, 'stationing their lighter craft along the shore'. The Carthaginians were greater in number; they had 'no less than five hundred ships' and the 'Carthaginians surpassed in number'. The Carthaginians won decisively 'the greatness of their success'.<sup>181</sup>

A final example is 'The African Elephant', which is described by the words in the game '(...) elephants were utilized as shock cavalry in the Carthaginian army. As proven by Hannibal's crossing of the alps, they made excellent pack animals when not engaged in combat'. This references the outstanding achievement of Hannibal, written down by Livy and Polybius, when Hannibal crossed the Alps to reach the Italic peninsula.<sup>182</sup>

These examples illustrate a few vital trends. First of all, many military traditions and their descriptions are based on classical sources. Polybius, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus are used and almost quoted verbatim in some instances, which brings attention to and shows an appreciation of these sources. Secondly, unlike the barbarians in the previous chapter, the military traditions of the Carthaginians do not only rely on future events. The starting point of the game is 305 BCE, and it refers to the past of Carthage when mentioning the Battle at Catana, the present, and the future. Moreover, the Carthaginians' traditions do not only entail their dealings with the Romans but also mention their affairs with other cultures, such as the Massylian, Iberian and the cultures from Magna Graecia.

. Thirdly, a lot of attention is placed upon the naval superiority of the Carthaginians, something that was both attested by the ancient sources and which remains a popular topic to today.

#### 2.4.2 *Government and Political System of Carthage*

As the player begins their game as Carthage, they will immediately notice that Carthage does not stretch all the way over the North-African coast. At the beginning of the chapter, it was stated that the empire was admired by the British for having such a vast

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.,. 14.59-60.

<sup>182</sup> Liv. 21.32.6-37.6; Plb.3.49-56.

landmass, so why is this not shown in the game? On closer inspection, the player will notice that the other political entities in North Africa are contributory subjects of Carthage to a certain degree. This means that in times of war, they will send troops to help Carthage fight and, in some cases, also send contributions in the form of money to Carthage. This is also reflected in some in-game descriptions, such as, 'Many nations were considered protectorates by Carthage, often providing troops in return for nominal protection.' This representation of Carthage distances itself from the traditional view of the 'Carthaginian Empire', which was important to eighteenth-century British historians. This slowly became replaced by a Carthage whose informal and multifaceted political structure was emphasized. Carthage is currently more often described as a city at the center of a broad geopolitical sphere of influence instead of an empire.<sup>183</sup> The game embraces this idea and proves quite capable of representing this sphere of influence by making Carthage's political entities contributory to the city.

In the game, the government of Carthage is led by the Suffete and Co-suffete. These titles are well attested in literature by Livy. 'Suffete —the highest magistrates among the Phoenicians' and 'The senate was accordingly convened by the suffete'.<sup>184</sup> Livy makes the comparison between the Roman consul and co-consul, 'whose authority corresponded to that of consuls', and in the game, these tops of the government are practically the same.<sup>185</sup> Instead of a senate, the Carthaginians get a body of advisors called 'the Adirim', which literally translates to 'mighty ones' or 'great ones'. Livy, Polybius, Diodorus, and Appian all name the Adirim most often in the context of them deciding what a Carthaginian general was allowed to do.<sup>186</sup> Within *Imperator: Rome*, the Adirim functions exactly the same as the Roman senate.



Figure 18: the Suffete and Co-Suffete of Carthage, which are the positions as the consul and co-consul for Rome

<sup>183</sup> Hoyos (2010) 57.

<sup>184</sup> Liv. 28.37.2, 30.7.5. Note that the word Suffete knows many variations in spelling, in the text I will refer to the 'Suffete' since this is the manner which *Imperator: Rome* chose. Other spelling include, but are not limited to Sufete, Sufet, Shopheṭ or Shofeṭ.

<sup>185</sup> Liv. 30.7.5.

<sup>186</sup> Plb. 3.13-14; Liv. 21.3.1; Diod. 22.8.2; App. *Hisp.* 8.29.



Figure 19: the government offices of Carthage

Hereafter, things are less clear-cut. In the game the government consists of eight offices. For the barbarians, these were mostly descriptive, such as ‘bodyguard’ and ‘high priest’. In the case of Carthage, some functions received specific names (Figure 19). The eight offices are Shephat, Magistrate, Mefahked, Tribune of the Treasury, Augur, Kahen, Tribune of the People and Rophet. Some of these are still descriptive. For example, the Tribune of the Treasury ‘is in charge of administering the republic’s treasury (...)’ and the Tribune of the People ‘represents the republic’s freemen (...)’, others have more specific titles.

A function that might also ring a bell is ‘Augur’, the description of this title is ‘this office is a senior priest and the republic’s chief interpreter of the will of the gods (...)’. Many sources attest that an Augur was a priest and an official in the Roman world.<sup>187</sup> The word itself is also Latin, not Hebrew like the other functions. The ancient Carthaginians did also practice augury, which is the interpreting of omens from observing the behavior of birds. However, it is unlikely they had the exact same name for this as the Romans since they spoke a different language.<sup>188</sup> This title might have been picked because of the Roman authors who wrote about Carthage, specifically Virgil had a role in this. He states ‘(...) et regi Turno gratissimus augur’ and ‘ipse Tolumnius augur’, he refers to the Carthaginian priests with a Roman term, even though they probably had their own name. The word augur eventually is used for Carthage in the video game.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>187</sup> To name just a small number of instances; Cic. *Brut.* 1.5; Hor. *Od.* 1.2; Liv. 1.18, 1.36, 1.41.21; Suet. *Cal.* 12; Plin. *Nat.* 7.67.

<sup>188</sup> Hoyos (2021) 16, 19.

<sup>189</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 9.314; Verg. *Aen.* 12.441; Translated ‘and King Turnus beloved augur’ and ‘that augur Tolumnius’.

The following example will show how video game developers ‘create’ history in some instances out of necessity. While the office ‘Sufette’ is attested in multiple sources, the function ‘Shephat’, in the game responsible for the state census, public morality, and clearing blockages in the senate and courts, is not present in any of the ancient sources previously listed. There are, in fact, very few titles of other functions from the Carthaginian political system known to us. It is uncertain how exactly the government functioned. Even though the ‘Suffete’ and ‘Adirim’ are attested in Roman sources, their power and limitations are still debated in the academic world.<sup>190</sup> For the game developers, a problem then arises. Every playable political entity gets the same outline for their governments and they each receive eight functions. While their description and job can vary, the eight positions must be fulfilled and it is up to the developers to appoint a name and a function to each historical ‘blank’.

How do game developers choose to fill these voids? In the case of Carthage, there is a distinct pattern. The titles Shephat, Mefahked, Kahen, and Rophet are all Hebrew words. For example, the word ‘Rophet’, which is written רֹפֵא in Hebrew, means doctor. In this government, his function description states, ‘this office is the most senior doctor of the republic and is responsible for the care of senior politicians and their families’.<sup>191</sup> Kahen, or כהן, simply means priest, and in this game, the description of his office is: ‘This office is the chief high priest of the republic, responsible for overseeing the priesthood, conducting state sacrifices, and religious festivals’.<sup>192</sup> Mefahked, or מְפַקֵד, which translates to commander or commanding officer, has the description: ‘This office oversees the quality of the republic’s military by managing their training logistics, and discipline’.<sup>193</sup> Finally, the Shephat, which corresponds to the word שָׁפֵט, is a verb with the definition ‘to judge’, but also it is used in another form as a noun, which means judge.<sup>194</sup> In the translation of the Old Testament, this word is sometimes also translated as magistrate, which comes close to the description of the given function. So all of these functions and descriptions stay pretty close to the literal translations of the Hebrew words.

The next obvious question is: why choose to use Hebrew words in the first place for the Carthaginians? The ancient Carthaginians used the Punic language, also called the Canaanite or Phoenicio-Punic language, and this was a variety of the Phoenician language. The Punic language has been handed down in much smaller quantities than Greek and Latin, and the same is true for the Phoenician language itself.<sup>195</sup> This is not the case with the Hebrew language because written traditions of Judaism were preserved, and today an

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<sup>190</sup> Hoyos (2010) 57-59.

<sup>191</sup> Phonetically רֹפֵא could also be written as rofé; Brown (2004) 951.

<sup>192</sup> Brown (2004) 497.

<sup>193</sup> Phonetically also written as m’fakéd. Brown (2004) 823-823.

<sup>194</sup> Brown (2004) 1048-1049.

<sup>195</sup> Adams (2003) 200-201, 205-206.

estimated nine million people still speak Hebrew.<sup>196</sup> Hebrew is linguistically closely related to Phoenician, thus, by proxy, also Punic.<sup>197</sup> In the virtual world of *Imperator: Rome*, there are several political entities situated in the Phoenician region; Byblos, Sidon, Ardados, Samaria, Judea, and the enormous Antigonid Empire (Figure 20). All of these, except for the Antigonid Empire, have a Kahen, Shephat, Rophet, and Mefahked in their government. So the Phoenician and Carthaginian world in this game share duplicate titles in their government. Even though it is unknown what the Carthaginian political titles were, the game fills in part of the void by using titles as close as possible to the original language by using Hebrew words.

The game *Imperator: Rome* tries to create a nuanced image of the political position of Carthage in classical antiquity. Rather than the traditional idea that some British historians adhered to about a 'long-stretched' empire, the game tries to incorporate the newer and more complex idea about Carthage's sphere of influence. This is done by making the other political entities in the vicinity of Carthage tributary subjects or vassals.<sup>198</sup> They still have some form of independence, but some have to contribute levies and even fight Carthage's wars. This shows how this game tries to create a Carthage that adheres to the current academic consensus. The government of Carthage shows that sometimes a Roman source is used for the title of a function (such as the case with augur), however developers also rely on other sources when they have to fill in the 'gaps' of historical knowledge. Since there is no known name for some of the functions that need to be filled, they relied on the closest linguistic cousin of the Punic language: Hebrew, which has been handed down more completely. Rophet, Kahen, Shephat, and Mefahked are all Hebrew words used for Phoenician and Punic political functions.

### 2.4.3 Religion

The pantheon functions in the same way that the Druidic pantheon does, in that there are four different deities of war, culture, economy, and fertility.

For the deity of war, Carthage has been given Tanit, who was the chief deity of Carthage and protector of the city.<sup>199</sup> She has multiple areas of influence, and one of these was possibly war-like, as the famous childhood oath Hannibal swore to her was 'never be

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<sup>196</sup> Modern Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew differ, of course, but even the biblical Hebrew was handed down in greater volume than was the case for Phoenician. The terms that were used in this game can be found in modern Hebrew dictionaries; Ethnologue, 'Hebrew', [https://www.ethnologue-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/language/heb?ip\\_login\\_no\\_cache=Kz3%EE%3B%E2%817&cache](https://www.ethnologue-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/language/heb?ip_login_no_cache=Kz3%EE%3B%E2%817&cache) (accessed 06-06-2021).

<sup>197</sup> Gras, Rouillard, Teixidor (2006) 82-85.

<sup>198</sup> Tributary subjects in *Imperator: Rome* will only grant the dominating state a part of the income of the tributary subject. Vassals in *Imperator: Rome* are political entities in a subservient relationship to another state, paying tribute, fulfilling commercial and military obligations to their overlord in return for protection from other states.

<sup>199</sup> Hoyos (2010) 95-96.

friendly to the Romans'.<sup>200</sup> The importance of Tanit is also assimilated in the flag of Carthage (Figure 20). This symbol is that of Tanit and is attested on many stelai, mosaics, and on other objects (Figure 21). She might have been a deity of fertility as well in the game since this was also one of her attributed areas. However, she was picked as a war goddess because she is the most important goddess for Carthage. The player will most likely venerate a deity of war since the majority of the missions nudge the player to go on a military campaign, plus the deity of war gives bonuses to the army.<sup>201</sup> By making Tanit the deity of war, the player is most likely to venerate her.<sup>202</sup>



Figure 20 (left) shows the flag of Carthage in *Imperator: Rome*. Figure 21 (right) shows a votive stela with an image of Tanit in the middle. The British Museum, reg. no. 1857,1218.44, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W\\_1857-1218-44](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1857-1218-44) (accessed 18-06-2021).

The deity of culture is Ba'al Qarnaim, who was also known as Ba'al Hammon, but in this form, he was primarily associated with the ram.<sup>203</sup> The game description points to his war aspects: 'we worship Ba'al Qarnaim in times of need and war, and he inspires our people.' Near the city of Carthage, an open-air sanctuary was discovered, which may contribute to incorporating this god into the pantheon.<sup>204</sup> He is attributed with some connection to the sun or light. The deity of economy is Melquart, who was most important in the city-state Tyre; he is sometimes equated with Nergal, god of the underworld and death. His cult held winter and spring festivals at his temple. He was sometimes equated with

<sup>200</sup> Plb. 3.11

<sup>201</sup> Only one deity can be venerated at the time in this game.

<sup>202</sup> For example, Delphi in *Imperator: Rome* has Apollo as deity of war. While he does have some ties to fighting, he is not primarily known for being a deity of war, and the choice for him to appear this way is so that the player will venerate him the most.

<sup>203</sup> In some instances Ba'al Qarnaim is regarded as the same deity as Ba'al Hammon, but in the form of 'Lord of Two Horns', other times Ba'al Qarnaim is regarded as an epithet as Ba'al Hammon, and finally, as an own Punic god that was associated with Ba'al Hammon, because of similarities. The relationship between the two gods is by no means clear-cut, and still subject to debate. Bongiovanni (2014) 2-3, 9-10, 26.

<sup>204</sup> Bos (1989) 111.

Herakles and possibly had a connection with the sun too.<sup>205</sup> His importance is also attested by Livy, who states that Hannibal made sacrifices to Melquart before setting off on a march to Italy.<sup>206</sup> The last deity that appears as the deity of fertility, is Ba'al Hammon, who was the chief male deity of Carthage. He was a weather god and was attributed with the responsibility for the fertility of vegetation.<sup>207</sup>

The point of this list is to show that the framework for deities in *Imperator: Rome* might fit the Roman and Greek religion more or less in a functional way. However, this is not the case for Carthage. While, unlike the barbarians, Carthage does not share its pantheon with other states, only some deities are shared, some other issues remain. The Roman deities did not completely have strict boundaries as to what aspects they were attributed with, but the boundaries existed to a much greater degree, than is the case for the Carthaginian gods. While war and fertility, Tanit and Ba'al Hammon were the most clear-cut cases in this instance. The other two deities might just have been picked not because they had the most affinity with culture or economy, but because they were believed to be the most important to Carthage, Qarnaim because of the sanctuary near Carthage and Melquart possibly best known because of his position in Tyre, or even because of the pilgrimage of Hannibal. The game incorporates them because they are important deities, even when the framework does not work optimally for these gods.

#### 2.4.4 *Families*

Similar to the game *Old World*, this game also has four influential families that the player better keep satisfied. Failing to do so could result in a civil war. In this game, the families do not receive specific traits or descriptions but rather fill key positions in the government and function as generals and commanders. It is interesting to notice that the Carthaginians from *Old World* and *Imperator: Rome* only share one important family, and the rest all vary from the other game.

The first, and only shared family, is the Barcid family. As was previously stated, this was an important family active in Carthage and general Hannibal Barcid is the best known member hereof. The second is the Gisgo family. Likewise with the families of *Old World*, this family is also named after individual(s) since a lot of famous people shared the same name.<sup>208</sup> This name is a Latinization of the Punic masculine name Gersakkun, and one of

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<sup>205</sup> For equation Nergal see Lafayette (2017) 127-128; For the connection with Tyre and Herakles see Hdt. 2.44; for the connection with the sun and spring and winter rites see Fischer-Hansen (1988) 62-64.

<sup>206</sup> Livy, 21.21-23.

<sup>207</sup> Lancel (1992) 197.

<sup>208</sup> A lot of the Carthaginian names known to us, for example, Gisgo (or Gisgo), Hannibal, Bomilcar, Hanno, are shared by a number of famous individuals.

the known individuals carrying this name was with Hannibal during the Battle of Cannae. Plutarch wrote about the battle and mentioned an interaction between Hannibal and Gisco:

‘When one of his companions, named Gisco, a man of his own rank, remarked that the number of the enemy amazed him, Hannibal put on a serious look and said: ‘Gisco, another thing has escaped your notice which is more amazing still.’

And when Gisco asked what it was, ‘It is the fact,’ said he, ‘that in all this multitude there is no one who is called Gisco.’<sup>209</sup> The joke in itself clearly proves that the name Gisco was by no means unusual. The first sentence is even more important, since it states, ‘a man of his own rank’. This could be the reason why the Gisgoid family shows up in the game on the same footing as the Barcids. Another possibility is a Gisco who was a Carthaginian general during the First Punic War.<sup>210</sup> The Gisgoid family is clearly based on one of these individuals and is thus based on ancient sources.<sup>211</sup>

The third family is the Bodonid family, similarly to the Gisgoid family, this family is also based on a single individual. Bodo was a Carthaginian senator and general serving in the First Punic War. Livy tells us that ‘The Carthaginian general Hannibal despatched Boōdes, a member of the Senate’.<sup>212</sup> Lastly, there is the Hannid family, which refers most likely to Carthage’s last monarchical ruling family from 340 BCE to 308 BCE, of whom the earlier mentioned Bomilcar was also a part of.

All of the families have historical grounds. Each family is based on one or more individuals that fulfilled key positions. These families are also recorded by Greek or Roman writers, primarily by Polybius and Diodorus Siculus. The importance of the individuals is also emphasized in Carthaginian ‘heritage’, which ‘often led to greatness by charismatic generals’. Some of them fought in the Punic Wars, but others are known from other military campaigns that did not involve Romans. The history of Carthage before the Punic Wars is also used plenty in this game.

#### 2.4.5 Missions

The three missions of the Carthaginians are also important to their representation because they will give the player an idea of what is essential to the virtual Carthage and

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<sup>209</sup> Plut. *Fab.* 15.3.

<sup>210</sup> Lazenby (2012) 131-133, 157.

<sup>211</sup> Some might argue that the general known as Hasdrubal Gisco, known from the Second Punic War, could have served as an inspiration for the Gisgoid family, but Livy states ‘There Hasdrubal son of Gisco, being the greatest and most distinguished general after the Barca family in that war’, which means that this Gisco was part of the Barca family. Liv. 28 12.

<sup>212</sup> Plb. 1.21.

what they should focus on the most. In this part, the first three missions and what sources inspired these representations will be analyzed..<sup>213</sup>

The first mission is called 'An End to Sicilian Warfare', and the description reads,

'Sicily has long been a battleground between different Greek factions, particularly the people of Syracuse, and ourselves. (...) most recently under the warmonger Agathocles. It is time to put an end to these petty wars, and finally annex the island once and for all'.

Previously in this chapter, it was stated that Carthage fought multiple Sicilian wars, and this too is incorporated in this game. The storyline for this mission is about a man, Agathocles, who is a 'warmonger'. He was a self-styled tyrant of Syracuse who was active in multiple wars, according to Diodorus Siculus and Polybius. His reputation was not the best but it possibly made him stand out in history.<sup>214</sup> Diodorus calls him 'greedy for power'. He betrayed the aristocratic class of the island by killing them and taking over the position of power. Diodorus describes it as a 'massacre' which was followed by 'all manner of lawlessness'.<sup>215</sup> Agathocles was an infamous ruler, known for cruelty, who now has to be defeated by the player.<sup>216</sup>

The second mission is the 'Aftermath of the revolution', and it tells the player that 'after our disastrous war against Agathocles in Sicily, the traitorous Suffete Bomilcar tried to sell our lands to gain tyrannical power for himself. (...) There are still conflicts and disagreements lingering all across our nation.' This once again mentions Agathocles; however, this time the story refers to the Seventh Sicilian War, which ended in a peace treaty which resulted in Agathocles taking charge of the island.<sup>217</sup> The suffete Bomilcar was the general of an army that was defeated by Agathocles a few years prior.<sup>218</sup> A year and a half after this defeat, Bomilcar 'who had long planned to make an attempt at tyranny, was seeking a proper occasion for his private schemes' and he was 'depriving his fatherland of its liberty' because 'he declared himself tyrant'.<sup>219</sup> Diodorus then goes on to state how Bomilcar slaughtered people in the street and how 'the city was being betrayed' by him. Not only the events, but also the type of language of Diodorus is mirrored in the mission's description. The *traitorous* Bomilcar tries to gain power for himself.

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<sup>213</sup> Appendix B shows the consulted game files.

<sup>214</sup> Diod. Sic. 19.4-3; Plb. 9.23.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 19.6-8.

<sup>216</sup> A part from his greed and treachery recorded by Diodorus Siculus and Polybius, Polyaeus writes about his ruthless killing of the inhabitants of Leontini; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 5.3.2.; Diodorus records his slaying of the male inhabitants of Croton; Diod. Sic. 21.4.1.

<sup>217</sup> Diod. Sic. 19.107-110.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 20.10.5.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, 20.43-44.

The third mission, 'Aegis of Africa' is introduced. 'As our trade empire expands, with more and more colonies and ports abroad, our ambitions in Africa have withered. We must secure our footing at home(...).' This urges the player to subjugate or conquer all of North Africa. Historically, Carthage and Egypt were always active in trade with one another, which led to plenty of cross-cultural influence.<sup>220</sup> It is unlikely that Carthage had the ambition and resources ever to take over or subjugate Ptolemaic Egypt. Furthermore, Carthage's prosperous trade was probably reason enough to maintain their trade relations as it was. It is possible that this is simply a decision that would fit in the game. Many other missions, for a wide variety of nations, are all revolving around acquiring more territory. This mission encourages the player to expand Carthage and make it more powerful in the process.

These three missions all point to one thing: Carthage was not stable. Carthage had trouble gaining control of Sicily, it had internal revolutions, and it had an unstable footing in Africa. This also fits the idea of Carthage as a sphere of influence rather than a centralized empire, but it also implies that this form of empire was problematic since the missions make the player attempt 'fixing' these issues. Additionally, two of the missions have plenty of historical sources and put emphasis on two historical figures. These mostly show up in the texts by Diodorus Siculus and Polybius. Inherently the representation of Carthage is oppositional to the Roman Empire, which was more centralized. This is sometimes named as the reason that Carthage lost in the end because a more centralized form of government was believed to be stronger.

#### 2.4.6 *Heritage and Position of Carthage*

Before the player even enters the game, they get to see the specific heritage of any of the political entities by simply hovering over them on the map. For Carthage, the heritage is described as: 'Carthaginian heritage - Founded as 'the new city' centuries ago by the settlers from Tyre in faraway Phoenicia, Carthage is now the uncontested leader of the Punic, or Western Phoenician world. Her heritage is one of a strong naval and mercantile power, often led to greatness by charismatic generals.' Even when a player has no previous knowledge of Carthage, this representation conveys some key elements of the Carthaginians. Carthage is very powerful 'uncontested leader', its navy is strong, its mercantile power is unprecedented, and its generals are famous in history.

When a player enters the game, a hint is given so that the player can position themselves better within the world by assisting them in establishing some balance of power.

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<sup>220</sup> Hoyos (2010) 40-42.

'Further north, the young and uncivilized Italic states wage bitter war on one another, though there are rumors that a once-insignificant city is emerging to challenge the power in Italy. They call themselves Rome <Carthage shall endure!>.'<sup>221</sup>

From these descriptions, Carthage is the 'top dog' in this story, while Rome is the underdog. These descriptions go so far as stating that Rome is near to insignificant. The last sentence, however, which the player has to click on, is a play on words that players who are more familiar with ancient history might enjoy. 'Carthage shall endure' is imitating the saying 'Carthago delenda est', which is uttered many times by Cato the Censor.<sup>222</sup> 'Carthage must be destroyed' is now replaced with 'Carthago shall endure'. For those players who will understand the reference, Carthage is not just a powerful entity. It was an entity that the Romans conquered. Players can fulfill a hero's mission and change history by making Carthage endure instead of it getting destroyed by the Romans.

The player is not encouraged to go after the Roman state right from the beginning, however. Instead, the player gets missions to fulfill, gaining them all kinds of bonuses in the process thereof.<sup>223</sup> In the beginning, there are three missions available to the Carthaginians that the player is free to choose from. The first focuses on war with Syracuse, the second on creating a firmer grip on the surrounding regions (which means bringing the contributory subjects in line), and the third makes you deal with the aftermath of the failed rebellion of Bomilcar. There is no option to deal with Rome. It would indeed be ahistorical to make Carthage attack Rome vigorously at this point in time because it is still a very small state and nothing points to the direction of it becoming an enormous empire. Moreover, at this point in time, the Carthaginians had a treaty with Rome.<sup>224</sup> However, anyone familiar with the history of Carthage might feel tempted to knock out Rome at the beginning of the game, and by doing so, become a hero, in a sense, since the player would have saved Carthage from its fate.

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<sup>221</sup> Opening statement when choosing to play Carthage in *Imperator: Rome*.

<sup>222</sup> This is the shortened, but more popular form of the quote 'Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem esse delendam'. No ancient source states the quote literally, but multiple have a paraphrase of the saying; Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 27; Plin. *Nat.* 15.20; Aur. *Vict. Caes.* 47.8. While this quote would most likely not be known to all the players of *Imperator: Rome*, the popularity of this quote should also not be underestimated. In popular culture it found a new vehicle in 'memes' and is often shared by people enjoying classics, which audience might overlap with the people playing *Imperator: Rome*.

<sup>223</sup> These missions were not mentioned for the barbarians, since they receive 'generic' missions, which means that it is the exact same for all of the nations that did not receive specific ones. These generic missions usually encompass expanding territory, improving current territories or strengthening the economic situation.

<sup>224</sup> The game begins in 305 BCE and Carthage and Rome signed a treaty in 306 BCE. Carthage's sphere of influence was still enormous, while Rome is still limited to the middle of the Italic peninsula; Serrati (2006) 113-134.

#### 2.4.7 AI

The AI (artificial intelligence) dictates how the nations around the player behave themselves. This means that it decides when to declare war, make alliances, and ask for trade relationships, among other actions. This allows the player to interact in a dynamic world. While they make decisions, the nations around them do the same. This is different from the way *Annals of Rome* functions. As mentioned for *Annals of Rome*, a low-level programming language was used, and Carthage made decisions based on programmed historical behavior. The AI in this game makes more choices based on logical calculations, such as what would be most beneficial to them, and what has the lowest risk. Most of the behaviour of other states are then decisions made by the AI, with only two exceptions. In the beginning of the game, a nation has a specific 'stance', which indicates how likely they are to focus on attacking, peacemaking, or trading. Carthage has a trade stance, which means they focus on trade. Secondly, nations have historical rivals, which they cannot ally with, such as with Carthage and Rome. *Imperator: Rome* has an option to study how this AI behaves without the player playing the game. This is called 'observer' mode, and it sheds light on the geopolitical balance and the position Carthage fulfills in this video game.

When engaging observer mode, a few observations can be made. Even though the missions point to instability within Carthage's political system, the nation is unlikely to disintegrate. Rebellions do rise up but are seemingly effectively dealt with. Furthermore, Carthage will most often expand its territory into Hispania. As was evident earlier in this chapter, this has historical grounds. However, it is also a logical choice for the AI since the stretch of land is divided into smaller tribal political entities, which do not pose any difficulty for Carthage. Carthage manages to expand quickly, even before the historical conquering of Hamilcar Barca (around 236 BCE). Most importantly, Carthage is the most powerful political entity at the beginning of the game in the western Mediterranean world. While Rome also has the potential to grow quickly in size, Carthage is already a force to be reckoned with, and in some cases, Carthage will eventually spread through Hispania into Gaul.<sup>225</sup> From this follows that Carthage is the top dog. They start out in a better position and receive bonuses to be on par with Rome as it expands quickly. This is done so Rome and Carthage dictate the power balance in this part of the Mediterranean and for the player to have 'the one enemy to beat'.

Carthage in this manner functions in two ways. On one side, when playing as Rome, the player has to face an incredibly strong enemy, and when defeating the foe, the player becomes a hero by completing this task. On the other side, Carthage was historically the 'loser' and the player fulfills their hero potential by defeating the conqueror: Rome.

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<sup>225</sup> For a sped-up run of the observer mode see: VALUE, 'Exploring Imperator Rome Episode 8: The Perfect Adversaries part 2', <https://youtu.be/fROsZzaBQJ4> (accessed 18-06-2021) 7:51-12:05.

#### 2.4.8 *Conclusions*

This part of the chapter was concerned with analyzing the representation of the Carthaginians in *Imperator: Rome* and how history was assimilated in the game. For the military component of the Carthaginians, their naval superiority was stressed. The military traditions consist of many bonuses to Carthage's fleet. Furthermore, a lot of specific events and individuals are named in the descriptions of the traditions, usually referring to the writings of Diodorus Siculus, Livy or Polybius. Some in-game descriptions refer to the Punic Wars, but many also refer to other historical events that do not feature Romans.

The political situation of Carthage in this game reflects modern insights about Carthage as a sphere of influence, rather than a centralized empire, which is how the British historians of the 19th century described Carthage. This idea is incorporated by giving Carthage tributary subjects. The government titles of Carthage are partly based on Livy and Polybius, while the 'gaps' in our historical knowledge are filled. The game creates these titles by using the closest language to Punic that has survived in greater quantities: Hebrew. The government titles are all phonetic spellings of Hebrew words. The pantheon of Carthage shows how the framework for deities is optimized for Roman and Greek pantheons and not so much for others. The division between war, culture, economy, and fertility does not fit with the reality of the most important gods of Carthage. The game opts to pick the most important ones rather than picking lesser known gods that might have suited the framework better. The important families of Carthage are known from the sources by Polybius and Diodorus Siculus and show an emphasis on the charismatic individual, the heroes, so to speak, of Carthage. The names of these individuals are used for the most important families in the game.

The missions of Carthage all point to an unstable situation within Carthage itself. Texts by Diodorus Siculus and Polybius are used to describe two historical events and the player needs to 'fix' the issues. From the beginning, the Roman Empire does not appear as a mission, but a player familiar with history might want to 'beat' the conquerors of Carthage when playing as that empire.

The position of Carthage is that of the top dog. They are larger in territorial size than Rome is at the beginning of the game, and they receive bonuses to remain on par. The example of the AI shows that Carthage is balancing out the power of Rome, and that this game has only two main contestants for the hegemony of the western Mediterranean. Whether the player chooses to play as Rome or Carthage, in both cases, there is a potential of completing the journey of the hero. In the case of Rome, the player has to defeat an enormously strong foe, the larger and stronger Carthage. In the case of Carthage, the player is reminded by the line 'Carthage shall endure!' that historically, Carthage was on the losing

side. To beat the Romans is to rewrite history in the digital world, completing an enormous feat and becoming a hero.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the Carthaginians of the video games *Annals of Rome*, *Old World*, and *Imperator: Rome* were analyzed. This chapter revolved around how cultures conquered by the Roman Empire are represented in video games, what sources are used for this representation, how this history is treated, and what function does this representation fulfill within a video game. This function is explained with theories of heroes and villains by Campbell, Allison, and Goethals.

Writers such as Polybius, Cicero, and Livy stressed the wealth and naval power of the Carthaginians and these sources and traits were emphasized in all of the aforementioned games. The admiration that the writers often have for Carthage, even though they were an enemy, might be the reason why Carthage is described in neutral or even favorable terms in video games - even when the goal is to destroy Carthage, such is the case in *Annals of Rome* - The language keeps an almost admiring tone.

Furthermore, in the case of *Annals of Rome* and *Imperator: Rome*, there is a slight focus on the Punic Wars. In *Annals of Rome*, the Punic Wars are simulated by Carthage aggressively attacking Rome during those years. In *Imperator: Rome*, some of the military traditions described events happening during one of those wars. Polybius and Diodorus Siculus were most often used in these instances.

This is not the only time period that is emphasized, however. *Old World* chooses to focus on the mythical beginnings of Carthage, as the scenarios of the game refer to Vergil's *Aeneid*. *Imperator: Rome* is even more diverse and includes various other historical events that happened prior to the contact of Carthage with Rome. Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarchus, and Livy are all used to create a Carthage that is nuanced and rich in history in the game.

The history of Carthage in these video games, , and arguably in the historical texts as well, is built on individuals. In Dido's concise introduction in *Old World*, together with her visual representation, she presents at least four of the Great Eight traits. She is intelligent, resilient, strong, and an inspiring female leader. This representation is very much built on Vergil's Dido. He too represented her in a very positive manner. The families in *Old World* are also named after individuals. *Imperator: Rome* only shares one important family with *Old World*, but all of their families are also known from famous individuals. Moreover, the description of their military traditions feature multiple famous generals, and they are even more emphasized by the phrase regarding the heritage of Carthage, which is, 'often led to greatness by charismatic generals'. These figures are so well-known to us because Roman

and Greek authors were fascinated with them and granted some of them near-mythical status, such as Hannibal in particular.

Moreover, this chapter attempted to exhibit how game developers of *Imperator: Rome* tried to fit history within a game and how they would fill in any 'gaps'. In the case of the government of Carthage, there is simply not enough information about how the political system functioned. Some titles are known from Livy, but many are unknown. The game used words from the closest language to Punic that has survived in greater volume, Hebrew. They refrained from choosing specific words, instead they opted to choose simple ones that meant 'doctor' or 'magistrate', in order to create government titles that might have been similar to Punic words. Furthermore, the pantheon of Carthage proves that the framework is made for the Roman Pantheon and thus is not ideal for the Punic one. Thus, the game shows the most important deities of Carthage, known from inscriptions and temples, and assigns them to one of the previously established fields.

Carthage plays an essential role in the geopolitical situation within the world of grand-strategy games. In *Annals of Rome*, they are a powerful enemy with a strength of ten out of a possible ten. The manual emphasizes that 'the Carthaginian Empire must be defeated for the foundation of the Empire to be established.' This establishes that Carthage is a so-called top dog, having the upper hand in the world of antiquity, while Rome still has to fight for such a place. At the beginning of *Imperator: Rome*, Carthage is also larger. Instead, Carthage is more of a sphere of influence rather than an enormous empire. As the missions pointed out, Carthage experienced trouble with an unstable political situation. A case can be made for this game that Carthage is a top dog, and also an underdog. Carthage starts with more land and more manpower, and the example of the AI's observer mode showed how Carthage is able to take on the Roman Empire. Even more so, if they attempted to do this at the beginning, it would prove quite an underwhelming victory. However, Carthage remains a loser of history, and hints starting at the beginning of the game are dropped regarding this. 'Carthage shall endure' echoes 'Carthago delenda est,' thus the player will most likely be aware that the Romans beat the Carthaginians at some point in time. A potential for becoming a hero then presents itself: to complete the task that even mythical Hannibal could not perform. To achieve the greatest victory for Carthage and beat the Roman Empire.

## **Conclusion**

While most research focusing on antiquity in video games centers around the Roman Empire, I set out to study the Romans' most common virtual enemies: the barbarians and the Carthaginians. The barbarians of the games *Legionnaire* (1982), *Ryse: Son of Rome* (2014), *Old World* (2021), and *Imperator: Rome* have been discussed, and the Carthaginians of *Annals of Rome* (1986), *Old World*, and *Imperator: Rome*. This thesis analyzes how these two 'losers of history' are represented in video games, what sources are used for these representations, and how these sources are employed in a game. Furthermore, this research examines what function the representations fulfill within a video game, using the theories around heroes by Allison and Goethals, and the heroes' journeys by Campbell and Vogler.

The first question is: what sources are used to create the representations in video games? The sources could be traced in games partly by looking at virtual aspects but mostly by reading the descriptions of various elements in the game and other in-game text. For the representation of the barbarians, Julius Caesar's *Bello Gallico* was the most commonly used. In *Legionnaire*, it is the only source that is used. The barbarian tribes of this game received their assigned strengths, weaknesses, and descriptions based on Caesar's words. In *Ryse: Son of Rome*, Caesar's words are almost translated verbatim in a visual scene when the barbarians made a wickerman full of humans to be sacrificed. In *Imperator: Rome*, almost all of the barbarian military traditions are based upon Caesar's experiences written in his *Bello Gallico*.

Other sources have been used for the representation of the barbarians as well, although in smaller quantities than Caesar's. So is Boudica in *Ryse: Son of Rome* is predominantly based upon the writings of Cassius Dio. *Imperator: Rome* incorporates the texts of Diodorus Siculus for the visual representation of the portraits of barbarians. For the female names of the barbarians, partly material epigraphic sources are used, such as the stelai, but also names from medieval Welsh legends.

For the Carthaginians, the game *Annals of Rome* uses Polybius and Livy for the events during the Punic Wars. The game takes the texts of these authors as a reference for how the virtual Carthage should behave. This results in Carthage acting aggressively to Rome in the time frame of the historic Punic Wars. Furthermore, Carthage has a preference for conquering Sicily and Hispania. This is a historical decision since the logical choice in the game would be a different one.

*Old World* features the mythical founding of Carthage and its humble beginnings. This means that it relies most on Virgil's *Aeneid*, evident from both the description of Dido and the scenarios of Carthage. Other texts that have been used for this game are by

Polybius and Livy. The important families of Carthage all stem from individuals known by their hands. Lastly, the special units unique to the city were based on the texts of Diodorus Siculus.

In *Imperator: Rome*, Polybius, and Livy are also favored. In almost all aspects of the game, some of these author's lines can be found. For example, the important families in this game are also based on the writings of these authors. The military traditions of Carthage all refer to either Polybius, Livy, or Diodorus Siculus. In the case of the missions for Carthage, the texts of Diodorus Siculus are used the most. This game does not only use written sources for their Carthaginians, however. The deity Ba'al Quarnaim was best known from a sanctuary discovered close to Carthage, and few written sources exist that mention him. The flag of Carthage in the game is based upon the virtual representation of Tanit on stelai and other objects. Finally, the example of the government titles in Carthage demonstrated how the game developers handled gaps in historical knowledge. Since not many political offices were known from Carthage, they chose to use terms from a closely related language to Punic; Hebrew. This way, Carthage is still assigned specific government titles, perhaps not known from history, but possibly linguistically as close as possible.

Then, the second question: what video game representations result from these sources? For the barbarians, the language that is used to describe these peoples is primarily negative. In *Legionnaire*, the barbarians are described as ferocious, aggressive, they fight like demons, or are 'clay pigeons'. In *Old World*, the barbarian tribes are described as 'hordes', and there are 'barbarians without end, ready to attack'. In *Ryse: Son of Rome*, the barbarians get little to no backstory and are constantly portrayed negatively. The Roman Marius points out how cruel barbarians are since they kill innocent people all the time (such as his sister and mother). Only *Imperator: Rome* uses language that is seemingly more objective, possible since a player can decide to play the game as a barbarian tribe. Even so, there are a few references, such as how 'carnage is the true purpose' of the barbarians, that put the barbarians in a negative and overly aggressive light.

The barbarians in *Legionnaire* and *Ryse: Son of Rome* also have minimal discipline. In *Legionnaire*, this is explained in the manual, and in *Ryse*, this is evident from the visual representation of the army of barbarians. While the Romans fight in a clearly disciplined manner, in formation, the barbarians simply run in a disorganized manner to their enemies.

Furthermore, barbarians are in all four games portrayed as a weak enemy. In *Legionnaire*, the barbarians receive twice as many armies as the Romans, indicating the power imbalance between the two. In *Ryse*, Marius and his fellow centurions refer to the barbarians as weak, and he can take on numerous barbarians at once, and they are killed with a single slash of his gladius. In *Old World*, the player needs to defend themselves against 60-100 units of barbarians while having maybe half of that manpower. The

barbarians in *Imperator: Rome*, are a lot weaker than the Romans, and they can easily be conquered. All these barbarian tribes are ultimately a weak player in the virtual world.

The Carthaginians, on the other hand, are represented as mighty enemies. In *Annals of Rome*, they are attributed with the greatest strength possible, making them the main contestant for hegemony in the Western Mediterranean world. In *Old World*, it is also implied that Carthage is strong, or that the player should fulfill the destiny of Carthage and become strong: 'the time has come for Carthage to become the most powerful'. The game *Imperator: Rome* begins in 305 BCE, and at that moment, Carthage has the greatest sphere of influence, with its tributary subjects of North Africa, and is the most powerful in the Western Mediterranean. They have many troops, possess naval superiority, and have a high income to hire a significant number of mercenary troops. Without a doubt, Carthage embodies the most dangerous enemies of Rome.

Secondly, the Carthaginians are represented as great traders with enormous wealth. In *Annals of Rome*, Carthage has a great treasure, while their income is not that high, indicating that trading acquired these riches. In *Old World*, the player is asked to 'make Carthage the richest'. In *Imperator: Rome*, Carthage begins with a good income, and a multitude of trade relationships.

Thirdly, the language used to describe the Carthaginians is usually respectful or even admiring. *Annals of Rome* describes the Carthaginians as 'deadly' and adds that the Roman Empire cannot be established as long as 'the great Carthaginian Empire' still exists. *Old World* refers to Dido as a goddess to her people and Carthage as the richest and most powerful. In *Imperator: Rome* there is also an emphasis on the power and achievements of Carthage. In the last two games, there is also a lot of attention to the great achievements of the individuals, such as Hannibal.

So how is it possible that the most dangerous enemies of Rome are portrayed in a positive light, while the barbarians are portrayed in such a negative way? This has to do with the primary sources themselves. Polybius, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus might at times use a hostile tone to describe Carthage, but most often, one of admiration is used. The Carthaginian Empire was a wealthy and formidable enemy, with generals and individuals worthy of admiration, even if they were from Carthage's side. The barbarians, on the other hand, are predominantly based on Caesar's *de Bello Gallico*. This text was not meant to be objective, even if Caesar attempts to present it that way. It was a propagandistic tool, intending to paint himself in a better light. The barbarians then are more often described by negative words, especially if they bothered Caesar.

Secondly, the games show barbarians through the eyes of Romans, most often Caesar's, and thus almost exclusively refer to barbarians in relation to the Romans. Frequently, Caesar was not impressed by the customs of the barbarian tribes and regarded

them as less civilized, which also led to a less favorable description of the tribes in his writings. The historical barbarian tribes had their own customs, material cultures, values, and traditions, but since the Romans left more written sources, these are more often used for all sorts of popular media. The emphasis on the lack of civilization does not play a role for Carthaginians. They had a great empire, plenty of trade routes, and material culture more familiar to the Romans, and thus were not seen as 'primitive'.

The barbarians and Carthaginians then fulfill different roles in the video games. In *Legionnaire* and *Ryse*, the barbarians take on the role of a heightened contrast foil. By explicitly stating what is wrong with the barbarians, implicitly, the virtues of the Romans affirmed. In *Legionnaire*, this is done by emphasizing them as being primitive, disorganized, 'less civilized'. Thus, the Roman legions are organized and civilized. The barbarians of *Old World* are presented in a framework of civilization versus barbarism. These barbarians represent a 'reasonless' evil that cannot be bargained with and have the sole purpose to destroy civilization. The 'evil' side is rendered a lot less complex than the other, making a stark contrast between the 'good' and 'evil'. While the named civilizations belong on the good side, the barbarians are synonymous with evil.

The barbarian tribes in *Imperator: Rome* do not function as a 'foil', but they take on the position of the underdog, and the player is responsible for the fate of the tribe. They can create a hero's journey by changing the fate of the tribes and accomplishing a near-impossible task: becoming a victor over the Romans. This type of triumph, one that seems almost unattainable, but might be just in grasp, makes for a stronger feeling of victory, according to the theory of the hero's journey of Campbell and Vogler.<sup>226</sup>

On the other hand, Carthaginians are the strongest adversaries in the game and are presented as the top dog in *Annals of Rome*. Carthage has more land and is wealthier at the beginning of the game, and Rome needs to beat them in order to establish themselves as a power. In *Imperator: Rome*, the position is more ambiguous. Carthage is territorially larger than Rome and has more manpower at the beginning. Moreover, the example of the observer mode showed that Carthage could wipe Rome off the map. However, they cannot completely become a top dog. This is reflected in the quote imitating 'Carthago delenda est', since they are 'losers' of history. Thus, even though they are partly framed as a top dog, there is still a hero's journey available to the player. To achieve triumph greater than Hannibal's, and defeat the Roman Empire, rewriting history in the process.

Finally, the Evil and Great Eight of two female leaders need to be discussed. The Roman authors might give Boudica a lousy reputation, but she has been granted a more positive role in later historiography and popular movies. First, in the eighteenth century,

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<sup>226</sup> Campbell (1949) 20-27; Vogler (2008) 3-6.

because of a newly acquired status as a rebel leader against the Roman yoke, nowadays, because modern media have a greater demand for strong female characters. In the game, she displays both traits of the Great and Evil Eight. She is smart, resilient, strong, and inspiring. The first two can be found in both the Great and Evil Eight. In the latter category, she is also violent and vengeful. She seals her own fate by, instead of admitting her wrongdoing, choosing to cling to her actions and reasons. By doing this, she refuses the redemption arch that could have made her a hero and remains a villain. On the other hand, Dido of Carthage was in ancient texts and, later on, always described with admiring words. In *Old World*, the story of her fleeing and founding a city makes her resilient, the use of the ox hide proves her intelligence, her stance proves a strength within her, and lastly, she is a goddess to her people, making her inspiring.

In short, the significant influence of ancient sources is mostly translated into video games. Most of the time, the barbarians were portrayed negatively in sources, and they ended up similarly in the games. Only *Imperator* tries to create a more nuanced and objective representation. In all of the games, the barbarians remain a weak enemy, and they are vilified, creating a kind of evil that needs no sympathy, in short, the perfect enemy. The Carthaginians, on the other hand, were admired throughout antiquity, even by their enemies. This admiration is expressed in the representation of these games and turns the Carthaginians into a very dangerous but much-respected enemy, granting their generals and founders hero status.

In this thesis, I could only incorporate a few games, while plenty of others feature barbarians and Carthaginians. In future research, a greater multitude of games could create a better understanding of the representation of these cultures within video games. These representations are also subject to change, as the attempt of more nuanced tribes of *Imperator* shows. These changes might also reflect developments in our current society, and not just of changing appreciation of sources.

Moreover, many other 'losers of history' could, and should, be analyzed within games. This would help create a framework of how the dialogue between ancient sources and video games functions and how gender representation is shown within this relation. Finally, I would advocate for more intimate cooperation between the academic field and the field of video games in general. Video game developers put proper research into their games, and in return, their creation deserves research as well. This field of historical video game research will remain a highly dynamic field, with plenty of opportunities for new perspectives since only a few have been employed. I have attempted to introduce my own, and I hope that an increasing number will enter this field from all disciplines to create a truly multidisciplinary field.

**Abbreviations Ancient Sources**

App.		Appian
	<i>Hisp.</i>	<i>Hispanica</i>
Aur. Vict.		Aurelius Victor
	<i>Caes.</i>	<i>Caesares</i>
Caes.		Julius Caesar
	<i>Gal.</i>	<i>De bello Gallico</i>
Cass. Dio		Cassius Dio
Cic.		Cicero (Marcus Tullius)
	<i>Brut.</i>	<i>Brutus</i>
	<i>Fin.</i>	<i>De finibus</i>
	<i>Rep.</i>	<i>De republica</i>
Diod. Sic.		Diodorus Siculus
Flor.		L. Annaeus Florus
Hor.		Horace
	<i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmina</i>
Liv.		Livy
Ov.		Ovid
	<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
Plb.		Polybius
Plin.		Pliny (the Elder)
	<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis Historia</i>
Plut.		Plutarch
	<i>Fab.</i>	<i>Fabius Maximus</i>
	<i>Cat. Mai.</i>	<i>Cato Maior</i>
Polyaenus, <i>Strat.</i>		Polyaenus, <i>Strategemata</i>
Pompon.		Pomponius
Suet.		Suetonius
	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Divus Augustus</i>
	<i>Cal.</i>	<i>Gaius Caligula</i>
Strab.		Strabo
Tac.		Tacitus
	<i>Germ.</i>	<i>Germania</i>
Thuc.		Thucydides
Verg.		Virgil
	<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>

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## **Appendix A: Game terminology**

4x game: Abbreviation of Explore, Expand, Exploit, Exterminate. This is a subgenre of strategy games and include both turn-based and real-time strategy games that revolve around the creation of an empire, with emphasis upon economic and technological development.

AAA game: Video games with the highest development budgets.

Action Adventure Game: Games that combine the focus on speed and physical drama that require good reflexes and coordination skills of action games with the focus on puzzle-solving within a narrative framework that require logical thinking of adventure games.

AI (artificial intelligence): Often used to describe the behaviour patterns of computer opponents.

Casual games: Games that require little time investment, a lot of mobile phone games belong in this category.

Cut-scene: A scene within a video game that is important to the narrative. It usually shows a development of the story or is important for character building of a protagonist or antagonist. Within a scene the player, most often, has no agency.

Game mechanics: The rules of a game that control and navigate the player's actions and the response of the game to them. This can be expressed in both explicit rules eg. goals to be completed in order to win a game, or implicit responses eg. receiving a small bonus when performing a task.

Grand Strategy Game: These types of strategy games focus on the bigger picture and military strategy as well as movement and use of a nation's or empire's resources. Most of these games recently in corporate politics, economics, warfare, diplomacy and religion and decisions have long-term consequences.

Indie game: Independent games, developed outside of the large studios.

Real-time strategy game: a type of strategy game which is played continuously, without breaks in the gameplay.

Turn-based strategy game: This type of game emphasizes the ability to deal with dynamic priorities, typical in a context of resource shortage.

## Appendix B: Games Files

**Example 1: Military traditions** (shortened to just the barbarian traditions).

Steam>Steamapps>Common>ImperatorRome>game>localization>English>Military\_Traditions\_I\_english

I\_english:

#####

#####Celtic

#####

celtic\_philosophy:0 "Barbarian Traditions"

celtic\_philosophydesc:3 "The Barbarian Traditions encompass the fighting styles of the peoples of Hispania, Gaul, Britannia, and Germania, among others. They mostly relied on large formations of lightly armored infantry equipped with spears or swords, supported by nimble chariot formations or light cavalry, and made extensive use of ambush tactics, especially in forests.\n\nCan unlock the '#Y Raise Levies#!' Ability\nCan unlock the '#Y Hit and Run#!' Tactic\n\n#G Tradition Focuses#!\nStrong #Y Light Infantry#!\nGood #Y Archers#!, #Y Chariots#!"

celtic\_philosophy\_start\_bonus:0 "Chariot Culture"

celtic\_philosophy\_start\_bonus\_desc:0 "The use of chariots in warfare stems back many thousands of years, and holds strong affiliations with nobility and class; chariot inhumations speak to the honor that can be won through battle. Chariots themselves were commonly used as mobile platforms with two to three occupants, from which javelins or other thrown weapons were used to break the ranks of their opponents."

#Britannic

celtic\_britannic\_path\_1:0 "Scythed Chariots"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_1\_desc:0 "Affixing scything blades to the wheels of our chariots, adds a lethal deterrent to anyone foolhardy enough to assault them."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_2:0 "Coming of Age"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_2\_desc:0 "From a young age, our children are taught that they may be called upon to defend their settlements. If every man bears responsibility for arming himself, armies can be raised from the very salt of the earth."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_3:0 "Living off the Land"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_3\_desc:0 "Our people know the ways of the land better than most; which berries and plants are edible, and which natural remedies can be used to salve wounds."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_4:0 "Word of Mouth"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_4\_desc:0 "Whether it be a chance for glory, an opportunity for loot, or merely to revel in the slaughter, news of an imminent battle draws even the elders to our ranks."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_5:0 "Chariot Mastery"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_5\_desc:0 "The terror inspired by a massed chariot attack, can be sufficient to break even the most battle-hardened formations."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_6:0 "Selective Breeding"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_6\_desc:0 "Revered throughout the bronze age and before, as evident in the chalk hill carvings throughout Britain, the strong-backed domestic horse is a result of thousands of years of selective breeding, and capable of carrying a single rider into battle."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_7:0 "Take up Arms"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_7\_desc:0 "Every man has a place in our armies; not least the hunters, who stalk their prey on battlefield and forest alike."

celtic\_britannic\_path\_end\_bonus:0 "Trained Cavalry"

celtic\_britannic\_path\_end\_bonus\_desc:0 "Domestic horses, while sufficient for defense in emergencies, are inclined to panic on the battlefield. Thus, by expanding our stock of horses bred and trained for war, our bold warriors will excel at their true purpose: carnage."

#Germanic

celtic\_germanic\_path\_1:0 "Strike and Withdraw"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_1\_desc:0 "The relative fitness of our warriors, combined with our people's contempt for cumbersome equipment, allows us to outmaneuver traditional armies with ease. By harrying our opponents' flanks, they will likely lose enthusiasm for the fight before we do."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_2:0 "Natural Resources"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_2\_desc:0 "The abundance of arable land and vast tracts of land sporting workable wood, give us unparalleled access to the resources we need to create weapons of war."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_3:0 "Ambush"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_3\_desc:0 "'Quintili Vare, legiones redde!' - The battle of Teutoberg Forest was a decisive victory for the Germanic tribes, all but wiping out three entire Roman legions. While a combination of factors contributed to this, the Germanic familiarity with the dense terrain was a major one."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_4:0 "The Glory of the Hunt"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_4\_desc:0 "Tribal warfare is a brutal affair. The seizure of slaves, women and valuables is a time-honored practice which we ought not to forgo."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_5:0 "Shield Wall"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_5\_desc:0 "Germanic troops often surprised their opponents by utilizing a core of heavily shielded warriors, acting as a deterrent to attackers, and as a particularly cohesive and mobile unit on the battlefield."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_6:0 "The Young Must Serve"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_6\_desc:0 "Learning the art of warfare is a vital part of every youth's education. If a child can wield a sword and maintain their equipment, then they are ready for war."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_7:0 "Hail of Stones"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_7\_desc:0 "Those unable or unwilling to hold an axe, learn the art of the sling, or bow. A simple tool it may seem, but even mighty giants can be felled by a single stone."

celtic\_germanic\_path\_end\_bonus:0 "Adaptability"

celtic\_germanic\_path\_end\_bonus\_desc:0 "Our brave soldiers may be the fiercest the world has seen, but true humility comes in learning from our defeats. By adopting tactics we encounter on the battlefield, from those who consider themselves more 'civilized', we may outdo any fighting force we meet."

#Gallic

celtic\_gallic\_path\_1:0 "Strike From Afar"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_1\_desc:0 "Huntsmen and skirmishers practice from a young age, honing their skills on wildlife and those unlucky enough to constitute a target."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_2:0 "Confederations"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_2\_desc:0 "Many tribes maintained close relations with their neighbors, guaranteeing a certain amount of cooperation when it came to battle. Warbands likely comprised members of many different local tribes, all fighting for glory."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_3:0 "The Plains Fight With us"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_3\_desc:0 "The rolling plains of Gaul, from the coast to the Alps, prove ideal terrain for the use of cavalry."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_4:0 "In Defense of our Home"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_4\_desc:0 "From blacksmiths to traders, when our hill forts and rural settlements are threatened, all shall take up arms and stand united."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_5:0 "A People on the Move"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_5\_desc:0 "Our ancestors moved freely, uncaring of borders or territorial claims. These nomadic traditions live on, as our people live in constant readiness to seek out pastures greener than their own."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_6:0 "Strong Arm"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_6\_desc:0 "While most of our warriors eschew the protection afforded by mail, our strong-armed and well equipped javelin-throwers clad themselves in armor, and can hurl iron-tipped spears capable of punching through plate armor, flesh, and bone."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_7:0 "Scale the Walls!"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_7\_desc:1 "Our people have taken to residing in walled territories, which, while well-defended, have weaknesses, if one knows where to look."

celtic\_gallic\_path\_end\_bonus:0 "Blow the Trumpet, in the New Moon!"

celtic\_gallic\_path\_end\_bonus\_desc:0 "The Carnyx, a trumpet possessed of a harsh and instantly recognizable timbre, inspires our troops, while terrifying our opponents."

#####

## Example 2: Name pool of Britannic names

Steam>Steamapps>Common>ImperatorRome>game>common>cultures>00\_britannic

```
britannic = {
```

```
    levy_template = levy_britannic
```

```
    primary = archers
```

```
    second = chariots
```

```
    flank = light_cavalry
```

```
    primary_navy = tetrere
```

```
    secondary_navy = hexere
```

```
    flank_navy = liburnian
```

```
    color = hsv { 0.57 0.7 0.4 }
```

```
    male_names = {
```

```
        Acco Addedomarus Adiatuanus Adminius Aiorix Ambicatos Andecombogius  
        Aneroestes Arioivistus Arverus Arvirargus Atis Avitus
```

```
        Bellicianus Bellovesus Boduognatus Boio Boiorix Bolgios Brennus Bricussa  
        Britomaris Brucetius Buite Cailtram Caractacus
```

Carvilius Cassivellaunus Cattulanus Cartorites Catugnatus Cavarinus  
Cavarus Celatus Cingetorix Coilus Commios Comux Concolitanus Correus Cottius Crixus  
Cunobelinus Diviciacus Divico Donnus Drappes Dubnovellaunus Dumnacus  
Ducarius Duratios Dumnocoveros Dumnorix Elitovius Eitovius Epatticus  
Galan Galba Guiderius Iacus Iccius Immanuentius Inamarcus Inammicus  
Indutiomarus Kimarcus Lucterius Lugotorix Lutarius Mallaius Mandubracius Marganus  
Mascelio  
Orgetorix Prasutagus Segovax Sinatus Sinorix Sisillius Talorc Tasciovanus  
Tasgetius Taximagulus Teutomalius Tincomarus Togodumnus Vertiscus  
Venutius Viridorix Vosenius Vodenos  
}

female\_names = {  
Aife Airmed Ancasta Banna Billica Boudica Bricta Brenwen Cata Cartimandua  
Chiomara Damona Diseta Gwendolen Litavis Iamcilla Maeve Verica  
Cingetessa Conna Catia Carssouna Cunovinna Illica Lovernisca Magunna  
Lucilia Oconeia Ria Rosula Senica Senticia Sulicena  
Vassura Vinoma Vorvena Urca Veloriga Velibia Totia Titocuna Velbutena  
Seniciana Senila Vrocata Exuperata Deiana Cunolava Cunsa Aucissa  
Allauna Alatuca Aessicunia Bodicacia Britivenda Catissena Cantisena  
Rhiannon Andraste Iouga Ricagambeda Satiada Senuna Sulis Verbeia  
Modron Arianrhod Goewin Ceridwen Donwen Awen Brigantia  
}

family = {  
Corres.Correia.Correii.Correid  
Divicus.Divica.Divicii.Divicid  
Duratus.Durata.Duratii.Duratid  
Elitoves.Elitova.Elitovii.Elitovid  
Galbus.Galba.Galbi.Galbid  
Iacus.Iaca.Iacii.Iacian  
Marganus.Margana.Marganii.Marganian  
Sinatus.Sinata.Sinatii.Sinatian  
Vodenosus.Vodenosa.Vodenosi.Vodenosian  
Caractacus.Caracta.Caractii.Caractian  
Venutus.Venuta.Venutii.Venutian  
Bolgius.Bolgia.Bolgiaii.Bolgian  
Celatus.Celata.Celatii.Celatid  
Accus.Acca.Accii.Accian  
Sinorus.Sinora.Sinori.Sinorian  
Crescus.Cresca.Crescii.Crescian  
Inammices.Inammica.Inammici.Inammicid  
Urcus.Urceia.Urcii.Urcid  
Oconus.Oconia.Oconii.Oconian  
Velbus.Velba.Velbii.Velbian  
Orgetorus.Orgetora.Orgetorii.Orgetorid  
}

```
culture = {
    #Britannic
    britannic = {} #deprecated
    caledonian = {}
    iceni = {}
    trinovantian = {}
    cantian = {}
    durotrigan = {}
    dumnonian = {}
    dobunnian = {}
    demetian = {}
    ordovitian = {}
    coritani = {}
    cornovian = {}
    brigantic = {}
    votadinian = {}
    damnonian = {}
    taexalian = {}
}

barbarian_names = { ANCALITES ATTACOTTI BIBROCI HORESTI CASSI
GABRANTOVICES GANGANI NOVANTAE LOPOCARES SEGONTIACI SELGOVAE }

graphical_culture = celtic_gfx
ethnicities = {
    10 = britannic
}
}
```

### Example 3: Carthaginian missions and descriptions

(shortened to just the ones mentioned in this thesis)

Steam>Steamapps>Common>ImperatorRome>game>localization>English>Carthaginian\_missions\_l\_english

l\_english:

### Sicily Missions ###

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission:0 "An End to Sicilian Warfare"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_DESCRIPTION:0 "Sicily has long been a battleground between different Greek factions, particularly the people of Syracuse, and ourselves. It has been a drain on our resources, and pushed us to the brink of destruction in the past, most recently under the warmonger Agathocles. It is time to put an end to these petty wars, and finally annex the island once and for all."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_CRITERIA\_DESCRIPTION:0 "This mission will be considered complete when we have annexed the whole island of Sicily."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_REWARD\_DESCRIPTION:0 "Sicily"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_BUTTON\_TOOLTIP:1 "It is time to put an end to the threats coming from Sicily, and annex the island. No longer will our nation be put in danger from ambitious Greek warlords."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_BUTTON\_DETAILS:0 ""

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_1:1 "In Defense of  
[SCOPE.sP('acragas\_province').GetName]"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_1\_DESC:0 "We promised to protect Acragas against Syracusan aggression, and despite our interventions it now seems like they have finally fallen to the enemy. It might be time to prepare a liberation of the city?"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_1\_tt:0 "#Y  
[SCOPE.sP('acragas\_province').GetName]#! is NOT owned by  
[SCOPE.sCountry('mission\_country').GetName] or  
[SCOPE.sCountry('acragas\_country').GetName]"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_1\_tt\_2:0  
"[SCOPE.sCountry('acragas\_country').GetName] is the subject of a foreign nation"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_2:1 "[SCOPE.sP('acragas\_province').GetName]  
Liberated"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_2\_DESC:1 "As loyal allies of  
[SCOPE.sCountry('mission\_country').GetName], Acragas will be an important port towards the Greek east. As they are often trading with their ancient homeland, they will be convinced to bring Greek goods and wealth into the Epikrateia."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_2\_tt:0  
"[SCOPE.sCountry('acragas\_country').GetName] owns #Y  
[SCOPE.sP('acragas\_province').GetName]#!"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_2\_tt\_2:0  
"[SCOPE.sCountry('acragas\_country').GetName] is guaranteed by #Y  
[SCOPE.sCountry('mission\_country').GetName]#!"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_3:1 "[SCOPE.sP('acragas\_province').GetName]  
Subjugated"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_3\_DESC:0 "Dead center between the Punic west and Syracusan east lies the city of Acragas, a strong independent city-state. If we want to ensure control of the island, we need access to the city one way or another."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4:0 "The Phoenician Settlements"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4\_DESC:0 "The Phoenician settlements of western Sicily are one of the few enclaves of our people left on the island, often pushed back by the Greeks. Ensuring that those cities remain strong and wealthy is essential if we want to spread our influence in the region."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4\_lilybaeum\_tt:0 "#Y  
[SCOPE.sP('lilybaeum\_province').GetName]#! has city status"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4\_panorumus\_tt:0 "#Y  
[SCOPE.sP('panorumus\_province').GetName]#! has city status"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4\_soluntum\_tt:0 "#Y  
[SCOPE.sP('soluntum\_province').GetName]#! has city status"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_4\_modifier\_tt:0 "#Y  
[SCOPE.sP('lilybaeum\_province').GetName]#!, #Y

[SCOPE.sP('panorumus\_province').GetName]#! and #Y  
[SCOPE.sP('soluntum\_province').GetName]#! gains the modifier #Y Punic City#! for #Y 10

years#!, giving the following effects"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5:0 "Punic Sicania"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5\_DESC:0 "Our Epikrateia in western Sicily has long been the only bulwark against Syracusan aggression. Though often sacked and broken down in the many wars, we need to make sure that our cities are populous enough to guide those who rely on our protection."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5\_effect\_tt:0 "#Y 3#! Canaanite Punic Freemen appear in #Y [SCOPE.sP('lilybaeum\_province').GetName]#!, #Y [SCOPE.sP('panorumus\_province').GetName]#! and #Y [SCOPE.sP('soluntum\_province').GetName]#!"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5\_lilybaeum\_tt:0 "#Y [SCOPE.sP('lilybaeum\_province').GetName]#! has a population of #Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#! or higher (#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_lilybaeum\_svalue')]0]#!/#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#!)"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5\_panorumus\_tt:0 "#Y [SCOPE.sP('panorumus\_province').GetName]#! has a population of #Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#! or higher (#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_panorumus\_svalue')]0]#!/#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#!)"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_5\_soluntum\_tt:0 "#Y [SCOPE.sP('soluntum\_province').GetName]#! has a population of #Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#! or higher (#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_soluntum\_svalue')]0]#!/#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_punic\_sicania\_max\_pop\_svalue')]0]#!)"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_6:0 "Eastern Nemesis"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_6\_DESC:0 "At the south-eastern tip of Sicily lies Syracuse, greatest of the Greek cities, and a thorn in our side. Long have we fought their armies across the island, and most recently they had the audacity of landing in our heartland and causing havoc."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_7:0 "Punic Syracuse"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_7\_DESC:0 "Taking control of Syracuse will be the first of many steps in pacifying the island of Sicily, and finally putting an end to the many Sicilian wars."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_8:0 "Sicilian Domination"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_8\_DESC:1 "The Siculians are the ancient inhabitants of Sicily, who lived there long before the Greeks decided to settle the coastline. Though they have been pushed back to the central parts of the island, they have often shown a streak of independence and stubbornness that we would need to quash if we are to proceed."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_9:0 "Local Governor"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_9\_DESC:1 "A local governor will surely ease the tensions between the inhabitants of eastern Sicily and our new bureaucracy in the area. They will be able to bring order to the area with an air of familiarity."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_9\_tt:0 "There is a governor in #Y [SCOPE.sP('syracuse\_province').GetName]#!"

carthaginian\_mission\_sicily\_local\_governor\_modifier\_tooltip:1 "All territories in Sicily with a dominant #Y Sicelote#! culture will gain the modifier #Y Local Governor of Sicily#! for #10 years#!, giving the following effects"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_10:0 "Syracusan Warships"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_10\_DESC:1 "The Syracusans are known for their ingenuity, and many interesting experiments has come out of the city in the past. Taking a look through their plans, ideas and shipyards might provide military boons to our forces."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_11:0 "Wine and Grain"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_11\_DESC:0 "Though the farmlands of Sicily are rich in wine and grain, their fields are poorly taken care of and their ways outdated. If we were to bring Carthaginian agriculture to the area, we would surely see more bountiful harvests than ever before."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_11\_trigger\_tt:1 "Hold #Y 5#! or more territories in Sicily that produce #Y Wine#! @wine! or #Y Grain#! @grain! (#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_wine\_and\_grain\_counter\_svalue')]0)#!/#Y 5#!)"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_11\_tt:2 "Any territory producing either #Y Wine#! @wine! or #Y Grain#! @grain! in Sicily will be given the modifier #Y Punic Agriculture#! until #Y End of Game#!, giving the following effects"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_final:0 "End of an Era"

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_final\_DESC:0 "Many wars have raged across Sicily, often bringing poverty and death in its wake. With the whole region under our rule we will no longer have to fear Greek attacks, and the only thing that remains is to decide how we will govern the area."

carthaginian\_sicily\_expansion\_mission\_final\_tt:1 "At the completion of this mission task, Sicily will either be put under Punic domination or released as a #Y Subject#! of Carthage"

### ### Africa Mission ###

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission:0 "The Aegis of Africa"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission\_DESCRIPTION:0 "As our trade empire expands, with more and more colonies and ports abroad, our ambitions in Africa have withered. We must secure our footing at home, protect our backs from uprisings and raids by unruly tribes, before we can once again turn our gaze across the sea."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission\_CRITERIA\_DESCRIPTION:0 "This mission will be considered complete when western North Africa is subjugated or conquered."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission\_REWARD\_DESCRIPTION:0 "Africa"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission\_BUTTON\_TOOLTIP:0 "Our back must be secured before we can turn our gaze outwards once more."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_mission\_BUTTON\_DETAILS:0 ""

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyphoenician\_settlement:0 "Integrate the Musulamii"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyphoenician\_settlement\_DESC:2 "The lands of the Musulamian tribes borders us to the south-west. Although they nominally pay homage to us,

the tribal Musulamii have come into conflict with our Punic settlers in the borderlands. It is time to introduce Punic civilization to these barbaric tribes."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyphoenician\_settlement\_tt1:2 "#Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#! owns at least one territory with city status and #Y 15#! or more pops in the Areas of #Y Thabracania#!, #Y Musulamia#!, or #Y Maxyesia#!."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyphoenician\_settlement\_tt2:1 "#Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#! will annex #Y Musulamia#!."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_integrating\_phoenicians:0 "The Wicked Sisters"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_integrating\_phoenicians\_DESC:0 "The Phoenician cities of Utica and Kerkouane, our sister-cities, have long been staunch allies of Carthage. However, there have been recent rumblings that they may not be as loyal as they seem. Perhaps it would be best if they were no longer in control of their own fate."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_ending\_massaesylia:0 "The Massaesylian Menace"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_ending\_massaesylia\_DESC:0 "The Massaesylian tribes to the west have been raiding our Punic settlements between Rusaddir and Qartan. They need to be brought to heel, and to feel the wrath of our displeasure."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_ending\_massaesylia\_tt1:1 "#Y Massaesylia#! is a subject of #Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#!."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_ending\_massaesylia\_tt2:1 "#Y Massaesylia#! does not exist, and #Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#! or a subject completely owns the Areas of #Y Sitifensia#!, #Y Machuria#!, #Y Iolia#!, #Y Massaesylia#!, and #Y Metagonia#!."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_securing\_coastline:0 "Securing the Coast of Africa"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_securing\_coastline\_DESC:0 "While we already control the northern coastline of Africa and Numidia, we must extend our grasp to control the coastline of Mauretania as well, to ensure our domination of the western Mediterranean."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_securing\_coastline\_tt:1 "#Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#!, or a subject, owns the entire African coast, from #Y Safim#! to #Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#!, and every Territory in the Areas of #Y Tingitania#!, and #Y Mauretania#! (#Y [SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_mission\_africa\_securing\_coastline\_current\_svalue')]0)#!/#Y

[SCOPE.ScriptValue('carthaginian\_mission\_africa\_securing\_coastline\_max\_svalue')]0)#!)." #Y

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_unruly\_subject:0 "The Mutiny of the Berbers"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_unruly\_subject\_DESC:0 "The Massylians, though ostensibly under our rule, are fickle subjects. We can never be certain if they will fight for their liege or defect to the enemy. Time will tell where Massylian allegiance truly lies."

carthage\_africa\_unruly\_subject.tt:1 "Completing this task will result in a war between #Y Massylia#! and #G [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#!."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_massylian\_hinterland:0 "The Massylian Hinterlands"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_massylian\_hinterland\_DESC:0 "With the Massylians put in their place, we need to secure control over the Massylian hinterlands to the south. An influx of Punic settlers ought to provide us with the tools we need to cement our influence in the area."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_eastern\_coast:0 "A Tale of Four Cities"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_eastern\_coast\_DESC:1 "The Phoenician cities to the south, on the coast of Bissytyis, have long been close allies of ours. In order to strengthen our hold

on the area, it might be time to bring them even closer into the bosom of [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_emporium\_tripoli:0 "Emporium of Tripoli"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_emporium\_tripoli\_DESC:0 "Our southern neighbours, Emporia and Tripolitania, are currently under our protection. In order to extend our grasp southward and eastward, maybe we need to take direct control over their wealthy trading ports."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyan\_empire:0 "Libyan Empire"

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyan\_empire\_DESC:1 "The coast of Africa is under our control, and the tribes of Numidia and Mauretania have submitted to the yoke of [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName], from the Pillars of Melqart to the deserts of Libya. Our homeland is now secure, the lands across the sea are ripe of the taking, and the glorious City of Dido will shine with a light of a thousand colors."

carthage\_africa\_libyan\_empire.tt:0 "Completing this task will give a choice between two permanent boni."

carthaginian\_africa\_expansion\_libyphoenician\_settlement\_tt:0 "The tribes of the Musulamii will either submit and become a #Y Client State#! of #Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#, or start a war of independence with #Y [SCOPE.GetRootScope.GetCountry.GetName]#!"

### ### Bomilcar's Revolution ###

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution:0 "Aftermath of the Revolution"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_DESCRIPTION:1 "After our disastrous war against Agathocles in Sicily, the traitorous Suffete Bomilcar tried to sell our lands to gain tyrannical power for himself. Many were led astray by his ideas and plans, and even though they were pardoned there are still conflicts and disagreements lingering all across our nation."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_BUTTON\_TOOLTIP:1 "The political consequences of Bomilcar's revolution still linger across our nation."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_CRITERIA\_DESCRIPTION:0 "This mission will be considered complete when the lingering conflicts from Bomilcar's revolution have been resolved."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_1:0 "Agent of the 104"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_1\_DESC:0 "The Council of the 104 are the leading judges of the nation, making important decisions on the behalf of the people as a whole. Not even we have the power to oppose them entirely, and it would be beneficial to come to an agreement with them if we are to make more radical changes in our political system, as they could oppose it."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_2:0 "Power at Home"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_2\_DESC:0 "If we are to restore the political system of Carthage to its glory days, we need to have enough seats in the Senate to make sure our policies can be forced through."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_3:0 "Soldier from the Revolution"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_3\_DESC:1 "The revolution once stood strong in Carthage, about to overthrow the whole nation. Though they were pardoned for their crimes, a lot of the revolutionaries both play an important role in, and oppose certain parts of, the Carthaginian system."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_4:0 "Strengthen the System"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_4\_DESC:0 "The system does not need to be changed, it simply needs to be strengthened to a point where tyrants cannot get enough power to take control of the state on their own."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_5:0 "Plutocratic Rule"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_5\_DESC:1 "Our merchants have long played an important part in the hierarchy of Carthage, bringing wealth to our cities and improving relations with potential subjects across the Mediterranean. Though the revolution fought for the tyrant Bomilcar, many were promised that the lower classes would be given more power in the rule of their cities. A plutocratic rule would certainly be well received in both of these camps, as well as among some of our senators."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_6:0 "Oligarchic Rule"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_6\_DESC:0 "The many judges of the Council of the 104 have already planned and set up all the necessary work to be able to change our political system to one where they are in charge. Together with our Suffete, they will be able to overthrow the rest of the bureaucracy and take complete control of the government."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_7:0 "Aristocratic Rule"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_7\_DESC:0 "The landed nobility, many of them working in our political systems already, will appreciate moving to a system where they are given even more power."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_8:0 "Mercenary Patron"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_8\_DESC:0 "Our history with the local mercenary companies is a long one, where we have often turned to their help to secure our goals. Particularly in the many drawn out wars in Sicily, they played an essential part in protecting our interests.\n\nAs we are already close friends with some of the mercenary warlords, we should be able to convince them to settle down in Carthage. With our patronage, the companies will flourish and we will secure their loyalty at a cheaper price in the coming conflicts."

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_final:0 "Carthaginian Peace"

carthaginian\_mission\_bomilcars\_revolution\_task\_final\_DESC:0 "Finally we can rid ourselves of the shackles of the past, the lingering consequences of Bomilcar's revolution, and look to the future."

