

## Sallusto's History

Herein begins the history of the all consuming wars of the great nations. The year is 300 BC. The place is the Mediterranean Sea and its environs.

At the beginning, the world is at peace. But, it is a tenuous peace. Five strong and capable leaders have emerged to lead five great nations. Any one of these great men could rule the world were it not for the other four.

Each of the nations has a robust economy and its people are ready for war. Each claims the sea as his own and will use it to expand his domain.

Week One. But for now, peace reigns throughout the world. The quiet interrupted only by the song bird. Trade is the goal of all right thinking rulers. Trade leads to prosperity for all. But, the gains; do they go to the people or do they fill a war chest?

Egypt and the Levant have announced their friendship to the world. But, it is also a warning; if you cross one, you cross them both. Beware the double mailed fist!

Pentapolis' fear of Akabulan aggression has come to life today as an army commanded by the famous Akabulan general Mago has laid siege to the proud city of Leptis Magna (2428). Adding insult to injury General Echebrates of Egypt has similarly begun constructing siege lines around the city of Cirta (3030). The precise timing of these incursions

leave thoughtful men with the idea of collusion in their minds if not on their tongues.

On a more peaceful but no less alarming note we learn that the famous Egyptian General Ptolemy has encouraged, no doubt through a show of overwhelming force, brave Petra (4926) in Arabia to declare for Egypt! Concurrently, General Gorgias of the Levant has shuttered up the inhabitants of the Arabian city of Jerusalem and has begun constructing siege engines. It is obvious to all that the Eastern Alliance has decided to partition proud Arabia among themselves.

The great seafarers of Greece have struck Crete like a bolt of lightning out of the blue! Knossos has declared for Greece among strained cries of, "Hail Aristomachos!"

**Week Two.** A new era of expansionism spreads throughout the world. Stronger nations prey on weaker nations and cities change allegiance like underwear. This week alone Salonea (2410) and Messana (2420) have declared for Latium, Nicaea (4015) has changed allegiance from Anatolia to Greece. The famous Levant General Achaeus has brought the once mighty city of Trapezus (4712) under the control of the burgeoning Levant empire. Sieges continue in Leptis Magna (2428), Jerusalem (5024) and Cirta (3030).

**Week Three.** unbridled expansion to the detriment of the lesser powers continues. Dyrrhachium declares for Greece. Jerusalem (5024) and Ephesus (4017) declare for the Levant. Gadir (0119) and Leptis Magna

(2428) fall to Akabula. Sizcia (2507), Syracuse (2421) and Massilia (1412) all declare allegiance to Latium! Cirta (3030) declares for Egypt. Latium's empire has grown to be the greatest in the world. They are followed closely by Greece and to a lesser extent The Levant, Akabula and Egypt.

**Week Four.** Trade agreements between the Levant and all but Egypt have been cancelled. Diplomatic overtures have flown in both directions but nothing has been able to avert this march toward conflict and death. The Levant has cast the spear of war onto the soil of the Greek enclave in Nicea! In response Greece has issued a formal declaration of war. Egypt for the Levant and Latium for Greece have been swept up into this hurricane swirling toward fire and death. Akabula, while once having beaten the drum loudly behind the scene, has chosen to remain neutral. Do the Akabulans await the result of the impending battle to decide which side will earn their favor? Strong words and drum pounding are one thing, but a battle won speaks for itself.

**WAR!** Not waiting for the Levantine hammer to fall on Nicea, the famous Greek General Magos has struck the Levantine army commanded by Achaenus near the town of Adapazari (4114). The world holds its collective breath. Peace has been trodden down by the tramping feet of these armies.

### **Greece Thunderstruck!**

Achaenus, brave Achaenus has brought the Levant's military to the apogee of skill and ability. Outside the town of Adapazari, northeast of Nicaea his brave Legions drove the mighty Greek phalanxes back and forced

them to retire behind the walls of Nicaea. But, the victory was a bloody affair. Both the Greeks and the Levantines suffered serious losses and will need time to repopulate their formations.

### *The Battle of Adapazari.*

The battle opened with the Levantine Legions facing a Greek army arrayed with a series of powerful battle lines deployed across the center of the battlefield. These brave hoplites were buoyed on either flank by aggressive, mercenary warriors and serried ranks of Greek horsemen.

As the battle opened the Levantine legions displaying dizzying maneuverability changed their army's alignment from the center of the battle field to the eastern edge and launched their own cavalry at the mounted Greeks. This combat flowed back and forth for most of the day but eventually the Greek mercenary warriors were needed to bolster this hard pressed flank. Much was expected of these fierce looking brutes but at the end of the day the field was littered with the bloody corpses of these violent men willing to die for a day's pay.

The hoplites proved to be made of far sterner stuff. Well equipped and armored, fighting to secure their nation's borders they continued the fight to the bitter end. But, in the end, it was indeed bitter as the Legions were not to be denied. The Levant's brave Achaeus is recognized as one of the truly exceptional commanders of his day and his army now has a solid core of veterans. The Battle of Adapazari, the first battle of the All Consuming Wars is registered as a resounding victory for the capable Levantine Legions.

But, Greece has more problems than a single battle lost. Achaeus's army was not a single spear point piercing Greece's breast but only the northern tine of a strategic trident. A Levantine army under Bacchides has crossed the Bosphorus and convinced the town fathers of Adrianapolis to declare for the Levant. Simultaneously an Egyptian army commanded by Epaenetus swept into Sparta from across the sea and overwhelmed the city before it could offer a defense. Greece staggers like a pugilist under a flurry of lightning fast fists.

Elsewhere, the Akabulan army under a general named Hannibal has moved on from Gadir and convinced the city elders of Novo Carthago (0519) to declare for Akabula. Concurrently, Hasdrubal the Akabulan has sailed to Corsica and laid siege to Caralis. Latium continues its expansionistic strategy by subduing and occupying Tarraco (1013).

**Week 5.** A firebrand warrior from one of the foremost tribes of Latium has risen to fame and glory. Scipio is now ready to assume command of a Latin army.

Akabula has had a sudden change of heart and declared war on Egypt. This unprovoked event has taken Egyptian diplomats entirely by surprise.

### **The Battle of Babaeski.**

While the Battle of Adapazari raged to the east a Levantine army crossed into Greece south of the Bosphorus and quickly subdued the garrison at Adrianapolis (3714) and captured the city. Recovering quickly, Greece dispatched an army under Aristomachos reinforced by elements of

Mago's army nearby and forced the Levantine army under Bacchides to battle outside the town of Babaeski.

Babaeski hosted a battle for the ages. The more numerous Greeks rolled onto the battlefield overlapping the Levantines on both flanks.

Throughout the morning hours it looked as if the Greek phalanxes would quickly drive the Levantine legions from the battlefield. But, as the day wore on the Greek battle lines diminished and as they did so, their flanks became exposed. Slowly the Legionaries were able to exploit the flanks of the hoplites and begin the slow work of destroying Greek core units. While the morning belonged to the Greeks, the afternoon belonged to the Levant. But, the afternoon did not extend long enough and the battered but unbowed Greeks were able to defeat the Levantine Legions with the absolute last reserves of strength they possessed.

Bacchides and the remnants of his army quickly retired to Adrianapolis and sheltered behind the city's massive walls.

### **Hope for Greece!**

Latium and Greece have declared an alliance! Battle lines are being drawn all across the Mediterranean. Can the Latins save Greece from the rampaging hordes from Levant and Egypt that are tramping across Greece?

### **Politics as usual.**

The tyrant of Greece has attempted to appoint a new army commander. The candidate was immediately assassinated. Those in the know will

not say so, but Greece's military hierarchy has demonstrated their contentment with the status quo.

### **Akabula goes to War!**

Akabula, mimicking the Greek treachery vs. the Levant, has suddenly attacked Egypt without provocation.

### **The Battle of Euphranta**

Not far from the city of Cirta (3030) a small hamlet called Euphranta has grown up around a water hole. Several miles south of this tiny settlement the armies of Akabula (Carthage) and Egypt engaged in battle. The Akabulans arrayed a diverse army of military specialists; hoplites to push the line, cavalry to apply speed and flexibility and peltast medium weight troops to protect the flanks. The Akabulan army is a formidable force, led by the ever capable Carthaginian, Mago.

For their part the Egyptians fielded their traditional consular legion army. Egyptian legions supported by allies and mercenaries. The Egyptian hopes rested with their pilums and the Leadership of their famous general Echebrates. The Egyptians did possess one wild card, a division of mercenary elephants!

The Akabulans attacked from the west. The Egyptian legions opposed them to the east. A range of low hills stood to the south. To the north was a disappointing oasis with only enough water to support a large stand of trees. The oasis has no standing water or inhabitants other than the occasional wandering goatherd. The trees stood a short distance in front of and separated the Egyptian center and right flank.

Both Armies deployed in their traditional manners. The Carthaginians were drawn up in a long single line. Their African and excellent Greek hoplites were in the center and peltasts advanced on either flank. The Egyptian legions were arranged in the traditional three deep triplex acies. From their right to their left they presented an Egyptian Legion, an Allied Legion, an Egyptian Legion, an Allied Legion and finally on the far left to the south, the elephants.

The early stages of the battle saw a general and relentless Akabulan advance that quickly pressed the Egyptians back against the impassable Deep Desert Depression.

using the trees of the oasis to their advantage, the Akabulan peltasts on their left, northern, flank quickly destroyed one third of the maniples of the right most Egyptian Legion opposing them. In the center the Akabulan phalanx was irresistible, keeping the pressure on the Egyptians by destroying four maniples and two light companies without losing a single hoplite company. However, while the Carthaginian phalanx pushing the center remains intact, it has suffered greatly from pilum attacks that seemed to blacken the sky.

On the Carthaginian right flank the peltasts are unable to contain the Egyptian elephants and the elephants break into the open desert behind the Akabulan phalanx. This forces the Akabulan leader Mago to call in his scouts from the desert to the south to deal with this burgeoning threat. Once the cavalry arrives it is just the matter of a few minutes before all three elephant squadrons are destroyed.

Returning to the other end of the battlefield, the northern flank, the Akabulan peltasts lure the Egyptian cavalry of the right flank into the trees and destroy it. The disappointing performance of the Egyptian northern Legion forces the Egyptian leader Echebrates to call for a reinforcing legion from Ptolemy, whose army was nearby. This allowed Echebrates to stabilize his northern flank while simultaneously applying pressure to the left flank of the Carthaginian phalanx battle line.

In spite of the increased pressure to its left flank, the Akabulan phalanx battle line continues to destroy Egyptian maniples in the center. But finally, an Akabulan phalanx company falls and Akabulan Carthaginian leaders can be seen rushing from one weak spot of the battle line to another to encourage their hoplites to keep pressuring the enemy.

Sensing the balance of power shifting in the center, Echebrates calls in a reinforcing division of Praetorian guardsmen and allied Extraordinarii to attack the center of the Akabulan wavering phalanx and quickly three more hoplite companies fall. Soon the Akabulan phalanx is reduced to just the superior Greek hoplites that are eventually surrounded and cut down to the man. This final act seals Mago's fate and secures an Egyptian victory at Euphranta.

### ***Akabulan Expansionism in the Western Mediterranean!***

Akabula captures the city of Caralis on the island of Corsica and the city of Saguntum in Iberia.

*Greek suffering continues!  
Egypt captures Thebes (3316).*

### *Week 6*

#### *Blockbuster Alliance!*

*The two largest empires in the world, Latium and Akabula, declare an Alliance! The rest of the world is staggered by the melding of these two super powers. Buoyed by eliminating its greatest possible threat through diplomacy, Latium declares war on both the Levant and Egypt.*

*Responding to Akabula's surprise attack on Egypt, Egypt's ally, the Levant has declared war on Akabula. The Akabulan ambassador to the Levant was taken into custody during a pre-dawn raid of the ambassador's residence in Antioch. The Levant and Akabula are now at War.*

*Bows or Butter? The Egyptian tax council has denied Ptolemy's request to raise another officer to the level of Army Commander.*

*Greece regains Thebes but loses Epirus and Nicea. Thebes (G) welcomes a Greek army and realigns with Greece. Nicea (4015) declares for the Levant. Epirus (3015) declares for Egypt. Alesia (1506) declares for Latium.*

*Zenon's Conspiracy. A military coup attempt in Antioch has been foiled and the current government retained. With so much of the Levant's governing families far away in Greece a local upstart named Zenon and*

several young compatriots tried to usurp the government and install themselves as Army Leaders. In the middle of the night they stole into several homes of prominent members of the current government. In every case they were met by a contubernia of praetorians. Apparently late nights of too much wine and too much bragging had undone their plans. The Levant military will retain the status quo.

A few weeks later in the middle of the night a long boat pushes off from a merchant ship moored at the outer edges of the long channel leading to the port of Antioch. Soon a small band of men step from the boat into a remote warehouse neighborhood of the Antioch port. The men are dressed as wealthy Egyptian merchants but, are in fact, Greek agents. Melding with the crowd of people at Antioch's main market they learn much of Antioch but little of the hero Zenon. At a public house on the second evening of their visit they take a chance and pointedly ask where they can find Zenon. After a period of strained silence and puzzled expressions the Greeks are told, "I think they were buried in potter's field. Except for little Gemal.

After a brief period of disappointed knowing glances the Greek agents asked where they could find this famous revolutionary and why the authorities did not execute him with his coconspirators.

"Gemal? He is of little concern. He couldn't convince a dysentery sufferer to follow him into an outhouse.

The next night the Greek agents found Gemal and had a frank and pointed discussion with the little man. The following morning they were back on their boat headed for Greece leaving a near visible trail of disappointment.

## Week 7

*Globalization in Greece.* Greece has been overrun by foreign influences. From the Latium and Akabulan gold that fills their war chests to the Latium warriors and Levantine Legionaries filling their roads and villages, Greece is something far different from what we have been taught. What will happen to the proud Greek culture? What of Achilles? What of the heritage of brave Leonidas? Will Greece find another Alexander the Great in time or will we remember Greece as a docile Levantine or Latium backwater?

Clouds of Latium Warriors crowd the byways of Greece. Now, during the courtship phase of the Greek Latium relationship, all is smiles and hearty handshakes. But, what about tomorrow? Latium has a very costly investment in Greece. How will that debt be settled? What will Latium demand? What is that old expression? Beware of Latins bearing gifts? Or is it Akabulans bearing gifts?

Greek armies bought with Akabulan gold and backed up by Latium war bands have swept Levantine armies before them like so much cattle. Has Levant merely stumbled or have they suffered a deadly fall? Overextended and very far from home the Levantine legions have been not only stopped but pressed back relentlessly.

Where are their Egyptian allies? Have they left the Levantines to their own devices? There are reports that an Egyptian army remains in Greece and has been assailing undefended cities and nipping at the ankles of the Greek war machine. Are the Egyptians home sick or do they have something else up their sleeves?

undeniably, Egypt has been boldly advancing in Africa. Leptis Magna (2428) declares for Egypt. Can anything stop this westward swarming juggernaut?

Egyptian diplomats have offered terms to Akabula. Akabula resists. Does Akabula know something Egypt does not? It is very possible because Akabula continues to expand their holdings in Iberia. Arbocala (0213) declares for Akabula.

Gergovia (1209) declares for Latium.

### Week 8

All major nations have resigned themselves to fighting a long war. Each has streamlined and standardized their military. How will these changes effect history? The expanded empires embrace so many tribes and peoples that each can field practically any known army type.

Military Priests assume a dominant role in Egypt! Nicanor emerges as the first among equals in a gang of four Army Leaders. The Soldier Priests demand a brave new direction for Egypt and the Ptolemaic rulers respond in the affirmative. The first visible change is to reinvigorate the Egyptian Diplomatic Corps. Prominent proponents of the pro-Levant party have been either otherwise indoctrinated or "retired" and Egypt ends its long held alliance with the Levant. Are war clouds gathering? More importantly can the Egyptian economy sustain being at war with the rest of the world?

But, the drama does not end there! The world tilts dangerously as Egypt and Akabula cease hostilities! Has Nicanor and the other Ptolemaics thrown over The Levant in favor of a new suitor in the guise of an old enemy? Or is this a temporary cease-fire calculated to buy time for Akabula to recover from the staggering losses suffered at the Battle of Euphranta? What does Egypt have to gain from such an agreement and how will the Levant react? Why has Egypt removed the blade from Akabula's throat? What will Nicanor's impetuosity produce? Will Egypt ultimately end up fighting all other nations at once? So many puzzling questions...

Returning to the seat of war, Greece, Hyperbatas has laid siege to Adrianapolis shutting up Bacchides and his greatly reduced army behind the city walls. The Greek general Chabrias has advanced his army to besiege Sparta.

Gorgias, the Levantine general has sped north from Adrianapolis and captured Nicopolis (3810).

Meanwhile the world marvels at the size and scope of the Latium empire.

### **The Battle of Epirus - An epic struggle.**

Thrasbulus the Greek general and Epaenetus the Egyptian prepared for battle near the Egyptian city of Epirus (3015).

Both the Greek and Egyptian armies arrived late in the week; the Greeks to recapture Epirus and the Egyptians to deter Epirus from returning to Greek control. The Epiran home guard shuttered the city and manned the walls. The opposing Greek and Egyptian armies arrayed opposite one another across acres of gently rolling farmland. Both armies were formed of legions of the Roman type. However, the Egyptian army was augmented by a large contingent of Greek mercenary pikemen.

Epaenetus deployed this phalanx to anchor the center of the Egyptian line of battle. The Egyptians converged all of the triarii from their legions to form an additional phalanx. The Greeks chose instead, to form their triarii individually, but with each led by a general. One entire Greek allied legion was held away from the battlefield as a strategic reserve.

The battle began with a general advance by both sides. Initially the fighting flowed back and forth but the Egyptian army was on the battlefield in its entirety and the greater numbers were telling. By the end of the first day the Greek line was crumbling. On the other side of the battlefield the Egyptian legions had suffered fearful casualties but their phalanxes held firm. Toward the end of the first day the Greek right had collapsed and the few survivors there were faced with both Egyptian phalanxes poised to deliver a coup de grace.

To counter this force the Greek Generalissimo brought on his reserve legion; deploying infantry to the left and cavalry to the right. Upon the arrival of the fresh legionaries and the rising sun, the Greek Generalissimo began a powerful push sweeping from the left into the center of the battlefield. The Egyptian general Epaenetus finished off the remnants of a Greek legion before turning his phalanxes to face this new threat. But, by this time the phalanxes were far too distant to effectively oppose the advance of the fresh Greek legionaries.

Both sides spent hours chasing down the fleeing remnants of damaged units. And as the sun set the Egyptian army dissolved. Their stout mercenary pikemen slowly backed through the gates of Epirus to join the home guard garrisoning the city. The remaining victorious Greeks began digging the trenches and saps necessary for a protracted siege. So ends the battle for Epirus, a signal Greek triumph!

Mighty Periander, the Tyrant of Greece can survey his lands with satisfaction. Three previously lost Greek cities are besieged by Greek armies. Both Egypt and Levant have suffered stunning defeats at the hands of the Greek military machine.

### Week 9

Egyptian diplomatic distancing from the Levant has begun to realign the balance of power around the Mediterranean. Latium has offered the olive branch and Egypt has accepted. However, trade routes between Latium and Egypt remain closed.

**Epirus siege broken!** Egypt has hired more mercenaries at Epirus. Greek forces contract and fall back to defend against the burgeoning forces behind the walls of Epirus. This breaks the siege and allows much needed food and other necessities to reach the city.

### **The Battle of Adrianapolis**

The Levantine army commanded by Gorgias moved to break the siege of Adrianapolis. As Gorgias' army moved into position a wing of Bacchides' army sallied out from behind the city's walls and fell into line creating a maximum size army of pikes and armored cavalry. Opposite this host were the Greek legions of Hyperbatas reinforced by the veteran legion from Achaesus' army.

The unexpected appearance of a veritable forest of pikes and heavily armored horsemen caught the Greeks by surprise. This was a new and different foe from the Levantine legions they were accustomed to facing.

The Levantine army was arrayed side by side, one unit deep across the field from the steep hills in the west to the impassable close terrain to the east. The extremely wide formation of the Levantine pikes left the Greek legion commander pondering where best to launch his attack.

Once both armies were fully deployed the Levantine army attempted to seize the initiative. They quickly rushed forward placing their pike phalanx line across the center of the battlefield. The Levantine armored Cavalry extended the pike line to the right (east) flank.

On the Greek side of the field Achaeus' veterans immediately fell upon the armored cavalry. They quickly destroyed one squadron and forced the remaining seven squadrons to fall back behind a narrow fold in the earth.

Relentlessly, the Levant pikemen continued to advance, leaving far too little real estate for the Greek Legions to inflict their hit and run tactics to maximum effect. Legionaries on the right flank were able to destroy the peltasts protecting the pike units' flanks and press on behind the pikes. But, mounting casualties and pressure from additional Levantine peltasts rendered these legionaries ineffective.

In the center the Levantine pikemen were suffering frightening carnage but kept pressing forward until the center legions were destroyed.

Pressed back to the edge of the open terrain and cut off from their lines of communication to the south, the remaining Greek legions had run out of

options and they conducted a fighting withdrawal from the field of battle.

The final tally of the Battle of Adrianapolis had the Greeks losing three full wings including Achaeus' Veterans. The Levantine Army losses, while significant were half as many as the Greeks.

The siege of Adrianapolis is broken and the Levantine general Bacchides' army is resupplied.

Hyperbatas, once the foremost fighter in the Greek army has been recalled to Athens. Hyperbatas met with The Council of the Families of Great Worth and has subsequently decided to retire from the army and any form of public service. He plans to spend the rest of his days at his villa in the small fishing village of Agropoli.

The Council of the Families of Great Worth have placed their confidence in a young rising military star named Pausanius. Pausanius has been appointed commander of the troops protecting the Greek capital.

## **Week 10**

**Levantine Lightning Warfare!** The Levant has sliced into the heart of Greece like an obsidian dagger. Amphipolis was the first to fall. The garrison of old men and boys were no match for the battle hardened veterans of General Gorgias.

The Greek city of Thebes was next. It now lays under siege by an army commanded by the famous Levantine general Achaeus. It has been said

that Achaenus was more shocked than disappointed that the mere mention of his name was not enough to see the city gates thrown open.

**The Peloponnese Restored!** Greece recovers Sparta! After a lengthy siege the final attack was accomplished by a coup de main delivered through a shepherds' gate that had been overlooked by the Egyptian garrison. For their carelessness those that did not fall in battle were paraded before the populace, tortured and crucified. Now, Collaborators are being ejected from the city to face starvation in the wilderness. Spartans; not a people to be taken lightly.

**Sicily Suddenly Significant!** Except for the land immediately astride the Nile river, Egypt is a dry land. So, it is not surprising that they would mount an expedition to capture the inventor of a device that can move water up a slope; a mathematician named Archimedes. That is just what the Egyptians have accomplished by sending a fearful army to overwhelm the local gate guards of Syracuse. The city fathers of Syracuse had promised fealty to Latium. That fealty is now redirected toward Egypt.

The formerly independent city of Lilybaeum has declared for Akabula. In a suspicious incidence of simultaneous coordination the Egyptians were landing on the southern end of the island while the Akabulans were landing on the western most point. One can only guess what the Latinos think of all this activity so close to home.

## *Week 11*

*Sicilian Misdirection.* Sicily hosted armies from three major powers for exactly one week. As soon as the Latin war machine made the slightest threatening gesture both Egypt and Akabula jumped back onto their boats and headed for parts unknown. Surprisingly, Akabula, Egypt and Latium all hold cities on the island. How long will Latium's Crixus allow these daggers pointed at Rome to persist? Is Latium a power to be reckoned with or merely an illusion?

The Levantine armies pushed further into Greece. Like a spear point into the belly of a pig there was very little resistance before the bloodletting. As they marched into the Peloponnese practically within sight of Athens, the world expected Periander to draw a line and cry "No More!" But, instead Pausanius' army fled like so many frightened geese. Thereby neatly side stepping danger and leaving their Latin allies to bear the brunt of the attack by the Levantine menace.

*North African Shenanigans.* In a stunning display of diplomatic disregard, the Egyptian General Echebrates has captured and garrisoned the Pentapoline city of Leptis Magna. While no Akabulans were harmed during this action, Akabulan diplomats and traders have been expelled from the city and told to never return.

## *The Battle of Livadia*

South of Thebes (Greece) Marcellus of Latium engaged Gorgias of the Levant in a battle of pristine warriors vs. battle scarred Legionaries. Marcellus called in reinforcements from the Greek General Thrasbulus

and Gorgias received assistance from that famous Levantine veteran of so many battles, Achaenus.

Marcellus advanced to battle with a very heavy left hand. Gorgias countered with mercenary hoplites in the center and legions to each side. In the early stages both sides suffered heavy pounding but, gradually Marcellus' warriors were gaining the upper hand against the Levantine right flank. While it looked likely that the Levantine right would collapse and expose the rest of the fighters from Levant to attacks from the flank and rear, it was quite a different story in the center. Pressure from the Levantine Praetorians and clever maneuvering by the mercenary Hoplites gave the grim reaper a tremendous harvest of Latium warriors. The Latium army was pressed into the abyss and their slaughter was complete. Thrasbulus' troops escaped back into the hills but the Latins were not so lucky. All, including brave Marcellus, were consumed by the insatiable Levantine hunger for destruction.

**Athens Imperiled!** Following the death of Marcellus and the destruction of his Latin army the road to Athens was laid bare before the Levantine menace. Rushing into this vacuum, the Levantine General Philotis has sped to the gates and finding them barred, laid siege to the Greek megalopolis. Is this the beginning of the end of Periander's Greece or is this merely the end of the beginning of the war?

## **Week 12**

Philotis spent several days of uneasy siege preparations before the gates of Athens. It is with some relief when he received word to abandon the siege and march north. Once again we are reminded that luck favors the

prepared mind as Philotis was positioned to respond to two different conflicts south of Thebes (G); the Battle of Thebes and the Pursuit of Thrasbulus.

### *The Battle of Thebes*

In a conflict that saw Thrasbulus' large Greek army of all troop types oppose a slightly smaller Levantine army under Achaeus, we saw the Levantines able to achieve a draw during a sharp battle in which the Greeks suffered more casualties. Once again Achaeus displays his famous exceptional ability as an Army commander. Chronos showered favor on Achaeus and the Levantines and brought darkness just as the Greeks were poised to strike a crushing blow on the weary Levantine warriors. Under cover of darkness Thrasbulus pulled back his army to the crossroads northwest of Athens to reorganize. But, before Thrasbulus could recover from the ravages of the Battle of Thebes his army was struck on the flank by a Levantine army led by Gorgias. Thrasbulus lost a wing conducting a fighting withdrawal down the road toward Athens.

*News from Africa!* The Akabulan General Gisgo marched south to protect Akabula's southern border from a possible Egyptian attack. Akabulan foreign policy has been one much like a pendulum. Friend of Latium to enemy of Latium. Friend of Egypt to enemy of Egypt. Such diplomatic vacillation places the Akabulan military on high alert as they never know which border may be threatened. Gisgo marched to Leptis and established a solid defensive position running from the hills of Leptis to the sea with the city to his rear. As predicted, the Egyptians arrived in force and deployed for battle. But, Gisgo's nerves failed him and

rather than fight, his army limps lamely through the gates of Leptis. Egypt immediately begins constructing siege lines around the city.

**The Oracle at Delphi.** The well known nay-sayers of Delphi are up to their old tricks again. This is their latest lament: "The earth trembles and becomes hot to the touch, the skies darken and grow darker still, merchants and farmers stumble and perish." Are the priests of Delphi angling for donations or is this truly a message from the Gods? The Vestal Virgins are so upset they cancelled Date Night. No tasty sweet date desserts for the virgins!

### **Week 13**

#### **Persian Disaster becomes worldwide!**

It seems that the Oracle was onto something. The gods have now seen fit to visit at least a taste of last year's Persian cataclysm on all the world! The persistent eruption of three separate volcanoes in the Zagros mountains have left Persian cities and valleys covered in black lava. Worse still is the blackening of the sky for months on end that has scoured the land of all but the most meager vegetation.

Persian, Mede, Babylonian, Bactrian, Cimmerian civilizations are scrambling. Their people look for anyplace that will sustain them, no matter how meagerly. Military levies have been disbanded and their peasant soldiers sent home to sustain themselves in any way they can. The clouds have begun to drift over our lands, albeit intermittently. Nevertheless, crop yields are down and trade is dramatically curtailed. What would routinely see a nation yield 500 talents a week in trade is now halved to 250 talents per week.

Economies are in decline. Cities have begun to have trouble providing the demands of its inhabitants. Cities that once welcomed their warriors now bar their gates to all but their own home guards. Not that soldiers would want to take up residence in what they believe may become a fetid cesspool of disease. Cities are still paying taxes but, for how long?

### **Battleground Greece.**

Greece continues to see incessant warfare. Thebes (g) remains under siege by the Levant. Brave Chabrias has slipped the Levantine noose and recaptured both Amphipolis and Adrianapolis. Gaius "Shecky" Eschecrates suggested, "Amphipolis should install a revolving door at the front gate and a sign that reads No Appointment Necessary." Elsewhere the Greeks continue to build new armies in Athens. Greek military spending far exceeds what other nations routinely do. Greeks are a fearsome and warlike lot.

### **The Balkans.**

Egyptians roam the country of the independent Thracians. Recently we have learned they have captured Dyrrhachium (2813). Reports have also surfaced of a Latium army marching south from Trieste (Jewel of the Adriatic and birthplace of Mars).

### **North Africa**

Akabula has once more attempted to step onto the world stage when Mago aggressively advanced and put Cirta (3030) under siege. They may decide to pull back the reins of their war chariot as Egypt has captured Thapsus (1822) and now casts a covetous eye on the megalopolis of

Carthage. Where is the great Hannibal? Can he put Akabulan fortunes back in order?

### Sicily

Calamity! Syracuse (2421) falls to Latium warriors! The city was poised to hold out for what could have been years. But, disease in the waterfront slums put the city fathers on edge. Rumors indicate the city fathers felt it prudent to open a back gate and let the Latins in before they were in a mood for slaughter. Egyptian mothers mourn the loss of their soldier sons.

### Stubborn Thebes!

Thebes (9) (3316) continues to resist. Long gone are the grain reserves and livestock. Dogs and cats suspiciously disappear. But still, Thebes refuses to knuckle under to the Levantine invaders.

### Week 14

Latium goes all bare-knuckles on Egypt. Like a schoolyard bully, Latium muscled a flood of fighters down Germania's southern coast road delivering a right, then a left and finally a knock-out right to Egypt's jutting chin. The Battle of the Three days saw a series of battles and fighting withdrawals all at Egypt's expense. In a battle on the northern outskirts of Epirus (3015) the final stake was driven into the heart of Ptolemy's veteran army. Brave Ptolemy perished with his army.

Egypt's fortunes fared better in Africa where they were able to wrest Leptis (1925) from Akabula. Otherwise in Africa, Egyptian and

Akabulan armies stumbled around each other like twelve year olds at a Catholic middle school dance.

Thebes falls! Finally ending a marathon siege that consumed Greek soldiers and Levantine time. Commodities neither could afford. Will this free up Levantine forces to besiege Athens or is Latium due for some comeuppance?

Amphipolis' garrison of field troops is threatening to desert. The soldiers demand to be reassigned to a field army or they will escape the siege and return to their farms.

Word has arrived from Knossos (3722) on Crete that there was a mutiny among the field troops garrisoning the city. Although the mutiny was quelled, the garrison has been reduced by half.

In a surprise move Chabrias the Greek general dashed his army into Anatolia and captured the city of Ephesus. What are Chabrias' intentions? Will he continue to ravage an undefended Anatolia or is Antioch his ultimate goal? What do the omens portend?

**Week 15**

**The Liberation of Thebes.**

In a contest of battle-hardened armies the Greeks under Thrasbulus were able to defeat the vaunted Levantine army under Gorgias.

### *The Battle of Asprovalta*

In a battle that saw victory just over the horizon for both armies the Latins under Tiberius were able to withstand a final furious assault and earn a hard fought victory. The pursuit was relentless and the Levantines were mercilessly slaughtered.

### *Levant in the decline?*

Just weeks ago the Levant was on the verge of sweeping Mediterranean beaches clean of all enemies. But, after a disastrous week of campaigning in Greece Levantine aspirations now lay much closer to home. Once mighty Achaeus and Gorgias' reputations have been sullied. The other side of the coin is Latium whose military star shines better than ever with armies that become more battle hardened with every enemy encounter.

### *Ruminations*

As I walked through the market today I heard two youths. The first said,

"What do you want to do?"

His companion responded, "I don't know. What do you want to do?"

"Well I'll do something if you do something."

"Then do something."

"Not until you do something."

"After you."

"Well, what do you want to do?"

"I don't know, what do you want to do?"

"Never mind, Egypt."

"As you wish, Akabula."

*Armageddon?* The world suffers days of perpetual darkness. A sacred calf was born with two heads, a bull gored a high priest to death, the chickens refuse to eat and the vestal virgins stand around looking guilty,! The skies darkened and remain dark. Crops wither. Trade ships rot at their mooring and cities bar their gates. All trade agreements are null and void as trade gives way to local bartering. Every nation has centralized their tax collections at their capital. Individual cities no longer contribute tax revenue individually. Nations that control ten or more cities will collect 500 talents per week. Nations that control less than ten cities will collect 300 talents per week.

*Conclusion.* Heeding the warnings sent by the gods, leaders from all the great nations have agreed to a halt of hostilities. Even as they make their way to their capital cities to announce the peace agreement the skies have begun to brighten and birds are singing.

*As the great nations stand at the threshold of a new era, how do they fare?*

*Latium: 14 cities*

*Egypt: 11 cities*

*Akabula: 9 Cities*

*The Levant: 9 cities*

*Greece: 7 cities*

*All hail Crixus the Gaul, Galatian Prince, Conqueror of Rome, Tyrant of Latium and all around fun guy.*

