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INTRODUCTION

43AD is the roleplaying game of Roman invasion and of native British resistance to Roman rule. In **43AD** the Roman legions crossed the English Channel under orders from emperor Claudius and began the conquest of barbarian Britain. Resistance from the Iron-Age tribes was fierce and unrelenting. The last futile attempts to complete the conquest were still in progress forty-years later!

43AD is a gritty military-style game with a slice of dark horror running through it. Life is grim and the world of the native Britons is painted in dark and horrific colours. Britain is a place of fear and death, terrors and torments, and the Iron-Age tribes live with these horrors. Celtic priests, the druids, contain them in lakes and pits and forests. When the legions step onto British soil, they step onto a land of ancient horrors of which they (as yet) know nothing. Life, honour and warfare amongst the tribes is explained for players and GMs alike.

Characters are Roman soldiers, fighting for the emperor in a hostile land against the battle-hardened warriors of the tribes. This is the visible enemy, but beyond, should the Game Master wish to go there, lay the dark secrets of Britain, the night terrors, the death-bringing spirits of the wild, the night crawlers, the face eaters, the skinchangers and the rest of the monsters and wild things that infest Britain. The tribes themselves live in fear of these malign entitites. But at least they know of their existence! As the legions march into hostile territory, they think their toughest battles are going to be with blue-faced tribesmen. How little they know ...

CONVENTIONS

The game uses normal **six-sided** dice for nearly all rolls. A single D100 is required during character creation.

Language Conventions: This game is written in modern English, but tries to convey an account of life two thousand years ago, amongst two very different cultures. Latin and Brythonic were the languages of the day, but words in **43AD** are given in these languages only sparingly, or for the GM's information. Fort is used rather than castra, spear rather than lancea, tribe rather than teuta. Plain English is the order of the day. Sometimes, however, an ancient word evokes an image or mood and is used instead; such as druid, gladius, dun, rath and vicus. When the ancient name for a place is known (Rutupiae, for example), it is used, but the modern name is always given in parenthesis (eg. Richborough). This facilitates further research by the Game Master, if required.

Conventions of Measure: By fortunate co-incidence the Romans used a system of measures very similar to the modern 'feet-and-inches'. This modern system is used throughout the game. Please note that 'miles' and 'feet' in **43AD** are ***modern*** 'miles' and 'feet', not Roman (which were slightly shorter). Weights are less compatible, but one Roman libra is roughly equivalent to a modern 'pound', divided into twelve uncia (roughly equivalent to a modern 'ounce'). The Romans measured capacity (grains and liquids) in modii (sing. modius), equivalent to around 16 modern pints. Each modius was divided into 16 sextarii (sing. sextarius) of about a pint each.

Naming Conventions: A long list of names (both Brythonic - that is native British) and Roman are given in chapter XII, Play Aids. Both players and Gamemaster can use these lists to create character names. The GM

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will also need to create names for hills, rivers, forests, ridges and other geographic locations. Two methods are possible. One is to improvise, making up a short name that sounds vaguely Celtic, the other is to use plain English. A mountain might be called Gwethir (according to the first method), or Black-Rush Mountain (according to the second) - both are acceptable!

Date Conventions: All dates are given as AD in order to assist the Game Master in researching any aspect of the background further. Romans and Romanised Britons might use the year of the foundation of Rome as their dating system, more likely they used the rule of the various provincial governors. "I was born in the second year of the rule of Tiberius Avidius Quietus".

CHANGING HISTORY

Do not be deceived by this book's title. This is a game, not a history lesson. Plenty of historical background is given to assist the Game Master in placing his characters in time and space, but once the game begins, it ceases to be historical. The gloves are off, anything can and should happen. It is a poor GM who forces events to occur just as they did in history ***despite*** the actions of the player-characters. If they assassinate emperor Claudius when he crosses the Thames, or persuade Cogidubnus to support the resistance, then so be it. The whole point of roleplaying within a historical setting such as this, is to answer those 'what ifs' as well as give players the thrill of participating in historical events. A writer of historical fiction ***must*** conform to the historical record, but the GM and players have no such limitation. This is one great virtue of the roleplaying game!

Alea iacta est (the die is cast)
Julius Caesar

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1 CONQUEST

The villa was a fine one, the freshly lain mosaics gleaming in the unseasonable sun.
'Is it to your liking?' asked the tribune, holding his crested helmet under his arm as the king surveyed his new courtyard.

'It is,' said King Cogidubnus. Already, mere weeks after the legionaries had landed on the shore controlled by his tribesmen, Cogidubnus was wearing the toga and speaking passable Latin. 'You have made the right choice, tribune. Rome could easily have gone to war with us. Instead, I feel our alliance is of benefit to all.' Cogidubnus threw a couple of scraps from his plate to the dogs scurrying around his feet.
'Caesar agrees,' said the tribune. 'Rome does not oppose those whom she can befriend.' The tribune cleared his throat. 'There is still the matter of the scouts.'

'Ah, yes. You went behind my back and sent them to spy on my holdings inland. Rather rude, I think.'
'Intelligence on our friends is a necessity for an alliance,' said the tribune briskly. 'I hope you can understand. But they are good men and if they are found, their return would help seal our friendship.'
'I am sure,' said Cogidubnus idly, 'they were merely following the orders of your Caesar. He is a god, is he not? Or will be when he is dead?'
'That is our way.'

Cogidubnus flicked another scrap of meat to his dogs. The tribune saw for the first time that the meat was raw and bloody. 'I am beginning to understand,' said the king, licking his fingers, 'how you Romans do things.'

In the year 43, a force of approximately 40,000 professional soldiers invaded Britain. For over a generation they fought to subdue the native tribes, fought with iron blades, with fire, and with brutal intimidation. Lives were changed, many were swiftly ended, but without a doubt the invasion of 43 AD transformed life in Britain for the next three centuries - and beyond. What stories could that generation tell? This roleplaying game allows players to explore the invasion from the viewpoint of Roman soldiers, either fresh to the islands, unsure of what they will encounter, or soldiers generations later, trying to secure the hard-won Roman province from belligerent tribes and dark forces.

This chapter gives an account of the invasion. Within are campaign suggestions and adventure seeds which can be utilised by the Game Master (GM) to form the basis of his game. Later chapters describe Britain, its people and its invaders in great detail, and are similarly interspersed with scenario and campaign ideas. The game rounds off with a chapter that gives advice to the GM on making and using props to increase the atmosphere of his **43AD** games.

THE ISLAND OF THE MIGHTY

For the ancients, the world ended where Ocean began. There were many seas, lakes and rivers – but only one Ocean, a world-girdling river of immense size and ferocity, a churning mass of storms and sea-monsters that surrounded the flat disc of the ancient world in all directions. And yet, there lived a remote

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