

MOVES IN ENGLISH edited by Charles Vasey

THE ART OF SIEGE

by Stephen Clifford, Pete Bartlam, Geoff Barnard

TYRE, 332 B.C. (or Ten Years Too Late)

The date of the siege portrayed in this example of the *Art of Siege* is worth mentioning, as anyone buying the edition of the game I received will find both map and rules booklet cover proclaiming 322 B.C. as the year of the siege.

The game map is a standard hexagon-printed sheet, with a very attractive map of the island city, a piece of the mainland coast and Alexander's Mole, and wide expanses of blue sea. This looks most impressive when the waiting red ranks of the Macedonian army are massed on the coast.

Within twelve turns, the Macedonian player must capture two key points (the Temples of Heracles — Melkart — and Agenor) in Tyre, or the Tyrian player wins. Each turn, the Macedonian must choose between a Naval Superiority/Bombardment Phase (six impulses) or an Amphibious Assault, during which the Macedonian player *must* force a win.

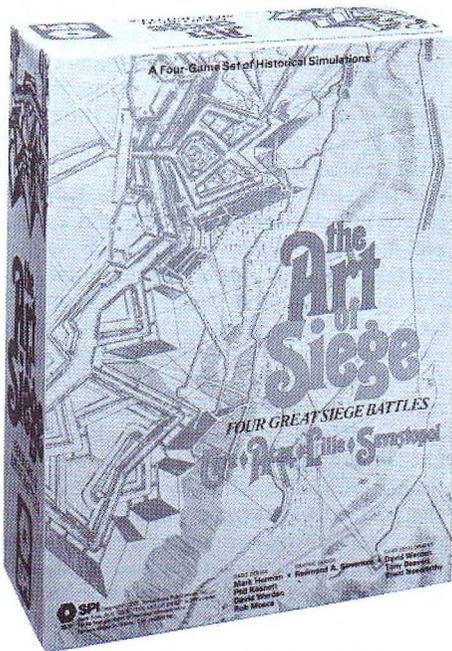
In the Bombardment Phase, Macedonian ships attack the city walls with battering rams and catapults, opposed by counter-bombardment from the walls and by the Tyrian fleet. At the same time the Macedonian player may attempt to push his Mole nearer the island, and the Tyrian may obstruct beach hexes and repair walls. The Macedonians can soon win naval superiority if the player is prepared to trade ships, as he can afford to do, and the Tyrian player is probably best advised to preserve the last elements of his fleet, together with his fireship, for a do or die attack on the invasion fleet.

Once he is satisfied that sufficient breaches have been created in the walls, the Macedonian player will attempt an amphibious assault. Land units, which take no part until this point, are embarked in the ships and attempt to storm the breaches, using special landing rules.

Movement of both land and naval units is controlled by leaders, and cannot take place outside the control radius of a leader. Land leaders also directly influence combat by their presence, and lend extra points to attacks made by units of their nationality within a certain radius. (The Macedonian forces are divided into the various groups of allies, distinguished by a range of counter colors.) Naval leaders also carry combat and ramming bonuses. Most leaders are relatively immune from combat hazards (although in one game I played the Tyrian King was

killed), the greatest risks being run by land leaders when being transported by sea. Two of the leaders provided, Alexander and King Azemilk, have both a land and a naval capability.

There is one unexplained Macedonian naval leader counter in the game. This is "Pyntgrs," who is not named in the set-up rules. Presumably this is Pnytagoras, the Phoenician commander of the left wing of Alexander's fleet, whose Pentereme was sunk by the Tyrians in one early melee.



It is a pleasant surprise, in the light of current trends, to find that the rules, though fairly full, are by no means too long, especially bearing in mind the charts and maps included in the booklet. I received some rules errata, which proved very useful, although attributing to the counter-mix two 'faults' which mine did not have. There are, as usual, a number of unclear points in the rules, probably attributable to inaccurate proof-reading, but all can be resolved by common-sense, and there is no useful purpose in cataloguing them here.

Undoubtedly the best aspect of the *Tyre* rules is the segment dealing with naval movement and combat. This produces a dense mass of maneuvering galleys, backing oars, ramming, and general interlocking, which represents pretty well the character of an ancient naval battle. If the Tyrian ships take

refuge behind the booms of their harbors, they can make themselves virtually immune from attack, on the assumption (which seems reasonable, although it is not spelled out in the rules) that ram attacks cannot be made across the booms. This is acceptable, except in the closing stages, when the harbors were overrun by Alexander's ships while most of the Tyrian crews were fighting ashore. Although Marines form one of the main land units of the Tyrian army, their presence ashore has no effect on the Tyrian naval capability during the Amphibious Assault Phase. Arrian (II.24.1) also makes it quite clear that the Northern harbor *had* no boom. The boom closing the narrow entrance on the mapsheet makes this harbor impregnable.

The naval counters are divided into Triremes, Quinqueremes and Biremes. Apart from combat factors, these are well and clearly differentiated by marks on the counters. Triremes bear two stripes, Quinqueremes one and Biremes none, making the ship type obvious at a glance.

One of the weakest aspects of the game is the rigid distinction between the alternative Bombardment or Assault Phases open to the Macedonian player. There are siege towers containing fire units on the Mole, but these can fire only in the Assault Phase. Macedonian catapults can be used only in the Bombardment Phase, and must be shipborne, although Arrian (II.18.6) indicates that some were placed in the towers on the Mole. Nor is there any real provision for a successful completion of the Mole up to the East walls of the city. Such a possibility, which would mean a land attack from one direction, is not catered for in the land movement rules. The extension of the Mole to the Tyrian coast will also affect naval movement, forcing communication between the two harbors via the long, western, route.

Once the assault has been launched, the Macedonian player soon learns that it is essential to support the Phalanx units with missile troops as, unsupported, the heavy units will be held in their beachheads by the Tyrian Marines, which can both fire and melee. The large combat factors of the Phalanx cannot be used in attack because of disruption by fire combat, while retreat due to fire attack can cause heavy losses in a confined space. The Militia, whose leader cannot control any fire units, are the weak point of the Tyrian defenses, whether they hold the South part of the island or are held in reserve (which causes the other units to be spread more thinly).

Some counters from *Tyre*:

Front		Back
	Land Backprinted Leader	
	Naval Trireme	
	Quinquereme	
	Bireme	
	Fireship	
	Spearmen	
	Spearmen Archers	
	Archers	

It is my impression (gained, I have to admit, from solitaire play so that the two players are always evenly matched!) that the Macedonian player has the better chance of winning. To do so, however, he must be willing to suffer heavy casualties, sometimes sufficiently high to cripple the army. Alexander used only the Hypaspists and Coenus' division of the Phalanx to storm the walls. In the game you must be prepared to lose twice this number to break out of the beachheads. This seems to stem from the differing views of the designer, Mark Herman, and the developer, David Werden. As Herman says, Werden was forced to make changes to give the two sides some balance. To do so, he insists that Alexander must win by the point at which he did historically. He justifies this on the dubious grounds that Alexander's coalition would have broken up if he had delayed. Alexander's real worry was to leave a secure situation *behind* him when he marched into Persia. While the army was in Phoenicia, his alliances were secure. Werden argues that only one Amphibious Assault Phase can be allowed, on the ludicrous grounds that "the additional losses would have crippled Alexander's forces' morale for the next battle," yet his victory conditions force genuinely crippling losses. Herman rightly says that Macedonian victory is inevitable, whether the Macedonian player wins the game or not.

On the whole, then, *Tyre* is a quite successful representation of Ancient siegecraft,

and is very good on naval combat in particular. As for this siege, the system is too inflexible to give the full picture of the siege of Tyre. It is in the Victory Conditions that the game falls down, with the results described. To create two different (and possible) results for what was a foregone conclusion is, however, very difficult. It is not, I am afraid, quite as difficult as this game makes it appear. Cf. Arrian, II.15.6-24.6.

Stephen Clifford

WISE ACRE

My first impression of *Acre* was of a cleaned-up *Constantinople*. On later examination, it turned out to be a cleaned-up *Constantinople!* However, it does have the important "Alesia factor," for we have not only the siege but the besiegers besieged. The Crusaders must not only invest the city, but also, utilizing their own earthworks, try to hold off Saladin and his three-army relief force.

To set the scene, the four-color map-board is quite pretty, though conventional; i.e., it has hexes unlike some others of the Siege Quad, and is similar in style to *Constantinople* (though without all that sea!) One quarter of the board is taken by charts. These are very useful, but are annoyingly situated as far as is possible from the center of the action: i.e., the city. The playing area has the men of Acre in one corner, their backs to the sea, looking over their walls at the Crusader camps, beyond which lie the Outerworks used to hold back Saladin. This leaves Richard and the rest as the "meat in the sandwich."

Like *Constantinople*, game turns are either bombardment or assault. However, while the Crusader chooses, the Moslem secretly elects a relief force. For half of the sixteen turns, he must select the small Army of Mosul, six times he can choose the slightly larger Army of Egypt, and twice (only) he can go to town and let Saladin lead out his Army of Sinjan plus the other two. With the exception of the latter, which forces an assault phase, the choice is academic if the Crusader chooses to bombard as the field armies are forced to leave him to it.

Bombardment sees the mighty catapults swing into action. Lined up against the walls are The Evil Neighbor, Furious, Victorious, Wrath of God, and God's Own Sling. Hardly seems fair does it? Well it is, because Moslem engineers are running round repairing walls as quick as they're broken. The repair table does, however, make it harder to repair a wall that is either breached or nearly so. This presumes the Moslem player elects to repair the walls, for, while the rocks are flying about upstairs, down below grim-faced men are slowly burrowing their way toward the walls. Engineer points can therefore also be spent on counter-tunnelling and, if the correct hex is guessed, underground combat takes place. Undetected tunnels will eventually permanently breach the walls.

When the Crusader feels the walls are in sufficient state of disrepair (or when he gets fed up waiting), he elects to assault. This

gives him ten impulses to get into the city or at least cause as much damage as possible. Each impulse sees first the Crusader then the Moslem forces, garrison and field, move. This is followed by a simultaneous fire combat phase. Here fire-units (roughly half the total forces) attack targets at ranges from 1-4 hexes. A clever, if somewhat laborious, use of two fire tables allows for a wide variety of missile units: crossbows, long bows, horse archers, ballistae, catapults, and Saladin's Archers of the Eyes. These can all disrupt targets, force them to retreat, or eliminate them.

After the Crusader uses non-moved units to fill Foss hexes in the next phase, we move on to the three melee phases, where the remaining half of the forces slug it out. First the garrison hits the attacking Crusaders, then undisrupted Crusaders attack both Acre itself and also the relief armies, and finally the relief armies themselves have a go. Thus, the defender always hits first.

This sequence continues until the Crusader takes Acre or kills Saladin, or the Moslem kills both Richard I and King Philippe of France or occupies the Crusaders' camps. If none of these events has taken place by the end of sixteen turns, then the Moslem is awarded victory.

So much, therefore, for the mechanics of the game. How does it stand up to critical analysis? Before I go on, I must declare an interest. *Constantinople* was voted by the readers of "Perfidious Albion" the worst game of 1978. I actually liked it a lot! So when I say that *Acre* is very similar and I like it too, where does that leave us? Well, having *Acre*, I'll never play *Constantinople* again. This is because *Acre* takes the good points of *Constantinople* and builds on them. The rules are tidied up, though still not perfect (the classic glitch being the reference to the Harbor Tower being in the non-existent, and very land-locked even if it was portrayed, hex 1951 instead of 2104) and we have a wider variety of units to play with. The big score, though, is the double-encirclement angle. At last the poor soul who is holed-up in the city has something positive to do. Each side gets the chance to be both attacker and defender. It's also quite playable solitaire, the only problem being the guess-work in tunnel discovery. This is easily overcome by using a random die-roll, weighted in favor of most likely hexes, to determine which ones are investigated.

Playable, but what about historical accuracy? I must now confess that I am not a slave to absolute realism. Endless arguments about which particular SS division held what bit of scenery in the Ardennes leave me cold. So, for me, as long as the forces are reasonably accurate, it's the flavor of the thing that's important. Before I dismiss historical accuracy, however, I must point out that, here in England, we refer to our greatest king as Richard *the* Lionheart. Does your dropping the *the* mean we look forward to SPI games featuring such all-time super-stars as Attila Hun, Ivan Terrible, or even Kate Great!

Still I digress; back to the flavor of the thing. A real siege is long and tedious. It's unfair to say this spirit is captured, but one does get the feel of the lengthy process of grinding away at the fortifications in the early stages of the game. It's the assault phases where things don't seem quite right. The overall effect of it needing a lot of effort outside the walls to achieve an impact inside is there, but this is obtained wrongly, by having forces mass against the walls in relative safety — forces that are unable to do very much once they've surmounted the defenses. It should be much more dangerous up against the walls, making it necessary to employ a lot of arrow-fodder, with units who successfully breach the defenses having much more effect. Ladder assaults, for example, are too easy. One doesn't get the feeling of desperate men clawing their way to the parapets, rung by rung, through a hail of arrows. Siege towers, as well, have gone from being the death-traps they were in *Constantinople*, thanks to Greek fire, to being almost unassailable.

Some counters from *Acre*:

Front	MOSLEM	Back
	Spearmen	
	Siphasis Medium Cavalry	
	Bowmen	
	Horse Archers	
	Small Catapult	
	Elite Spearmen	
	Ulefishy Senior Guard	
	Chiarious Junior Guard	
	Naphtha Grenadiers	
	Archers of the Eyes	

Front		Back
	Garrison Spearmen (backprinted)	
	Garrison Bowmen (backprinted)	
	CRUSADER	
	Giant Catapult (Mangonel)	
	Men-at-Arms	
	Knights	
	Javelin (Lancers)	
	Knight Cavalry	
	Backprinted Leader	
	Ballista	
	Crossbowmen	

Still, the chipping-away aspect and exploiting weaknesses angle once you get your toe in is there. So it's a siege, but a medieval siege? To me, wargaming in this period is all about color and pageantry, so let's have the heraldic style counters of *Agincourt* or even *Battleline's Machiavelli*. To be presented with the basic *Renaissance of Infantry* style counters (now nine years old) leaves a lot to be desired.

So, there we are; an enjoyable, playable game, a good simulation of a siege, with one or two caveats, but a minus for medieval flavor. When Richard the Lionheart, in legend at least, the greatest king of England is reduced to "K.Richrd English 4-3-3-7," then romance is truly dead. *Pete Bartlam*

SEVASTOPOL A Historical Comment

I must admit that, as a game, *Sevastopol* works well. There is a lot of color, the objectives of both sides are clearly defined, and

there are interesting things for each side to do, as the Russians work away strengthening their fortifications, repairing damage, and plotting off-map battles to distract the allies, who are meanwhile constructing their siege-works and planning artillery bombardments to commence an assault.

Sevastopol is, however, supposed to be a simulation, and what I'm more concerned about is the extent to which it is valid. In some respects it may be in fact too much of a simulation, insofar as the game is somewhat fixed. It is, I think, acceptable that the designer should have started the game in October, thereby avoiding the period in September when the Allies sat and did nothing in front of the virtually non-existent fortifications; it would after all be silly to have the game depend on a Turn 1 assault! What is less satisfactory is the treatment of the Allied Right Flank, facing the Malakoff and the Little Redan. This area in the game cannot be used until the French enter there in January and July, yet prior to that the British had been in the area, only had done nothing. I admit that the Russian Field Army was still operating in the area as well — in fact the Inkerman battle area encroaches onto the game map area here — and also the area was covered by the guns of the Russian ships in the bay (not included at all in the rules). I rather suspect that the designer considered that the action out there prior to January 1855 was not part of the siege and could therefore be disregarded.

This has led to two problems. Most important, the Russians start the game with the Mamelon Bastion in operation, whereas in fact it was only occupied by the Russians on the 22nd of February 1855 (i.e., Turn 7). Secondly, the fixing of the front has caused the moving of the location of the British Lancaster Battery to the edge of the wrong ravine: it should in fact be behind the French January 1 lines on the south edge of the Carenage Ravine, although in game terms this is insignificant.

The early appearance of the Mamelon is more important, as the enfilade rules make it a vital modifier to the ability of the British to dig parallels. The British Left Attack area is useless except as a fire base. The Right, however, where the activity should be, is stopped immediately by possible enfilade from the Mamelon. The British, who should be digging away toward the Great Redan, instead have the Mamelon to worry about, and the terrain and siegework rules are such that there is no way they can avoid this problem until the Mamelon falls.

A particularly fascinating part of the game is the Russian Field Army Intervention Phase, wherein the Russian Player may, subject to certain conditions, opt to fight Balaklava, Inkerman, and Tchernaya Bridge. I rather feel that the Russian player is allowed too much freedom with these. It's reasonable to allow Balaklava and Inkerman before the winter of 1854, when they actually happened, but the rules allow them to be left until March 1855 or later. Balaklava (treated as an attack on the British supply lines) would have been much more difficult by then

owing to the extra French troops and the Sardinians, in the rear areas, while Inkerman, which involved a considerable force from inside Sevastopol, would have been very difficult after the French January 1 siege area is opened and almost impossible after the July 1 area opens, except in a very reduced form with a much less drastic effect. Furthermore, the Russians should have a Sally Box to "commit" troops for Inkerman, and also possibly for alternative threats on Evpatoria (any troops sent there must be away a complete turn, but if they win, Russian reinforcements and supply are helped). In April 1855, the Russians sent men north to attack Evpatoria, but a new Allied bombardment and threatened assault caused them to be hurriedly recalled without completing their mission.

As for Tchernaya Bridge, if the Russians get a result there (re-opening the land link with Sevastopol) their replacement rate increases. Why don't the Russians get this extra replacement while the land link is still open before the winter of 1854/55? I rather suspect that the Russians could get as many supplies and men into and out of Sevastopol as they wished across the harbor throughout the siege — Tchernaya Bridge was in reality another Russian attempt to dislodge the Allied siege positions by threatening their rear and supply lines, and a Russian success there should delay or prevent the opening of the French Right siege areas rather than have the effect given in the game.

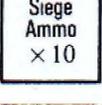
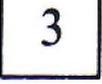
As in the companion siege game, *Lille*, the main part of the game is spent in the construction and destruction of siege works. Given the restrictions of the game, I suppose it is acceptable that while the assaulting Allies are obliged to construct complete and connected works, the Russian positions have been highly rationalized into the Bastions, thereby disregarding all the lesser battery positions, the curtain walling between the bastions and the various bastion outworks. The latter in particular is unfortunate, as in a number of instances an Allied attack was able to take, and hold, the outworks (of Central, Flagstaff, and Great Redan at least), while failing to take the whole position. In the game, an assault is an all or nothing affair: if at the end of 5 assault phases you haven't captured the Bastion, you must retreat right back to your starting point! It is also interesting to note that in *Sevastopol* the considerable mining activities are completely disregarded (the French did lots, especially in front of Central and Flagstaff, and just before the main assault on the Malakoff, where the ground was suitable), whereas in *Lille* the much lesser mining works are represented.

Obviously, the designer had his eyes firmly set on the renowned bastions (Malakoff, Great Redan, Central, and Flagstaff — for some reason called 'Mast' in the present game; i.e., a translation of the French name Bastion du Mat). This pre-occupation is again reflected in the Victory Conditions, which require one minor and one major bastion to fall for an Allied victory. Historically the Russians retreated after the fall of the

Mamelon and subsequently the Malakoff. This is a little simplified, as it would seem that, historically, although the Malakoff was pivotal, an equally valid game objective like Flagstaff was not, in that the ground behind it was well covered by other works, especially Great Redan and Central.

Similarly the Great Redan is useless militarily on its own. Historically, access to it was controlled by the Malakoff, which is why the British and the French nearly always combined their attacks on these positions. It is a pity that all the topographical detail shown on the map affects only Allied siege-work construction, thereby missing out all the subtleties of the fields of fire of the various Russian works. This could at least have been represented in slightly more detailed Victory Conditions.

Some counters from *Sevastopol*:

Front		Back
	Siege Battery	
	Mortar Battery	
	Field Battery	
	Field Battery (Marine)	
	French Zouave	
	English Independent Naval	
	Ammunition Supply Track Marker	
	Bastion Strength Level Marker	

There is only one part of the rules I would query, and this concerns the construction of Russian works. In order to construct, Russian infantry must be in the Bastion (Rule 9.43). Rule 3.1 defines the Bastion Reserve position as being part of the Bastion. Hence it seems the Russians can stay in the Bastion Reserve, where they are much safer from enemy fire, and still construct and repair. While this may well be correct, it strikes me as rather odd that this should be the case when the designer himself states that the vast majority of casualties were suffered during construction and repair, and I rather wish the

point were more clearly explained. On the same subject, rule 9.38 prohibits British and French Guards and the British 1st Division from building siegeworks, while I have a contemporary quote that men of the Guards Brigade could construct a gabion per day per man, while a line regiment was capable of only one gabion for every three men employed. The rule may well be true for the French Guards, but maybe there should be a rule to allow the British Guards to build 3 times as fast rather than not at all!

One is left with the impression that the designer of this game may have left out more than necessary in order to make the game fit the format. It's quite likely there were limitations placed on the level of complexity allowable, and some of the points I've covered would have entailed a considerable increase in complexity. Still, although *Sevastopol* remains an interesting game, as a simulation it is true only to a very limited part of the activity of the siege. Unfortunately, however, the design and system of the game are such that there is not much the player can do to improve matters, as to do the full job, the hex-less and highly stylized map would need substantial revision. Still, there are some things you can do, and I hope I've put a few ideas your way.

Geoff Barnard

Opening MOVES *[continued from page 3]*

In the not-too-distant future, I hope to be able to write a column in *Ares* discussing the manner in which new sf/f gamers seem to be widening their interest to include historical games. I also hope to discuss how the sf/f game has brought about increased interest in science and the history of mythology.

Redmond

CORRECTION
 The author of *Creature Feature (MOVES 47)* stated that human units could be replaced during the Human Movement Phase in the Tactics section of his article. Units may never be replaced after elimination in *Creature That Ate Sheboygan*.

FEEDBACK RESULTS MOVES 46

Rank	Article	Rating
1.	MOVES in English	6.95
2.	Designer's Notes	6.84
3.	Forward Observer	6.56
4.	Good Woods	6.40
5.	Highway to the Reich	6.38
6.	Opening MOVES	6.24
7.	Colossal Counter Contest	5.89
8.	Playback	5.86
9.	Heli-War	5.81
10.	Second Prize: Philadelphia	5.59
11.	War in the World, Pt. 2	5.37
	This Issue Overall	6.34