

“The Grass Crown”: The Battle of Pompeii 89BC

Historical Background:

“...Lucius Cluentius insolently took up position only six hundred yards away from Sulla’s camp in the hills near Pompeii. Unable to endure the insult, Sulla attacked Cluentius without waiting for his own foragers to come in, and retreated after getting the worst of it, but when he was given the assistance of the foragers he defeated Cluentius. The latter at first withdrew to another camp, further away, but on receiving some Gaulish reinforcements approached Sulla again. As the armies came together a Gaul of huge size ran forward and challenged any Roman to single combat, but when a little Moor accepted the challenge and killed him, the Gauls were terrified and fled. Not even the rest of Cluentius’ army stood their ground, now that their battle formation had been wrecked, and they fled in disarray to Nola. In the pursuit Sulla killed about 3,000 men as they fled, and because the Nolans were letting them in by a single gate to stop the enemy from coming in after them, about 20,000 died under the walls, among these was Cluentius, who fell fighting.” (Chapter 50 Book1 from Appian’s Civil Wars written 2nd Century A.D)

Expanded Map Setup:

The “Grass Crown” scenario uses an extended two-section map to better allow for the two opposing camps, and the advances and retreats of both the Roman forces and Cluentius’ Italian army. Take a second C & C Ancients map and cut or fold it over lengthwise along the entire center of the “E” hex-row. The two maps are then abutted so that D1 on the now “half-map” is adjacent to A1 and A2 on the main full map; similarly D12 will end up adjacent to A12 and A13 on the main map. The play area is now 13 Hexrows deep and 12 or 13 hexes wide depending on the Hexrow. The main or full map is referred to as” Map 1” and the four row or half map is called:” Map 2” when charting the locations detailed below.

Terrain Set-up: (See Terrain Special Rules)

X11 Roman Campworks: **Map 2:** D5, D6, D7, D8, D9, C5, C9, B5, B8, A6, A7, A8(See Terrain Special rules on Campworks)---The facing of the Roman Campworks tiles is immaterial—Use Rampart Tiles to represent Roman Campworks.

x5 Roman Camp Core: **Map 2:** C6, C7, C8, B6, B7

Use Fortified Camp tiles to represent the Camp Core terrain.(see Terrain Special rules & Victory rules on Camp Core Hextiles)

x5 Italian Campworks: **Map 1:** I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I7---(See Terrain Special rules on Campworks) The facing of the Italian Campworks tiles is immaterial—Use Rampart Tiles to represent Italian Campworks

x45 Hill Tiles:: **Map 1:**A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9, C4, C6, C9, C10, C13, D12, E12, E13, G13, I12, I13 **Map 2:** A3, A4, A5, A9, A10, A11, B3, B4, B9, B10, B11, C3, C4, C10, C11, D3, D4, D9, D10

x5 Broken Ground: **Map 1:** D9, F12 **Map 2:** B2, B12, A12,

Initial Set-up: (note that 4 of the 18 Roman units start off-map initially, they are foraging—x1 Heavy Infantry, x1 Auxilla, x1 Medium Cavalry, x1 Medium Infantry)

Roman Army (use Roman blocks): x18 units & x 4 Leaders

X2 Medium Infantry (Legionary Infantry see special rules): **Map 2:** D6 **Off-map:** x1 unit

X7 Heavy Infantry (Legionary Infantry see special rules): **Map 1:** A6, A8 **Map 2:** D4, D5, D7, D9 **Off-map:** x1 unit

X3 Elite Heavy Infantry—5 Blocks (Legionary Infantry see special rules): **Map 1:** A5, A7 **Map2:** D8

X2 Medium Cavalry: **Map 2:** C11 **Off-map:** x1 unit

X1 Light Archers: **Map 2:** D3

X2 Auxillia: **Map 2:** D10 **Off-map:** x1 unit

X1 Light Infantry: **Map 2:** C3

X4 Leaders **Map 2:** D8 (Sulla) **Map 1:** A6 (Metellus Pius) **Map 2:** D4 (Titus Didius)

Map 2: D6 (Lucius Licinius Lucullus the Tribune)

Italian Army: (use Carthaginian Blocks): x22 units & x3 Leaders **ALL setup** initially on **Map1:**

X8 Medium Infantry (Legionary Infantry see special rules): D4, E4, D6, E6, D8, E8, E9, D10

X5 Heavy Infantry (Legionary Infantry see special rules): D3, E3, D7, E7, E10

X1 Elite Heavy Infantry—5 Blocks (Legionary Infantry see special rules): E5

X3 Warriors (Gallic see special rules): G3, G5, G7

X1 Auxillia: E11

X1 Medium Cavalry: E2

X1 Light Archers: C6

X2 Light Infantry: C3, C8

X3 Leaders: E5 (Lucius Cluentius) E10 (Italian Legate) D6 (Duilius)

War Council (Neither side may have an initial hand that includes “Line Command”!!)

Roman Army

Leader: Sulla

6 Cards (may be reduced to 5 or even 4 Cards via the Single Combat rule & loss/evasion of Sulla)

Italian Army

Leader: Cluentius

5 Cards (may be reduced to 4 Cards via the Single Combat rule)

Move First!

Victory: Victory is 10 Banners initially for both sides scored in the normal way, however the Italians receive 2 Banners if they eliminate Sulla, and 1 Banner for each Roman Camp Core hextile they manage to remove. The Romans for their part receive 1 Banner for every Italian Campworks they remove after the first. The number of Banners needed for victory for a particular side can be effected by the General Retreat (+1 Banner to the opposite side for victory) and Single Combat (-2 Banners for the winner of the Single Combat) special rules (see below).

Special Scenario Rules:

Command Rules:

The “Marian” Command Card Deck

Historical Note: Combat in the 1st Century BC between Roman/Italian Legions was somewhat different than the wars between civilized states in the 3rd Century BC. There was less room for combined arms tactics and maneuver, and battles probably tended to be more of the nature of hand to hand full bore slugfests.

This particular scenario utilizes a different Command Card Deck than the original C & C Ancients Deck. Eight (8) Cards are removed from the original deck leaving 52 Cards for scenario play. This new deck is called the “Marian Deck” and it is named after Caesar’s uncle Gaius Marius, a general in the Social War, and a reorganizer of the Roman Legions in circa 105-103BC (several years before Caesar was born) to meet the challenges of the Germanic Tribal invasions that threatened the Roman Republic of the time.

The following eight cards are removed before play and put aside to create the Marian Deck:

X4 “Order Light troops”, x1 “I Am Spartacus”, x2 “Move-Fire-Move”, x1 “Mounted Charge”---note that one Mounted Charge” card is still retained in the deck.

Leader Command & Rally Special Rules:

All Leaders may cancel a retreat **or** a sword hit if present with the unit.

Sulla may cancel both a retreat **and** a sword hit if present with the unit.

Lucius Licinius Lucullus the Roman Tribune may only help Roman units involved in combat that he is actually stacked with due to his relative youth and lower rank.

Units on both sides involved in close combat with the support of a Leader may only count one helmet hit amongst those rolled to inflict a hit on an opposing unit. Exception:

Roman units supported by Sulla may count up to two helmet rolls as hits in a single close-combat or battle-back.

If Sulla is eliminated or evades off the field the Roman Player must discard one card immediately thereby reducing his hand permanently by one Card.

Units and the Rally Card: No unit can be rallied to beyond its strength at the start of the scenario. If a Player rolls “swords” when attempting to rally he may freely chose which unit gets a block back.

Reduced Missile Range Special Rules:

a) Light Archers only have a range of 2 hexes in this scenario—and may missile fire at adjacent enemy units.

b) Auxillia & Light Infantry only have a range of one hex in this scenario—and may missile fire at adjacent enemy units.

c) An ordered unit may either missile fire or conduct close-combat in a player-turn—never BOTH.

Roman/Italian Legionary Infantry Rules:

The following types of infantry units in the game on BOTH sides are assumed to be Roman/Italian Legionaries: Heavy Infantry, and Medium Infantry. ALL of these units are considered to be Roman/Italian Legionary Infantry.

Roman Pilum:

Each Roman/Italian Legionary Infantry unit starts with a Pilum Marker. The Pilum is a one-time use weapon that is generally fired right before a Roman/Italian Legionary unit attacks in close-combat or is itself attacked by the enemy in close-combat. Once the pilum is fired (or lost see below) –the Pilum marker is removed from the Roman unit to indicate that the pilum has been expended and the unit may not throw Pilum for the rest of the battle unless the Pilum is replenished via a General Retreat (see below).

Just before a Roman/Italian unit with pilum is attacked or is itself attacked by the enemy for the very first time in the battle in close-combat it throws its pilum—roll one die and apply normal hits for swords, color, or a Flag/retreat hit Afterwards remove the Pilum marker. The act of throwing the pilum **is not** considered to be part of the Close-Combat—so any result of the pilum throw is resolved before the Close-combat. If two Roman Legionary Infantry units that have not thrown pilum yet engage the attacker resolves his pilum throw first. An attached Leader may use his special ability to cancel a “swords” hit that was inflicted via a pilum hit (see special Command rules) on the unit he is stacked with.

Roman/Italian Legionary units, adjacent to the enemy, that have not expended their Pilum may also be ordered to throw Pilum if the card “Darken the Sky” is played by their commanding player. The Player picks one adjacent enemy unit and throws two dice – apply the results just as one would before close combat—and remove the Pilum Marker.

Roman/Italian Relief Moves & Cohort Maneuvers:

Adjacent and on the same side Roman or Italian Legionary Infantry, instead of moving, may switch places in a “Relief/Cohort Maneuver”. Relief/Cohort Maneuvers may only be conducted through the play of Section cards **ONLY**. Instead of ordering one unit via a section card, the controlling Player may order a pair of adjacent Legionary Infantry units to switch hexes—at least one of the units switching places must not be adjacent to an enemy unit. A unit that switched places via the Relief/Cohort Maneuver into a hex adjacent to the enemy may close combat in the same player-turn.

Legionary Special Movement!!!: Legionary units ordered to move **with any** card except “Double Time” or “Line Command” may move two hexes as long as they do not start or end or pass through hexes adjacent to enemy units. (*note: this rule was added to increase mobility on this extended map for both sides*)

Outflanking---*This is an easy way of introducing facing and flanks to the game with little fuss—it can be retrofitted to other scenarios where appropriate:*

A unit is said to be “Outflanked” if it is surrounded **in all** six adjacent hexes by either enemy units, or hexes adjacent to an enemy unit. The presence of friendly units or impassable terrain does not negate an “Outflanked” situation **in any way**. Units on the board edges (and not surrounded by six adjacent hexes) **cannot** be “Outflanked”. Effects of being Outflanked: “Outflanked” units when battling back roll only half the normal number of dice they would be normally entitled to rounded up—to a maximum of only two dice—“Outflanked” units when battling back **never** hit on

helmet rolls even if supported by a leader. A unit's "Outflanked" situation is judged at the instant it battles back.

The Return of Sulla's Off-map Roman Foragers:

All of Sulla's initially off map four Roman units return at the start of the 5th Roman Player-turn of the scenario—they arrive in any vacant map-edge hexes on Map 2, (A1 through A13, B1, B12, C1, C13, D1, D12) , and are placed on-map by the Roman Player as he wishes, one per vacant hex. The arriving Legionary infantry units arrive with pilum.

"General Retreat" Option Rules:

Each Player at the start of his player-turn, on any player-turn after his second may, once per game, declare a "General Retreat" in place of executing a normal player-turn. ALL that player's units & Leaders conduct a normal retreat of **one hex** (if Roman), **or three** hexes (if Italian), however the Gallic Warrior Italian units never retreat in a General Retreat. The units & Leaders retreating are retreated normally by the owner player in any order he wishes, and suffer the usual penalties if they fail to retreat. Once the General Retreat is done the owning player selects four retreated units to each gain back one lost block (up to their initial strength only). A Player whose opponent has declared a General Retreat already in the course of the game **may not** himself declare his own General Retreat until at least his third player turn or later after his opponent's retreat has taken place. A Player declaring General Retreat also increases the requirement for Victory by his opponent by one banner & all the retreating Legionary units that make the full retreat receive back their pilum Markers.

"Single Combat" Rules:

Note: This rule allows for the single combat between the Gaul and the Moor that supposedly (according to Appian) had a big effect on the battle. See the Historical Background above. ALL Italian Warrior units are considered to be Gallic Warriors.

The Single combat may only happen once per game when any Italian (Gallic) Warrior units is within 1 or 2 hexes of a Roman Light unit or Cavalry unit of any types, and the Italian General Retreat has already occurred. Either player in such a situation may declare 'Single Combat' in lieu of taking his Player-turn and must play a Leadership Card (of any type) to have the single combat come off. Another Card is immediately drawn by the player initiating the single combat. To resolve the single combat roll a (D10) ten-sided die: The Player initiating the single combat is the 'Challenger' the other is the "Champion".

Results:

1-4 Challenger wins (see below for results)

5-7 The pointless Single Combat has no effect on the battle—nothing happens.

8-10 Champion wins (see below for results)

If the Italian Player wins the single combat he picks four Roman units within three hexes of any Gallic Warrior unit(s) **to each** lose one block, this can result in elimination---**and** the Italian Player's requirement to reach victory is reduced by two Banners.

If the Roman Player wins the single combat **each** Gallic Warrior unit loses one block & must conduct a normal retreat of two hexes **and any** two Italian units picked by the Romans within two hexes of any Gallic unit also each lose one block and must conduct a normal retreat of one hex---**and** the Italian Player's requirement to reach victory is reduced by two Banners.

The player on the losing end of the single combat **in both** of the above cases must also discard randomly one Command Card (permanently with a one card hand reduction).

Special Terrain Rules:

Campworks: Roman & Italian foot Units occupying their own Campworks hextiles that are not in an outflanked condition Battle-back with one extra dice and may ignore the first Flag result inflicted upon them. Campworks tiles are removed (and the hex reverts to clear terrain if Italian, hill if Roman Campworks) when an opposing unit enters the hex for any reason. Campworks block line of sight.

Camp Core Hextiles: Camp Core Hextiles confer no combat benefit to Roman units occupying them, **but do** block line of sight. Camp Core tiles are removed (and the hex reverts to hill terrain) when an Italian of any type unit enters the hex for any reason.

Hills: Level 1 and Level 0 Elevations: The map now, in effect, has contour lines of hexes showing different elevations. Basically there are two Terrain elevations in the scenario: Level 0: which includes all clear & broken terrain and Italian campworks, and Level 1: which includes all Hill tiles, and Roman Campworks and Camp core tiles.

Elevation effect on close-combat and battle-back: If a unit is close-combating or battling-back against a unit at a higher elevation (or level) the "normal" maximum dice that unit may use is minus one (-1) normal. If a unit is close-combating or battling-back against a unit at a lower elevation (or level) the "normal" maximum dice is used. **If both** units are on the same level and there is no other terrain considerations the units would use their standard number of dice as dictated by the rulebook and these scenario rules. Elevation **is not** considered when close-combat attacking or battling back into or out of broken terrain—use the normal rules.

Changing Plans-The redraw option: Up to twice per game, starting Player-turn 3 or later, each Player may, instead of taking his player-turn, decide to discard exactly three cards from his hand and pick up three new cards from the draw deck. The re-draw option may not be exercised on consecutive Player-turns by the same player or by two different Players on back to back opposing Player-turns. The redraw option may not be utilized if the overall Leader of the army shown in the War Council has been eliminated or has evaded off map.

The Grass Crown*** (The Selection Below is from The Grass Crown by Colleen McCullough—a historical novel set during the times of the Social Wars & after see pages 559, 560, and 837 in that book)

‘Before Didius or Metellus Pius could depart the tribune of the soldiers Lucius Licinius Lucullus appeared at the head of a deputation of centurions; eight senior men, *primi pili* and *pili priores*. They walked gravely, solemnly, like priests in a sacred procession or consuls going to their inauguration on New Year’s Day.’

“Lucius Cornelius Sulla, your army wishes to give you a token of its gratitude and thanks. Without you the army would have been defeated, and its soldiers dead. You fought in the front rank and showed the rest of us the way. You never flagged on the march to Nola. To you and to you alone is due this greatest victory by far in the whole war. You have saved more than your army. You have saved Rome. Lucius Cornelius, we honor you”, said Lucullus stepping to make way for the centurions. ‘

‘The man in their midst, most senior centurion of them all, lifted both arms and held them out to Sulla. In his hands lay a very drab and tattered circlet made of grass runners plucked from the field of battle and braided together haphazardly, roots and earth and blades and blood. *Corona graminea*. *Corona obsidionalis*. The Grass Crown. And Sulla stretched out his arms instinctively, then dropped them, utterly ignorant as to what the ritual should be. Did he take it and put it on his own head, or did the *primus pilus* Marcus Canuleius crown him with it on behalf of the army?’

‘He stood then without moving while Canuleius, a tall man, raised the Grass Crown in both hands and placed it upon that red-gold head.’

‘No further word was spoken. Titus Didius, Metellus Pius, Lucullus and the centurions saluted Sulla reverently, gave him shy smiles, and got themselves away. He was left alone to face the setting sun, the Grass Crown so insubstantial he scarcely felt its weight, the tears falling down his bloodstained face and no room inside of himself for anything beyond exultation he wondered if he had steel enough to live through. For what was on its other side ? What could life possibly offer him now ?.....’

*** The Grass Crown or *Corona graminea* or *Corona obsidionalis*, Made of grass (or sometimes a cereal like wheat if the battle took place in a field of grain) taken from the battlefield and awarded ‘on the spot’ by the centurions and other military professionals of the army. The Grass Crown was the rarest of all Roman military decorations. It was given only to a man who had by personal efforts saved a whole legion –or a whole army

The Social War: 91 BC to 88BC

The Social War in Italy began in late 91BC when, after a long period of unrest over the issue of Roman citizenship, the Italian peoples, who had linked up as allies in the last two centuries to the Roman state, revolted and formed the makings of their own republic. They called their new polity Italia and inaugurated their nation and their capital in the

city of Corfinium that was itself renamed Italica. They created their own coinage to both pay their troops and as gilded popular propaganda against Rome. Their coins displayed the Italian bull gorging and raping the Roman wolf. The Italian armies of the new state were trained and led by the battle-hardened veterans of Rome's many wars, and were generally organized at the lower levels on the Roman pattern in Legions & cohorts. The peoples of Italia initially were able to field over a 100,000 men divided up into individual armies according to their positions within Italy.

The organization of the infant state of Italia mimicked the style of the Roman republic. Like the Romans the Italians selected two consuls to lead their armies and their new government. Lesser posts in the Italian republic were parceled out to prominent Italian nobles to head the forces newly raised from the various peoples of Central and South-Central Italy. The Italian consuls were Quintus Poppaedi Silo of the Marsi, and Gaius Papius Mutilus of the Samnites. The Italians also formed their own Senate of about 500 members.

The Roman Senate and people were caught by surprise at the sudden onset of the war and the genesis of Italia. They had to hastily cobble together Legions, recruit volunteers, levy taxes on the wealthy classes, and call for the help from their outer Imperial provinces as well as the Roman client kingdoms. Italia's very existence posed a dire threat to the integrity of what remained of the Roman confederation. Non-Roman or partly Roman/Latin areas of Italy, particularly in Umbria, northern Campania, and Etruria, as well as scattered & initially besieged cities like Alba Fucens, Acerrae, and Asernia remained precariously loyal to Rome, but almost all of Lucania, Apulia, and parts of southern Campania quickly moved into the Italian column via both Italian invasions and diplomacy. It was necessary for the Romans and their remaining loyal allies to survive the first onslaughts, and quickly recover from their early defeats as this would discourage further defections and allow time for Rome's ultimately superior resources and greater cohesion to be brought to bear.

The initial trigger for the start of the Social War in late 91BC was the assassination of the Roman Tribune Livius Drusus, who had proposed laws for the enfranchisement of the Italians and the purchase & distribution of land in Italy to settle lower-class Romans. He was struck down on the poorly lit portico of his house while conducting business with his clients one evening. A knife was discovered driven into his hip.

The Course of the Social War in 89BC: The Final Battles

For the year of 89BC the Romans elected as consuls Pompey Strabo (the father of Pompey the Great) and Lucius Cato, a scion of the famous patrician Cato family. Strabo was dispatched from Rome to his old stomping grounds in the north with several legions to reinforce the siege of Asculum that was being conducted by Sextus Caesar acting as pro-consul, while Cato, remaining near Rome, commanded the central front opposite the Marsi. This left Sulla, by default, in almost sole defacto command for Rome as legate in Campania where he soon laid blockade to the Italian-held town of Pompeii.

Sextus Caesar, for his part, was busily tightening the siege of Asculum to the point where one of the Italian generals, Vidacilius, lost all hope and committed an elaborate pre-planned suicide on a funeral pyre in the center of the town. He had broken into the siege with a handful of troops leaving the others outside to be defeated by Sextus Caesar when they were caught while switching camps. Reputedly up to 20,000 Italians were killed or captured in that action alone. Caesar, however, was unable to rest on his laurels dying soon after from some illness before Strabo had even arrived to take command.

Strabo, possibly while on the march from Rome, managed to intercept a force of 15,000 Picentes who were trying to make common cause with the Etruscans against the Romans without the knowledge that the domestic situation in Etruria had calmed down following the passage of the “Lex Julia” laws on Roman communal citizenship. The hapless Picentes were caught in the mountains—Strabo killed half of them and drove the other half toward the wintry peaks of the Apennine range where most of the remainder starved and froze.

On the central Marsic front the Romans sustained a major defeat and the loss of the second consul in the war to the fierce Marsi. Lucius Cato first faced insubordination from his own officers, as well as raw recruits, but managed to penetrate as far as Fucine Lake where his army was over-run and he fell in the fight.

Meanwhile to the north everything continued to focus on the siege of Asculum. After the defeat of Cato the Italians soon gathered about 60,000+ men to break the Roman blockade, while Strabo had up to 75,000 men under his command to combat their attempts. The Italian rebels were defeated in the major decisive northern battle of the war and Pompey Strabo hunted their remnants through the mountains of Picenum and back southwards into the Marsic and adjoining lands.

In Campania and surroundings equally dramatic and decisive military events unfolded with fortune’s favor strongly on the scales on behalf of Rome. Sulla’s threat to Pompeii and the other Italian-held coastal towns was disturbed by the arrival of large army of Samnites leavened with turncoat Gauls under the command of Cluentius. In a surprise move the Samnites took station close to Sulla’s hilltop camp provoking him to sally out before the return of his foragers from the nearby countryside. Sulla at first was defeated and had to draw back into his fortifications, but the arrival of his foragers on the field allowed another more successful attack. Cluentius was then himself also forced back towards his camp and rallied back to the attack when he received reinforcement from the Gallic deserters. The Italian army advanced again, but was thrown into dis-order when the Gauls suddenly bolted supposedly over the loss of one of their number in a single combat with a Moor in Sulla’s army. Cluentius’ army was chased back some miles to the walls of Nola and cut to pieces with their commander right at the gate to that city.

The Italian-held cities of Campania were now at the mercy of Sulla’s forces. Stabiae, Pompeii and Herculaneum soon fell to the Romans and Nola was left isolated. Sulla then embarked on his victorious campaign into Samnium which with the associated Apulian

debacles destroyed many of the remaining embers of the rebellion per the Cambridge Ancient History:

“This brilliant maneuver dealt telling blows against the Samnites and must have aided operations in Apulia and Lucania. Sulla first marched against the Hirpini and captured two of their cities, Aeclanum and Compsa. At Aeclanum, he forestalled the arrival of help from Lucania by giving the inhabitants one hour’s notice of battle; he then set fire to the wooden walls and captured the city. Bursting into central Samnium by an unexpected route he surprised the Samnite commander, Papius Mutilus, and drove him in rout to Asernia. This success enabled him to strike at Bovianum Vetus, a principal city of the Samnites and a rebel headquarters, which fell after a short engagement. Leaving an army to blockade Nola, he went to Rome to stand for the consulship. In Apulia a competent (Roman) legate...Cosconius, recovered practically all the ground which had been lost to Vidacilius in the previous year. He burned Salapia and crushed a Samnite army on the northern bank of the Aufidus near Cannae. Winning freedom of movement by these victories he ravaged the territories of Larinum, Ausculum, and Venusia and secured the undulating moorlands which lie north of the Via Appia between Venusia and Tarentum...”

At the end of the year Cosconius was replaced in the field by Q. Caecilius Metellus who proceeded to attack the Iapygae defeating and killing the Italian general Poppaedi and incorporating the survivors of the rebel army into his force. Metellus also advanced further into northern Apulia stamping on the last sparks of the rebellion in those parts.

By the close of the year 89 BC the Italian rebellion that represented the issue of the Social War had been reduced, with the Marsic defections from the cause, mainly to the Samnite heartland. Silo the Italian consul of the Marsi took refuge among the Samnites and led them in the final campaign of the war. The Samnites tried to convert their national struggle into a confrontation between classes, freeing and arming some 20,000 slaves to beef up their forces. Initially that approach offered some success with the recapture of Bovianum Vetus and in skirmishes with Roman detachments. The desperate Samnites even sent embassies to King Mithridates in Asia seeking help and alliance against Rome. It was all for naught, the Samnites and their exiled Marsic consul were beaten down in a great battle later that year (88 BC) closing the book on the Social War, but as the famous Roman historian Appian notes (below) the war itself added greatly to the threats facing the creaky Roman Republic and the instability and conflicts generated by the war give rise to future civil disorder and internal wars in the decades to come: *‘This was the state of affairs when the so-called ‘Social War’ broke out, involving the many peoples of Italy. It began unexpectedly, rapidly became serious, and caused enough apprehension to extinguish factional strife in Rome for some time. When it died down it too gave birth to other internal conflicts, and to faction leaders who were more powerful and employed against each other not legislative programmes, not demagoguery, but whole armies. And for these reasons I have included it in this history, because it originated in the civil dissensions in Rome and it resulted in much worse conflict of that type.’* (From Appian’s “Civil Wars” Book 1 Chapter 34 originally written in the early to mid-2nd century AD)

