



Legio: SPQR

an EYELarp by Kitty Dobson and Johnny Fisher
Design Document V.2.1

Basic Information and Concept

Legio: SPQR takes place in the last days of the Roman Republic, before and during the civil war that will eventually place Julius Caesar as the Emperor of Rome. Players take the role of Legionnaires of the Eleventh Auxiliary Cohort of the Twelfth Legion, known to history as the Fulminata - the Thunderers.

This game is inspired by TV Shows such as HBO's *Rome* and *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*, and classic films such as *Centurion*, *The Eagle*, *Gladiator* and *Spartacus*. It has a notoriously high character death rate to reflect the brutality of the setting and time period, but is designed to be exceptionally easy to re-roll back into the game as a reinforcing member of the Cohort.

Legio: SPQR began in February 2019 with a notorious blizzard event, and has run three times since, with the event in 2022 culminating in the Siege of Uxellodunum, the final breaking point of the Tribes of Gaul in Caesar's Gallic Wars. It was on the triumphant journey home that Caesar crossed the Rubicon and began the Civil War. This is where we see the Cohort now.

The Die is Cast...

As with all EYELarp games, we have set Legio: SPQR in a fictional pocket of history; the Twelfth Legion were indeed real, and present in the majority of places we have set them within the known world, however there were only ever ten cohorts in every Legion: the Eleventh Auxiliaries are entirely fictitious.



The Story So Far...

It began in the early Spring of 51BCE (AUC 703). The notorious Twelfth Legion were stationed in the Alps as one of the Cohorts was given a... reshuffle. There were murmurs of all the best and brightest being reassigned elsewhere, conveniently enough in the other legions commanded by Marcus Antonius, friend and ally of Caesar himself. When the Patrician son of a wealthy Senator was given command of the Cohort in the prestigious role of Military Tribune, well, who was to argue? That was a commission often bought for second sons, vying for power or sent off to the Provinces to avoid scandal.



When the pair of remaining Centurions met Military Tribune Tarquinius at the snowy foothills of Cisalpine Gaul, he was not what was expected. A pampered princeling, of the sort of the old Kingdoms? Certainly. A useful pawn for an experienced soldier looking for an easy life? Could be. A ruthless general-in-the-making who would lead them all to Jupiter's arms? Probably not... but then he might surprise them.



According to the rumours, Tobias Caelius Tarquinius had received his commission directly from the hand of Mark Antony, although largely because that hand had held a worse roll of the dice than Tarquinius. Either way, *someone* had made sure that every soldier accused of insurrection, every known thief, every malingerer, every bloody nightmare legionary in the Twelfth Legion had been moved from their cohort to the Eleventh Auxiliaries. Not that a soft-handed, soft-headed fool like Tarquinius would know the difference!



With a gaggle of friends and hangers-on in tow, including the domineering social climber Agrippina, a Gladiatorial Ludus-owning niece of Pompey Magnus and widow of half a dozen husbands, they made the journey to the Northern front of the Gallic Wars, to deal with the Belgic tribes who were causing problems to Caesar's supply lines, via a merchant of rarities who was playing both sides off on each other, and making a tidy profit besides.



Once they had proved themselves, in the late spring of 51BCE the Eleventh Cohort were assigned a border post on the Gaulish borders, ensuring barbarian imports were examined, local thugs were taken care of and no dangerous elements made it through the border. Here it was not the painted Gauls who were the problem - instead the skeleton crew of Auxiliaries faced hardened veterans in the employ of Mark Antony, determined to assassinate the Tribune and take back his Cohort by any means necessary.



Despite heavy losses, with the aid of local farmers willing to negotiate with the Republic in exchange for support, the cohort fought off the turncoat legionnaires and savage warriors until their reinforcements arrived in a final stand - at one point down to just two surviving members; the Centurion and medicus.



From there in the Summer of 51BCE they were stationed on the outskirts of Narbo, a fine little town in the Provinces full of retired legionaries and their families, and the closest thing to leave a soldier can expect during service. Guard duty, pure and simple. A chance to recoup after the brutality of the Northern front and enjoy the hospitality only a proper Roman settlement can provide - wine, good food and entertainment, in the form of Ludus Septimus, set up by a rival to Domina Agrippina. Games were held, but there were whisperings of sabotage - Agrippina's gladiators were attacked on the road with only the whip-fast Aqua and brash Taurus surviving. According to the locals, a slave uprising was causing chaos, and there was great demand for Gladiators to act as guards, a cash cow for Ludus Septimus.



A challenge was made, and Agrippina couldn't allow it to go unanswered, using her influence with the Military Tribune to fill the ranks of her Gladiators with members of the Eleventh Cohort for one night only (assuming they survived). That night the cohort gathered evidence that the slave uprising was faked in order to create a protection racket by none other than Dominus Septimus of the local ludus - and in the ensuing arrest, Gladiator fought Legionary in a bout that would put the colosseum to shame...



Travelling back to the main battle lines in late Autumn 51BCE, the Cohort found themselves joining up with the rest of their Legion, forming the rear guard during the Siege of Uxellodunum. Here they cut off the supply lines of foraging Gauls, took down smugglers trying to break the siege and protected Sappers who were quite literally undermining the besieged Gaulish town.



For many of the Eleventh Cohort, it was a relief to get back to the simplicity of orders, barracks, drills and swinging a scutum at the necks of rebellious Gauls. While the Hound of Alesia, Gaius Caninus broke the siege with the last minute assistance of Caesar's own cavalry, the Eleventh cut off the retreat, preventing the survivors from reaching the safety of Hispania.



With that, the Gallic Wars had ended. Time for a quiet life, right? All they'd have to do is follow Caesar back home... Across the Rubicon.



Behaviour and Conduct

Legio: SPQR is a pseudo-historical game, but in accordance with all EYELarp games, which are gender blind and do not expect people to conform to particular gender roles. By participating in the game, you are expected to act in a respectful and inclusive manner and not choose a character type that behaves in a manner that will offend others out of game. Anyone found pushing or openly behaving in a way that is NOT within the game brief will be asked to leave. Real world political and social ideologies must be left at the door and not brought into the weekend - anyone acting in a way that is sexist, homophobic, racist or transphobic will be asked to leave the game.

This is a game with a cinematic historical setting - that discriminatory language is “historically accurate” is not an acceptable excuse. As with all EYELarp games, historical or fantastical, we do not restrict roles based on any real-world characteristics. All people are eligible for military service in the 11th, and it is not remarkable to find people of all genders in the testudo.

It is not acceptable to insult another participant based on an out-of-character attribute such as height, weight and other out-of-character physical appearance characteristics, or remark upon such traits in any way that is discriminatory.

Non-consensual sex of any kind is not part of any EYELarp game. Any reference to such will be met with a final warning.

Please remember that the people around you may have been affected by issues you want to play out in game. Checking in with other players beforehand is encouraged and subtly going OC to do this shouldn't be considered immersion breaking.

[Our full Equality and Diversity policy is available to read here](#)



Gender and Sexuality

Roman terminology tends to be binary between masculine and feminine versions of the same words. Where possible, we keep things neutral by using modern words such as Legionnaire, Soldier, Officer etc, and specifically picking those Latin words which do not have gendered connotations to give flavour to the game.

Naming convention in Ancient Rome was very gendered and complicated, based on paternal line. We don't insist on following this, feel free to play around with the various prefixes and

suffixes that make up Roman names, or choose something from further out of the known world - Greek, Gaulish and Celtic names also work in the setting, among others. Nicknames were common, referring to a personal quirk or characteristic, such as Rufus (the red), Strabo (cross-eyed), Mektator (bloodthirsty) or Caepio (onion-seller!)

Pronouns will be respected, and trans attendees are free to play trans characters within the game if they so wish - gender-non-conforming and transgender individuals were known to the Ancient world as part of stories such as Ovid's Iphis and Ianthe, and the presence throughout the Republic and later Empire of the Anatolian Cult of Cybele, who was exclusively served by transfeminine priestesses.

Sexuality was likely less confined by labels than it is today - citizens were expected to marry and procreate, but divorce was common, sex work was legal and what we would call bisexuality was the norm in many cultures.

The sense of humour and swearing skews quite phallocentric, and toilet-humour based, borrowing some language from the TV shows that have inspired the game - "Jupiter's cock" is a common phrase of frustration, and "fuck", "shit", "cunt" and other swearwords of ancient origin are commonly used in both conversation and graffiti. This is an 18+ game, however use of "Soldier humour" should nevertheless be done with the Conduct Policy in mind.



Character Creation

Player Roles

This is a game about being the absolute dregs of the Roman Army. All players start out as Legionnaires or Auxiliaries in an Auxiliary Cohort - a mixed bag of the lowest-ranking soldiers.

There are some "officer" ranks in the game, however these are very limited and the majority are filled by NPCs as they do not form a regular part of the game.

A Legion was made up of around 6000 people, plus support staff, and consisted of ten cohorts of 480 people. At Legio: SPQR we cap tickets at 50 players and 30 crew, so we're never going to be able to phys-rep these numbers! Instead we play with the "Film-Sim" idea that the participants are where the story is currently, the other 400 or so members of the Cohort are off-screen doing the night shift, on guard duty elsewhere, tending the packhorses, digging the ditches etc. This also forms the pool of characters we can pull from for NPCs and rerolls in the case of character death, which is a likely occurrence in the Roman Army. Cohorts were led by a Military Tribune, with Centurions, Optios and Decanii below them in a role similar to non-commissioned officers today.



We currently have one player Centurion, who bridges the gap between the NPC Tribune and the common soldiers, plus an Optio, a role similar to sergeant. As and when it is needed, a player may be given the role of Decanus if they are leading a smaller group of up to ten.

Starting off as a Centurion or higher rank is not possible - this is a game about being a common soldier in the vein of Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus in HBO's *Rome*, not the officers who make all the big decisions.

Remember - the Eleventh Cohort has very few remaining members from its days under Mark Antony. The majority have histories of being problem cases elsewhere, so all you need to create a character in the setting is a reason why you were transferred, a place within the Roman world you are from, and the kind of role within the cohort you prefer to play.

For example, reasons for being transferred to the Eleventh Cohort could include being:

- Convicted of a crime and forced to join the army to avoid execution
- Involved in a scandal with an influential family
- A known blackmailer or black-market dealer
- Suspected of causing the death of a superior
- On the run for their crimes
- Agitators and insurrectionists
- General nuisances



Weapons and Armour

As an Auxiliary Cohort, the Eleventh utilises a wide variety of arms and armour from across the Roman world.



Armour ranges from padded gambesons (avoid obviously medieval styles), to generic LARP chainmail, to more authentic chainmail Lorica, to leather or plate segmentata, to cinematic-style moulded breastplates.

It's also appropriate for some troops like scouts (Exploratores), archers (Sagitarii) and slingers (Funditores) to not wear any armour.

A physician of the cohort is known as a Medicus, and can mix and match whatever armour style they prefer, alongside any weapons and fighting style. Some have been lightly armoured, some heavy infantry with first aid experience, this is entirely up to the player.

Appropriate weapons include:

- One-handed swords, both the Roman Gladius and other regional variants from the ancient world. Short swords are the ideal - two handed swords are not appropriate
- Shields, both the Roman Scutum and other regional variants. The ideal shape is rectangular or oval. Please avoid round and kite shields
- Javelins or spears with a thrust-safe tip
- Bow under 30lbs and arrows, or slings with larp-safe coreless projectiles over 6" in diameter
- Throw-safe javelins are appropriate, but should be checked before each use to ensure stones and other debris has not become embedded in them. The tip must be thrust-safe

- Axes can be used by those auxiliaries from Germania and Gaul, but are considered brutal, savage weapons by most Romans.



The Roman World

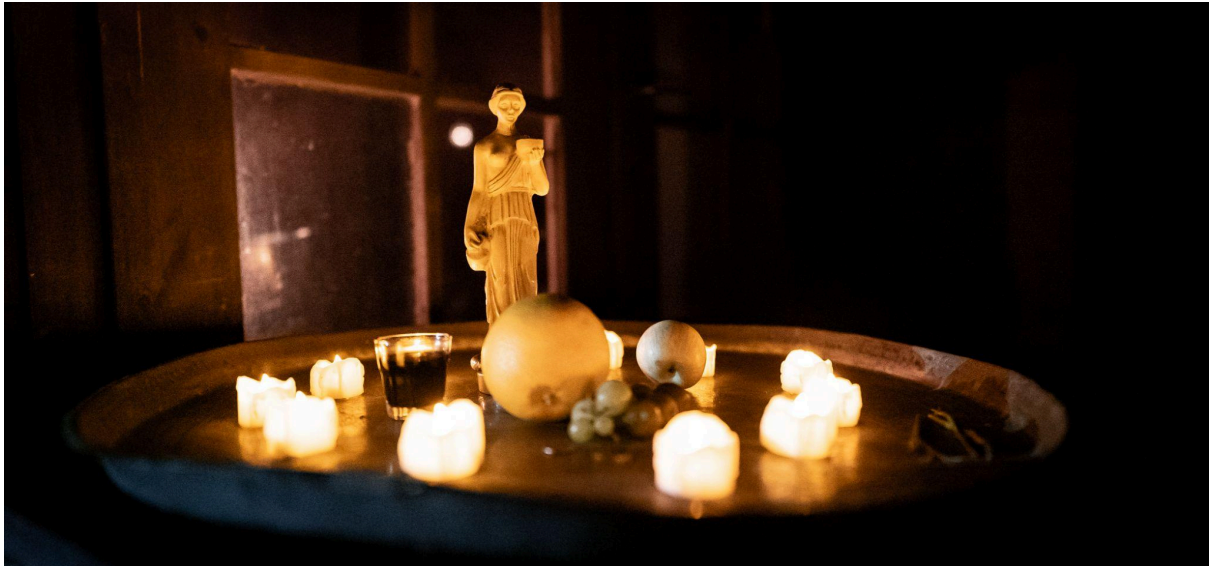
The world as known to the Roman Republic of 51BC was a wide and varied one, from Britannia in the North to Sub-Saharan Africa in the South, and Hispania in the West to Syria and Persia in the East. Service in the Roman Army conferred citizenship, so was a recognised way of earning a life for your descendants that may otherwise be out of reach.

Newly-conquered tribes and regions provided soldiers for the Auxiliary units, who were stationed far from their homeland to prevent uprisings spreading to the army, so there is scope to play a character who is from the fringes of the Roman Provinces and new to the trials and excesses of Roman life.



Character Death

Legio has a notoriously high death rate among player characters, with our second event seeing all but two being killed in the defence of a border outpost. We have made character generation as easy as possible for this reason, and due to the nature of the Cohort, as a military operation with many members below the abstraction layer, it is easy to rejoin the game with reinforcements, or join the crew for a little bit before jumping back in. We can lend you crew kit to make things look a little different to your previous character too, if needed.



Religion

The Roman Pantheon is the majority religion in Legio - most frequently worshipped are the twelve Gods of the Dii Consentes; Jupiter or Jove, Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercurius, Neptunus, Vulcanus and Apollo. Jupiter, Minerva and Mars are in particular recognised by the legions.

Other beliefs include the mystery religions of the Magna Mata or Cybele, Isis, Baccus, Prosepina and Mithras, all of whom had large cults that worshipped their deity.

Regional deities are also part of the setting - almost every river in Gaul, Germania and Brittania had a patron God or Spirit, and worship of these was common. "Celtic" religious practices, such as the thunder God Taranis, the warrior Goddess Andraste and others are appropriate for Legionaries who hail from those parts.

The Roman Republic had a large Jewish population, centred around Judea and Syria, however it is the subject of historical debate over whether they were exempt from military service in this period. We ask that only those of Jewish extraction play with this element of the setting.



Design Doc V.2.1

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