

SCENARIOS AND VARIANTS

SPANISH GOLD**A Major New Scenario for Conquistador**

by David R. Grant

When first playtested (by your Editor and others) *Conquistador* was long and boring. It evolved into a finished game that was long and *interesting*. Nevertheless, one still has the problem of how to cope when only an evening is available. Mr. Grant presents a solution that has the sea dogs of England and France chewing on the legs of the ocean straddling Spanish giant. —RAS

An historical simulation, *Conquistador* has some good plusses, but also has had to sacrifice some details in favor of playability. It quite accurately simulates the age of exploration in that it shows the rush of discoveries made in the early half of the sixteenth century. Another facet true to the historical situation was the success of English privateers in growing fat off intercepting Spanish gold and silver as it was transported across the Atlantic.

When it comes to exploitation, however, only the Spanish solitaire scenario anywhere nearly approximates the actual historical settling of the New World. Spain did settle as well as explore in several areas of the New World (mainly in the Caribbean, Mexico, Isthmus, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru). The only other nation to have successful colonies in the New World during the time span covered by the game was Portugal, which settled in Brazil. The first English colony that succeeded was Jamestown, founded in 1607. There were a couple of French efforts under Cartier and Roberval between 1538 and 1543, but nothing succeeded there, either. Scurvy, natives, and failure to find a passage to China or an abundance of gold discouraged the colonists. In the normal play of the three or four player campaign game, colonial efforts more apropos to the seventeenth century develop from the earliest decades of the sixteenth century. History is thus telescoped in favor of playability, a fact which makes the game a game and more than just an exercise in determining naval attrition. If one doesn't mind French and English efforts being out of historical order, *Conquistador* is a good simulation of what it took to colonize and exploit the New World.

As to playability, the only real problem the game has is its length. A long evening, at least, would be needed to finish a game. Accordingly, a shortened scenario is herein offered. It bypasses the rush for discoveries, shows Spain's historical head start in settling and exploiting the New World, and picks up the action at 1551, just prior to the arrival of the English privateers on the scene. Historically, one will find that settling by England and France will still be telescoped

about fifty years. This scenario will provide the "feel" of the total game without the large investment of time required by the campaign game. The emphasis will focus more on diplomacy, war, resources, and gold. Spanish colonist units have been placed historically within the limits of the counter mix. It is recommended that rule [24.0], the German Banker option, not be used.

The key to the action in this scenario will be the French and English efforts to keep Spain from becoming so rich that she would outstrip them militarily and in prestige. Some of the restrictions put on Spain in this scenario are to force a conformity to history (in location of settlements) and to give the other two or three players a chance to win.

[21.3] THE PRIVATEERING SCENARIO with 1551 (Turn 12). England receives S. Cabot and France receives Cartier for Turn 12. Spain has Ulloa and Irala for Turn 12. Two to four players can play.

[21.32] Treasury levels and Monarch ratings.

Spain: 500 ducats, A Monarch
England: 250 ducats, B Monarch
France: 300 ducats, B Monarch
Portugal: 325 ducats, C Monarch

[21.33] Initial Set-up

Spain

Hex	Historical Site	Date Estab	Units
4213	Potosi and Sucre	1540-45	2 colonists
4716	Santiago and Valparaiso	1541	2 colonists 1 missionary
3719	Lima	1535	1 colonist 1 missionary
3319	Quito	1533	1 colonist
3017	Bogota	1538	1 colonist 1 missionary
2817	Cartagena	1533	1 colonist
2819	Panama City	1518	1 colonist
2316	Santo Domingo	1500	1 colonist 1 missionary
2220	Havana	1511	1 colonist
2127	Mexico City	1521	2 colonists 1 missionary

(Optional with expanded counter mix)

4411	Asuncion	1537	1 colonist 1 missionary
2718	Santa Marta	1525	1 colonist
3118	Cali	1536	1 colonist
2813	Cumana	1502	1 colonist
2716	Coro	1505	1 colonist
2524	Guatemala City	1520's	1 colonist 1 missionary
2523	Tegucigalpa	1524	1 colonist 1 missionary
2418	Jamaica	1505	1 colonist
2126	Veracruz	1520	1 colonist

Portugal (optional with [23.0])

3904	Salvadore de Balboa	1500	colonist
3601	Olinda (Recife)	1537	1 colonist
4508	Sao Vicente (Santos)	1507	1 colonist
4509	Sao Paulo	1532	1 colonist

Native levels in all occupied areas are at zero. Other areas are as on map. If Portugal does not play, use rule [22.0] with Portuguese level at ten.

[21.34] Spain *must* keep a colonist in each of these hexes. If the colonist unit is lost due to attrition, it must be replaced on the next game turn. Failure to do so will result in a loss of ten victory points per hex per turn left unoccupied, starting on the game turn after the loss occurs. (This does not apply if an enemy nation has occupied the hex).

[21.35] Tenochtitlan and Cuzco are considered depleted. All other mines or treasure cities are undiscovered or operating if occupied.

[21.36] Initiative is figured only for England, France, and Portugal. Spain always moves last.

[21.37] Spanish Armada loss. At the end of Turn 19, Spain must reduce her navy by 50% (fractions rounded down). This includes losing the Galleon fleet which counts as one unit for purposes of this rule.

[21.38] Spain is the only nation with a rutter to round the Cape.

[21.39] Victory Conditions No credit is given for discoveries. Political control is the same as [20.0]. Two victory points are awarded for each ducat in a nation's treasury.

Game Notes:

At first glance this scenario looks like a cakewalk for Spain. Her large headstart in both treasury and colonists on the map seems to be insurmountable. Two factors, however, militate against Spain having an easy time of it.

1) The historical placement of her colonists is anything but an advantage. It is more like an albatross tied around her neck. They are located by and large in high attrition and undoubled resource areas (the Caribbean being the lone exception). Spain will be hard pushed to keep colonists in the historical sites, and in many cases (like hexes 2127 and 4213) it is like pouring colonists down the proverbial rat-hole.

2) Spain has the colonists scattered over a wide area of the map, thus increasing her expenses in bound (if more than one expedition is used) or in attrition losses (if one expedition makes all the stops). At some point in the game Spain will find that her colonists are

ferential. E.g., Caesar's best legion is his X, with a strength (for each of the ten cohorts) of '3' and an effectiveness of '9', highest in the game. Now no Pompeyan player will allow the X to face his worst legion, so let us compare the X to one of Pompey's better (but not best) legions, his Hispanic, rated at 4-7. Now, if the Hispanic attacks the X it would be attacking at +1, subtract two from the die roll. It would have a 67% chance of inflicting a greater result (albeit marginal in the majority of them) on the X than it would on itself. Conversely, if the X were to attack the Hispanic — at -1 add two to the die roll — the X would have to take a step loss no matter what the die roll (as would the Hispanic). Since the strength of the X is only 75% of that of the Hispanic, simple addition reveals a maxim of attrition. And the X is by far the best Caesarean legion. Add to this the fact that Pompey has three more legions than Caesar (11-8), that two of Caesar's legions — the VIII and IX — are virtually incapable of attacking, as well as the superiority of Pompey's cavalry and you have an inevitable end result.

I am not that familiar with the actual battle to know exactly how Caesar triumphed over Pompey's superior force. I do know that he wasn't working with the loaded deck that Loren has slipped to the gamer disguised as a CRT. I do know that both games I played to conclusion had the same result: a surrender by Caesar after the loss of several legions in fruitless attacks after being pressed to the edge of the game-map by an inexorable Pompey advance. I fear that inadequate playtesting and development — the bane of GDW's house — is at fault here. The differences in the CRT, and its fissures, are subtle; they are not faults easily discerned. But they are not so hidden that adequate developmental work could not have uncovered them. Inadequate development is a problem with every company today, regardless of the production time given to their games. And poor development can do more to harm a game than any other single aspect of production. So perhaps the blame should fall less on Loren Weisman, who has certainly evolved a nice system, and more on John Harshman, who was in charge of this portion of the game.

Be it as it may, it is frustrating for the player to encounter a game where so many things seem right yet the end result is useless. *Pharsalus* is not a convoluted game and it is not a bad game. It has a fair amount of flavor and shows the earmarks of a great deal of research. But it fails to convey any insight into how or why Caesar destroyed Pompey on the plains of Greece because it fails to make that result probable. It simply fails to give Caesar — and the player — his due.

Berg

Pharsalus is available from GDW, Box 432, Normal, Illinois for \$8.75



Napoleon's Victory

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The French player should not even hesitate to fall back to the La Haye Sainte, La Belle Alliance, Plancenoit line if advantage can be gained from the shift.

Soft cover hexes (not hexsides) are also valuable since so much of the Prussian potential is in their cavalry, and since they have a limited ability to form the skirmishers which are most effective in the woods. Should the French be demoralized, they should place as many units as possible in blocked hexes (not hexsides), either soft or hard cover, to avoid routing from Prussian charge zones. Units in blocked hexes do not check morale, as charge zones do not extend into these hexes.

Blocked *hexsides* are most useful as artillery sites; their morale benefits can be a real help, too, if the French find themselves demoralized right at the end of the game, though units will still face morale checks from Prussian charges.

Brigades committed to the Prussian defense should not exceed five — usually three infantry and two cavalry. The defense should be anchored by the maximum number of skirmishers and artillery batteries — the Guard Artillery is especially useful because of the higher morale of the crews. The batteries should occupy the ridgecrests between the covered hexes which are held by masses of skirmishers. The formed infantry and cavalry should be concealed on the reverse slopes to counterattack any charging Prussian cavalry, and to resupply the skirmishers. Maximum use is made of artillery and skirmishers because they do not require brigade commitment; also the morale loss should an artillery battery be routed is only one point.

Throughout the entire battle, brigades which have been decimated should be pulled out of the battle and deactivated. This will be easier for the French since they will basically be advancing. The brigades should move south and west, dropping off all possible skirmishers, including removing any eligible damaged battalions (if optional rule 15.33 is being used). The brigades should move at the maximum possible rate until the first hour turn that they are far enough away, then they should deactivate. Don't waste an extra point; you can always re-commit the brigade later if you must. Once the Anglo-Allies are demoralized, the movement should be more west than south, to put distance between the units and the Prussians. Whenever a brigade of infantry is to be deactivated, the units should go into "Square" formation; this will prevent their recommitment by Prussian cavalry, at least until they have actually been meled, or until the Prussian artillery arrives.

A successful defense will delay the French Demoralization past Turn 40, and if they can go beyond Turn 44 they are the likely winners. Should the Prussians get careless, they can find themselves demoralized, too. Vive la France!

Spanish Gold

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worth more in a close, safe (low in attrition level), doubled resource area than the ten victory points per turn it will cost to not replace a colonist lost in attrition. Of course, some other nation might do her a favor by mounting a war and/or occupying some of the vital hexes (4213 is an attractive spot if mines aren't depleted). Let them have them.

The player with the best chance of winning is the one who makes friends and quietly minds his own business of placing his colonists on the eastern seaboard of North America (in areas of doubled resources and low bounds expense for transportation). To do so will require that he resist the urge to succumb to gold fever. Especially from Turn 17 on, well-placed colonists are much more valuable collecting resources than wasting energies (and ducats for transportation) on an often fruitless search for gold. Spain should concentrate on the Caribbean. The Deep South and Rio are also good areas. California is a long way off, but could be supplied through Panama and a transfer of colonists from Atlantic to Pacific. Gold should be mined from Panama, Midwest Plateau, and Saguenay (Brazil also if Portugal plays).

Players will be very unwise to let any other player quietly develop his empire in more than one doubled resource area. Colonists start paying off richly in the last half of this game (a nation with the maximum twenty colonists in the Atlantic Coast would draw 200 ducats from that area on Turn 20). A surprise attack designed to eliminate ports and colonists is in order to keep that player from running away with the game.

Conversely, the player who is concentrating his efforts on resources while his friends go after the gold and Spain tries vainly to maintain her empire will be advised to garrison strategic ports and passes.

Beginning on Game-Turns 19-20, the players should make plans to expand their borders to include adjacent areas (and win political control victory points) by judicious replacement of colonists and soldier detachments. Political control is worth 150 victory points. Also remember that in a close game, a careful placement of units can deny another player his 150 victory points for that area (75% of soldiers in an area must be friendly to gain political control). Soldier units are especially dangerous because of their wide movement allowance that permits them to strike from distant areas.

Wars should be carefully calculated as to expense versus gains. Eliminating five colonists could mean a loss of 40-50 ducats per turn for your opponent, which would be well worth the 40 ducats required in just one turn to buy an army.

The play of this scenario will be challenging and closely contested. It will give one the enjoyment of the military side of the game when borders start meeting as well as the feel of the economic decisions required to win.