Holy Grail Games , Synapses Games [Les Jeux Synapses] , Matthieu Podevin

Caesar’s Empire [L'empire de César]

France, Quebec, Canada (2021)

TAGS: Caesar Roman Army Roman Empire Rome



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Caesar’s Empire [L'empire de César]
Studio/Production Company	Synapses Games, Holy Grail Games
Country of the First Edition	Canada, France
Country/countries of popularity	France, Canada, UK, Germany
Original Language	French
First Edition Date	2021
First Edition Details	Synapses Games and Holy Grail Games, *L'empire de César*. Designer: Matthieu Podevin, illustrators: Alexandre Bonvalot, Joëlle Drans, 2021.
Running time	about 30–60 min
Official Website	French: jeuxsynapsesgames.com (accessed: February 10, 2022). English: holygrail.games (accessed: February 10, 2022). Official trailer: youtube.com (accessed: February 10, 2022)
Genre	Board games*
Target Audience	Crossover (8–10+)
Author of the Entry	Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of “Artes Liberales” of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Hanna Paulouskaya, University of Warsaw, hannapa@al.uw.edu.pl

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Creators



Holy Grail Games (Publisher)

Holy Grail Games is a game publisher from Nancy, France, specializing in crowdfunded projects. The company gathers a small team of passionate designers and illustrators working hard to develop and design board games.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: June 8, 2022).

agorajeux.com (accessed: June 8, 2022).

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Synapses Games [Les Jeux Synapses] (Publisher)

Synapses Games (Les Jeux Synapses), formally known as Get Together Publishing, is a board game publisher based in Quebec, Canada. It was founded in 2018 by Carl Brière, a passionate player of board games since he was five. Experienced both in the gaming industry and in being a player, he launched his own business of board games that are easy to learn and easy to create connections between the players: contact with people is similar to synapses between neurons and results in having fun.

Sources:

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Official website (accesssed: June 8, 2022).

BGG Board Game Geek boardgamegeek.com (accessed: June 8, 2022).

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Matthieu Podevin , b. 1985
(Author)

Matthieu Podevin was born in France in a large family of keen gamers with many cousins – children and adults – playing hundreds of various games. He works as a masseur and physiotherapist in Meurthe et Moselle-à-Lupcourt near Nancy and is also a passionate gamer and game designer; he has been creating prototypes of games since he was eight. He also designed card games and board games, such as *Abycity,* which became the prototype for *Titan*, *Drogi do Rzymu* [Roads to Rome], published for the Polish market, and *Caesar's Empire*. His latest creation, with Olivier Melison, was *Tiles of Arabian Nights*. Currently, he is working on a cooperative abstract family game, a potential extension of *Caesar's Empire,* and two games set in Antiquity. He also plans to realize a game about Ancient Rome.

Sources:

FLIP (Festival Ludique International de Parthenay), *Présentation de Matthieu Podevin, créateur du jeu Abycity* available at jeux-festival.com (accessed: February 11, 2022).

boardgamegeek.com (accessed: February, 2022).

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Additional information

Adaptations	*L'Empire de César* is an international version (licenced by the Astérix franchise) of the game *Drogi do Rzymu* [Roads to Rome] available in Poland, designed by Matthieu Podevin, illustrated by Joëlle Drans, published by Granna and Holy Grail Games in 2020. See Drogi do Rzymu (accessed: June 13, 2022).
Translation	English: *Caesar's Empire*, Holy Grail Games, 2021. German: *Cäsars Imperium*, Holy Grail Games, 2021.
Sequels, Prequels and Spin-offs	The company is working on adding extensions to the game.
Summary	*L'Empire de César* is a game for 2–5 players with clear and simple rules, well adjusted to the target audience. "The year is 50 BC. Gaul is entirely occupied by Romans. Well, not entirely... One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaries who garrison the fortified camps of Totorum, Aquarium, Laudanum and Compendium..." The game is set in the universe of Astérix and stylized to resemble Albert Uderzo's immediately recognizable illustrations. The players, however, do not represent the brave Gauls known from the comic books, but rather impersonate Roman soldiers, members of Julius Caesar's entourage, taking part in a mission to expand Caesar's empire to the limits... of the board. The main goal is to build as many Roman routes as possible to connect Rome with other cities and interfere with other players on their way to victory. The players collect tokens of cities and wealth as rewards for building roads until all the cities on the board are connected to Rome, which is when the game ends. Having added up the value of wealth points, city points and a bonus for building the most routes, the player obtains his result; the

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person with the most points wins.

Analysis

The game is a tactical family game for children, connecting parts of Caesar's Empire through building roads and connecting the players in a friendly activity. The game provides fun and basic knowledge about Caesar's conquests and develops strategical and calculative thinking. Fans of the Astérix comic books easily recognize the graphic design in the appearance of the board, tokens and figurines, faithful to that universe.

First and foremost, the cover box shows the title character – Julius Caesar, in a laurel wreath, planning to place the legionary eagle on a diorama with classical buildings. He is presented comically with a sinister expression of greed on his face. As the game is licensed by Astérix, Caesar resembles an unreal simplified character known from the comic books rather than a Roman general. The shadow of Caesar's silhouette can be seen over half the board, representing the massive threat he constitutes to the regions that the players will soon conquer.

The main phenomenon of Roman civilization, highlighted in the game, is the Roman road system built to facilitate expansion. The game creates awareness of how dense the web of connections between particular cities was and shows explicitly that "all roads lead to Rome" or – in this case, from Rome. Showing roads as the most important means of expanding Roman territories, connecting people, and enabling trade and cultural exchange against the background of the geography of the ancient world; the game creates an image of the Roman territorial expansion while offering an opportunity to have fun with friends and family.

There are other elements of Roman Antiquity present on the board; drawn with great accuracy, they allow children to learn to recognize elements of the Roman world, such as a Roman sword, weapons and soldier equipment, a Roman legion's eagle, architectural monuments, coins and so on.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and

Caesar Roman Army Roman Empire Rome

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Concepts

Further Reading

How to play – rules in French are available here (accessed: June 13, 2022).

Instruction booklet in French available here (accessed: June 13, 2022).

Clark, Andrew, "Imperialism in Asterix", *Belphégor: Littérature Populaire et Culture Médiatique* 4.1 (2004), at: dalspace.library.dal.ca (accessed: February 15, 2022).

Higgins, Francis, *On joue à L'Empire de César: tous les chemins mènent à Rome dans l'univers d'Astérix!* Available at le Soleil Numérique website (accessed: February 10, 2022).

Kessler, Peter, *The Complete Guide to Asterix*, London: Hodder, 1995.

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