**1.0) QUICK-START RULES**

*Onward Christian Soldiers* is a game covering the first three Crusades to “The Holy Land”. These Quick-Start rules are designed not as a rules summary, but rather to function as the official rules for your first few games, or to refresh your memory if you come back to the game after not having played it for a while. In both cases, the idea is that you’ll use the larger rule sets as a reference, turning to it for answers to specific questions and to get a handle on the full range of situations possibly with each rule covered here. But there’s no question that you’ll be able to get started playing using only the Quick-Start rules and the Charts and Tables.

**Important Notes:** If there is a discrepancy between the Quick-Start Rules and the rulebooks, the latter take precedence. But we sincerely hope there aren’t any.

**WHAT YOU’RE TRYING TO DO**

In *Onward Christian Soldiers*, you play on one of two sides: the Crusader side or the Muslim side in the First Crusade version (often abbreviated to 1C), or the corresponding Frank side or the Saracen side in the Second and Third Crusade version (which you’ll also see with the abbreviation 2C/3C). In both versions, you move your units across the map, attempting to satisfy your own side’s victory conditions while denying the other side’s victory conditions. In the multiplayer version (First Crusade only), each player has his own victory conditions, depending on how many—and which—factions he controls.

Victory Points are awarded at the end of the game for controlling certain Cities (and sometimes Towns). In the First Crusade, the Crusader also gets points for destroying Cities and for holding the True Cross (which starts the game in Jerusalem). See the scenario rules and the charts and tables for the Victory Point awards for each scenario.

You capture Cities primarily by besieging and assaulting them, although in the First Crusade you can also negotiate surrenders and attempt to take Cities through treachery. To capture a City you either have to destroy the garrison, usually through attrition and assault, or assault it until it no longer has the ability to resist. In the Second and Third Crusades, you capture castles in the same way, although castles never count for Victory Points.

You move armies by activating their leaders—using Activation cards in the First Crusade and Activation markers in the Second and Third Crusades. As they march, armies suffer attrition, battle other forces, ravage cities and towns (and castles), and get themselves into position to conduct sieges and assaults. You need resources from cities for various functions, and random events can help you or hinder you. In multiplayer games, you can also help and hinder each other.

**THE GAME COMPONENTS**

**A. The Playing Pieces [2.3]**

Onward uses three types of military counters: Army Strength Points (ASPs), Leaders, and Fleets. The ASPs controlled by a Leader constitute his Army. ASPs can exist on the map without a Leader, but only in Cities, Towns, and, in the 2C/3C version, in Castles. In such cases, they’re called a Garrison. Leaders can exist without ASPs, but you usually don’t want them to, because they can be easily captured. Fleets can exist only in the Sea Zones—they can’t even move into Port spaces.

ASPs are divided into factions. Each faction has its own color and, in the case of the Muslim factions, it’s own icon. But even though there are different factions in the game, there are always only two sides. The sides in the First Crusade are the Crusaders and the Muslims; in the Second and Third Crusades, the Franks and the Saracens. In 2C/3C, it’s simply a matter of having one side against the other, with all the Frankish factions joining in against all the Saracen factions. This is also the two-player version of the First Crusade, with all four Crusader factions controlled by one player and all three Muslim factions by the other.

But as you add players to the First Crusade, each controls fewer and fewer factions, until you reach the 7-player game, in which each player controls only one. The sides don’t change, but suddenly factions from different sides can start cooperating, while factions from the same side can start working against each other. For example, one Muslim player might deny another Muslim player the use of an important City while making it available to a Crusader faction. Two factions on the same side might even start a battle against each other.

The First Crusade rules cover these possibilities, but mostly it’s a matter of doing anything you feel like to help or hinder the other players. After all, victory is based on City or (in a few instances) Town possession, and only one faction—not one side—can get the Victory Points for any given location.

Leaders have three ratings: Activation Rating, Campaign Rating, and Rank. The Activation rating is the cost to include that Leader in the Activation Pool (2C/3C) or Activation Deck (1C) each Game-Turn (we’ll get to this shortly). The Campaign Rating is used to determine if he can continue to move after stopping as well as which battle formation he adopts in combat and whether or not he can intercept enemy forces as they move. The leader’s Rank determines how many ASPs he can command, as well as whether or not he can command subordinate leaders. In addition, only the top-ranked Crusader or Frank leader can carry Armored Knights points with him, and it figures as well into Muslim recruitment in the First Crusade.

The game markers help you keep track of what’s going on. Put the Year and Month markers on the Game-Turn track in the appropriate spaces at the start of the game and move them along at the end of each turn. Put the other markers with the forces and locations on the map as you have a need. For example, a City space will sometimes have a siege marker (either Full Siege or Partial Siege), an Assaults Point marker, a Resources marker, and a Ravaged marker, all at the same time. Armies might have Demoralized or Ravager markers (or others), while Leaders could have a combination of Visions (or Jihad), Leader III, Independent Leader, and more.

There are no Victory Point markers. At the end of the game, simply add up the VPs. For the Mosul Turk player and all the Crusader players in the First Crusade, some of the victory conditions are kept secret. Write them down on a slip of paper and put this paper away somewhere where you can access it (so you can figure out how you’re doing) but where nobody else can.

**B. The Map [2.1]**

The map portrays the portion of the Middle East most heavily contested during the first three Crusades. It consists primarily of a series of spaces joined by connections; the spaces include Cities (square shapes), Towns (large round shapes), and Points (small round shapes)—along with some boxes, covered below. Inside each Point and Town is a number. This number represents the Attrition value of that space; this number is used for various types of Attrition (see How to Calculate Attrition, below).

Each City consists of two spaces: the City space itself (these are
square), and the connected City Entry space. The City Entry space is basically just a point like any other point, but it has some special traits:

(a) an Army in the Entry space of a friendly City is considered in the City for the purpose of Movement Attrition after a march, Point and Ravaged Attrition at the end of the Game-Turn, and for the purpose of picking up troops from the City and dropping them off in the City;

(b) when you want to take action against an enemy-controlled City (siege, assault, ravage, etc.), you don’t move your Army to the City space itself, but rather to the Entry Space. From there, you can Ravage the City and conduct Sieges, Assaults, Treachery, and Surrender. If the City falls, you transfer as many ASP as you wish from the Entry Space into the City (which is now yours), in addition to the mandatory one ASP that becomes the Intrinsic Garrison (see the “How Cities Work” section below).

The Sea Zones control fleet movement. Fleets may move only in the zones themselves, but they can help with (or against) sieges taking place on land, and they can transfer ASPs from port to port.

Printed on the map are several boxes. The Crusader Entrance Boxes near the top left (A, B, and C) guide where the Crusader player brings the Crusader factions onto the board (1C) and where the German leader Frederick Barbarossa starts (3C). The Cappadocia and Mosul boxes may be used by the Mosul Turks only (1C). The Fatimid box has different uses depending on the scenario instructions. In the First Crusade, it functions as the entry point for the Fatimid forces; in the Third Crusade, it is accessible to the Saracen player. In the Second Crusade, it is out of play.

Along both sides of the map are the Army Holding Boxes. When you set up the game, and as you play, you can either keep Armies and their Leaders on the map, or you can have just the Leader on the map and put the ASP counters in the Army Holding boxes along both sides of the map. Each Leader has a corresponding Holding Box. These boxes are designed for use specifically when playing the First Crusade, but you use them for the other Crusades as well. The 2C/3C scenario instructions provide suggestions for whose Holding Box to use for which Leader.

Lastly, the Map Key shows you what the spaces and numbers all mean, and the Card Holding Boxes give you a place for the Event and Activation Decks in the First Crusade version.

C. The Cards (1C only) [2.2]
Onward uses two types of cards, but only in the First Crusade: Activation cards and Event cards. Activation Cards are sub-divided into Leader Activation cards and Standard Activation cards—see “Building the Activation Deck” and “Using the Cards” below for details on how to use them. Event cards are in two decks: Crusader and Muslim. See “Placing the Event Decks” and “Using the Cards” below.

H O W TO P L A Y

A. Choosing a version and scenario to play [1.1]
You have a choice of two different game versions available: (1) The First Crusade and (2) The Second and Third Crusades. Most of the major game systems—movement, combat, sieges, and attrition—are identical—or practically so—in the two versions. The major differences are as follows:

(a) The First Crusade (1C) uses a more complex activation system (i.e., who gets to go next) than the Second/Third Crusades. In the First Crusade, you build an Activation Deck each game-turn and draw from that deck to see what happens next. In the Second/Third Crusade (2C/3C), you put Activation Markers in a cup and draw blindly to see who goes next.

(b) The First Crusade has multi-player rules, allowing games with anywhere from three to seven players. The game also plays perfectly well (and was heavily tested) as a two-player game, but the multi-player game adds diplomacy, deal-making, and the like. The Second/Third Crusade scenarios are strictly two-player.

(c) The two sides for the First Crusade are called Crusaders and Muslims. For the Second/Third Crusade, they’re called Franks and Saracens.

The Second Crusade scenario acts as a good learning scenario, with the majority of the rules in effect so you really do learn the game, and a playing time of roughly two hours so that you learn it quickly. It’s a good place to begin. It’s only four turns long.

The Third Crusade: Historical scenario gives you the two best-known personalities of the Crusades era: Saladin and Richard the Lionheart. It takes longer than the Second Crusade (count on five hours including setup, although some games will take less than this), and its action from start to finish. Two superb leaders face each other here, and their snake-and-mongoose maneuverings let you use the game system to its fullest.

The Third Crusade: Barbarossa scenario lets you see how different the Third Crusade might have been had Emperor Frederick Barbarossa not drowned on his way to the Holy Land (with his reportedly enormous army turning around and going home). The game takes roughly six hours to set up and play.

The First Crusade takes about 12 hours to play from start to finish, longer if it’s your first time. Count on two very long evenings. Interestingly, the first 5-6 turns of the game last considerably longer than the last half, because by Turn 7 or so the Crusaders are typically so depleted (they get no reinforcements for the entire game—one of their historical problems) that they need to conserve strength. This game features a host of sieges and sweeping moves, and you’ll quickly get to know your army leaders and their capabilities. If you can possibly get 5-7 players together for this, you’ll find the diplomacy aspect as fascinating as the action, simply because each player is out for himself: victory depends on city control, and only one player can control any given city. But as a two-player game The First Crusade also shines, so if there are only two of you, don’t hesitate to give this one a go.

B. Setting up the game
Once you’ve chosen your version and scenario, set up the game according to the instructions at the end of the corresponding rulebook. These instructions consist of where to place the ASP markers, Fleets and Leaders (and Castles in 2C/3C), how to win, who goes first, and so on. Once you’re set up, you’re ready to play.
C. Playing a game-turn

The Sequence of Play [3.2]

The Sequence of Play is printed on the game map. You begin each game-turn with either the Diplomacy Phase (1C), in which you hammer out deals with the other players, or the Reinforcement Phase (2C/3C), in which Frankish reinforcements arrive. Next comes the Army Assignment Phase, in which you divide your ASPs among your leaders according to the scenario rules for doing so. After that, you move into either the Activation Deck Creation Phase (1C), in which you get the activation cards ready for play for that turn, or the Activation Pool Phase (2C/3C), where you decide which activation markers you want to use that turn.

Then comes the Operations Phase. Here, you perform the game’s military actions, moving armies, fighting battles, conducting sieges, assault cities and castles, and much more. Activations are controlled by random card (1C) or marker (2C/3C) draw. When all the activation cards or markers have been drawn, this phase is over, and it’s on to the Attrition Phase, where you roll for attrition at sieges, in points outside of towns or cities, at sea, and in ravaged locations. Finally, the Recovery Phase allows cities to recover their resources and various markers to be replaced or removed, after which you move the game-turn markers and start the next turn.

Preparing the Activation Pool (2C/3C only) [4.0]

In the Second/Third Crusade version of Onward, which player goes next is tied to the Activation Pool—a cup with Activation Markers (AMs) in it. Each of you gets to put a certain number of AMs in the pool each Game-Turn—the scenario instructions tell you how many. The Second Crusade allows four AMs per side, the Third Crusade allows five. In addition, an Event AM goes into the Pool.

And see the scenario instructions for special restrictions, including rolling for Initiative. For example, the Saracen Reinforcement AM counts as two of the five AMs the Saracen player may put in the cup for all of the Third Crusade Historical scenario and the latter part of the Third Crusade Barbarossa scenario. Another restriction is you may use Fleet AMs in the Third Crusade scenarios but not in the Second Crusade scenario. There are others, including a Neutrals AM that goes in the Pool for the Third Crusade scenarios.

Once the Pool is prepared, it guides play of the Operations Phase for that Game-Turn. First, whoever gets the Initiative keeps whichever of his AMs he wishes out of the Pool, and that AM gets played first. You decide Initiative by rolling a die—the high roller has Initiative. If it’s a tie, all AMs go into the Pool. After this, whoever played last draws an AM blindly out of the pool, and that AM is what happens next. If it’s a Leader AM, that Leader and his forces get to act. If it’s a Fleet AM, all the Fleets belonging to that player can act. If it’s a Saracen Reinforcement AM, the Saracen player gets new troops by rolling on the Saracen Reinforcement Table. If it’s the Event AM, either one of you rolls on the Event Table for the scenario you’re playing and follows the instructions. For the Neutrals AM, see the specific rule.

When all AMs have been played, the Operations Phase is over, and you move on to the Attrition Phase.

Building the Activation Deck (1C only) [4.3-4.5]

The First Crusade uses Activation Cards, not Activation Markers. In the Activation Deck Creation Phase, you build the Activation Deck by stockpiling it with a combination of two types of cards: Standard Activation cards and Leader Activation cards. All the Standard Activation cards go into the deck automatically. After that, each of you buys Leader Activation cards to add to this deck.

Buying Leader Activation cards is a matter of using the Activation Points you have available. First you separate the Leader Activation cards among the various factions. Next, you separate the Activation Point markers among the seven factions pictured on their reverse sides. Whoever controls each faction takes that faction’s markers and mixes them around, face-down; depending on the number of players, a single player could control several different factions and thus be in charge of several sets of markers. You then randomly draw one marker for each faction you control and keep the result confidential; put the marker aside, still face-down, for confirmation at the end of the game-turn.

The marker tells you how many Activation Points you have for that faction. Each Leader Activation card shows the cost in Activation Points for that Leader (the Activation rating gives this number). You now buy—without showing the other players—as many Leader Activation cards as you wish without exceeding the number of Activation Points you have available. You might have Activation Points left over, either intentionally or because you can’t buy any more cards with the points you have remaining. Sometimes it’s useful to spend fewer points than you have, to keep your opponent guessing; more frequently, though, you’ll end up buying as many Leader Activation cards as you can.

Once you’ve all bought your Leader Activation cards, you put them together, face-down and without the other players having seen them, in the Activation Deck along with the Standard cards. Shuffle thoroughly, and you’re ready for the Operations Phase.

If the Leader showing on the card is currently captured or has been killed, you’re actually buying the Replacement Leader showing on the card, not the original Leader. If there’s no replacement listed, you may not buy that card.

Placing the Event Decks (1C only) [4.2, 12.0]

Divide the Event cards into a Crusader deck and a Muslim deck. Shuffle each deck and place it face-down on the corresponding box on the map. When

Rolling for Initiative [4.6]

You roll for initiative each Game-Turn (except the first) to determine which player goes first. Exactly what happens depends on which version and scenario you are playing.

For the Second and Third Crusade scenarios, you each roll one die, with the higher roll gaining the Initiative for that Game-Turn. If you get the initiative, you choose one of your selected AMs and play it for the first AM of the Operations Phase. If the die-rolls are tied, all AMs go into the Pool.

For the First Crusade, you each roll two dice. Whoever rolled higher draws the first Activation card. If the result is a tie, keep rolling until one of you wins. Most times, the first Activation card will simply be a Leader Activation card, in which case that faction’s player will just go first. Sometimes, however, one of the Standard Activation cards will come up first, and this can benefit the drawing player.

The setup instructions show who has the Initiative for the first Game-Turn of that scenario.

Using the Cards (1C only) [4.0, 12.0]

With the Activation deck and the two Event decks in place, and with setup and initiative determined, the game begins. The Cruc-

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sader player decides which Leader Activation card he will use to start the game. After that activation, he draws the next card from the Activation deck, turns it over for all to see, and one of two things happen: (a) If it’s a Leader Activation card, whoever controls the Leader may now activate that leader and, after doing so, draws the next card; (b) If it’s a Standard Activation card, he does whatever that card states or allows—activate an Armenian army he has already bribed, activate a Crusader fleet, or draw an Event card. See the scenario instructions in the 1C rulebook for how to use the Armenian cards. See “How Fleets Work” below for how to use the Crusader Fleet cards.

If you draw an activation card that tells you to draw an Event card, take the top card from your side’s Event deck and follow the instructions. The card will tell you either to play it immediately or that you may hold onto it. You may hold no more than three in your hand, and you may play those you hold at any time during the Operations Phase of any Game-Turn (unless it says otherwise). After drawing an Event card and either playing it or holding it, that same player draws the next card from the Activation deck. The Operations Phase is over once the Activation deck is empty. Each Event deck is reshuffled when it is empty (or if an Event card tells you to).

See 12.0 in the 1C book for details about the Event cards, including full descriptions. Also in 12.0 are rules for playing the Event cards in multi-player games.

**How to Move Land Units [6.1]**

Most of your playing time in Onward will be spent moving Leaders and their ASPs around the map. The Leader and his ASPs are known as an Army. The movement rules are quite simple, with the trick being knowing where to move them. Here we’ll look at how, not where.

When a Leader is activated—by drawing either an AM (2C/3C) or a Leader Activation card (1C) with his name on it—you may move the Leader and his Army on the map, from space to space along the connections. Unlike many games, there is no limit to how far you can move an Army in any one Activation, as long as you don’t move into a space in which the rules force you to Stop (we’ll get to those in a minute). You may, in fact, move from the top left corner of the map all the way to the bottom right.

Move the Leader from space to space along the connections. When you Stop, immediately check for Attrition (see the next section). Besides attrition, some things are mandatory and others are voluntary, and some Stops result in the Activation being Finished while others do not. In cases where it is not finished, you may roll for Continuation (6.2) to see if the same Leader may move again (or perform other functions).

Here’s a list of things you may do during land movement:

- You may Stop whenever you wish. The typical reason for this is because you’ve reached your planned destination, or you simply want to minimize attrition.
- If it’s a voluntary Stop, you may roll to see if you can keep going. This is known as Continuation. Roll one die; if the result is higher than the Leader’s Campaign Rating, the Activation is Finished. If equal to or lower, you may move him again. It’s possible to Continue numerous times in the same Activation.
- In a 2-player game, when you enter a space occupied by an Army belonging to the other player, you initiate a Battle and you must Stop. The other player may withdraw or fight. If he withdraws, you may roll for Continuation and, if successful, keep moving. If he fights and you win the Battle, you may roll for Continuation; if you lose or draw, the Activation is Finished.
- If you begin an Activation or an individual movement segment of an Activation in such a space, you may also initiate Battle. You don’t have to, though—you may stay right where you are or move away instead.
- In a multi-player game, the other player may agree to let you go through the space without Stopping, even if he’s on the other side. If he does not, you initiate Battle, in which case it’s the same as above.
- When you move into the City Entry space of a City you control, you may (a) voluntarily Stop in order to pick up ASPs from inside the City or drop off ASPs there; (b) voluntarily Stop in order use the City’s Resources to negate Movement Attrition—you may do this in addition to (a) above; (c) move into the City itself, in which case a Stop is mandatory. In all cases, you may roll for Continuation in order to keep going if you wish.
- When you move into a City space (not its Entry space) that you control, you may Destroy the City.
- When you move into the unoccupied City Entry space of a City you do not control, you may (a) Move right past it, as long as a Leader inside doesn’t Intercept you; (b) Ravage the City, after which the Activation is Finished; (b) Stop voluntary and roll for Continuation in order to keep moving or to Besiege or Assault it (see next point).
- When you start an Activation or a post-Continuation movement in the unoccupied City Entry space of a City you do not control, you may (a) initiate a Full or Partial Siege; (b) Assault the City; (c) ask the other player to Surrender the City to you; (d) attempt to take the City, in the First Crusade only, by playing a Treachery card; (e) move away from the City, thereby lifting any Siege that might be in place and allowing the City to recover Resources and Assault Points according to the rules for such recovery.
- Other activities, such as Bribe Armenians in the First Crusade version, are possible as specified in the scenario instructions.

One other important thing about movement. As mentioned above, you move along the connection lines. When you enter a space occupied by an enemy force, you don’t actually place your Army in that space. Instead, you place it on the connecting line just before the space. You are considered in that space for purposes of attrition and other matters, but you may not move past the enemy force. If another enemy Army subsequently moves along that same connecting line from the space you came from, you are blocked in—you can go neither one way nor the other without either destroying or retreating one of those Armies, or having one of them move away voluntarily.

**How to Calculate Movement Attrition [6.3]**

Whenever you Stop—either voluntarily or because you must—you must roll for Attrition:

1. Roll one die.
2. To the result, add the accumulated Attrition Point total to the result.
3. To this result, add the tens digit of the number of ASPs that have moved. For instance, if you moved 28 ASPs, you add 2. If you moved 9 ASPs, you add nothing.
4. To this result, add the number of Armored Knights points that have moved (if any).
5. To this, you add 2 if it’s a Rain turn or 3 if it’s a Winter turn. Events and Cards might also add to the Attrition value.

6. From this result, subtract 1 if the moving Army is Muslim or Saracen.

7. From this result, if you are in a City space or a City Entry space that you control or have permission to use, subtract the number of Resource Points you decide to use to negate Attrition for that move (and place a Resources marker beside the City to reflect what you’ve used).

8. From this result, subtract 14.

9. The remainder is the number of ASPs you lose.

Weather (6.6) affects movement attrition. In the Mid-October-to-November game-turn of each year, add 2 to each movement attrition roll; in the Winter turns, add 3. The Heat event, when in play, also increases the likelihood of attrition.

Yes, it sounds a bit complex, but in practice it’s not. But it’s crucial to the game, so be sure to spend some time getting a handle on this system. The procedure will seem extremely easy roughly the fourth time you do it.

Leaders and their Commands [5.2]

Each version of the game has its own command rules. You simply must understand how this work, although it gets really tricky (but also great fun) only with multi-player games of the First Crusade.

Two important factors come into play for command: the rank of the leader, and the fraction the ASPs belong to. Leaders have a rank ranging from 3 stars (highest rank) down to 1 start (lowest). The rule is simple: no leader may ever command more ASPs than the next highest ranked leader. So if the 3-starred leader of a faction has an army of 15 ASP, say, the 2-starred leader of that same faction can be in command of only 14 ASP, and the 1-starred leader only 13 ASP. The problem is that it’s extremely easy for army sizes to change (battle losses, attrition, dropping off units for garrison duty, random events), so you have to watch this carefully. In the First Crusade, incorrect army sizes can actually paralyze a faction.

For 2C and 3C, command is quite easy. Each 3-starred or 2-starred Frankish leader can command forces from any of the Frank factions you want. 1-starred leaders are restricted to commanding their own faction’s ASPs. (But this can change if you get the “Dissension Among the Franks” event in 3C, so be prepared).

In both 2C and 3C, the Frank factions are divided as per the scenario instructions. The Saracen player in 2C has two factions—the Mosul Turks and the South Syrians—and they are always kept completely separate. In 3C, the Saracen player has no factions, so the Franks need to pay attention only to leader ranks.

In 1C, ranks and factions cause numerous difficulties, especially in multiplayer games. Basically, any 3-starred leader can command any faction’s lesser-ranked leaders, but it gets truly interesting when you want a 3-starred leader of one faction to act as the Overall Leader of an army containing another faction’s 3-starred leader. You can do this, but you have to plan it during the Army Assignment Phase (not at any other time), even though such leaders can join together in sieges, assaults, and battle defense. See 5.2 and 5.3 in the 1C rulebook, as well as all sections with specific multiplayer rules, to see how this works.

How to Fight Land Battles [7.0]

When two enemy forces occupy the same space, a Land Battle is possible. Indeed, if you move into an enemy-occupied space and the enemy force does not Withdraw, you have no choice but to fight. However, you may start an Activation or an individual movement segment of an Activation (i.e., after succeeding at Continuation) in such a space without necessarily initiating Battle: you may instead simply do nothing, or move away, or perform activities such as assaulting a City or Castle. Here let’s assume that you want Battle.

The Attacker is the Army that initiates Battle. The Defender is the other force (an army or a force of leaderless ASPs).

There are two types of Land Battles in Onward: Full Battles, which both sides can conduct; and Harassment Attacks, available only to the Muslim/Saracen player. We’ll deal with these one at a time, since they’re quite different from one another.

Harassment Attacks (7.1) allow the Muslim/Saracen player to launch numerous small attacks, attempting to knock out only a few enemy ASPs each time. They work this way:

1. A Muslim/Saracen force enters a space occupied by a Crusader/Frank Army, as long as it’s not in a Town, a City, or, in 2C/3C, a Castle space.

2. The Crusader/Frank now checks for Western Aggression by subtracting the Muslim/Saracen’s leader’s Campaign Rating from the Crusader/Frank leader’s and rolling a die. If the result is equal to or less than the difference between the two ratings (although rolling a “1” always makes this happen), Western Aggression occurs and the Harassment Attack is over. It’s now a Full Battle.

3. If there’s no Western Aggression, the Muslim/Saracen player rolls a die. He then compares the two leader’s Campaign Ratings. If his leader’s is higher, he adds the difference between the two ratings to the die-roll result; if his is lower, he subtracts it. He then finds the modified result on the Harassment Attack Resolution Table to see what happens.

Full Battles (7.2) are pitched battles. They work as follows:

1. See if the Defending player wants to Withdraw (see “How to Withdraw”, below). If not, there’s a Battle.

2. If the Battle is in a Town space, see if the defending player wants to get the Town benefit (~1 to the die-roll in 1C, ~2 in 2C/3C).

3. Add up the ASPs for each side and express them as a ratio, Attacker:Defender. 24:10 is 2:1; 26:10 is 3:1, 10:24 is 1:2, 10:25 is 1:3. The high number in the ratio gives the die-roll modifier for the battle, positive if the attacker has more ASPs, negative if the defender does. So the examples here would be +2, +3, -2, -3.

4. Both players roll on their Formation Table for that particular crusade. They then cross-reference the two formations on the Formation Adjustment Table (there’s only one of these). This gives the Formation die-roll modifier for the Battle roll. It also determines if the Crusader/Frank army gets to use his Armored Knights points (if he has any).

5. Look at the bottom of the Battle Results Table to see if any other modifiers apply. Note that some of these depend on other decisions. See the individual rules sections (here and/or in the Rulebooks) for these situations.

6. Roll two dice. Apply the modifiers from #2-#4 above to get the final Battle roll. Cross-reference this final result on the Battle Results Table. The number to the left shows the percentage of Attacker ASPs lost; the number on the right the percentage of Defender ASPs lost. Fractions are rounded up for whichever side...
suffered the higher percentage and rounded down for the side that suffered the lower—see the Battle Loss Calculation Table. If it’s a Draw (both suffering the same percentage), round all fractions up.

7. Whoever loses the higher percentage loses the Battle; the other side wins. If the same percentage, it’s a draw.

8. The Losing force may always retreat. If it suffers double the attacker’s losses, however, it has no choice—it must retreat. If it must but can’t, the Attacker rolls a die and the Defender stays in place but loses that number of ASPs. To retreat, the force moves one space away from the Battle, but not along the connection the other force used to get to that space, and rolls for Retreat Attrition (see the “Attrition” section below).

9. If the Winner was the active player, he may roll for Continuation if he wishes. If he wasn’t the active player (this happens mostly in interception), or he didn’t win, his Activation is finished.

How to Withdraw [7.2C]
Whenever a Full Battle is initiated, the Defending Army decides if he wants to Withdraw. It may not do so if it’s a leaderless Army, or if it’s in a Town space whose defensive benefit it wants to use, or if it’s conducting a Full Siege, or if it’s a Muslim/Saracen Army that has triggered Western Aggression. In all other cases, the defending player simply moves his Army to an adjacent space, as long as that space is unoccupied or friendly, and as long as it doesn’t use the connecting line by which the Active force entered the current space. There’s no die roll for Withdrawal; it’s always automatically successful. The Withdrawing army gets a Demoralized marker on top of it (leaderless ASPs may never Withdraw), and rolls for Withdrawal Attrition (see the section on “Attrition” below).

The Demoralized marker stays there until the player decides, at the start of a subsequent Activation, to remove it; he can do so and then immediately roll for Continuation. In the meantime, with the Demoralized marker on top, the Army may not enter an enemy-occupied space or even, in 1C, a space containing another faction’s Army (even if friendly). But a demoralized Army may continue to Withdraw as often as it wishes, as long as it has a space to Withdraw to (and as long as Withdrawal is possible).

How to Intercept [6.4]
If you have an army with a leader inside a City space, you may attempt to intercept an enemy army that enters that city’s Entry space. Roll a die; if the result is equal to or less than your leader’s campaign rating, the interception succeeds (if higher, you just stay where you are) and your army moves immediately into the Entry space and becomes the attacker in a battle against the moving force. If you already have an army in the Entry space when the active army moves in, you may attempt to have the army in the city intercept in order to join forces in the battle. If you succeed, they attack together; if you fail, the active army conducts its battle adding 2 to its battle diceroll (reflecting the botched combined forces operation).

How Towns Work [8.1]
Each Town begins the game either occupied or unoccupied. If occupied, the faction already there controls it—place a Control marker there, with the Town side up (the side with the white background). You take control of an unoccupied Town by moving a force of any size into it and Stopping. If you move a force into an already occupied Town that you don’t control, you may take control if the controlling player Withdraws from the space, or if he gives you permission (1C only), or if a Battle results in the force in the Town being destroyed or retreated. It’s entirely possible for you to be in the Town space but not in control of the Town itself.

A force attacked in a Town that it controls may use the Town in defense: the Town gives a –1 die-roll modifier in 1C and a –2 in 2C/3C. Again, you could be in a Town space but not control it, in which case you may not use it for defense (unless permitted by the controlling player in 1C). Nor do you get the benefit if you activate an Army in a Town space and you attack another force in that space, whether or not you control the Town—only defenders can possibly benefit from the Town.

Apart from the Battle DRM, there are two other points to note about Towns. First, neither Armored Knight points nor Harassment Attacks may not be used against forces in a Town space. Second, Towns are not subject to Sieges, Assaults, or Destruction, but they are subject to being Ravaged. See “How Cities Work, immediately following.

How Cities and Castles Work [8.2]
This is possibly the most important system in the game. While by no means difficult to learn—and second-nature after only a few plays, the rules for conducting actions against cities and castles provide numerous options and are rich in detail. That’s because sieges were a crucial part of warfare during the Crusades, and cities and castles were paramount in the strategic plans of both sides. Here we outline the rules for actions against cities, but many of the ideas are identical for dealing with castles—see the “How Castles Work” section for the differences.

Cities consist of both the City space itself and the City Entry space to which it connects. If you control the City, you may use both of these spaces. In 1C, you may also do so if the owning player gives you permission to use them. If you don’t control the City, you have to work from the Entry space instead. On the one hand, the Entry space is nothing more than another Point; you may move through it if it’s unoccupied, you may fight Battles there, and you acquire an Attrition point when you move into it. On the other hand, the Entry space is where you have to be in order to start a Siege, Assault, Ravage the city, or attempt Treachery or Surrender in 1C games.

Each city has a Siege Defense Rating (SDR). The SDR determines how large an army is needed to besiege the city (see “Sieges”, below), and the SDR number is also the number of Resources the city can provide (see “How Resources Work”). The SDR is affected only if the city is destroyed (see “Destroying a City”)—it is never affected by sieges or assaults.

There’s no such thing as an empty City in this game. In addition to ASPs that might be in the City space, every City contains, at all times, a 1-ASP Intrinsic Garrison belonging to the faction who con-
trolls that City. The control marker, flipped to its City side, automatically represents the Intrinsic Garrison (i.e., if you see a City Control marker, it means there’s a 1-ASP Intrinsic Garrison there). When you capture a City, you remove 1 ASP from the capturing army and place the City Control marker—this is mandatory, and you can never get the ASP back.

Castles exist only in the Second and Third Crusade scenarios. They work nearly identically to cities, except for the following. They do not have entry spaces (you conduct sieges, assaults, ravaging, etc. from the Castle space itself). Besieging them requires ASPs only three times the SDR, not five times as with Cities. Both sides roll only one die for Siege Attrition in a Castle siege. Castles have a maximum garrison of 10 ASP (including the intrinsic garrison). Finally, Castles do not provide Resources.

(a) Ravaging a City [8.3G]
Whenever you’re in a City Entry space with an Army of at least 10 ASP, you may Ravage the city. Ravage happens at the end of the Army’s movement or, if it hasn’t moved yet, as its entire movement. You may roll for Continuation after Ravaging. Ravaging immediately lowers the Resource Points available in the City to zero. Put a ‘0 Resources’ marker and a “Ravaged” marker beside the city, and a “Ravager” marker on the Army who just did the ravaging. Being the Ravager can have an attrition benefit; see the Attrition section below.

The point to Ravaging a city is to eliminate its Resources, and therefore its ability to recover from attrition losses. In the Attrition Phase of each game-turn, each Ravaged city must undergo Ravaged Attrition and, if under siege, a worsened Siege Attrition. Not only is the die-roll for Siege Attrition modified to make it worse for the defender, the defender has no Resources available to negate losses. Then again, the besieging Army also has a worse time of it during the Attrition Phase, once past the first such phase after doing the Ravaging.

During the Recovery Phase of each game-turn, Ravaged markers flip over to become Ravaged-Remove markers, unless the city is under siege. The Recovery Phase after that, the Ravaged-Remove marker is removed. While either type of Ravaged marker is there, the City cannot recover its Resources.

(b) Sieges [8.3A, 8.3C, 8.3D]
You put a city under siege primarily to destroy the garrison through attrition and to make your assaults more effective. To start a Siege, get an army into the Entry space. If you move into the space, you may roll for continuation and, if successful, start the Siege and place the Siege marker. If you start an activation in the Entry space, you may simply place the Siege marker as your entire Activation. In either case, the Activation is Finished.

To start a siege, you need an army in the Entry space with at least as many ASPs as five times the city’s Siege Defense Rating. If your army’s size ever drops below 5X the SDR, the siege is over. The siege also ends if you move away from the Entry space for any reason, if the besieged army sorties and you take a higher percentage of losses, if all defending ASPs are eliminated through assault and/or siege attrition losses, or if you capture the city by surrender or treachery (1C only).

When you start a siege, and every activation while it’s still on, you declare if it’s a Full Siege or a Partial Siege (and you place the corresponding marker). You need the same number of ASPs for both sieges, but those ASPs help and hurt you in different ways for other purposes. A Full Siege lets you use all of your ASPs for an assault, but if you’re attacked by a relief force from outside you may only use half your ASPs to defend. A Partial Siege works in reverse. You may not withdraw from battle or retreat afterwards if you’re in a Full Siege.

Each Siege has a Commanding Leader, who conducts all siege operations. In the two-player versions of the game, all leaders in the Entry space are part of the sieges and are commanded by this leader. See the Multiple-Force Siege rules in the 1C rules for the intricacies of multiplayer play in Sieges.

Siege Attrition takes place in the Attrition Phase for every city under siege. Both players roll two dice and apply any applicable modifiers listed below the Siege Attrition Table. The result is the number of ASP lost. However, each side may spend 2 Resources to nullify the loss of each ASP. The besieged force gets these Resources from the city itself, assuming it has any left. The besieging army draws them from any city or cities within a Limited Line of Communication (see “Lines of Communication”, below).

If your city is under Siege, you may send an army to attempt Siege Relief. You can either fight the besieging army in a straight fight—see above for how many ASPs the besieger may use—or you may attempt to have the army inside the city (as long as it has a leader) attempt to join your relief force in the fight. See 8.3D for how this works—there are numerous possibilities, depending on the situation.

(c) Assaults [8.3B]
You assault a city from its entry space. Unlike sieges or ravaging, there is no minimum number of ASPs required for an assault, but the more the better—the Assault Table shows the die-roll modifiers applied for the comparison between the attacker and defender ASP totals. The idea is to amass sufficient forces in the assault to cause casualties to the defender and damage to the city, both of which the table results show.

Cities take damage in the form of Assault Points; place an Assault Points marker on the city showing the current number inflicted. When the Assault Point total equals the city’s SDR, the city falls to the attacker. Note that Assault Points don’t actually lower the SDR itself (nor does anything else, except actually destroying the City—covered a bit later).

The Assault Points remain in place as long as the city is under siege or as long as a the attacker keeps an army in the entry space with at least as many ASPs as the city’s SDR; once that’s no longer the case, one Assault Point is removed immediately and three in each subsequent Recovery Phase.

If you roll high enough on your assault, the defender can lose ASPs.
However, depending on the SDR of the city, one or more of the losses might not occur. After you place the new Assault Points marker, subtract the number of Assault Points from the city’s SDR; the result is the number of ASPs that are protected by the walls.

In multiplayer games, assaults work somewhat differently if armies belonging to multiple factions are in the entry space. See 8.3B in the 1C rules for what happens in such a case.

**Checking for Attrition [6.3B, 6.3C]**

Attrition was a key ingredient of the campaigns of the Crusades period, and Onward uses numerous types of attrition to reflect this. Movement Attrition (determined after each land movement) is dealt with in its own section of these rules, as are two of the four types that occur during the Attrition Phase, Siege Attrition and Fleet Attrition. The other two types are Point Attrition and Ravaged Attrition.

Point Attrition happens when an army ends the Operations Phase on a point rather than in a controlled town, castle space, city, or entry space. First, you automatically remove 1 ASP from the army. Next, you add the attrition rating of the point (the number in the circle) to the tens digit of the number of ASPs remaining to obtain the Forage Rate of the point. Now, you roll a die. If the result is lower than the Forage Rate, you lose ASPs equal to the difference.

Ravaged Attrition occurs in towns, castles, or cities (or their entry spaces) currently bearing a Ravaged or Ravaged Remove marker. It works exactly as if you were doing point attrition in a point with an attrition rating of 1. The intrinsic garrison of a city or castle is eliminated only after all other ASPs.

Withdrawal Attrition and Retreat Attrition (6.3B) are lesser versions of Point Attrition. When an army withdraws or retreats into a point with an attrition rating of 2 or higher, roll a die. If the result is less than the attrition rating, the army loses ASPs equal to the difference.

**Getting Reinforcements and Replacements [5.5]**

In the First Crusade, the Crusader factions get no reinforcements or replacements at all. Zero. The Frank player gets no replacement ASPs in the Second or Third Crusades, but in the Third Crusade they do get some reinforcements. But for the most part, what the Crusaders have is what the Crusaders get.

The Muslim/Saracen side is under no such restrictions, except in the Second Crusade (when they get neither replacements nor reinforcements). The Muslim factions get extra ASPs in the First Crusade both by Recruiting and by playing a Muslim Reinforcements Event card, while the Saracen player can get them in the Third Crusade by electing to include one or more Saracen Reinforcement Activation markers in the Activation Pool. When he draws each such marker, he rolls on the Saracen Reinforcement Table to see how many ASPs he gets and where they’re placed.

**How Fleets Work [9.0]**

Fleet counters are double-sided: one side shows 2 Naval Strength Points (NSP), which all fleets start with, the other side shows 1 (meaning the fleet has taken a loss). When activated, a fleet can move up to three Sea Zones. They always move in the Sea Zones; they never enter ports. Fleets are activated in the First Crusade by the Crusader Fleets Activation card and in the Third Crusade by drawing a Fleet marker. The Second Crusade doesn’t use fleets.

If you have fleets in a sea zone with a besieged port, the fleets can blockade that port (if you’re the besieger) or help relieve siege attrition (if you’re the defender)—see the DRMs on the Siege Attrition Table. In addition, each fleet can carry up to five ASPs in a naval transport mission (9.5); the ASPs must start the fleet activation in a controlled port and may then transport to another port (controlled or uncontrolled) up to three sea zones away.

**Naval Combat**

Naval Combat (9.6) occurs when both players have fleets in the same sea zone, and the non-activate player chooses not to withdraw his fleets to an adjacent zone. Each player adds up his NSPs and rolls that many dice; each result of 5 or 6 eliminates an enemy NSP (and possibly some ASPs as well if they’re being transported). The fleets stay in that sea zone after the battle is over.

If you have Fleets, you must check for **Fleet Attrition** (9.2) in the Attrition Phase. Fleet attrition is tied to the Fleet Support Capacity of your controlled ports. Deep Ports (the ones with a circled anchor) can support an unlimited number of fleet counters; regular ports can support only 4 ships (note that this is fleets, not NSPs), and only 1 fleet in Winter game-turns. If you have more fleet counters in a sea zone than the capacity of your controlled ports in that zone, you roll a die for each fleet counter. On a 4-6, the fleet loses 1 NSP (so it either flips to its “1” side or is eliminated); on a 1-3, the fleet must move any distance to a sea zone where you have the capacity to support it. If there is no such place, the fleet is eliminated.

**How Resources Work [10.2-10.5]**

At the beginning of each scenario, each city provides Resources equal to its SDR. As the game progresses, these Resources are spent and replenished. You can spend Resources to nullify movement attrition and siege attrition (see those sections), and for purposes such as Treachery in the First Crusade. Towns and Castles never provide Resources.

To spend Resources, the leader or army requiring them has to be within a Limited Line of Communications (see that section) to a City. Place a Resources marker beside the City space on the map denoting how many Resources are remaining. Cities bearing a Ravaged or Ravaged-Remove marker have zero Resources. Cyprus and Fatimid Egypt can provide Resources in the First Crusade: see the 1C rules.

In the Recovery Phase, each city recovers all its Resources (remove the marker) unless it has a Ravaged or Ravaged-Remove marker on it.

**How Lines of Communications Work [10.1]**

Lines of Communication are necessary for spending Resources and for some victory conditions. Onward uses three types of Line of Communication: Unlimited, Limited, and Naval. An Unlimited LOC is a path of any distance to a city you control (or have permission to use in 1C); a Limited LOC is a path of no more than 10 attrition points to such a city. A Naval LOC is a path of no more than 3 Sea Zones to a Deep Port space you control; either of the other two types of LOC can include one Naval LOC. The land path may not include enemy forces or enemy-controlled towns or cities (or city entry spaces).
2.0 QUICK-START VIGNETTES

The following “vignettes”, as we’ve chosen to call them, are essentially situations based on playtests rather than (as we do with scenarios) on historical force positions. Their purpose is to help you and your opponent learn the game in a limited game setting with equally limited objectives. They play in about 60-90 minutes and they make it easier to jump into the full scenarios.

Note: Thanks to Michael Gouker for thinking of the idea of the vignettes as learning scenarios in the first place, and for designing and testing them.

(2.1) Vignette from the First Crusade

Number of Players
This is a two player game. One player plays the Muslims and one player plays the Crusaders.

Game Length
There are 3 turns. Each turn has 13 activations. There are 6 Crusader activations and 7 Muslim activations. The number of activations is listed in the description of the forces.

Map Restrictions
The game is played east of Modena and space B6. Also, no armies can venture south or west of the road that runs from E8 to B6. This means that the only entrances for the Mosul Turk box are E8 and D3. It also means that Antioch, Harenc, and Alexandretta are out of play.

Initial Dispositions and Activations
Not all factions are in play. There are no initial resources except the SDR of the cities themselves.

- **Sicilian Normans**: Bohemond of Taranto; Tancred of Taranto; 30 ASP, 1 AK marker. Bohemond gets 2 Activation Cards per turn. Tancred gets 1 Activation Card per turn.
- **Germans**: Godfrey of Bouillon; Baldwin of Boulogne; 43 ASP, 2 AK marker. Godfrey has 2 Activation Cards per turn. Baldwin receives 1 Activation Card per turn.

Balancing:
To make the game easier for the Crusaders, add:

- **Northern Franks and Normans**: Stephen, Count of Blois, 10 ASP, 1 Activation Card per turn.
- **Robert, Count of Flanders**: 30 ASP, 4 AK marker, 2 Activation Cards per turn.

Only two Muslim Factions play:

The Northern Syrians:
- In Aleppo: Ridwan, Emir of Aleppo; 20 ASP, 1 ASP Ctrl marker, 2 Activation Cards per turn.
- In Birejek: 1 ASP, 1 Ctrl marker.
- In Aintab: 1 ASP, 1 Ctrl marker

The Mosul Turks:
- In Samosata, Hasan, Emir of Cappadocia; 25 ASP, 1 ASP Ctrl, 2 Activation Cards
- In Edessa, Balduk, Emir of Samosata; 12 ASP, 1 ASP Ctrl, 1 Activation Card
- Melitene: 2 ASP, 1 ASP Ctrl
- Raban: 1 ASP, 1 Ctrl

Turk Reinforcements: Kerbogha, Atabeg of Mosul; 50 ASP, 2 Activation Cards. Kerbogha only enters play in turn 3. He may take no actions—not even recruitment—until turn 3.

Balancing for Muslims:
Yaghi appears at D8 or B6 with 10 ASP in turn 2. Yaghi has 1 Activation Card.

If this is not enough help, allow the vignette to go 4 turns instead of 3 turns and allow Kerbogha to raise reinforcements in turn 2.

Victory Conditions:
- Edessa is worth 10 VP
- Aleppo is worth 10 VP
- Melitene is worth 1 VP
- Samosata is worth 1 VP

The winner is the player with the most victory points. In testing, the game was mainly a draw, though in games with a winner, the Muslims most often were victorious.

(2.2) Vignette from the Second Crusade

This was inspired by an insane playtest game of the Second Crusade. It starts off with the Crusaders almost winning. They hold Jerusalem and they are about to give a death blow to Damascus. However, in their moment of triumph, Nur ed-Din has appeared, and the Crusaders must choose between protecting Jerusalem and crushing Damascus. The objective of the game is to practice combat, but as with everything in Onward, sieges and assaults figure in as well. In the Second Crusade vignette, the Muslim forces are far stronger tactically than in the First Crusade vignette.

Number of Players
This is a two player game. One player plays the Saracens and one player plays the Frankss.

Game Length
Initially, Nur ed-Din gets 1 activation. After Nur ed-Din, Baldwin is activated. Finally Nur ed-Din is activated again. This is the end of turn 1.

Then, there follow 2 complete turns. Each turn has 8 activation chits, 4 for each side. Do not use the event chit.

Map Restrictions
The game is played south of the road from Sidon to Damascus, inclusive (that is, you may use the road, but not go north of the road).

Initial Dispositions and Activations

Crusaders:
- In the City Entry Space of Damascus: Baldwin III, 10 Latin ASP, 1 AK; Conrad III, 20 German ASP, 2 AK; Louis VII, 29 French ASP, 2 AK
- 5 Latin ASP in Jerusalem
- 2 Latin ASP in Beaufort
- 2 Latin ASP in Karak Castle
- 2 Latin ASP in Krak de Montreal
- 2 Latin ASP in Ascalon
- 1 Latin Control ASP in Nablus, Haifa, Caesarea, Tiberias, Acre, Tyre, Sidon, Gaza, Hebron, Jaffa, Ramah, Arsuf, and Jericho.
Balancing for Crusaders:
Baldwin gets 2 activations in turn 1, the same number as Nur ed-Din. Muslims are not allowed to recruit.

Saracens:
- In Damascus: Unur, Regent of Damascus, 10 ASP, 1 Control ASP. Damascus has 0 resources, is Ravaged Remove, and has taken 3 Assault Points.
- In City Entry Space of Tyre, Nur ed-Din is located with Said ed-Din and 40 ASP.

Balancing for Saracens:
Each turn Saracen Reinforcement chit is added for free. In addition ed-Din holds Sidon at the beginning of the game (there are no Latin ASPs there in this case).

Victory Conditions:
For the Saracens, Jerusalem held at the end of turn 2 signifies victory.
For the Crusaders to win, they must hold Jerusalem and Damascus at the end of turn 2.
In testing, the Saracens won one game. All other games were draws.

(3.0) PLAY NOTES
The First Crusade
Crusaders
As the Crusader player in the First Crusade, the simple and inescapable fact of life is that your armies are dwindling while the Muslim armies keep getting replacements and reinforcements. You start strong, but if you don’t exercise caution in marching and fighting, you’ll soon find yourself whittled down to the point where you’re on the tactical defensive at all times, unable to force enemy-held positions and doing little but wait for the Muslim player to do something that makes him vulnerable. And as that happens, there’s absolutely nothing you can do to get more troops. You’ll quickly discover, even a 2-ASP attrition loss often feels extremely painful.

That said, you don’t have all the time in the world. Fourteen turns might seem like a lot, but it’s not—and if the Uncertainty card comes up at the wrong time, you might get only twelve. The first decision is what to do about the north: Antioch, Aleppo, and Edessa. You can do it all, but think hard about how to divide up your forces. Ridwan will likely be recruiting his brains out over in Aleppo (or wherever you chase him to), but the big worry is Kerbogha. Not only is he as good a leader as anyone you have on your side, he also has nearly as large an army as your best, and he can keep getting more ASPs through recruiting or the play of those nasty Muslim Reinforce-
need them, in fact, until they’re 40+ strong. They can be an ex-

tremely significant ally.

Watch the Crusader victory point totals at all times. You don’t have
to defeat them in battle, you have to prevent them from taking key
locations. Jerusalem is obviously key, but even if you lose it, set to
work taking back everything else. The Crusaders can’t hold every-
thing; and you will always be in a position to start reclaiming 3- and
4-VP cities. Do so, and keep your opponent on the edge of losing
the game for as long as you can.

The Second Crusade
This scenario is fast, fun, and balanced. As the Franks, you’re ham-
strung by mediocre leaders, but you have to try to take as many
coastal cities as you can and hold Antioch. As the Saracens, you
have one superb leader in Nur-ad-Din, and you need to use him to
do most of your dirty work early on. Get the victory points early for
the towns and cities in Edessa, and then work your way south. But
other than that, we’ll leave this one to you, because this one has the
chance to be a much-played scenario and we don’t want to tip your
hand.

The Third Crusade: Historical
Classic battles in this one between Richard and Saladin. As the Frank-
ish player, pick your battles with Richard in charge, using his supe-
rior leadership and his AK points to defeat work for him. But keep
as many Frankish ASPs alive as you can, because the Saracens have
the luxury of reinforcements and you don’t. One possibility is to try
to keep an army between Saladin and the Fatimid box; most of the
reinforcements appear in the Fatimid box, and you want to try to
keep them out of the fray as long as possible. Do anything you pos-
sibly can to delay Saladin by forcing him to fight (even small battles)
and roll for continuation. He will usually have three activations per
turn; you must slow him down.

As the Saracen player, you have the advantage of being able to ha-
rass the Franks—do so, and take out as many ASPs that way as you
can. And use the withdrawal rule to your benefit: each time you
withdraw, the Frank player must roll for continuation, and sooner
or later even Richard will fail. As long as you can keep the Franks
from the main cities, or keep him bottled up inside whatever cities
he takes, you can usually stem the tide. And don’t forget that Saladin
isn’t the only leader you have.

The Third Crusade: Barbarossa
This one is horribly difficult for the Saracen player, because the
scenario is based on the possibility of an early advance by a truly
enormous German force that historically could possibly have tipped
the scales significantly in the Franks’ favor. Your main hopes are
(a) that he will lose 75% of his army to attrition, and (b) that Frederick
Barbarossa will die. If you’re playing a two player game, you might
try it once with the option that lets you ignore the “Frederick Dies”
event, but if you’re the Saracen player you don’t want to play that
way very often. He’s simply too dangerous. And if Frederick is still
in good shape when Richard makes it into the game, the Franks can
ride roughshod over you.

As the Frankish player in this scenario, just get Frederick south
with a decent sized army and head for Jerusalem. Capture it and
hold on while you wait for reinforcements. And don’t despair when
you see up to 15-20 ASPs disappear with a single movement attri-
tion roll. You have plenty to spare. Just be careful not to be so reck-
lessly as to lose all your armored knights.

(4.0) DEVELOPMENT NOTES
Like all games, Onward Christian Soldiers underwent numerous
changes during its two years of development (we started in October
2004), but some things worked so well from the start that changes
weren’t even considered. The most astonishing of these was the
mysterious figure of 14 that underlies all movement attrition rolls.
This is precisely the kind of number that, while specifically de-
gined to produce certain results, often gets modified in develop-
ment, simply because it’s such an easy way to make things happen.
But not only did we not change it, we didn’t even consider doing so.
It just worked.

The basics of the combat system also got through development un-
scathed. We adjusted only a few percentages on the Battle Results
Table, and we added or changed a few of the modifiers, but the
methods of calculating odds and losses are the same now as they
were at the beginning. The Battle Formation Tables, a holdover from
the original The Crusades game in S&T, remained the same in prin-
ciple although it underwent change in content. A few discussions
took place about whether or not formations should be chosen by the
players rather than rolled for randomly (within the parameters of
leadership ability, that is), but the simple explanation that what the
leaders do once they enter battle is beyond the control of the player
proved satisfactory to all.

The first major change to the game came early, with a system based
on movement points replaced by the current system, in which move-
ment is potentially unlimited with multiple continuations, but sub-
ject to increasing attrition. The system is similar to that used in the
designer’s Ancient World series (Rise of the Roman Republic
and Carthage), but the attrition system here it takes on a much different
feel. This system, too, worked very well right off the bat. Suddenly
it was possible for the Crusaders to march all the way to Jerusalem
in their first activation, as long as they were willing to lose practi-
cally their entire armies to attrition in order to do so. The question
then became: can the Crusaders make it to Antioch in the autumn of
1097, which historically they did?

Here the leadership system became a major element, since it be-
came necessary for players to focus on which leaders could control
which forces, and how to ensure that senior leaders were always in
charge of more forces than their subordinates. At one point we had
a means of tracking precisely how many ASPs were on the map for
each faction, and a fairly elaborate system of determining what per-
centage of those ASPs each leader could command. But in fairly
quick order we pared it down to the system the game has now, which
while much simpler mechanically still allows for the possibility of
command paralysis that the game required on a simulation level.
You can spend up to two entire game-turns simply getting your forces
organized properly, especially if a faction’s highest-ranking leader
starts losing his army. And with multiplayer games, command can
become a true nightmare strategically even though the mechanics
aren’t difficult to implement.

Only one significant sub-system got dropped: Field Treasuries. When
we started playtesting, the major-ranking leader of each faction used
to carry around a field treasury, collecting bezants from captured
cities and after forcing a retreat by a leader who also had a field
treasury. But as much as the idea appealed, we could never get it to
work the way it was intended. Ultimately, it became a rule that most
players tried to ignore, so it bit the dust. It was also at this point that
we dropped the multi-tiered city system (Level 1 up through Level
4) and tied each city’s resource level to its siege defense rating. It
proved an effective solution and a simpler set of rules.

A sub-system that came relatively late to the game was the Armored

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Knights. They’d been there in the form of a couple of battle cards, and had been factored into the battle formations, but their obvious presence in the period practically demanded that they have a rule of their own (and only the First Crusade used cards, so the knights weren’t even part of the later scenario as they should have been and later became). So in came the Armored Knight (AK) points. The minute they made their appearance, the last puzzle in the combat system came together. With this stroke, we had the benefits of the knights and their bound up with the revised formation tables and their drawback a significant part of the movement attrition system. They instantly forced the Muslim/Saracen player to consider his movements more carefully, and they added immeasurably to the relationship between Harassment Attacks and Western Aggression.

By far the most development time, however, was spent on the section of the rules called “Actions against Cities” (or “on Cities and Castles” in the 2C/3C rules). It was absolutely crucial to us that sieges felt like sieges—occasionally over quickly, but sometimes long, drawn-out, and demanding true resolve in order to complete them. We kept going back to the historical siege Antioch—eight months of Crusader frustration from fall of 1097 through early summer of 1098 that ended with capture through treachery and was immediately followed by a counter-siege by the Mosul Turks—to see how this could work in game terms. We already had the consequences of capturing Antioch in place, if the game were played with more than one Crusader player: whoever in command of the siege would get to occupy the city and, if still there at game’s end, get the victory points. But we needed to determine how such command would work, how Antioch could eventually fall, and how it could hold on for a long time if all went well. And then we turned to ensure that the capture of Jerusalem could also take place much as it did historically, with too few Crusader forces for an actual siege, but with assaulting the walls and starving the inhabitants allowing for its eventual fall.

The result is what you have now—the careful integration of ravaging, besieging, and assaulting, combined with the possibilities of surrender and treachery. Even near the very end of development, we felt one last tweak necessary: too often, players had captured cities by assault alone, and that proved unsatisfactory—hence the current rule for determining defender losses in the assault, ensuring that something else, either besieging or ravaging, would be needed. The best part of all was that, once learned, the entire system quickly became second-nature for players. It’s detailed—and certainly multiplayer sieges require a look at the rules—but it’s not in any way difficult.

(5.0) A NOTE ON THE TITLE

While this game was in preparation, a few discussions broke out on CSW (www.consimworld.com) and BGG (www.boardgamegeek.com) about the appropriateness of the title. The discussions showed two major arguments: (a) using the song is anachronistic; (b) the song isn’t even about war, let alone the Crusades.

Both arguments are true, at least on the face of it. “Onward Christian Soldiers” was written in England by Sabine Baring-Gould in 1864 (or 1865 according to other sources) as a Whitsunday hymn. On that day, groups of children would march, carrying a cross and banners, to nearby villages. Baring-Gould wanted to provide them with marching music, so he wrote one in fifteen minutes, calling it “Hymn for Procession with Cross and Banners”. Fortunately for later generations of churchgoers, and for this game, the first line of the song became the de facto title, the lyrics of which you’ll find below. Baring-Gould went on to write a great many more things, and at one time had the most books of any English author at the British Museum library than any other English writer. He also had fifteen children, so clearly his prolific tendencies weren’t confined to his pen.

(Then again, apparently at a party he once asked a child, “And whose little girl are you?” only to find out that she was one of his own—one hopes he paid somewhat more attention to his books.)

Actually, it’s only half true that the famous hymn was written in 1864. The music for it—or at least the music by which we know it today—wasn’t published until later. Originally, Baring-Gould had set the song to a Haydn symphony, but in 1871 Arthur Sullivan composed the music now associated with it, entitling it “St. Gertrude” after the wife of a friend. Sullivan refused to remain a one-hit wonder, however; in that same year, he teamed up with W. S. Gilbert to compose a few rather successful operas.

So yes, using the hymn as a title is an anachronism, since the Crusades happened several centuries before the song. But it’s been hardly unusual over the years for book titles to be taken from phrases written long before the composition or the subject of the book—for example, Hemingway used a 17th century poem for a title of a novel set in the Spanish Civil War—so while the anachronism point is valid, the point about inappropriateness can certainly be contended.

As for the point about the hymn not being about war per se, no question about it. But it was written as a marching hymn, and it draws on Biblical phrasing that linked being Christian with being soldiers of Christ, so it obviously evokes warfare. Certainly, a key word in the first line is “as”, in the phrase “marching as to war”, which makes that line metaphoric. But it’s unlikely that anyone has sung the song for the first time without thinking first of soldiers marching, and only later as a metaphor, so again, the real importance of the point can be argued. Here are the lyrics of the first three verses and the chorus:

Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.

Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle see His banners go!

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.

At the sign of triumph Satan’s host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory!
Hell’s foundations quiver at the shout of praise;
Brothers lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

Like a mighty army moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod.
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

It would be easy to map these lyrics against the prevailing themes of the Crusades themselves. But ultimately the product you’re holding in your hands is a game, not a hymn, not a religious tract, not even a novel, so let’s not. In the end, some of you will find the title highly appropriate, others not appropriate at all, but the big questions are whether or not the game system is appropriate to the history and whether or not you’re having a rewarding time playing it. Whatever you decide about these two questions, let us know.

Neil Randall—November 2006

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FURTHER READING

The following list represents only a portion of the works consulted in the design and development of this game. Runciman's work is the classic of Crusades scholarship in English. If you want a starting point for the First Crusade, we recommend Victory in the East. The most readable account of the entire Crusades period is probably The Dream and the Tomb.


