BATTLE OF ACTIUM RULES

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Introduction:

On the 2nd of September, 31 BC Mark Antony and his rival Octavian faced off in a climactic naval battle off the coast of Greece, near a small garrison town called Actium. At a pivotal moment, spotting an opening, Antony’s Egyptian ally Queen Cleopatra broke from the battle and seized her chance to escape back to her homeland. Antony chased after her, abandoning his men and his chances of ruling the Republic.

In this game, players control the naval forces of Mark Antony (red) and his lover Cleopatra (yellow) at the Battle of Actium. Though both are ostensibly on the same side against Octavian (blue), they actually have differing goals, and one of them may win without the other. Antony wishes to win the battle against stacked odds, clearing the way to the helm of a collapsing Roman Republic. Cleopatra, however, sensing that all is lost, seeks to break through the enemy lines and escape back to Egypt on her treasure- barge.

The blue player, Octavian, is Antony’s rival for control of Rome. He controls his vastly larger fleet through a deck of cards. He will endeavor to win the battle for himself by sinking both of his opponents’ flagships.

Victory Conditions:

The game is meant for three players: one controlling the forces of Mark Antony, and one controlling the forces of Cleopatra, and a third player controlling the forces of Octavian. Mark Antony controls the red ships on both flanks, and Cleopatra controls the yellow ships in the center of the board. The blue ships on the left-hand side are Octavian’s forces. Each of the three players has a different victory condition; these are listed below:

Mark Antony wins immediately if half or more of the blue ships are destroyed and his flagship is still alive.
Cleopatra wins immediately if her flagship reaches the far left side of the board.
Octavian wins immediately if both the red and yellow flagships are destroyed.

Setup and Map:
Set up the board according to the picture shown here:

Set aside the blue deck of cards to the left of the game board.

The map is divided into three “sea zones” from north to south, delineated by black lines. Combat is adjudicated on a sea zone by sea zone basis. The sea zones on the map are further divided into hexes. No two ships may occupy the same hex.

**Components:**

Each side has possession of a number of ships. The number above each ship represents how many health points it has. If you are not playing on the VASSAL module, you can place a dice on top of each ship to track its remaining health points.
**Ships**

The regular ships used to conduct naval combat.

**Flagships**

Ships bearing important commanders: Cleopatra (yellow) and Mark Antony (red). Losing your color’s flagship means you cannot win the game. The blue player has no flagship.

**Command Ships**

Special ships that allow the blue player greater control over his fleet. The red and yellow players have no command ships.

**Turn Order and Sequence of Play:**

The turn is composed of 10 phases.

1. Top sea zone red and yellow movement
2. Top sea zone combat phase
3. Top sea zone blue movement
4. Middle sea zone red and yellow movement
5. Middle sea zone combat phase
6. Middle sea zone blue movement
7. Bottom sea zone red and yellow movement
8. Bottom sea zone combat phase
9. Bottom sea zone blue movement
10. Remove Activation Tokens

**Movement for Red and Yellow Ships:**

When red and yellow players move in a sea zone, they may only move one ship at a time, up to three spaces away. Only ships without Activation Tokens in the relevant sea zone may be selected to move. After the red or yellow player has moved a single one of their ships this way, they place an Activation Token next to the ship they chose to move. **If both red and yellow ships are present in the same sea zone, then the player among red and yellow who has more ships in that sea zone resolves their moves first. In the case of a tie, the yellow player moves first.**
It takes two spaces of movement for any ship to pass through a hex containing another ship or a shipwreck. If there is no space for a ship on the other side of a shipwreck or other obstacle, then the ship cannot pass through it.

After the movement for both red and yellow ships has resolved, the phase ends and play proceeds to the next step in the turn sequence.

**Combat Phase**

Once both red and yellow ships have resolved their movements and placed activation tokens in a sea zone, combat occurs between all eligible ships in the indicated sea zone. Combat follows these rules:

All attacks are resolved simultaneously, meaning two ships can sink one another in the same combat.
A ship may only attack enemy ships that are adjacent to them.
Activated and unactivated ships can both attack.
Ships cannot attack “friendly” ships (ships of the same color are friendly, and red and yellow ships are considered friendly to each other). A ship may only make one attack per combat phase.

To begin the phase, the Red, Yellow, and Blue players each select eligible attack targets in the indicated sea zone, and which ships will be making those attacks.

The order for target selection is as follows:

1) **Whichever Red or Yellow player has more ships in the sea zone, with Yellow winning ties.**
2) **The remaining Red or Yellow player.**
3) **The Blue player.**

After this, all attack rolls are resolved simultaneously. **This means it is possible for ships to sink each other at the same time with successful attacks.** To hit with an attack, the attacker must roll a 7 or higher on a 10-sided die. Otherwise, the attack misses. Attacks that successfully hit deal one damage. Ships that have no remaining HP drop shipwreck markers when they die. Shipwrecks cannot be moved, make any attacks, or have attacks allocated to them.

**Blue Ship Movement**

When it is time for blue ships in a sea zone to move, the player controlling blue in that sea zone draws a maneuver card and puts it in the discard pile next to the sea zone. If there is a blue command ship in that sea zone, they may choose to draw a different card and apply the result
of the second card. After performing the action stated on the card, the blue sea zone movement phase ends, and play proceeds to the next step of the turn sequence.

It takes two spaces of movement for any ship to pass through another ship or through a shipwreck. If there is no space for a ship on the other side of a shipwreck or other obstacle, then the ship cannot pass through it.

**Special Rules:**

**Military-Grade Vessels:** Mark Antony’s ships were top-of-the-line military quinqueremes, crewed by able sailors. When rolling attack dice, red and yellow ships add their current health to the die roll.

**Pack Tactics:** Octavian’s ships were more numerous than Mark Antony’s, but lower quality. In battle, their volume meant they could surround the enemy. When rolling attack dice, blue ships add +1 to the die roll for each other blue ship adjacent to the same enemy ship, to a maximum of +2. If, at the end of a blue sea zone movement phase, four or more blue ships in that sea zone are adjacent to a single enemy ship and at least one other blue ship, each blue ship in this configuration can make an attack as though it were the combat phase, applying their usual modifiers.