

Glory to Rome vs. Uchronia

Chudyk's Double Game

At first it just looked like an oddity of publishing. On July, 11th the German source TricTrac-Blog reported that two publishers in France were to license the same game; GLORY TO ROME would appear from Filosofia as La Gloire du Rome and from iello as UCHRONIA. While the Filosofia version, like the German edition from Lookout Games, would be produced under a license from the American Cambridge Games Factory (CGF) and is in fact already on the market, the iello version would be based on a revision by the game author Carl Chudyk, with the most striking difference being that instead of Romans, the game would feature dinosaurs.

UCHRONIA had already been announced for summer 2010. iello described it as a variant of the central game mechanic that Chudyk had used for GLORY TO ROME, but offering more dynamic play and more interaction. This announcement unleashed a wave of speculation on BoardGameGeek, which Ed Carter, Managing Director of CGF, moved to quash, saying that Chudyk had given him a personal assurance that the new game would be significantly different from the old one, and that it was by no means just a copy. On 26th July 2011 the same Ed Carter released a press statement that he had issued a cease and desist order against UCHRONIA's publication.

You need to know the back-story to understand this change of heart. Although Carl Chudyk is credited as sole author for GLORY TO ROME, he is in fact only the co-author. Carter gives a lengthy account of how the two of them developed the original concept to a full game (at www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/678899/cgf-gtr-october-2004-to-june-2007), claiming to have contributed half the ideas. There were business reasons, according to this account, to credit Chudyk as sole author.

In 2007 Chudyk, who had founded the Cambridge Games Factory together with Carter, withdrew from the partnership. The emails published on BoardGameGeek seem to show that there were also private reasons for the decision. Whatever the real story, ever since then the publishing rights to GLORY TO ROME have been held by Carter and the CGF, while Chudyk continues to receive a slice of the license fees.

In 2010 Chudyk returned to the scene after a long absence with INNOVATION

(reviewed in spielbox 5/10). He also took his old design off the back burner, knowing quite well though that he could not publish another GLORY TO ROME. Accordingly he wrote Carter a message on March, 3rd 2010 that "iello is working to ensure that the new game is sufficiently different from the old one." Obviously this was more work than might at first have seemed, since the estimated time of arrival for UCHRONIA was pushed back by a year.

When the rules were then published and the first cards previewed, Carter found that the "sufficient differences" he had been promised were not there. And indeed many cards had the same name and the same functions as in the original game. The cease and desist order was

then finally triggered when iello claimed in the forum on TricTrac.net to possess the rights to GLORY TO ROME – which irked the actual license holder, Filosofia. Carter had to respond to protect his business partners. He has licensed the game in eight countries, with editions in France, Germany and his own edition, but also in Poland, Spain, Italy, Hungary and China!

We would like to have had statements from all parties to the dispute, if only to put Carter's rather prolix account of events into context. Our enquiries, though, either went entirely unanswered (iello), or were met with a brief "no comment" (Carl Chudyk). We particularly regret the latter response, since we had hoped for a few words in explanation about how the author and his (new) publishers are working together. The only one to send us an answer was Ed Carter, who lives in China these days and runs the publishers from there; he didn't want to say anything about current developments, but referred us to his lawyer, who confirmed Carter's version of events in every detail.

GLORY TO ROME is on the market in several languages. At time of going to press on this edition of spielbox, it remains unclear whether UCHRONIA will appear from iello. Both publishers will exhibit at SPIEL Essen, CGF in Hall 4 (Booth 231), iello in Hall 9 (Booth 48). *KMW/sw*



*Laying down a barrage of words:
Ed Carter, Chief of CGF*