

# PLAYBOOK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	34
<b>Scenario Default Setup</b> .....	34
<b>Playing Scenarios</b> .....	35
Map Size .....	35
Multiple Civilizations per Player .....	37
Team Play .....	37
<b>Historical Situation Scenarios</b> .....	38
Sargon I :Scorpions in a Bottle (2 Civilizations).....	38
Lion of Judah (3 Civilizations).....	39
The Sea Peoples (3 Civilizations).....	39
Fire in the East (3 Civilizations).....	39
Balance of Power (3 Civilizations).....	40
Agamemnon (4 Civilizations plus Troy)....	40
Fire on the Steppe (4 Civilizations).....	41
King of the Four Corners of the World (4 Civilizations).....	41
Cyrus the Great & the Rise of Persia (4 Civilizations).....	42
Empires on Horseback (5 Civilizations).....	42
Darius & the Great Rebellion (5 Civilizations).....	42
Successors (5 Civilizations).....	43
<b>Sandbox Situation Scenarios</b> .....	44

# ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS — OF THE MIDDLE EAST



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<b>Solitaire Rules</b> .....	48
NPC Choices .....	48
NPC Card Play .....	49
Solitaire Competition .....	51
NPC Disk Placement .....	52
NPC Mina, Card Draw & VPs ..	55
<b>Challenge Level</b> .....	55
<b>Scenario Crafting</b> .....	56
Exploration Scenario Quick Reference .....	60
Alexander the Great:Conquer (or Defend) the Persian Empire (a Solitaire or Two-Player Historical Scenario).....	61
Rostam (a Solitaire or Two-Player “Legendary” Scenario).....	65
<b>Bonus Setups: Here Come the Romans!</b> .....	67
Mithridates the Great (4 Civilizations).....	67
Rome vs. Parthia (2 Civilizations).....	68
<b>Example of an ACME Turn</b> .....	70
<b>Design Background</b> .....	79
<b>Differences from ACIS</b> .....	80
The “Real” History Behind the Game.....	82
<b>Optional Rule: Cultural Development Tracks</b> .....	83
Select Bibliography .....	86

# INTRODUCTION

Within this Playbook you will find background regarding *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* (ACME)'s design, comparison to its "sister game", *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea* (ACIS), optional rules, and numerous scenarios crafted for all player counts and play styles. All scenarios are playable solitaire as well as with multiple players. For solitaire play, you can choose to run both sides yourself or have one side use an automated "non-player civilization", or "NPC."

Multiplayer scenarios are presented first, followed by the solitaire rules and historical solitaire scenarios. The named scenarios are always historical in nature while the situational scenarios come in two styles: historical or sandbox.

**Design Note:** In sandbox situations players decide among themselves if they wish to pursue a peaceful game of exploration and expansion, a hostile game full of competition, treachery, and a "take that!" environment or any combination of playing styles.

*Note that sandbox games may be Short, Medium, or Long (as noted in the "Game Length" section of the Optional Rules portion of the main Rulebook. (And any game of any length is a complete game).*

*In addition, a selection of Additional Optional Rules may be found at the end of this Playbook; these significantly mollify the randomness and mitigate, at least to an extent, the game's "take that!" environment.*

All Historical Scenarios are intended to be war games played by two or more players and are particularly well suited for solitaire play. Historical scenarios tend to be shorter and feature civilizations hostile to one another from the start. In these scenarios victory is more than just accumulating victory points; it is also one of conquest or survival.

## Setup

The Scenario Default Setup below describes a generic setup procedure, although each scenario will likely contain modifications of one kind or another. Whenever a scenario setup instruction contradicts anything in the basic rules, the scenario always takes precedence.

## Special Rules

The scenarios in this booklet adhere to the basic rules found in the Rulebook except where they specifically differ in the sections that follow. Some of these will also use the solitaire game rules. Whenever a solitaire rule contradicts a basic rule, the solitaire item always takes precedence. Whenever a scenario's special rule contradicts a basic rule or a solitaire rule, the scenario item always takes precedence.

## Scenario Default Setup

**1. Board**—Place the board in the center of the table.



**2. White Disks**—Place the white disks next to the board to form a Supply pile. If the scenario uses anything but a Full Map, see the "Map Size" section on p35 for placement of white disks onto the map to designate the playing area.



**3. Cylinders**—Unless a scenario otherwise indicates, place a cylinder onto the Epoch I space, and another onto the Turn 1 space. Set aside the other cylinders for now.



**4. Player Colors**—Have each player choose the color they would like to play: burnt orange, green, blue, purple, red or yellow. Players take the 50 disks matching their choice and place them on the table in front of themselves to form a "Supply" pile.



**5. Barbarians**—Place the 50 black disks on the table to form a generic Supply pile for the Barbarians.

**6. VP Markers**—Each player places one of their disks in the zero box of the Victory Point Track.

### 7. Choosing Civilizations

**7a**—Each player selects one of the six colored Homeland Blocks, corresponding to their selected color, and then places one of their Supply's colored disks into an opaque container. In games where players will run two or three civilizations, place a unique colored disk corresponding to the number of the game's civilizations into the cup. Draw one disk at random and place it into space 1 of the Civilization Turn Order track.

**7b**—The player whose disk was drawn selects one of the scenario's available civilizations and places that **Civilization Display** card onto the table. The player then places the large block corresponding to the chosen color on the Home Area of the civilization. (Note that some civilizations offer a choice of Home Areas. Unless otherwise specified by the scenario, the player may freely choose from among the options listed on the Display.)

**7c**—Randomly draw another disk from the cup and place it into the next empty space ("2") of the Turn Order track. That player proceeds as in 7b. Continue this process until every color disk has been drawn from the cup.

**Note:** This process is slightly different from *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea*, where each player would select their Home Area and place their initial disks before the next player in the order of the draw chooses their Home Area. This change is necessary as many of the Home Areas in ACME are very close to other Home Areas.

**8. Initial Disk Placement**—The players in turn order perform the following procedure:

Take 12 disks from their supply and distribute them as follows:

- Place 2 into that civilization's Home Area.
- Place 2 into every non-desert Land area adjacent to its Home Area.
- If any remain, place 1 into every Desert and Sea area adjacent to its Home Area.
- If any remain, place disks into empty areas adjacent to an already-occupied area—up to 2 disks per Land area, then up to 1 per Desert or Sea area—and/or place up to 1 more disk into already-occupied areas if no other alternative is available. It is the player's choice where to place these remaining disks should choice be involved.

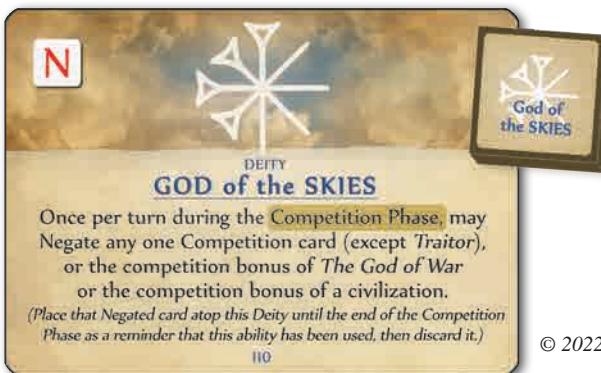
A disk may never be placed into another active civilization's Home Area.

**Note:** This process is slightly different from *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea*, in that in this game disks may be placed adjacent to a Home Area (as many Home Areas are quite close to one another: particularly in the Tigris/Euphrates region), but beware; the player controlling that civilization is more than likely to place disks there as well, thus setting groundwork for a likely competition on the very first turn of play. The preceding free-form set-up instructions could result in different disk placement(s) from those described in ACME's Rulebook (i.e. for Egypt).

If during any step above, the player does not have sufficient disks to fulfill the instruction entirely, they place as many as they can. If, however unlikely, they have more disks than they can place on the board, they will then put the remainder on the "Disks for Growth" section of their Civilization Display. These will become available for placement in the first Growth Phase. *Note that this, too, is different from Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea, where such disks would be forfeit.*

If all players agree, the Freeform setup procedure outlined above can be used for any of the basic scenarios in the ACME Rulebook.

**9. Deity Cards & Temples**—Place the seven Deity Cards face-up next to the board. Place each Deity's associated stickered block atop its card.



**10. Initial Fate Cards**—Remove the eight Event cards from the Fate Deck, then shuffle the remaining Fate cards together. Deal each active civilization 5 of these cards face-down. Then shuffle the Event cards back into the remainder. Place this shuffled stack face-down on the table to form a Draw deck. *You may look at your hand of cards at any time, but keep them secret from your opponent(s)!*

**11. Begin Play**—Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play by performing the first turn's Growth Phase for the civilization randomly selected to go first (per 7a etc.).

## PLAYING SCENARIOS

### Map Size

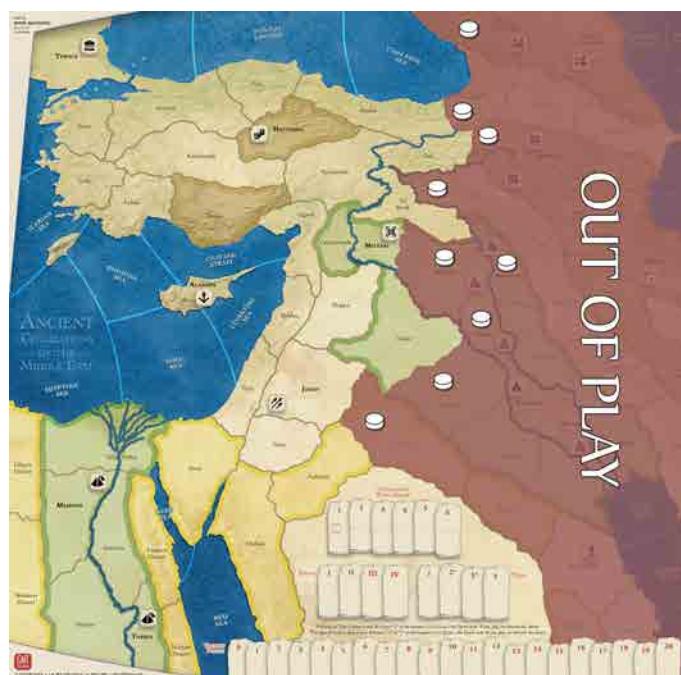
Some scenarios are played across the entire map, while others utilize only a portion of the map. Each scenario will indicate which of the following five map configurations is to be used.

#### Full Map

This uses the map in its entirety. All areas are playable.

#### Abbreviated Western Map

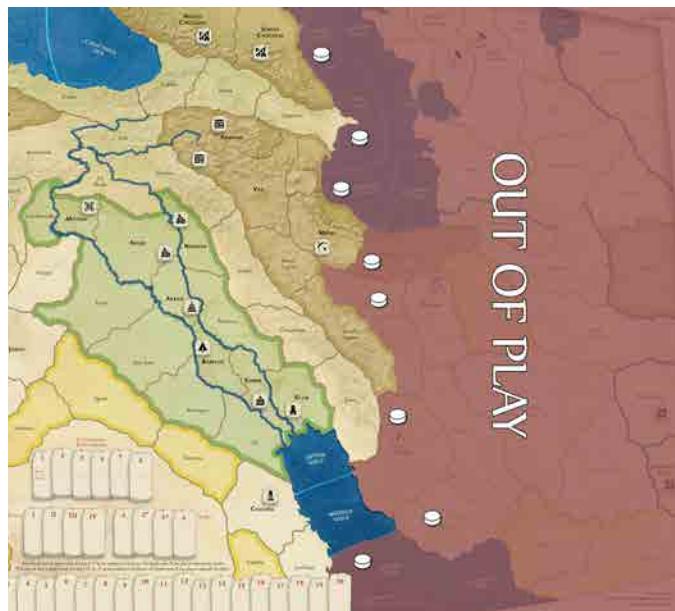
When a scenario calls for use of the Abbreviated Western Map; place a white disk into each of the following 9 areas: North Caucasus, Colchis, Armenia, Jarwan, Nineveh, Assur, Akkad, Dur Kur, Agrae.



This line represents the eastern edge of the map for all rules' purposes. No disk may ever be placed into these marked areas, nor any area east of them, throughout play.

## Western Map

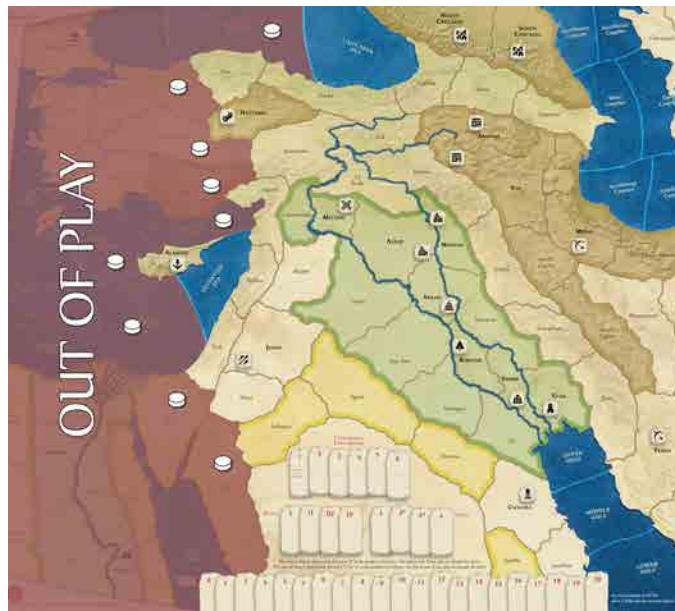
When a scenario calls for use of the Western Map, place a white disk into each of the following 8 areas: Northwest Caspian, West Caspian, Southwest Caspian, Elburz Mountains, Paraetaceni, Persus, Utiana, Lower Gulf.



This line represents the eastern edge of the map for all rule purposes. No disk may ever be placed into these marked areas, or any area east of them, throughout play.

## Eastern Map

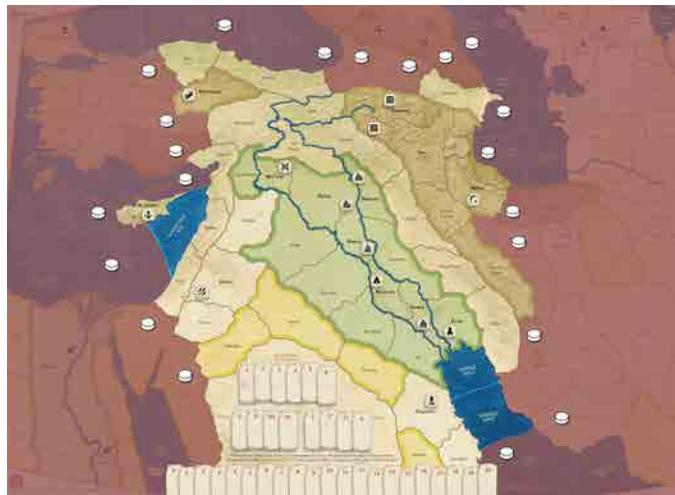
When a scenario calls for use of the Eastern Map, place a white disk into each of the following 9 areas: Pontus Euxinus, Arzawa, Karachuyuk, Tarsus, Cilician Strait, Rhodian Sea, Sinai Sea, Sinai, Midian.



This line represents the western edge of the map for all rules' purposes. No disk may ever be placed into these marked areas, or any area west of them, throughout play.

## Fertile Crescent Map

When a scenario calls for use of the Fertile Crescent Map, place a white disk into each of the areas noted in BOTH the Western and Eastern Maps. Then, in addition, place a white disk into each of the following 4 areas: Caucasus Sea, Colchis, Iberia, South Caucasus.



These three lines represent the eastern, western and northern edges of the map for all rules' purposes. No disk may ever be placed into these marked areas, or any area "outside" of this box, throughout play.

**Design Note:** The more civilizations in play and the smaller the map in use, the more likely—and earlier—direct competition (war) will occur and will occur with greater frequency. Simply put, the more crowded the map, the more likely civilizations will find it necessary to compete for space. Of course, even widely separated civilizations can vex one another by inflicting the torments allowed by the cards. Additionally, a smaller map will constrain and make some Barbarian Invasion Event cards more salient occurrences. Consequently, players may AS AN OPTION agree before the game starts to limit their effect or completely exclude particular Events from a game.

## Double Disk Option

If playing on the full map with three or fewer civilizations, each may use a second set of colored disks. Treat all disks of both colors as if they were a single color for all rules' purposes. One disk will be used on the Turn Chart, another on the Victory Point Chart, leaving the Civilization with 98 disks for its use.

**Example:** One civilization could use both blue and purple disks, while another uses burnt orange and green and the third uses red and yellow. In a 2- or 3-civilization game using the full map, this option provides greater capacity for there to be increased reach by each civilization, if they are geographically apart, for them to engage in competition and reap more victory points than could ever be achievable with a single set of disks.

## Multiple Civilizations per Player

**Play Hint:** Players new to the game are urged to select a scenario where each player controls only a single civilization. Those with some experience may consider controlling two or more civilizations. Be warned, however: although it can be great fun controlling more than one civilization simultaneously, playing time will be proportionately extended by virtue of having more civilizations in play as well as the deliberative challenges of coordinating more than one hand of cards.

There are 17 civilizations included in **ACME**, no more than six of which will ever be active in a single game. Turn order in every game is by civilization, not by player, even when a player controls two or three civilizations.

Thus, a player with two civilizations might go first and last in a Growth Phase, or have back-to-back turns, etc.

A player cannot trade cards, mina or disks among the civilizations they control, and must keep each civilization's hand of cards and Supplies separate. Each of a player's civilizations are opposed to each other for all rules' purposes, including but not limited to eliminating each other during competition.

The spirit of multi-civilization play is to coordinate player-controlled civilizations within the basic rule framework governing one-civilization-per-player. Players should recognize when the spirit of this approach is being violated.

Each of a player's civilizations maintains its own VP total. Their scores are added together to arrive at a sum total when determining a game's victor as well as which player has the most or least VPs for various rule and card effects.

### One vs. Two

In general, when players are in control of more than one civilization, each should control the same number. If all players agree, however, one player or more players could each control a single civilization while another controls two. If so, the basic rules are modified as follows:

- Each player controlling a single civilization may choose to select their civilization before or after the player controlling two civilizations.
- The single civilization players each get 16 starting disks instead of 12.
- The single civilization players have their minimum growth increased from 3 to 6.
- During every Draw Step, the single civilization players each draw a base of 4 cards instead of 3.

- If a single civilization player invokes the Gilgamesh Rule, they return with 50% more disks. They may invoke the Gilgamesh Rule even during the game's final Epoch.

- In the case of a tie between a player with a single civilization and a player with two civilizations, the single civilization player wins any tie.

- Each civilization belonging to the double civilization player(s) has its hand size reduced to 4, and each begins the game with only 4 cards.

- The game is limited to two Epochs.

Players will need to agree beforehand whether to either keep card #97 (Time Marches On) in the box or to ignore its text if drawn, since this card can automatically end an Epoch.

- Throughout play, the double civilization player totals the VP for their two civilizations and divides that total by 4 to arrive at their current VP score.

You could track this during play using a disk of an unused color on the Victory Point Track to record the combined score of the player(s) with double civilizations. This is important since it is each player's VP total—not that of each of their civilization's—that determines who controls the placement of Barbarian invaders—or the return of captured Deities - on certain Event cards.

## Team Play

**Design Note:** Team play can be useful as a teaching aid to new players (by pairing up one experienced player with one new to the game) or for gamers who want a variant to the social experience **ACME** offers; to have someone with whom to share the adventure or for those who wish to have someone directly “on their side” throughout the game.

### Forming Teams

At the start of the game, players may elect to form themselves into teams. Create teams in any manner of your choosing: by lot, by player choice, or perhaps by geographic location (*such as two western civilizations versus two eastern civilizations, and maybe a third team made up of two in the middle... lucky them...or two teams of three civilizations each*). Each team should contain the same number of players; and each player should have their own civilization.

### Team Member Cooperation

- A player cannot trade or give away their cards, disks or mina to teammates (or opponents, for that matter).

- A player may show a teammate all, some or none of the cards in their hand at any time.
- A player cannot play a card which inflicts more harm to a teammate than it does to one or more other Factions.

**Example:** A card that would cause a teammate to remove 1 disk from the map could not be played unless at least one non-team Faction also had to lose a disk.

- A player cannot place a disk into a teammate's Home Area.
- A player cannot place a disk into an area containing a teammate's disk if that placement would cause that area to become Contested.

## Team & Individual Victory

In team play, each civilization still tracks its own individual VPs. Prior to beginning play, however, all players must agree as to how victory will be achieved:

a) **Combined Scores**—At the end of the game, the team with the highest combined VP total wins.

Its members enjoy a joint victory and share equally in the glory of their civilizations' achievement.

b) **Individual Victor**—At the end of the game, within the team that has the highest combined VP total, the civilization contributing the greatest number of VPs wins.

c) However players choose to determine victory, if there is a tie between them, see Rulebook Section "Endgame" (p28) for tie-breaker criteria.

## Historical Situation Scenarios

The following scenarios are just a few of the possible ways to play some of the great competitions of antiquity using ACME. Those who want a more "free form," "sandbox" or "craft-it-yourself" set up may refer to the Sandbox Situation Scenarios Crafting Sections (p44) and for Solitaire play (p56). For all Historical Situation Scenarios, if not specifically stated otherwise, each civilization's disks should be initially placed upon the map in accordance with Rule 8 of the Scenario Default Setup (p34).

## Option: Initial Establishment of Deities

If all players agree prior to commencing a game, in any historical scenario, rather than acquire one through expenditure of resources, each civilization will begin the game with an established Deity and Temple. After initial disks are placed on the map, put the Deity Temple blocks into the box top. In Turn Order, each civilization randomly selects a Deity Temple and places it in their Home Area, then takes the associated Deity card and places it face-up on the table.

## Sargon I: Scorpions in a Bottle: First Cities at War (2 Civilizations)

Use the **Fertile Crescent map**. One player is **Sumer**; the other is **Akkad**. Each Civilization starts with a City in its Home Area—and 9 other starting disks.

**Time**—This two Epoch game begins with turn 1 of Epoch I.

This game spans two Epochs. This is intended as a war game, but need not be such, as there is sufficient room for both Civilizations to expand peacefully, should they wish.

**Victory Condition: Conquered Home Area**—At the end of any Competition Phase, if one player Controls both their own and their opponent's Home Area, the game ends and that player is declared the winner regardless of victory points. Otherwise, play until the conclusion of Epoch II and determine victory as per the basic rules.

**Fate Card Draw Restrictions**—Each player begins with an initial draw of only 3 Fate Cards.

**Event Card Restrictions**—Ignore, discard and replace any Event cards drawn during turns 1 and 2 of Epoch I.

**Sudden Death**—Do not check for Sudden Death on turns 2 and 3 of Epoch I.

**Gird for Battle**—Beginning at the conclusion of the End of Epoch Phase of Epoch I, either or both players may "gird their loins for battle" and militarize their civilization. The Akkad player may expend 5 VP and place the Assyria Civilization Display Card adjacent to that of Akkad. The player is now able to use the attributes of both civilizations. Similarly, the Sumer player may expend 5 VP and place the Elam Civilization Display Card adjacent to that of Sumer. That player is now able to use the attributes of both civilizations. The Akkad player announces their decision first. If they decline to militarize, but the Sumer player does, the Akkad player may respond by militarizing, but at the cost of an additional VP (6VP).

**Solitaire Adjustments**—Place a yellow disk into each active Home Area. The game's Gold Rules (p51) apply. The NPC can be either civilization and is always Hostile to you. The NPC will militarize if you do, OR if it has fewer VP than you. When placing disks on the map, the NPC will prioritize defending its base before proceeding through the normal list of priorities (p52).

**1<sup>st</sup>**: If its Home Area contains fewer than 4 disks, it will place disks there until there are 4 present.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**: If there are opposing disks in an area adjacent to its Home Area, it will place disks in that area until there are more of its disks than opposing disks, or until the stacking limit is reached, whichever comes first.



**Historical Note:** This scenario simulates the rise of the first city states of Mesopotamia with their growth and eventual conversion/conquest/absorption by militarized kingdoms. It is the time of Sargon I, founder of the Akkad kingdom—and ruler of the first empire ever (if briefly) established among the *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East*.



**Historical Note:** This scenario covers the era of the rise—and eventual fall—of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, from their wars with the Philistines up to the Babylonian Captivity. As Judah, can the player do better (it would be hard to do worse)?

## Lion of Judah (3 Civilizations)

Use the **Fertile Crescent map**.

One player is the **Israelite**, one is the **Babylonian** and the last is the **Philistine** (which will be represented by their ancestors, the **Sea Peoples**).

Set Home Area markers in **Judah**, **Babylon** and, for the Philistines, in the coastal Land area of **Ugarit**.

The Israelite and Philistine civilizations each begin with six disks for initial placement. The Babylonian civilization begins with 12.

Before the game begins, the Ugarit and Babylon Civilizations are each randomly dealt a Deity that is its Active Deity. Place the corresponding Temple in their Home Area. The Israelites, of course, begin the game with Card 95, *Monotheism*. Place the Monotheism block atop the Israelite Home Area Temple.

**Time** - The game begins with Turn 1 of Epoch III and concludes at the end of that Epoch (four turns). Ignore, discard and replace the *Time Marches On* (#97) Event if chosen. Do not conduct the Sudden Death Step during this scenario.

**When dealing Cards to begin the game, each Civilization receives only three Cards to start. In addition, all MUST PLAY Event Cards are IGNORED during the first two Turns. (If drawn, Discard and draw another to replace it.)**

This scenario is intended to be a war game, but need not be so. The Israelite and Philistine Civilizations should note, however, that the Babylonian begins in Fertile Land areas with double their initial disks.

**NPC and Solo Note:** In a game with only **two Players**, one must be Judah and the other Babylon. The Philistine Civilization NPC begins and will always remain Hostile to Babylon. If the Israelite places an Israelite disk in the Philistine Home Area or in any Area so as to initiate a Competition with the Philistines, the Philistines will also become Hostile to the Israelites, who will become their Primary Enemy.

In a Solo game, the player is Judah. The Babylon NPC is and will always remain Hostile to both the Philistine NPC and to Judah. The Philistines, however, begin the game as Babylon's primary enemy. The Philistine rule above, being hostile to Babylon, also applies.

## Sea Peoples (3 Civilizations)

Use the **Abbreviated Western Map**.

One player is **Egypt**, one the **Hittites** and the last the **Sea Peoples**.

Each Civilization begins with 12 disks.

The Sea Peoples' Turn Order marker is placed on the "3," regardless of the order in which it was selected.

**Time**—The game begins with turn 1 of Epoch II. The game ends at the conclusion of Epoch III.

**NPC and Solo Note:** In games with two Players, it is recommended that the Sea Peoples should be played as an NPC. The Sea Peoples are always Hostile to both players. In a Solo game, the player may take any of the three civilizations; both NPCs begin Hostile to the player and to each other.



**Historical Note:** The two great rivals of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC clashed at the great chariot battle of Kadesh—and then made a lasting peace. (The tablet bearing the terms of that treaty is on display at the United Nations.) That was fortunate, for soon after, wave upon wave of invaders—including both raiding forces and entire populations—crashed upon the shores of Egypt and the Levant and contributed mightily to the erasure of the Hittite empire from the map of antiquity.

## Fire in the East (3 Civilizations)

Use the **Eastern Map**.

One player is **Elam**, one is the **Scythians** and one is the **Indus Valley** (which, in this scenario, represents the Harappan).

The game begins on the 4<sup>th</sup> turn of Epoch II. The game ends at the conclusion of Epoch III. (Note that this game COULD be over very quickly—as short as three turns, and no more than five, due to a Sudden End of Epoch draw or if Event Card 97—*Time Marches On*—is drawn).

Each Civilization begins with 12 disks.

The Scythians go last (3<sup>rd</sup>) in Turn Order at the start.

**NPC and Solo Note:** In games with two players, it is recommended that the Scythians should be played as an NPC. The Scythians are always Hostile to both players. In a Solo game, it is recommended that the player should take the Scythians, and the other two be played as NPCs, each of which are always Hostile to the player and to each other.



**Historical Note:** The invasion of the horse peoples of the steppes was no less a challenge to the kingdoms of the east as that of the Sea Peoples were to the empires of the west. This situation represents that tumultuous era.

## Balance of Power (3 Civilizations)

Note that this is the same situation as the basic three-player setup (p10), **but** set in an historical context and with suggestions for NPC and Solo play.

The game uses the **Western Map**.

One Civilization is **Egypt**, one is **Assyria** and the third is the **Hittites**.

Each Civilization begins with 12 disks and conducts their initial placement as per Rule 8 (p35).

**Time** - The game begins with Epoch II. The game ends at the conclusion of Epoch III.

**NPC and Solo Play:** In games with two players, it is suggested that the Assyrians be played as an NPC. It does not begin Hostile to either player. In Solo games, the player may choose either Egypt or the Hittites. Whichever is the NPC is Hostile to the other. The Assyrians are not Hostile to either at start.



**Historical Note.** This scenario is set in 1270 BC at the time when Ramses II was pharaoh of Egypt and Muwatalli I was king of the Hittites. Their two empires clashed at the city of Kadesh, in modern-day Syria (approximately where Judah, Byblos and Aleppo meet on the game map). It was one of the first battles to be recorded—but it also set the stage for the world's very first peace treaty, that between Egyptians and Hittites, which is on display in the U.N. Headquarters in Geneva. Shalmaneser was king of Assyria at this time. He was a conqueror (as were most Assyrian monarchs) and boasted of laying low eight major nations and of taking their gods from their temples to that of his god in the “world temple” he built in Ashur.

## Agamemnon (4 Civilizations plus Troy)

Use the **Western Map**

Place 4 disks of an unselected color in Ilium (this represents Troy). Place another disk of that color on the “5” space on the Turn Order.

Add the **Greeks** to the Balance of Power scenario. The Greeks set up last—but go first on Turn 1 (Move their Turn Order marker to the “1” space and displace the Hittites, Egyptians and Assyrians one space to the right)

**Time**—The game begins with Epoch II and ends at the conclusion of Epoch II. (All four turns are played. Ignore the Sudden End of Epoch Phase and ignore Event 97—*Time Marches On...* if it appears, select another card to replace it).

**Troy**—The 4 initial disks placed in Ilium represent the legendary city state of Troy. It does not have a Civilization Display.

- Troy always goes last in Turn Order.
- Trojan Disk Regeneration: During the Growth Phase, if there is even a single Trojan disk in Ilium, add more disks until there are four disks present.
- Trojan disks are placed ONLY in Ilium.
- The Trojans do not draw cards.
- As long as at least one Trojan disk remains in Ilium, the following apply:
  - any card played on Ilium in any Phase may remove at a maximum one disk (with the notable exception of card 22, *Traitor*—which represents the Trojan Horse. This remains a “Great Person” card subject to Negation).
  - no Barbarian (black) disks may ever be placed in Ilium.
  - no civilization other than that of the Greeks may place a disk in Ilium.
- In the Competition Phase, place 2 Trojan white disks in Ilium. These represent the great walls of Troy.
- Only the Greeks may sack Ilium. If Ilium is sacked, the Greeks gain 2 mina and 2 VP **in addition** to their normal loot bonus.
- If Ilium is sacked, the Trojans are eliminated from the game.

**NPC and Solo Play:** The Greeks may be played as an NPC. If so, the Greeks begin Hostile to the Trojans. They are not, however, Hostile to any other civilization at start. As long as Troy is in the game, the Trojans are the Greeks’ primary enemy. In a Solo game the player may elect to be the Greeks. The Hittite and Egyptian civilizations are mutually Hostile to one another and will always remain so; the Assyrians do not begin as Hostile to any civilization. Each of the civilizations may at some time become Hostile to the Greeks as per the normal course of Solo play.



**Historical Note.** While the exact dates and details of the Trojan War may or may not follow Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, that the fabled city state existed and was destroyed—and destroyed numerous times—is fact. There is also written evidence on clay tablets of diplomatic and trade agreements between the Hittite empire and the city of “Wilusa” (aka Troy). This scenario is set in the Bronze Age, on the eve of the great migrations and invasions of the Sea Peoples—of which Agamemnon and his Achaeans may either have been a precursor of, or likely among the first victims of that violent wave.

## Fire on the Steppes (4 Civilizations)

Use the **Eastern Map**.

Add the **Cimmerians** to the Fire in the East Scenario.

The Cimmerians go last (4<sup>th</sup>) in Turn Order at start.

**Time**—The game begins on turn 4 of Epoch II and ends at the conclusion of Epoch III. (Note that this game COULD be over very quickly—as short as three turns, and no more than five, due to a Sudden End of Epoch draw or if Event Card 97—*Time Marches On*—is drawn.)

### Two-player, three-player, NPC and Solo Play

If played with three players, any one of the civilizations could be the NPC.

If played with two players, each may take whichever pair of civilizations they choose. One could be the established civilizations, and the other the invaders (Scythians and Cimmerians), or each player could take one established and one invading civilization.

Or, as another alternative, each player could take one civilization, and make the other two NPCs.

In Solo play, the player may choose any civilization.

If in any game either or both of the Scythians or Cimmerians are NPCs, they are both Hostile to Elam and the Indus Valley civilizations. If either or both of the Indus Valley and Elam civilizations are NPCs, they are each Hostile to the invading civilizations (Scythians and Cimmerians).



**Historical Note:** This scenario represents the incursion of the horse peoples from the steppes down into the lands of the urban, agricultural kingdoms.

## King of the Four Corners of the World(4 Civilizations)

The game uses the **Western Map**.

One player is **Egypt**, another is **Assyria**, a third is the **Hittites**, and a fourth is **Babylon**.

### -Initial Setup Modifications -

**Assyria** must choose Nineveh as its Home Area.

Each Civilization begins with 10 disks and conducts their initial placement as per Rule 8 of the **Scenario Default Setup** (p35), with the following exception: **Assyria** and **Babylon** must each place one, and only one, of their starting disks in each of **Akkad** and **Samarra**. Neither they nor any other civilization may place during set-up any additional disks in **Akkad** or **Samarra**.

**Time** - The game begins in turn 1 of Epoch II. The game ends at the conclusion of Epoch III, or at the end of ANY turn when either of the following apply:

- any one civilization controls its own Home Area AND any TWO of the other three civilizations' Home Areas;
- the civilization in first place has 20 or more VP over the civilization in second place.

**Note on NPCs, three-player, two-player and Solo Play:**  
If played with three players, the civilization they did not choose is the NPC.

If played with two players, either the two civilizations they did not choose are NPCs OR they may each run two civilizations each. Neither player, however, may control both Assyria and Babylon, but must choose one or the other; either may be paired with either Egypt or the Hittites.

If played Solo, the player should be Assyria. If they choose Egypt instead, all NPCs each gain 2 VP during each turn's Victory Tally Step. If they choose the Hittites, all NPCs each gain 1 VP during each Victory Tally Step. There is no handicap for NPCs if the player plays Babylon, because the player will face a Hostile Assyria from the start.

If either Assyria or Babylon (or both) are NPCs, they are Hostile to the other (whether that other civilization is itself also an NPC or run by a player).



**Historical Note.** This scenario is meant to replicate the situation just prior to the conquest of Babylon by what is known to historians as the “Old Assyrian Empire” (2000-1750 BC), during which time the kings of Assyria each styled themselves as “King of the Four Quarters of the World.”

## Cyrus the Great and the Rise of Persia (4 Civilizations)

The game uses the **Full Map**.

One Civilization is the **Medes & Persians**; another is **Egypt**, another is **Babylon** and the fourth is the “**Lydian Kingdom**” (represented by the **Sea Peoples**).

**Time**—The game begins on turn 1 of Epoch III. The game concludes at the end of Epoch IV OR at the end of ANY turn when either of the following apply:

- any one civilization controls its own Home Area AND any TWO of the other three civilizations Home Areas; or
- the civilization in first place has 20 or more VP over the civilization in second place.

**The Lydian Kingdom**—The Lydian Kingdom is represented by the Sea Peoples and uses the Sea Peoples’ Civilization Display. Their Home Area, however, is Lydia.

**Special order of Setup**—Regardless of the position of their markers on the Turn Order Track, **Babylon** sets up first. Babylon places three disks in Babylon and one each in Carchemish, Mittani, Emar, Nineveh, Ashur, Samarra, Akkad, Dur Kur, Borsippa, Ur, Sumer and Elam, for a total of 15 disks. Babylon, however, will move in the Turn Order as initially drawn.

Each other civilization sets up in turn order. Each begins with three disks in their Home Area, and 12 additional disks to place as per Rule 8 of the **Scenario Default Setup** (p35).

If played with fewer than four Players, one Player MUST be **Babylon** and that Player may NOT also control the **Medes & Persians** (and vice versa). Therefore, with one Player, that Player is Babylon, for two Players one is Babylon and the other the Medes & Persians, and if a third player joins, that player chooses one of the remaining civilizations and the fourth civilization becomes an NPC.

### Three-player, two-player, NPC and Solo play:

Regardless of the number of players involved, one player MUST be the Medes and Persians—and ONLY the Medes and Persians.

In a three-player game, each of the other players may choose a civilization and let the unchosen civilization be run as an NPC. As an alternative, one of those players may elect (if all others agree) to run a pair of civilizations—the one the player chose, and the one left unchosen. Such play is governed using the Multiple Civilizations per Player rules at the start of this Playbook on p37).



**Historical Note:** This scenario is set in 600 BC when Cyrus, later known as “The Great” - and one of the few ancient leaders truly worthy of that honorific—created the Persian Empire.

## Empires on Horseback (5 Civilizations)

Add the **Medes & Persians** as a fifth Civilization to the **Fire in the Steppes Scenario**.

**Time**—The game begins on turn 1 of Epoch III and ends at the conclusion of Epoch IV.

### Four-player, three-player, two-player and Solo Rules:

In a four-player game, one player is the “two kingdoms.” **Elam** and the Harappan (as represented by the **Indus Valley** civilization). The “two kingdoms” provide a great starting point to dominate the southeast corner of **ACME’s** Eastern board.

In a three-player game, one player is the “two kingdoms”, the other two players may either each take a civilization and let the unchosen one be run as an NPC, or, if all players agree, one of them may also run the civilization that was not chosen.

In a two-player game, one player is the “two kingdoms” and the other is their choice of any other two of the three remaining civilizations; the civilization left unchosen is run as an NPC.

In a Solo game, the player may be either the “two kingdoms” or a pair of two other civilizations or play any one civilization of their choice. Any civilizations not run by the player are run as NPCs.

Remember” In any game in which one player controls two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules at the start of this Playbook on p37 apply.

## Darius & the Great Rebellion (5 Civilizations)

Use the **Western Map**.

One Civilization is the **Medes & Persians**. This civilization, and this civilization ONLY, **MUST** use the **Double-Disk Option** (see p36).

The other four Civilizations are **Egypt**, the **Greeks**, the **Cimmerians** and the **Hittites** (who in this case represent the rebellious Persian satraps of Anatolia).

**Time**—The game begins on Turn 3 of Epoch III. The game concludes at the end of Epoch IV OR at the conclusion of any Victory Tally Step in which one civilization controls its own Home Area and the Home Areas of any two other civilizations.

**Barbarians**—Prior to civilization setup, place the following 20 Barbarian disks onto the map:

- 3 into each of Persis, Babylon, Elam, and Ur;
- 2 into each of Armenia, Medes, Assyria and Akkad.

**Medes & Persians Setup**—Regardless of the turn order, the Medes & Persians set up prior to any of the other civilizations.

**Place the Medes & Persians Home Area in Persis.** Note that the Persian Home Area is NOT in the control of the Medes & Persians player—and that this player, as “Darius”, must win it back in order to make use of that civilization’s abilities. ***The Darius player has no civilization abilities until this Home Area recapture is accomplished.*** This also means that if the option to begin with a Deity is selected, the Temple for that Deity is in Persis, and its benefits do not apply until Persis is returned to the control of the Medes & Persians. If the option to begin with a Deity is NOT selected, then the Medes & Persians may not establish a Deity until Persis is returned to the control of the Medes & Persians.

The Medes & Persians place two disks in Susa; the remaining ten initial disks may be placed in groups of two in any five Land areas within two areas of Susa and which do not already contain Black disks.

**Other Civilizations** - The other four civilizations begin with 12 disks each and place them as per Rule 8 of the **Scenario Default Setup** (p35).

#### Four-player, three-player, two-player and Solo Rules:

Regardless of the number of players, the Medes & Persians **MUST** be selected.

Any NPCs are always hostile to every other civilization. In the event of a tie when determining their primary enemy, the Medes & Persians are their primary enemy.

In a two-player game, one player is the Medes & Persians. The other is any pairing of their choice of the other four civilizations. Those not selected are NPCs.

In a three-player game, one player is the Medes & Persians. The others are any pairing of their choice of the other four civilizations.

In any game in which one player controls two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37 apply.

In a four-player game, one player is the Medes & Persians. Each of the other players choose a civilization. The civilization not selected is an NPC.



**Historical Note:** This game begins in 522 BC, with the ascension to the throne of Persia by Darius I—and the subsequent revolt of many of Persia’s regional governors (known as satraps) as well as the Greek colonies in Asia and client states to the east. One of Darius’ first and most important tasks was to regain control of the capital and treasury at Pasargadae—which is located in the ACME map’s Persis area.

**Design Note:** This game is intended to be a war game, as the involved civilizations are in close proximity to each other from the very start. Players, however, are free to play the game as one of more pacific competition, although the opportunities and temptations to go to war with one another may test their commitment to peace (as the designers intend). Players should note, however, that as the **Medes & Persians** have a double set of 100 disks at their disposal, they are extremely likely to win if not somehow contained.

## Successors (5 Civilizations)

Use the **Full Map**.

The successors (and the civilizations which will represent them) are:

- The Kingdom of Ptolemy (**Egypt**)
- The Kingdom of Lysimachus (**Greeks**)
- The Kingdom of Seleucus (**Medes & Persians**)
- The **Scythians**
- The Kingdom of Porus (**Indus Valley—Mauryans**)

**Time**—The game begins on Turn 2 of Epoch IV. The game will end sooner, at the conclusion of any Victory Tally Step, in which one civilization controls its own Home Area and the Home Area of any two other civilizations. If that situation does not occur, play on as follows:

Ignore, discard and replace the *Time Marches On* (#97) Event. Do not conduct the Sudden Death Step. At the end of Turn 4, after the Victory Tally Step, draw a single Card. If it is an even-numbered Card, play another turn. If it is odd, the game ends and go on to the End of Epoch Phase. If the game does continue for a fourth turn, at the end of THAT turn, draw again. If it is an even Card, play a fifth and FINAL turn. If it is odd, the game ends and go on to the End of Epoch Phase.

**Seleucus places first—and does Growth Phase last**—Regardless of the order in which civilizations were chosen, that representing Seleucus sets up first. Seleucus places 12 disks as per Rule 8 of the **Scenario Default Setup** (p35). The remaining civilizations then place their disks in Turn Order. The Seleucus player THEN places 6 more disks; these, however, must be placed in areas which already contain at least one of the Seleucus disks, OR in vacant areas adjacent to those which already contain at least one of the Seleucus disks.

The Seleucid Turn Marker is then moved to LAST place in the Turn Order, and all other Civilizations are moved forward in Turn Order. These conditions are only for set-up and the first turn of this scenario.

### Four-player, three-player, two-player and Solo Rules:

If there are only four Players, there are two options. One is that the Seleucids are an NPC and begin as Non-Hostile to all other civilizations. The players then each take a single civilization. The second option is that one player must be the Seleucids, and only the Seleucids. One of the other three players must choose to play two civilizations (any two will do), with the third and fourth players each taking a civilization.

If there are only three Players, one is the Seleucids. Each of the other Players chooses a pair of the remaining civilizations to play.

If there are only two Players, the Seleucids are an NPC and begin as Non-Hostile to all other civilizations, and each Player plays a pair (any pair) of the remaining civilizations.

In Solo play, the player is the Seleucids. All other civilizations are NPCs. None begin Hostile to any civilization. In the event of a tie when determining their primary enemy, the Seleucids are their primary enemy.

In any game in which one player controls two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules at the start of this Playbook on p37 apply.



**Historical Note:** This scenario is set during the years immediately following the death of Alexander the Great, and include the wars fought among those of his generals, each of whom sought to be the successor to Alexander, as well as resurgent regional forces seeking to break away from the empire Alexander had forged. (Two other generals, in Greece Proper and Epirus, were also part of this epic contest, but were comparatively minor participants whose Lands lie to the west of our map.)

**Design Note on Historicity.** Obviously, many of the cataclysmic and apocalyptic events described by the game's cards did not occur in the brief periods in which this and the game's other historical scenarios occurred. Therefore, view these as representations of revolts, uprisings, civil disturbances and raids by pirates, invading nomadic tribes, or the incursions of minor warlords, as well as natural and economic disasters—or signs of displeasure by the god or gods of choice.



## Sandbox Situation Scenarios

**Design Note:** When using the full map, players should remember that civilizations chosen in proximity to one another will be vulnerable to direct competition from the start. Far-flung civilizations geographically separated from one another will afford those players more opportunity for peaceful expansion early on... although Fate cards allow one civilization to strike at another from a distance, so there's nowhere on the map that is truly safe.

Sandbox situations come in two forms. Freeform and contemporaneous.

### Contemporaneous

If electing to play with only contemporaneous civilizations, first choose the situation for the number of players (or civilizations) in the game. Then choose the starting Epoch. Refer to the ensuing chart and set aside the Civilization Displays of those civilizations which are not present in that Epoch.

#### Contemporaneous adjustment in situations:

Note that the exclusion of civilizations that are not contemporaneous will restrict the number of civilizations available to be chosen; in some cases, a player who chooses third, fourth, fifth or sixth may be left with only one choice. In the unusual instance in which all of the contemporaneous civilizations from a particular grouping have already been taken (e.g. a six player Epoch IV game), that player may then choose from among any of the remaining civilizations available for the chosen Epoch which appear on the selected map.

### Freeform

Freeform allows for the appearance of any civilization in the game, regardless of the period in which it historically existed. Contemporaneous limits play to those civilizations which were present at the same time.

If players do **NOT** wish to **limit** themselves to the civilizations which were **Historically Available**, they may choose among any civilization whose Home Area is present in the Map on which they have chosen to play. For Example, the **Israelite** Home Area is available in all Maps (Full, Eastern, Western, and Fertile Crescent), although the **Israelite** civilization is not Historically Available (as an independent civilization) except for games which begin in Epoch III. Players who are starting a game with Epochs I, II or IV may wish to include the Israelite civilization as a choice. Such a choice should be treated as playing out one of the “What If’s” of history, notably such as what if a certain civilization arose at a time earlier than it had—or continued to exist and even flourish long after it was conquered, faded from history, or otherwise absorbed by other civilizations.

For those interested in arranging games pitting civilizations against those that were contemporaneous, you may wish to refer to the following chart:

Epoch I—The Early Bronze Age: (4000 BC—2000 BC)					
Epoch II—The Late Bronze Age (2000 BC—1200 BC)					
Epoch III—The Iron Age (1200 BC—500 BC)					
Epoch IV—The Hellenic Age (500 BC—100 BC)					
Civilization	Timeline (BC)	I	II	III	IV
Akkad	2334-2083	X			
Assyria	2500-609	X	X	X	
Babylon	1895-539		X	X	
Chaldean	940-539			X	
Cimmerians	1200-450			X	X
Dravidians (Indus)	2600-1500	X			
Egypt	3000-?	X	X	X	X
Elam	2700-540	X	X	X	
Greeks	507-?			X	X
Harappans (Indus)	3300-1200		X	X	
Hittite	1600-1178		X		
Israelite	1200-582			X	
Mauryans (Indus)	321-185				X
Medes & Persians	1100-?			X	X
Mittani	1500-1300		X	X	
Scythians	900-?			X	X
Sea Peoples	1276-900		X	X	
Sumer	4000-1940	X	X		
Urartu	1250-580			X	

“?” indicates that civilization continued past the end of Epoch IV, but in a different iteration: e.g. Greeks supplanted by Macedonia, the Egypt of the Pharaohs morphs into Ptolemaic Egypt, the Persians are absorbed by the Parthians etc.

## Solitaire Situation Scenarios

If you wish to play any of the following Sandbox situations solitaire (p48 & p56), you will need to use a Civilization Pool in conjunction with the NPC Hostility Rules (p57). You could also play any of these as an Exploration Scenario (Exploration Phase p58) with one or more of the NPCs unknown at the start of play.

Decide in advance which Epoch the game will begin with and how many Epochs will be played (see Sudden Death p57, in the Scenario Crafting section), and/or if the game will come to an end at a specific time (e.g. two hours of play) or when one civilization reaches or surpasses a set Victory Point Tally... whatever you and your fellow gamers mutually agree to prior to commencing play.

Some games will have but a single civilization in the central portion of the map. That civilization will have the advantage of being in position to secure much of the Fertile Crescent, albeit by doing so it will likely put a huge glaring target upon itself and earn the enmity/envy of the other players.

## 6-Civilization Situation

Use the Full Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map.

**Freeform:** The following civilizations are available:

- **Western** - any two of Greece, Egypt, Hittite, Sea Peoples or Israelite.
- **Eastern**—any two of Indus Valley, Scythian or Medes & Persians
- **Central** —any two, but no more than one of any grouping per below (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyrian may be chosen, etc..
  - one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
  - the Cimmerians or Urartu

## 5-Civilization Situation

Use the Full Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map.

**Freeform:** As per the 6-player game, however, only ONE of the civilizations listed under “Central” may be chosen.

## 4-Civilization Situation

Use the Full Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map.

**Freeform Option 1.** as per the 6-player game, but none of the civilizations listed under the Central section may be chosen.

**Freeform Option 2.** one civilization from each of the Western, Eastern and Central groups must be chosen. The fourth player may then choose ANY of the remaining civilizations.

## 3-Civilization Situation

Use the Full Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map.

**Freeform Option 1:** As per the 6-player game, but only one civilization from each of the three regions (Western, Eastern, Central) may be chosen. Once a civilization from the Western region, for example, is chosen, no other civilization from among those listed may be chosen.

**Double Disk Option:** Players should consider using the Double Disk Option (as listed on p36) as they are likely to be so far apart geographically that they are less likely to need (or be able) to enter into Competitions.

**Freeform Option 2:** As per the 6-player game, but after each player has chosen a civilization, each, in turn order, will choose a second civilization. (See the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** on p37.)

Players may agree beforehand on one of the following conditions for the second civilization that each player will choose:

- (a) no player may take a second civilization from the same region or
- (b) a player may only take a second civilization from the same region or
- (c) once two civilizations have been chosen from a region, no others from that same region may be selected.

## 2-Civilization Situation

Use the Full Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. Note these are setups for the Solitaire Player versus each civilization's NPC, with the Solitaire Player controlling more than one civilization for a single VP score under the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37). Ensuing references to "Player" are to the Solitaire Player and then to the remaining civilizations of a game setup which are each played by NPC who are also "Players"

**Freeform Option 1:** Only one civilization from the Western and one from the Eastern region may be chosen. If the first player chooses a civilization from the West, then the other must choose one from the East (and vice versa). In this instance, the Double-Disk Option (p36) is not merely highly recommended but mandatory.

**Freeform Option 2:** One player chooses one civilization from the Western region, the other from the Eastern region. Each will choose a second civilization. Players must agree beforehand if that second civilization:

- (a) must be from the same region as the first or
- (b) must be from the region in which the other player chose their first civilization or
- (c) must be from one of the civilizations in the Central region (as per the 6-player situation).

In this situation, the Double Disk option MAY be used, but is not required.

**Freeform Option 3:** Each player will play three civilizations (this is not recommended for new players, who may find running more than one civilization and especially three, a bit overwhelming at least the first time).

If three civilizations are to be played, it is suggested that each player take one civilization from each region (Western, Eastern and Central).

In any of the above in which the Solitaire Player will control two or three civilizations, please remember to refer to the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37, and that for the ensuing setups **the Solitaire Player is selecting one or more of the cited civilizations to control**.

## Four in the West

Use the Western Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Western** - any two of Greece, Egypt, Hittites, Sea Peoples or Israelites.
- **Central** -any two, but no more than one of any group (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyria may be chosen, etc..
  - one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
  - the Cimmerians

## Four in the East

Use the Eastern Map, Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Eastern**—any two of Indus Valley, Scythian or Medes & Persians
- **Central** –any two, but no more than one of any group (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyria may be chosen, etc..
  - one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
  - the Cimmerians

## Four in the Fertile Crescent

Use the Fertile Crescent Map. Each civilization begins with only 6 disks set up on the map. Each civilization receives a bonus of 6 disks to their growth on Turn 1.

- one must be one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
- one must be one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
- one must be the Medes & Persians
- one must be the Israelites

## Three in the West

Use the Western Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Western** - any two of Greece, Egypt, Hittites, Sea Peoples or Israelites.
- **Central** –any one, but no more than one, of any group (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyria may be chosen, etc..

- one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
- one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
- the Cimmerians

## Three in the East

Use the Eastern Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Eastern**—any one of Indus Valley, Scythia or Medes & Persians
- **Central**—any two, but no more than one of any group (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyria may be chosen, etc..)
  - one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldean.
  - the Cimmerians or Urartu

## Three in the Fertile Crescent

Use the Fertile Crescent Map. Each civilization begins with only 6 disks set up on the map. Each civilization receives a bonus of 6 disks to their growth on Turn 1.

- one, but only one may be one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
- one, but only one may be one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
- one may be either the Medes & Persians or the Israelites

## Two in the West

Use the Western Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Western** - any one of Greece, Egypt, Hittite, Sea Peoples or Israelite.
- **Central**—any one, but no more than one, of any group (e.g. if Akkad is chosen, neither Mittani or Assyria may be chosen, etc..)
  - one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldean.
  - the Cimmerians

**Double-Disk Option:** If a player (Solitaire or NPC) will each run a single civilization, they should consider using the Double-Disk Option (see p36).

**Multi-civilization Options:** If the Solitaire player wishes to play two civilizations each, that player must decide beforehand if the match up will be:

- (a) the Solitaire player will take 2 from the Western Region and the NPCs will take 2 from the Central Region or
- (b) each player will take 1 civilization from each of the two regions

If a player will run two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37 apply.

## Two in the East

Use the Eastern Map. Each civilization begins with 12 disks set up on the map. The following civilizations are available:

- **Eastern**—Dravidians, Scythians or Medes & Persians
- **Central**—one of Mittani, Akkad or Assyria.
  - one of Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.
  - the Cimmerians

**Option 1:** One player chooses one of the Eastern civilizations; the other selects one from amongst the Central civilizations.

**Option 2:** Each player selects one Eastern civilization and one Central civilization. If one player chooses one from amongst the Mittani, Akkad or Assyria grouping, the other may not select another from that same group. If one player chooses one of the Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea grouping, the other may not choose one from that same group.

If a player will run two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37 apply.

## Two in the Fertile Crescent

Use the Fertile Crescent Map. Each civilization begins with only 6 disks set up on the map. Each civilization receives a bonus of 6 disks to their growth on Turn 1.

**Option 1:** One player may select from Mittani, Akkad or Assyria. The other must select from among Elam, Babylon, Sumer or Chaldea.

**Option 2:** One player may be the Medes & Persians; the other may be ANY of the other civilizations noted in Option 1 or may elect to be the Israelites.

**Option 3:** Choose an initial civilization as per Option 1. Each player then takes either the Medes & Persians or the Israelites as their second civilization.

If a player will run two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37 apply.

## SOLITAIRE RULES

When playing **ACME** solitaire, the game system plays the opposing civilization(s), termed “NPCs” (Non-Player Civilizations). NPCs are intent on either conquering or competing with the civilization(s) you command.

Each scenario uses a core set of guidelines (rather than a flow charted “bot” found in other GMT games) by which the NPCs operate.

A Solitaire Player Aid is provided for quick reference during play. Unlike the Non-Solitaire Player Aid, it is organized not by Phase sequence, but for ease of reference in accessing needed Solitaire game mechanisms (e.g. a decision priority list for an enemy NPC versus a decision list for those of a non-enemy NPC).

### Suggested Order of Play

We suggest you begin with the **Alexander the Great** scenario [p61]. Its rules form the core set of guidelines from which the other solitaire scenarios proceed. The identity, setup and goals of the NPCs are known, and their priorities are more focused and obvious. Another good “starter” Solitaire game scenario is **Rostam** [p65].

The **Alexander the Great** scenario puts you, as **Alexander**, on the offensive in a race against the clock to match the achievements of that storied conqueror. If playing as **Darius** in that scenario, however, you are on the defensive against an aggressive powerful opponent.

Alternately, if playing the **Rostam** scenario solitaire as the Medes and Persians, you will be confronted by hordes of invaders coming from every direction as you struggle to defend the Persian empire.

If you prefer a more open-ended and (comparatively) peaceful type of game, playing the sandbox scenarios [p44 & 56] solitaire is an alternative to the more martial historical wargame scenarios.

## NPC Choices

To give you a viable and challenging opponent, a system of rules governs how the NPC plays the game. The system does not pretend to be as capable or as surprising as another human being, but neither is it entirely predictable. The NPC takes its turn in the same order as any other player civilization but follows a scripted list of priorities as to where to place its disks, how to play its cards, and how to spend its minas. There is a set of priorities for each [see below].

The lists of priorities almost always provide a clear answer to “What Will the NPC Do?” These priorities are more narrowly defined in the Historical scenarios and as such vary slightly from scenario to scenario.

### Equal Chances

Sometimes an NPC will be presented with two or more equal choices of where to place a disk, or perhaps where/how to play a card or resolve a competition. There are two ways to resolve these dilemmas:

**A. Use Your Brains**—Have the NPC take the action that is either most beneficial to the NPC or most harmful to you. If there are two or more players in the game, the player with the most VPs acts as the victim. If there is a tie, the tied player with the most Cities is the victim. *In other words, just ask yourself what you would do in such a situation—and do that.*

**B. Use the Cards**—For each possible action, reveal the top card of the draw deck. Perform the action that is associated with the revealed card with the highest ID.

**Example:** If each of three areas are equal in the list of priorities for placing a disk, reveal a card for each. If card #12 was drawn for the first, card #7 drawn for the second and card #88 drawn for the third, the disk would be placed into that third area.

A variation of method B is to use a single card’s ID.

**Example:** If there’s a choice between an NPC playing one of two cards, draw the top card from the deck and use an “odd/even” ID # method to choose.

We recommend you use one or the other method consistently throughout the game, to be determined before play begins. We recommend method A, as method B will cause the deck to be more swiftly depleted and more Event cards implemented.

If determining NPC actions with the “Use the Cards” procedure an Event Card is drawn, that Event MUST be played and played immediately (as per the Event Cards section found on page 17 of the Rulebook).

### NPC Enemies

How an NPC places disks during its Growth Phase, or how it plays cards during the Card Phase, depends on whether or not that NPC is hostile and, if so, hostile to whom?

In Historical scenarios an NPC is generally enemy to you and to the Barbarians. In non-Historical scenarios an NPC is always enemy to the Barbarians but is not initially enemy to any civilization.

An NPC will immediately become enemy to a civilization (either player or another NPC) if:

- That civilization plays a card that causes the loss of any of the NPC's disks, cards or minas.
- When placing disks, that civilization causes an area occupied by the NPC to become Contested.

To indicate that an NPC is enemy to another civilization, place a disk of that civilization underneath that of the NPC on the Civilization Turn Order track.

So if one of your civilizations takes its Growth Phase before the NPC, or plays a card in a round before the NPC plays a card, your action may immediately turn a previously pacific NPC Hostile—causing all of the NPC's subsequent actions to shift from the non-enemy to the enemy set of priorities.

Note that if using NPCs in a game with multiple Solitaire Player-run civilizations (per the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rule on p37 or other game circumstances) there could be two or more disks beneath an NPC's Turn Order disk, one for each player/NPC civilization to which it is enemy.

## Primary Enemy

An NPC is always an enemy of the Barbarians and can be enemy to any number of opposing civilizations at the same time. If an NPC has two or more enemy civilizations, it will treat one of those as the “Primary” (that is, the most threatening) enemy and will place disks and play cards as if that were its only enemy. Taking action against a Primary enemy civilization takes precedence over action against a different enemy civilization, which in turn takes precedence over taking action against Barbarians, which in turn takes precedence over taking action against non-enemy civilizations.

Designating an NPC's Primary Enemy is determined at various points during a turn and is subject to circumstantial change. At the beginning of the NPC's Growth Phase, the beginning of the Card Phase, and the beginning of the Competition Phase, if an NPC is enemy to two or more opposing civilizations and that NPC does not yet have a Primary enemy, check the priorities below, in the order given, to determine which of those opposing civilizations will become its Primary enemy. That civilization will remain the NPC's Primary enemy until the end of the turn.

### The Primary enemy will be the enemy civilization with:

1. the most disks in the NPC's Home Area;
2. the most disks sharing areas with the NPC's Gold;
3. the most disks sharing areas with the NPC's Cities;
4. the most disks adjacent to the NPC's Home Area;
5. the most VPs;
6. the most Cities;
7. the most disks in play;
8. otherwise, determine randomly using any desired method.

An NPC's status toward other civilizations will usually be described in a scenario's special rules; if not, it will be determined during each turn's Reckoning Phase [see “NPC Hostility,” p57].

## NPC Card Play

NPCs draw and play cards using all the same rules and restrictions for your civilization, with the following four exceptions:

- An NPC's hand of cards is always placed face-up on the table in full view.
- Any reference to “you” or “your” on a card in an NPC's hand refers to that NPC. Whenever a card says to place one or more disks it refers to that NPC's disks.
- Any card in the NPC's hand that would cause a gain of cards, minas, or VPs for the civilization playing the card is always played to the NPC's benefit as much as possible given the current game state.
- NPC card play that places one or more of its disks follows the disk placement priorities beginning on p52.

## NPC Free Deity Card

Unless otherwise specified in a scenario, at the start of an NPC's FIRST Card Phase, a Deity is drawn at random and is established at no resource charge to the NPC. A “first Card Phase” is defined as the first time the NPC has an opportunity to play a card in a Card Phase. Normally that would be during the first turn of the game. In *Exploration Scenarios*, however, an NPC might not be “discovered” until a later turn.. The drawing of the Deity is the NPC's play for that round of the Card Phase.

## Priority of NPC Card Play

An NPC will play its cards in the following order (and never against itself):

1. All cards that gain the NPC more cards in hand.
2. All cards that establish, restore or benefit a Deity for the NPC\*.
3. All cards that harm a Deity.
4. All cards that gain the NPC VPs.
5. All cards that gain the NPC minas.
6. All cards that cause a loss of cards.
7. All cards that cause a loss of VPs.
8. All cards that cause a loss of minas.
9. All cards that remove opposing disks from the map.
10. All cards that place Barbarian disks onto the map.
11. All cards that place NPC disks onto the map.
12. All other cards.

If a card does two or more things—such as both gaining a mina and removing disks—the action ranked earliest in priority takes precedence in determining the order of card play. If there are two or more qualifying cards, the one with the larger (higher priority) effect takes precedence.

### \*NPC Card Phase. Deity Priorities

If an NPC is in a position where it has an opportunity to re-establish a lost Deity, it will expend the two resources required to do so. If it has a Card whose effect helps restore a Deity (e.g. *Gold Smith* [#2], *Prophet* [#9] or *Monotheism* [#95]), it will play that to do so. If not, it will expend two resources to do so. It will expend mina to do so if it has any, and will make up the shortfall, if needed, by removing one or more disks from the map.

However, it will not remove a disk from a City or an area from which it will gain a bonus (*Fishing Grounds* [#71], *Mountain of Gold* [#69], *Oasis* [#70], Stronghold, Fertile Area or, in the case of the Sea Peoples and Cimmerians, Sea Areas), unless by doing so it will still retain the Victory Point or other bonus from that area. (In other words, choose the most expendable disk.) An NPC will not expend a card as a resource for this purpose. The re-establishment of a Deity is the NPC's play for that round of the Card Phase.

### Card Play Clarifications

An NPC will always use the ability on a card that states "you may..." for the stated benefit. *For example, Philosopher King* (#4) and *Grain Storehouses* (#60).

An NPC will never play a card which would require it to lose one or more disks/minas/cards/VPs (except to build or rebuild a Deity or play the *High Priest* (#28) or *Mercenary General* (#15) card).

An NPC will always play cards so as to cause the loss of VPs, cards, minas and disks belonging to an enemy civilization, prioritizing its Primary enemy.

If no opposing civilization is enemy to an NPC, it will play cards to cause the loss of VPs, cards, minas and disks belonging to the opposing civilization with the most VPs. If there is a tie for most VPs, it harms the tied civilization with the most Cities; if still tied, the tied civilization earliest in Turn Order.

### Cards that Place/Remove Disks

If a card played by an NPC places its own disks onto the map, place them in the order of priority given on p53.

If a card played by an NPC allows it to remove opposing disks, remove them in the order of priority given on p53 (*for example, opposing disks in its Home Area would take first priority, etc.*).

If a card played by an NPC removes its own disks, remove them in reverse order of priority given on p53 (*for example, removing disks from its Home Area would be the absolute last priority*).

If a card played by an NPC removes both opposing and NPC disks and within the priorities there is a choice of where the card effect will occur, it will be played in manner that removes the greatest number of enemy disks first, the greatest number of opposing disks second, and the fewest number of NPC disks third.

### Cards that Draw/Discard Cards

If an NPC is required to discard a card, it will prioritize discarding Competition cards first, non-Negation cards second, and Negation cards last, and it will do so in reverse order of play priority (*for example, it will discard a Competition card that places an NPC disk before a Competition card that gains it a mina*).

If an NPC is allowed to choose which card to take from you or which of multiple cards to keep from the Draw pile, it will choose a Negate card first, a Competition card second, and the card with the highest play priority third.

**NPC and Grand Astrologer (Card #5)**—the NPC will only play this card if it is in last place. When it does, it will ALWAYS take the second option (draw four cards, play any revealed events). If it is not in last place, it will use the card to pay off a loss.

**NPC and Seductress (Card #10)**—when the NPC draws three cards from an opposing civilization it will choose to keep the one that is highest on its list of card play priorities. If two or more are equal, it will choose the one that gains it the most or, if none would gain any disks, mina, cards or VP, it will select the one that will do the most harm, as per the list of priorities.

**NPC and Diplomat (Card #11)**—the NPC does not incur the one mina cost to play this card. It will play to examine the hand of the primary enemy (or civilization with the most VP if it has no enemy) and will choose and discard the card that would offer the most gain to that civilization or, if none do so, the one that could potentially inflict the most harm on the NPC, as per the list of priorities the NPC would use if playing the card on an opponent.

### Negate Cards

An NPC will not play a Negate card to prevent another civilization from gaining disks, minas, VPs or cards. An NPC will always play a Negate card **defensively** to prevent losses of its disks, minas, VPs or cards. However, if that opposing civilization has another card in hand that could also be Negated, reveal the top card of the Draw deck. If the revealed card's ID is even, the NPC will Negate the played card. If the revealed card's ID is odd, the NPC will reserve its Negate card in hand for the next card that it can Negate. If the revealed card is an Event card, resolve it; otherwise, shuffle the revealed card back into the deck. *Do not discard it as normal.*

If the Religion card ***Hand Writing on the Wall***, card #94, is playable by an NPC, that NPC will always negate an Event card that would place Barbarian disks into an area containing that NPC's disk(s).

**Exception:** An NPC will always play ***Prophet***, card #9, to change its Deity if its current Deity is not normally functioning or captured. If the Deity play priority is inapplicable, the NPC will use the ***Prophet*** card's Negate ability.

## Unplayable NPC Cards

There are times when an NPC will hold a card that is impossible to play (*for example, Tax Revolt, #79, where no other civilization has the requisite 3 or more mina, or Forsaken by God, #92, if there is no Deity in play*) If so, the NPC will reserve the card for the next time one of its disks is being eliminated, discarding it in lieu of losing that disk.

## NPCs & Barbarian Event Cards

NPCs are considered “players” when determining who will make decisions for the five Barbarian invasion Event cards. If an NPC has been determined as the one to make the decision, the Barbarians must be placed so as to do the most harm to its Primary Enemy (or the leader in Victory Points if it has no enemy). This is deemed the “target civilization.” The invasion entry point must either be an area containing disks of the target civilization or one which would allow the placement of Barbarians into as many of the target civilization’s areas as possible. Failing that, it must be the area closest to one of its target’s occupied areas. Target civilization areas containing Gold take priority over areas with Deities, which in turn take priority over areas with Cities, which in turn take priority over areas with Settlements, which in turn take priority over areas with Camps.

## Solitaire Competition

In historical solitaire scenarios competitions are not resolved in the usual northeast-to-southwest order. Instead, competitions are resolved in the following order, and are conducted in northeast-to-southwest order within each category:

1. NPC Home Areas.
2. Areas with NPC Gold, then NPC Cities.
3. The Primary Enemy’s Home Area.
4. Areas with the Primary Enemy’s Gold, then Cities.
5. Areas adjacent to the Primary Enemy’s Home Area.
6. Areas adjacent to the Primary Enemy’s Gold, then adjacent to its Cities.
7. All other areas.

The **Traitor, card #22**, is played before the Competition Phase begins. Therefore, an NPC will play this card to win a competition per the above priorities and caveat below.

In every competition you must play all Competition cards you wish to play before the NPC plays their first one.

In a competition where your Gold, Deity or City is located, an NPC will always, per the below caveat:

- place as many white disks as possible,
- play as many Competition cards as possible,
- and pay as many minas or cards (in that order) as possible in lieu of losing its disks, if by doing so it can win or at least tie the competition.

## Competition Caveat

An NPC **will not** invoke a civilization special ability, play a Competition card, or expend a mina unless it can win or at least tie the current competition (with at least one of its disks surviving).

An NPC **will** invoke a civilization special ability or play a Competition card if doing so would cause it to have at least 3 disks present at the end of the current competition. Once that is achieved, and there are one or more additional competitions pending, the NPC will cease devoting an additional Competition card or mina to that competition (that is, the first competition to be resolved does not necessarily compel the NPC to play every Competition card in its possession... unless needed, of course).

**Special Note for *Mercenaries Desert, card #40*:** An NPC will only play this Competition card if it has at least one mina in its treasury. If additional mina are available, the NPC will commit only sufficient mina to be assured of winning the competition... not one mina more!

**Player’s Note:** In other words, you cannot trick the NPC into wasting cards or minas in a competition it has no hope of winning or tying to fake it into an “overkill” victory. Remember that the game’s usual order of competition resolution and card play is altered to allow the NPC to make the most of its Competition cards and minas in those areas of most value to it.

## NPCs & Barbarians

Whenever an NPC needs to remove Barbarian disks from the map, it will remove them in the following order:

1. From its Home Area.
2. From areas containing its Cities (Gold Cities first).
3. From areas containing its disks.
4. From Barbarian-Controlled areas; those closest to its Home Area first.
5. From areas containing a single Barbarian; those closest to its Home Area first.
6. From areas closest to areas containing its disks.

## Gold

In Historical Solitaire scenarios, some areas begin with one or more yellow disks within them. Such a disk is termed “Gold.”

**Design Note:** Gold areas represent the most important areas for both the player and the NPCs to attack and defend. Gold areas are less vulnerable to card play, more easily defended in competition, and worth more VPs. Gold areas represent great well-defended fortified treasure Cities and therefore act as magnets which draw and focus the attention of the player civilization’s NPC opponent(s).

**Placement**—Gold is only ever placed during a game's setup; never during the course of play. Place Gold beneath another disk in its area—this marks the owner of the Gold. Gold can never be moved.

**Protection**—Any non-Competition card effect that would remove one or more disks from an area containing Gold can only remove a maximum of 1 disk belonging to the Gold's owner and it cannot be their last disk there. The last disk of the owner in an area with Gold can only be removed in competition or by a Competition card's effect. (*Exception: Traitor, card #22, is unaffected by this rule.*)

**Example 1:** The *Famine & Pestilence* card (#72) allows the removal of 2 disks from a City. If played on an area containing Gold and a City, only 1 disk would be removed: the second loss would be 'protected' and thus forfeit.

**Example 2:** A card that would allow for the removal of all disks from an area containing Gold would result in only a single disk being removed. Remember that this lone disk loss could still be negated if the victim surrenders a card or mina in its stead.

**Gold City Sacking**—At the end of the Competition Phase, if an NPC or Barbarian Controls an area with your Gold, permanently remove 1 Gold disk there. If it was an NPC (never the Barbarians), it gains 4 VPs and 1 mina as loot—this is in addition to any loot that may have also been gained via sacking a City there. *Exceptions: If Babylon or Assyria are NPC's, they will take captives rather than mina if there are adequate disks available in their Supply (ACME Rulebook p25).*

**Example:** An Egypt NPC civilization would gain 5VP and 2 mina total for sacking a civilization's Gold City.

## NPCs & The Gilgamesh Rule

An NPC will invoke the Gilgamesh Rule (p26) if it has 6 or fewer disks on the map and has the fewest VPs.

If an NPC has 6 or fewer disks on the map but does not have the fewest VPs, reveal the top card of the Draw pile. If the revealed card's ID is even, the NPC invokes the Gilgamesh Rule. Unless the revealed card is an Event card, *discard it as normal.*

Like a player civilization, an NPC cannot invoke the Gilgamesh Rule a second time. If it would invoke the Gilgamesh Rule a second time, it is out of the game: permanently remove all its disks from the game and its VPs are forfeit. (*Exception: the player(s) may agree before the game starts to use the optional rule "More than one Gilgamesh Return Per Game" found at the end of the Rule Book p30.*)

If all NPCs are removed from the game in which there are no other human players, the game ends and the player is declared the victor.

When an NPC invokes the Gilgamesh Rule, its disk is moved to last place on the Turn Order track. Then reveal the top card of the Draw Deck, referencing its ID number in the **Entry Location** table below to determine where on the map the NPC will reenter the game. The closest available civilization to that reentry point becomes the NPC's new civilization. Place the NPC's Homeland Block upon the designated Home area (randomly select a Home Area location if more than one is available: e.g. Egypt) and randomly select a Deity for it.

### Card ID Entry Location

< 21	The vacant map edge Land area with the greatest number of adjacent vacant Land areas. If tied, the one with the greatest number of adjacent vacant Sea areas. If still tied, reveal a card for each possibility: select the area associated with the revealed card with the highest ID. <i>The incoming NPC is enemy to no one.</i>
21- 50	The map edge land area, or Fertile area available civilization Home Area, closest to the Home Area of the civilization with the most VPs. <i>The incoming NPC is enemy to that civilization.</i>
51- 80	The map edge land area closest to the Home Area of the civilization that was most recently enemy to it (prioritizing its Primary enemy if there were more than one). If it had no enemy, treat this result as "21-50" instead. <i>The incoming NPC is enemy to that civilization.</i>
81 +	The map edge land area closest to the Home Area of the civilization which caused the NPC to invoke the Gilgamesh Rule. If there was more than one, or the responsible civilization is unclear, the one with the most VPs is the target. <i>The incoming NPC is enemy to that civilization.</i>

## NPC Disk Placement

The following rule sections concern determining priorities for NPC disk placement. These are summarized on the Solitaire Player Aid.

NPCs place and remove their disks following all the same rules and restrictions for your civilization—adhering to stacking limits, for example—except as amended below. Each Historical Solitaire scenario may further modify how and where an NPC places its disks (described within that scenario's special rules).

- No Voluntary Removal**—During every Growth Phase, NPCs skip the Retirement Step.

- Matching Stacks**—An NPC cannot place disks into an area containing an opposing disk unless the placement will give the NPC at least as many disks there as that of the opposing Faction with the most disks present. If an NPC does not have sufficient disks, it will proceed to the area next in order of priority.

**Example:** There's an Egyptian City (3 disks) and Barbarian Settlement (2 disks) in Tyre. A Judean NPC could either place 3 or more of its disks there or none at all.

- **Exceeding Stacks**—If possible within stacking limits, an NPC will place disks sufficient to exceed (instead of just equal) the largest opposing stack in an area by 1 if that area:

- is its Home Area,
- contains its Deity or Cities (Cities with NPC Gold take precedence), or
- contains an enemy disk.

**Example:** There's an Egyptian Settlement in Petra. The Israelite NPC from adjacent Judah would attempt to place 3 disks there instead of 2.

- **Contested Placement**—An NPC cannot place disks into an area if that placement would cause the area to become Contested unless the area contains an enemy Faction.
- **Barbarian Horde**— Unless it's the NPC's Home Area, an NPC will not place disks into an enemy-occupied area that contains 4 Barbarians and none of its own disks.

## NPC Disk Placement Priorities

During the Deployment Step of its Growth Phase, or whenever it places disks due to card play, an NPC places each disk in the order of priority given below. **Priority assessment is made for each disk and area individually.** For each disk, continue to assess the same priority until it no longer applies—or until it cannot be met—before proceeding to the next priority.

Thus, the first priority could apply to none, one, several, or even all of the NPC's disks. Remember to also prioritize the NPC's Primary enemy, if any.

### Home Defense NPC Disk Placement:

For each disk, the NPC will begin by assessing priorities 1-10.

1. If there is an enemy disk in its Home Area, place the disk there.
2. If there is an enemy disk in an area with the NPC's Gold, place the disk there.
3. If there is an enemy disk in an area with the NPC's City, place the disk there.
4. If there is an enemy disk in an area with the NPC's Stronghold, Fertile Area, *Oasis* (#70), *Fishing Grounds* (#71) or *Mountain of Gold* (#69), in that order. OR if such an area is adjacent to an area with an NPC disk, and is either vacant, or contains an enemy disk, place disks there until the stacking limit is reached.

5. If it does not have a City in its Home Area, place disks there until there are 3 present.

6. If it does not have a City in an area with its Gold, place disks there until there are 3 present.

7. If none of the Land areas adjacent to its Home Area contains one of its Cities, place disks into one of those areas until there are 3 present. Prioritize the area that is furthest from any of your (the human player's) disks.

8. If the NPC has fewer Cities or has fewer VPs than any civilization, it creates a City in the area it occupies that is as close to its Home Area as possible.

9. If the NPC is the **Sea Peoples** and it does not occupy at least four different Sea areas, it will place a disk into as many Sea areas as is necessary to occupy four. It will not place a disk into a Sea area already containing two or more disks belonging to an opposing Faction. If the Sea Peoples NPC still has 4 disks remaining to be placed, it will place them into different Sea areas so as to occupy 8 different ones. It will repeat this process to reach 12 Sea areas, then 16, and so on until it has three or fewer disks remaining to be placed or until it cannot place what it has remaining.

10. If the NPC is the **Cimmerians** and it does not occupy all of the six Caspian Sea areas and the Caucasus Sea area, it will place a disk into as many Sea areas as is necessary to occupy all or as many of those seven Sea areas as possible. It will place 2 disks into a Sea area instead of 1 if that area is solely occupied by 1 or 2 Barbarian disks. It will not place a disk into a Sea area already containing two disks belonging to an opposing civilization.

**Note:** Once these 10 conditions have been satisfied, they are ignored for the remainder of the Deployment Step. Advance to EITHER the Hostile OR Non-Hostile Disk Placement sections below...and “don’t look back.”

Put simply, the **Home Defense** priorities 1-10 are exactly that. They are **defensive** placements in that they are meant to safeguard what the NPC has built and prevent the NPC from falling behind in VPs.

The **Non-Hostile** priorities are similar, in that they are **expansive** placements which seek to increase the NPC's ability to acquire disks in Growth and to amass VPs. Once in this section, EACH disk is assessed from 22-28, as placing “up to 2 disks into an empty Land area...” (priority 25) may then trigger priority 24, as there may now be “an empty Sea area that is adjacent to a Land area it occupies.”

The **Hostile** priorities, however, are there to help direct the NPC to go for your throat. They are designed to bring the NPC ever closer to your civilization's core, and to do its best to rip the beating heart out of your body or, at the very least, keep you so busy defending yourself that you are unable to harm them. You may either follow the list 11-21 for each disk to be placed, or just ask yourself “what would I do to hurt them the most” and just do it.

### Hostile NPC Disk Placement:

If a disk remains to be placed after priorities 1-10 and the NPC is enemy to a civilization, it will assess priorities 11-21. Otherwise, if a disk remains to be placed after priorities 1-10 and the NPC is not an enemy (Hostile) to any civilization, it will skip priorities 11 through 21 and instead assess Non-Hostile priorities 22-28.

11. Place the disk into an area containing an enemy Deity.
12. Place the disk into an area containing enemy Gold.
13. Place the disk into a Land area adjacent to an area containing enemy Gold. If there are none, place it into a Sea area adjacent to an area containing enemy Gold. If there are two or more suitable areas to choose from, select the one containing the fewest enemy disks.
14. Place the disk into a Land area adjacent to an area containing an enemy Deity. If there are none, place it into a Sea area adjacent to an area containing an enemy Deity. If there are two or more suitable areas to choose from, select the one containing the fewest enemy disks.
15. Place the disk into an area containing an enemy City.
16. If the NPC is a scenario “Invader,” place the disk into the area closest to an enemy Gold, Deity or City. If two or more areas are tied for closest, select the area closest to that enemy’s Home Area.
17. Place the disk into a Land area adjacent to an area containing an enemy City. If there are none, place it into a Sea area adjacent to an area containing an enemy City. If there are two or more suitable areas to choose from, select the one containing the fewest enemy disks.
18. Place 2 disks into an area that contains an enemy Settlement and no more than 2 Barbarians. (*The NPC must have at least 2 remaining available disks to place.*)
19. Place the disk into an area that contains an enemy Camp and no more than 1 Barbarian disk.
20. Place the disk into a Land area containing one of its Settlements (*so as to create a City*) where no enemy disks are present.
21. Place the disk into an area where no enemy disks are present. Prioritize the area closest to the enemy’s Home Area, then the area closest to an enemy-occupied area. If unable to comply, go to the Non-Hostile NPC Disk Placement (22-28) for any remaining disks.

### Non-Hostile NPC Disk Placement:

**Terrain Note.** When given an equal choice below between two or more Land areas to place disks, the NPC will do so in this order of preference. Fertile, Mountain, Plains, Desert. The goal is always to CONTROL that area. Once Control is achieved by a Non-Hostile NPC, it will progress to the next disk placement priority. By the same logic, when given an equal choice below between two or more Sea areas to place disks, the NPC will place them where they are adjacent to (or at least closer to, if not able to place adjacent) Land areas in that same order of preference.

22. Unless a Controlled Fertile or Desert area, place the disk into a Land area containing one of its Camps (*so as to create a Settlement*).

23. Place the disk into an empty Sea area that is adjacent to a Land area it occupies.

24. Place 1 disk into an empty Fertile or Desert area or up to 2 disks into an empty Land area adjacent to any area it occupies.

25. If the NPC does not have the highest VP total, place the disk(s) into a Land area containing one of its Controlled Fertile areas or Settlements (*so as to create a City*). Prioritize placement to an area closest to the NPC’s Home Area.

26. Place the disk into a Barbarian-Controlled Land area adjacent to an area the NPC occupies. Prioritize the Land area containing the fewest Barbarians. Place enough disks to exceed the number of Barbarian disks there by one (*to a maximum of 4*)—but not if the area already contains 4 Barbarian disks (see #4 of **General Rules for NPC Disk Placement** below).

27. Place the disk into a Barbarian-Controlled Sea area adjacent to an area the NPC occupies. Prioritize the Sea area containing the fewest Barbarians. Place enough disks to exceed the number of Barbarian disks there by one (*to a maximum of 2*).

28. Place the disk into a Sea area occupied by another civilization if that Sea area is adjacent to an area occupied by that civilization unless the placement would create a Contested area. If unable to comply, any remaining placement is forfeit.



### General Rules for NPC Disk Placement

1. Scenario special rules always take precedence over the above.
2. An NPC will not place a disk in an area occupied by a civilization to which it is not an enemy if in doing so it would create a Contested area.
3. An NPC will only place disks where they can at least equal the largest enemy stack and will place enough to exceed that number by 1, if possible (due to stacking limitations / availability of disks to place).
4. An NPC will not place disks in an area occupied by an enemy civilization if that area already contains four Barbarians (unless it’s that NPC’s Home Area).

## NPC Mina, Card Draw & VPs

### NPC Mina



During its Draw Step, an NPC will always expend mina to increase its hand to the maximum of 6 cards, if possible. An NPC will not spend mina or use card effects to draw cards if doing so would put a seventh card into its hand (exception: an NPC Mittani). An NPC will always use Deity and Fate card effects that draw cards in preference to spending mina to draw cards.

An NPC will always expend an available mina in lieu of having one of its disks removed from its City or an area with its Gold or a Deity, or to retain control of a Mountain or Fertile area, or any area with a special bonus cube—*Oasis* (#70), *Fishing Grounds* (#71) or *Mountain of Gold* (#69). In other words, any area that will yield additional disks, mina or Victory Points as well as Mountain or Fertile areas in general.

### NPC Bonus VPs & Challenge Level

During every Victory Tally Step of an Exploration scenario (p58), each NPC gains 1 bonus VP. Player(s) may, however, increase this bonus to a default of 2 VP per turn for a more challenging game, or eliminate it altogether if they want an easier-to-win game.

Note that there is no such VP bonus in Historical scenarios; although you may do so if a greater challenge is desired. Some Solitaire scenarios are intentionally designed to be challenging to the player: for what would be the fun in taking on an all-to-easy-to-win game? A player is very likely to lose, or at least not finish first, in such games. Players may wish to play a scenario several times—keeping track of their score in each—with the goal of improving their score with each play.

Two bonus Victory Points per turn is the default unless another amount is selected. When considering adjusting that amount, you should consider that the more NPCs there are in a game the fewer bonus points should be awarded.

Should you find NPC opponents too challenging, we suggest either you draw an additional card during each Draw Step or the NPC draw one fewer; you could even apply both of these simultaneously. You can do the reverse if you find NPC opponents are not quite so challenging. Any civilization—player or NPC—can be boosted by giving it one or more minas during setup and/or at the beginning of each Card Phase. Alternatively, you could increase or decrease a civilization’s disk Growth by 2.

### Invader Scenarios

The increase in the guaranteed minimum growth for most Invaders in those scenarios that use them is intended to compensate for the Invaders being played by the game system instead of by a player. You may wish to play the scenarios several times, keeping track of how well you do against the Invaders and then adjust accordingly (if needed). Feel free to “tweak”... remember, “it’s YOUR game!”.

**Stronger Invaders**—To make the Invaders stronger, increase their guaranteed minimum disks during the Growth Phase by 2 or even 4 and/or give them 2 bonus cards (instead of 1) during the Draw Step.

**Weaker Invaders**—To make the Invaders weaker, reduce their disks during the Growth Phase by 2 or even 4 (after all Growth calculations are made) and/or eliminate their bonus card during the Draw Step.

**Stronger Player**—To make your civilization stronger, increase your guaranteed minimum disks during the Growth Phase from 3 to 4 and/or draw a bonus card during your Draw Step. The 6 card Hand maximum remains in place.

**Weaker Player**—To make your civilization weaker, reduce your initial hand of cards by 1.

### Gilgamesh Options

If playing less than four Epochs, decide in advance whether to permit use of the Gilgamesh option unless a scenario states otherwise. Before play begins, players may agree to allow more than one Gilgamesh play in the game.

This could help a newbie player remain an active participant in the game and continue to have fun. During play testing with this option, the record was three Gilgamesh returns which allowed that player to remain competitively “in the hunt.”

### One vs. Two Scenarios

When using the 1-civilization vs. 2-civilization option in a 2-player game, the 2-civilization player may want to divide their civilizations’ VP total by 3 instead of 4 to arrive at their current VP score if they are not as competent in the game as their opponent. Alternately, if more experienced than their opponent, perhaps a division of 5 would better balance the game.

**Design Note:** Since an experienced ACME player with but a single civilization could more than even the odds versus a “newbie” with two civilizations; players should take the above ratios as subject to further adjustment based on their perceptions of player experience with the system and the cards. This approach works however players configure things.

# Solitaire Scenario Crafting Procedure

**Design Note:** Solitaire scenario crafting recreates the multiplayer basic game if you do not have an opponent handy, or if you just wish to learn or play around and explore the ACME system. These games are generally more pacific than the historical Solitaire scenarios (yet need not be), which are war games of survival or conquest.

Crafted scenarios require a number of decisions to be made before the game can start, including whether a standard or “Exploration” version is to be played. In a standard game—similar to all the named scenarios in this booklet—all NPCs are known from game start. In an Exploration game, however, one or more NPCs will appear based on your disks’ expansion across the map during the course of play.

## Pre-Game Decisions

When setting up a crafted scenario, the following decisions need to be incorporated into the Default Setup.

### Map Size

First decide what size map you will use: Full, Abbreviated Western, Western, Eastern, or Fertile Crescent [see p35].

### Player & NPC Civilizations

Decide which civilization you will play and take its Civilization Display. Select a civilization that has its Home Area depicted within the map configuration you have chosen. Then decide how many NPCs you will compete against. We suggest using 2 or 3 NPCs in full map games, and 1 or 2 in games with less than a full map.

**Design Note:** The difficulty level of a solitaire game increases with the number of NPCs involved.

- Going head-to-head against a single NPC favors you.
- Facing two NPCs presents you with a solid challenge.

Going against three NPCs presents you with a very challenging situation indeed; perhaps best summed up as “being at war with two civilizations is bad enough; being at war with three is a death rattle”.

Use any method desired to decide which civilizations will be NPCs in a standard game or, if playing an Exploration game, allow the game to randomly choose from any number of available civilizations as they are encountered during play.

**Example 1:** You opt for known NPCs to play against. You decide to use the Western Map against two NPCs, choosing for yourself the Sea Peoples to face the Hittites and Egypt.

**Example 2:** You opt to let the system surprise you with an Exploration game’s NPC opponents. You do nothing now: when you first encounter a civilization, you will draw one at random from among the civilizations not yet in play. These may or may not be limited to those civilizations whose Home Areas are printed on the portion of the map in play. As a variation, before beginning the game, you can opt to set aside any civilizations you do not wish to play against and will draw at random from the remainder.

**Civilization Colors**—You may use any of the player colors other than yellow for your civilization and for the NPCs.

Yellow disks are used for NPC generation and other special rules in solitaire games.

## Turn Order & Initial Deployment

In an Exploration game you automatically place one of your civilization’s disks on space 1 of the Turn Order track—it will be the only disk there at the start of the game. If there is more than one player civilization involved in an Exploration game, or if this will be a standard game with known NPCs, use the Default Setup procedure to determine starting Turn Order. Set up the starting disks for all known NPCs according to the Default Setup. If you are playing an Exploration game with unknown NPCs, they will not set up now.

**Known NPC Example:** You elect to play the **Sea Peoples** against NPC **Egypt** and NPC **Hittites**. Assign one of blue, red, green, purple or burnt orange to each of these three civilizations. You randomly draw an Egyptian disk, so they set up first: take 12 of their disks from supply, placing 2 into their Home Area (Thebes is randomly selected) and 2 more into each of the adjacent Fertile land areas, only one for a Desert, and then, place the remaining 4 disks adjacent to these per the Basic Game—you decide which or you can use any random method of your choosing to make the determination. Randomly draw the second disk and set up that civilization’s starting pieces, then set up the third and final faction.

## Civilization Pool

Take 6 white disks and 4 black disks and place them into an opaque container. These disks form the “Civilization Pool.” If this is an Exploration game, add to the Civilization Pool 1 yellow disk as well as 1 disk belonging to each of the unknown NPCs that will be created/discovered during play.

The Civilization Pool will be used to determine NPC hostility toward you and, if this is to be an Exploration game, determine where and when unknown NPCs will appear.

## Sudden Death

Choose the length of the scenario, with the default being a 4-Epoch game that begins with turn 1 of Epoch I (9 to 16 turns). Alternately, you could set an Epoch or VP limit to the game, or set an arbitrary time limit of, say, 2 hours. If you decide the game will conclude at the end of an Epoch, skip all Sudden Death checks during that final Epoch (so it will not end early).

If a VP limit is chosen, the game will end at the conclusion of any turn in which any civilization has met or exceeded an agreed upon Victory Point value. For a short game, use a target of 25 VPs. For a game of average length, use 50 points. Use 75 points for a longer game or 100 for an epic length game.

## NPC Hostility

Unlike Historical scenarios where NPCs are always your enemy, in crafted scenarios—or when playing any of the Sandbox scenarios [p44 & 56] using one or more NPCs—the status of hostilities is determined at the end of every Victory Tally Step. To do so, perform the following steps order in the order shown:

1. Peace Offers to NPCs
2. Declarations of War by NPCs
3. Peace Among the NPCs
4. War Among the NPCs

### Peace Offers to NPCs

War between your civilization and an NPC does not need to be a perpetual state of conflict. Just as with a live player, it is possible to find peaceful accommodation. First, you may make a Peace Offer to any number of enemy NPCs, in any order. (*In a game with two or more player civilizations, Peace Offers are conducted in Turn Order.*) Peace Offers cannot be made in Historical scenarios.

#### Procedure:

For each Peace Offer toward an enemy NPC, draw 1 disk from the Civilization Pool for each of the following conditions (to a maximum of 4):

- You give the NPC 1 mina or 1 card (not both). *This gift must be made before the first disk is drawn.*
- There are no NPC disks in or adjacent to any area you occupy.
- The NPC has more VPs than you.
- The NPC has more Cities than you.

In games with two or more player civilizations, the NPC's Primary enemy automatically draws one fewer disk (*which could result in none being drawn*). If a white disk is drawn, the NPC is no longer your enemy (*remove your disk from beneath the NPC disk on the Turn Order Track*). Return all drawn disks to the Pool.

### Declarations of War by NPCs

After Peace Offers, every non-enemy NPC—other than those which just accepted a Peace Offer—must determine if it becomes your enemy. If there is more than one non-enemy NPC, proceed in highest-to-lowest VP totals (then in Turn Order if tied).

#### Procedure:

Draw 1 disk from the Civilization Pool for each of the following conditions (to a maximum of 5):

- The NPC has a disk in or adjacent any area you occupy.
- You have disks in or adjacent to the NPC's Home Area.
- You have more VPs than the NPC.
- You have more Cities than the NPC.
- You played a card this turn that caused the NPC to lose a disk, card, mina, VP or Deity.
- If the NPC is Sea Peoples or Cimmerians and you have a disk in a Sea area with a Sea Peoples or Cimmerian disk.

If a black disk is drawn, the NPC becomes your enemy (*place one of your disks beneath the NPC disk on the Turn Order track*).

Return all drawn disks to the Pool.

If an NPC becomes your enemy in this manner, it is no longer considered an enemy to any other NPC, and those NPCs are no longer enemy to it. Remove disks from the Turn Order track accordingly.



### Peace Among the NPCs

After Declarations of War, if any NPCs are enemy to each other, there is a possibility that peace may break out. NPCs check for peace in Turn Order.

#### Procedure:

Draw 1 disk from the Civilization Pool for each of the following conditions:

- The checking NPC has no disks in or adjacent to any area occupied by the enemy NPC.
- The checking NPC has more VPs than the enemy NPC.
- The checking NPC has more Cities than the enemy NPC.

If a white disk is drawn, the two NPCs are no longer enemy to each other (*remove the checking NPC's disk from beneath the former enemy NPC's disk on the Turn Order track*).

Return all drawn disks to the Pool.

## War Between the NPCs

If an NPC is not enemy toward you or another NPC and has not made peace this turn, it may become enemy to another NPC. If an NPC meets the preceding criteria, check for possible hostilities with each other NPC that also meets the above criteria, beginning with the opposing NPC with the fewest VPs. Draw 1 disk from the Civilization Pool for each of the following conditions (to a maximum of 5):

- The checking NPC has a disk in or adjacent any area the opposing NPC occupies.
- The opposing NPC has disks in or adjacent to the checking NPC's Home Area.
- The opposing NPC has more VPs than the checking NPC.
- The opposing NPC has more Cities than the checking NPC.
- The opposing NPC played a card this turn that caused the checking NPC to lose a disk, card, mina, VP or Deity.
- If the checking NPC is Sea Peoples or Cimmerians, the opposing NPC has a disk in a sea area with a Sea Peoples or Cimmerian disk.

If a black disk is drawn, that opposing NPC becomes an enemy of the checking NPC (*place one of its disks beneath that of the checking NPC on the Turn Order track*).

Return all drawn disks to the Pool.

## Exploration Phase

In an Exploration scenario the initial locations of one or more of the other civilizations participating in the game as NPCs are unknown. Exploration scenarios therefore have an additional “Exploration Phase” that occurs at the start of every turn (just prior to the Growth Phase). The main purpose of the Exploration Phase is to determine if and when unknown NPCs are encountered and what their initial presence on the map will be when they are encountered.

The first part of the Exploration Phase is the Exploration Step, where you will draw a disk from the Civilization Pool (“explore”), one at a time, for each empty area that is adjacent to an area that contains a non-white disk at the start of the phase. Perform each draw in its entirety before moving on to the next eligible area. Once every exploration has been performed, proceed to the Clean Up Step.

### Exploration Step

You must draw for all empty areas adjacent to one of your civilization's disks first. Then draw for empty areas adjacent to an existing NPC disk that has not yet been explored. Finally, draw

for each empty area adjacent to an existing Barbarian disk that has not yet been explored.

Remember to only explore those empty areas adjacent to disks that began the turn already on the map: ignore adjacency for any disk placed during the current Exploration Phase.

If you draw a white disk for an area, return the disk to the Civilization Pool (*the number of white disks in the Pool stays constant*), then place a white disk from supply into that area.

If you draw a black disk for an area, return the disk to the Civilization Pool (*the number of black disks in the Pool stays constant*), then reveal the top card of the Draw deck:

- If the revealed card is an Event card that would place one or more Barbarians into the explored area, resolve its effects.
- If the revealed card is an Event card that would not place Barbarians into the explored area, place 2 Barbarian disks into the area then resolve the card's effects.
- If a card other than an Event is revealed, check the first digit of the card's ID, then refer to the following table to determine how many Barbarian disks are placed into the explored area.

ID number	Barbarian Disks
1, 2, 3 or 4	1 ( <i>native tribe/fishermen</i> )
5, 6 or 7	2 ( <i>native settlement/raiders</i> )
8 or 9	3 ( <i>horde/pirate fleet</i> )*

\*If exploring a Sea area, this is an exception to the usual stacking limits—any excess disk(s) remaining at the end of the Competition Phase will be eliminated, as normal.

If you draw the yellow disk for an area, return the disk to the Pool, then reveal the top card of the Draw deck. Check the first digit of the revealed card's ID then refer to the following table. If an Event card is selected, play the Event but get no treasure nor a replacement card (the treasure was cursed!).

ID number	Result
1, 2 or 3	<i>Friendly Tribe</i> —Place 1 of your disks there.
4, 5 or 6	<i>Local Allies</i> —Place 2 of your disks there.
7 or 8	<i>Rich Mineral Deposits</i> —Place 1 of your disks there then gain 1 mina.
9	<i>Treasure</i> —Place 1 of your disks there. Then draw 2 cards: choose one to keep and discard the other.

The first time that you draw a blue, burnt orange, green, red or purple disk during each Exploration Phase, if there is at least one vacant area adjacent to the explored area, place the disk into that area, then resolve a **Civilization Creation Sequence** (p60).

**IMPORTANT:** Only one new NPC can be created each turn.

If you draw a blue, burnt orange, green, red or purple disk under any other conditions, return the disk to the Pool and treat the draw exactly as if a white disk was drawn.

Follow the steps below in the order given to create a new NPC. The NPC uses a Supply consisting of the colored disks matching that of the one placed into the explored area.

**1.** Place one of its disks into an adjacent empty area. If there are two or more to choose from place it according to the following priorities:

- a.** an inactive civilization's Home Area;
- b.** the area furthest from all player civilization disks;
- c.** a Land area instead of a Sea area;
- d.** determine disk placement randomly.

**2.** Place a second disk into an empty non-Desert Land area adjacent to the first disk, if any, using the above priorities.

**3. New Civilization Size**—Draw a disk from the Civilization Pool (then return it). If the drawn disk was white, the new civilization will place 8 more disks during step 5 below; if black, 10 more; otherwise 12 more. Whatever the quantity of disks selected, add 2 additional disks for every turn of the current Epoch that has already been completed.

**4. New Civilization Deployment**—Using the last disk placed in either step 1 or 2 above as a starting point, follow the procedure outlined in step 7c of the Default Setup (p34) to place the allotted disks onto the map. If any disks remain, place them so as to create Cities for the new NPC, prioritizing those areas farthest from areas containing a player's disk. If not all allotted disks can be placed without violating stacking limits, put the remainder into the Ready box of the new civilization's Display.

**5. Home Areas**—If a disk was placed into an inactive Home Area, the new NPC becomes that civilization (*if two or more, choose one at random*). Place 3 disks from its Supply there.

**5a. Non-Home Areas**—If a disk was not placed into any inactive Home Area(s), choose the land area occupied by the new NPC that is furthest from any area containing a player's disk and place the large flat block of its color (which can never be removed) in that area. That area becomes its Home Area for the rest of the game. If a disk was placed into an inactive Home Area, the new NPC becomes that civilization (if two or more Home Areas are available, choose one at random). Place two more disks from its Supply there for a total of 3. **Give the NPC the Civilization Display for the inactive civilization whose Home Area is closest to that area.**

**Optional NPC Deity:** As an Option, Players who wish an even greater challenge may grant the NPC a starting Deity. This Deity is drawn at random from those available and is placed in the NPC Home Area at no resource cost.

**Home Area Benefits:** If an NPC is created and its Home Area is not one of THE Home Areas identified for that civilization (e.g. Babylon is created with its Home Area in any area other than Babylon itself), treat that Home Area as if it were THE Home Area for all bonuses listed on the Civilization Display. For example, if the Babylonian Civilization was created and its Home Area was in adjacent Samarra, the NPC would gain the Babylonian bonus of 1 mina if it had a City in Samarra.

**6.** Place one of its disks onto space **1** of the Civilization Turn Order track, shifting all other disks on the track one space to the right.

**7.** Place one of its disks onto space **0** of the Victory Point Track, **then the NPC immediately gains VPs equal to your civilization's current VP total.**

**8.** Reveal cards from the top of the Draw deck until five non-Event cards have been revealed. Put those five cards into the new NPC's hand and shuffle any revealed Event cards back into the Draw deck (*do not resolve them*).

## Cleanup Step

Perform the following steps in the order given.

**1.** Remove all white disks from the map.

**2.** If all possible NPCs have been created, remove all blue, burnt orange, green, red and purple disks from the Civilization Pool. Skip steps 3 and 4.

**3.** If there are no active NPCs, add 1 NPC disk—its color chosen at random from among those still in the Pool—to the Civilization Pool.

**4.** If no NPC was created this turn (and there is at least one left to be created), add 1 NPC disk—its color chosen at random from among those still in the Pool—to the Civilization Pool.

## Event Cards With No Active NPCs

If an Event card is drawn or revealed during an Exploration scenario and there are no active NPCs yet, that card is resolved as if there were an active NPC and it had the fewest VPs. If the scenario has two or more players, the player with the most VPs is invaded. In event of a tie, the tied player with the most Cities is the victim, and if still tied, the player earlier in Turn Order is the victim.

### Example—Creating an NPC:

1. You are playing Egypt using the red disks. You occupy the starting areas for Egypt (as shown in the Basic two-player setup).

2. You choose to face three NPCs (and none are active yet) so the Civilization Pool is comprised of 6 white disks, 4 black disks, 1 yellow disk, and disks of three other colors: in this case purple, green and blue.

3. You elect to start exploring in the Sinai Sea. You draw a white disk. You place a white disk from supply into Sinai Sea and place the one that was drawn back into the Pool.

4. You then elect to explore Sinai and draw a green disk for the Sinai area. The disk is placed there and green is now in use for the new NPC.

5. You place a second green disk into an adjacent empty land area. In this case there are two: Petra and Tyre. You elect to draw a Card to determine which it will be: a Card with an even number ID will mean placing the disk in Petra and odd will be Tyre. Note that the Desert area of Midian is ignored for possible NPC second disk placement. You draw an even number Card and place the second disk in Petra.

6. You then place another green disk next to the Petra area. As Judah is adjacent and Judah is an inactive Home Area the green disk is placed there. Place the large Green Home Area disk there, along with two additional green disks. The NPC is the Israelite Civilization and will use the Israelite Civilization Display.

7. Next you draw a disk from the Pool to determine the size of the NPC. You draw a black disk so the NPC will have 10 more disks to place. Assume this is turn 1 so, because no turns have been completed yet for the Epoch, no additional disks are allotted.

8. Following step 7c of the Default Setup, you place its disks so there will be 2 of its allotted disks into each adjacent empty land area adjacent to the disk placed in step 6, above, and 1 disk into each adjacent empty Desert area. Thus, of the 10, one will go into Petra (so there are now 2 disks there), 2 will go into each of Tyre, Byblos, Aleppo, and Emar.



You have only 1 disk of those 10 left, and it must go into either Nabatea or Agrae, as these Desert areas are both adjacent to Judah. Again you choose to draw a Card, with even meaning you will place in Nabatea, and odd in Agrae.

9. Place green disks in the Civilization Turn Order track's #2 space and in the Victory Point track's "0" space next to the red disk. This means 17 green disks have been placed leaving 33 remaining in the new Israelite civilization's Supply. The Sinai Sea white disk is returned to its Supply and Egypt, during the Growth Phase's Deployment Step, would deploy 6 disks from its Civilization Display's Ready Box. Will you deploy disks to confront the Israelites with competition or specifically expand northward via Sea areas (or perhaps a bit of both)? Ah, decisions, decisions.

## Exploration Scenario Quick Reference

**Create Civilization Pool**—6 white disks, 4 black disks, 1 yellow disk, and 1 disk belonging to each of the unknown NPCs that will be created during play [p56].

**Exploration Phase**—perform at the beginning of every turn, prior to the Growth Phase.

- **Exploration Step:** Pull a disk from the Pool for each area adjacent to any Faction's disk that was empty at the start of the Phase [p58].
- **Cleanup Step:** perform various cleanup activities [p59].

**NPC Hostility**—check for war and peace at the end of every Victory Tally Step [p57].

**Civilization Creation Sequence**—Follow the steps below when instructed to create a new NPC. The NPC uses a supply consisting of the colored disks matching that of the one placed into the explored area.

**1. Place one of its disks into an adjacent empty area.** If there are two or more to choose from, place it according to the following priorities:

- a. an inactive Home Area;
- b. the area furthest from all player civilization disks;
- c. a Land area instead of a Sea area;
- d. determine randomly.

**2. Place a second disk into an empty non-Desert Land area adjacent to the first disk, if any, using the above priorities.**

**3. New Civilization Size**—Draw a disk from the Civilization Pool (then return it). If the drawn disk was white, the new civilization will place 8 more disks during step 5, below; if black, 10 more; otherwise 12 more. Whatever the quantity of disks selected, add 2 additional disks for every turn of the current Epoch that has already been completed (and adjust accordingly: e.g. consider a game commencing with Epoch IV's turn 4 to have the three preceding turns completed for six extra disks).

**4. New Civilization Deployment**—Using the last disk placed in either step 1 or 2 above as a starting point, follow the procedure outlined in step 7c of the Default Setup (p34) to place the allotted disks onto the map. If any disks remain, place them so as to create Cities for the new NPC, prioritizing those areas farthest from areas containing a player's disk. If not all allotted disks can be placed without violating stacking limits, put the remainder into the Ready box of the new civilization's Display.

**5a. Home Areas**—If a disk was placed into an inactive Home Area, the new NPC becomes that civilization (*if two or more equally available, choose one at random*). Place two more disks from its Supply there.

**5b. Non-Home Areas**—If a disk was not placed into any inactive Home Areas, choose the non-Desert Land area occupied by the new NPC that is furthest from any area containing a player's disk and place the large flat block of its color (which can never be removed) in that area; that area becomes its Home Area for the rest of the game. Place two more disks (making a City) from its Supply there. Give the NPC the Civilization Display for the inactive civilization whose Home Area is closest to that non-Desert Land area.

**Optional NPC Deity:** As an Option, Players who wish an even greater challenge may grant the NPC a starting Deity. This Deity is drawn at random from those available and is placed in the NPC Home Area at no resource cost.

**6.** Place one of its disks onto space **1** of the Civilization Turn Order track, shifting all other disks on the track one space to the right.

**7.** Place one of its disks onto space **0** of the Victory Point Track, then the NPC immediately gains VPs equal to your civilization's current VP total.

**8.** Reveal cards from the top of the Draw deck until five non-Event cards have been revealed. Put those five cards into the new NPC's hand and shuffle any revealed Event cards back into the Draw pile (*do not resolve them!*).

## Alexander the Great: Conquer (or Defend) the Persian Empire

### A Solitaire or Two-player Historical Scenario

This scenario begins after the various inter-Hellenic struggles (the Peloponnesian War, the unification of Greece under Philip of Macedon) and takes the fight to the east, challenging the player to duplicating—or parrying—the conquests of Alexander the Great (333—323 B.C.).

This scenario presents a unique situation that allows each of the players or an NPC to take either the role of Alexander the Great OR that of his Persian nemesis, Darius III.

## Setup

Use the Full Map.

## Deities

The use of Deities is optional. If Deities are to be used, however, select one for the Greeks and one for the Persian Heartland. The other three Persian civilizations (p62) may NOT have or build Deities. If the Macedonians are a player, they may choose the Deity they wish. If the Persians are a player, they may choose the Deity they wish, after the Macedonians choose. If either is an NPC, their Deity is chosen at random.

## Civilizations

One player is the Persian Empire. The Empire will be represented by four civilizations. The **Hittites, Sea Peoples, the Egyptians** and, finally and most important, the **Medes & Persians**. The other is the Macedonians (who will use the Greek Civilization Display).

## NPC

Either Alexander or the Persians may be an NPC, with the other controlled by a player. In the event the Persian Empire is the NPC, all three Empire civilizations are always hostile to Macedon, and always treat Macedon as the primary enemy. If Greece is the NPC, it is always hostile to all Persian Empire civilizations. If the Hittites are destroyed, then the Sea Peoples become the primary enemy. If both are destroyed, then the Egyptians become the primary enemy. If all three are destroyed, then the Medes & Persians become the primary enemy.

## Alexander

Alexander will use the Greeks Civilization Display and both the blue and green disks.

**Design Note:** Use of the green disks is in case the Macedonian supply runs out of blue disks, effectively giving the Macedonians 98 disks with which to work (as per the Double Disk option on p36).

- Place a blue disk onto space 1 of the Turn Order track.
- Place the large blue block (the Greek Homeland Block), a City, and a Gold disk in Thrace.
- Place a Camp in the Marmaran Sea and in Ilium.



## The Persian Empire

The Persians are represented by four distinct civilizations. The Persians use burnt orange disks and the Hittite Civilization Display to represent the Western Satrapies, red disks and the Sea Peoples Civilization Display to represent their Levantine Satrapies, yellow disks for the Egyptians using Egypt's Civilization Display and, finally, the purple disks and the Medes & Persians Civilization Display to represent the Persian empire's heartland.

### Persian Western Satrapies:

- Place a burnt orange disk onto space 2 of the Turn Order track.
- Place the large burnt orange block, the Hittite Homeland Block, a City and a Gold disk in Lukka.
- Place a City and a Gold disk in each of Lydia, Arzawa, Karahuyuk, and Kumanis.
- Place a Camp in Ilium.
- Place a Settlement and a Stronghold cube in Tarsus.

### Persian Levantine Satrapies:

- Place a red disk onto space 3 of the Turn Order track.
- Place the large red block, the Sea Peoples Homeland Block, a City and a Gold disk in Tyre.
- Place a City and a Gold disk in Petra, Byblos, Ugarit, Judah and Aleppo.
- Place Camps in Rhodes, Alashiya, and the Icarian Sea, Rhodian Sea, Cilician Strait, Levantine Sea, Sinai Sea and Egyptian Sea.

### Persian Egyptian Satrapy:

- Place a yellow disk onto space 4 of the Turn Order Track.
- As there are only six colors and the yellow disks are in use as "Gold Cities" the Egyptian Satrapy will also have to use yellow disks and a white disk to represent Egypt's single gold disk. Place the Egyptian Homeland Block in Memphis, and place one Gold (white disk) each in Nile Delta and Memphis and yellow disks for Camps in each of the Nile Delta, Memphis, Amarna, and Abydos

### Persian Heartland:

- Place a purple disk onto space 5 of the Turn Order track.
- Place the large purple block, the Medes & Persians Homeland Block, a City and a Gold disk in Persis.
- Place a City and a Gold disk into Assur, Babylon, Ctesiphon, Susa, Parthia, Bactria and Parachania.
- Place a Camp and a Stronghold cube each in Armenia, Van, Cadush, Northern Zagros, and Southern Zagros—as well as a Stronghold cube far to the east in Bactria.

**"Empty" Areas Note:** Although much of the map is empty, it is all actually part of the Persian Empire. For game play purposes—and to prevent map clutter and a shortage of Persian disks for more martial/victory point purposes—these have been left empty and are treated as empty for all purposes.

## Initial Card Hands

1. Take the **Warrior King** (21), **Master Armorer** (20) and **Armored Infantry** (31) cards out of the Fate Deck and give them to the Greeks.

**Design Note:** These three cards represent the superb generalship of Alexander and his subordinate commanders and the magnificent professional army he inherited from his father, Philip of Macedon.

2. Take the **Great Captain** card (14) out of the Fate Deck and give it to the Medes & Persians.

**Design Note:** This card represents the Greek mercenary General Memnon and the thousands of Greeks and Greek mercenaries who fought against the Macedonians.

3. Take the **Eagles of the Sea** card (41) out of the Fate Deck and give it to the Sea Peoples.

4. Remove the seven Event cards from the Fate Deck.

5. Shuffle the remaining Fate cards together. Deal three additional cards to the Greeks, and one card to each of the four Persian Empire civilizations.

6. Return the seven Event cards to the Fate Deck and shuffle to form the Draw pile.

## Special Rules

### 1. Turns and Epochs

The Alexander the Great Scenario takes place in a single Epoch that may last up to 10 turns. This can be marked by moving the Turn Record Cylinder on the Victory Point Track instead of the Turn Track. After the eighth turn is complete, draw a card. If the card is an even number, the game continues for a ninth turn. If it is an odd numbered card, the game is over (Alexander has died of illness/wounds/alcoholism). If there is a ninth turn, repeat the process at its conclusion. **The game will not go longer than ten turns.** The game also immediately ends if Macedon or ALL four Persian Empire Civilizations are eliminated (p63).

The Epoch does not end until the game ends. When it does, do not consult the End of Epoch Event Table, but do score any Victory Points allowed during an End of Epoch Phase.

Ignore any Cards which would bring the Epoch to a close; such cards may be expended in lieu of losing a disk. Do NOT draw cards at the end of turns 2 or 3 to end the Epoch.

### 2. Gold (and Victory)

The Gold rules (p51) are in effect with the following five modifications:

a) If the Greek Homeland Gold is looted, reveal the top card of the Draw pile. If the revealed card's ID is odd, the game ends immediately in a Persian victory.

Alexander left Antipater to hold Macedon and Greece. The Persian fleet, along with the army of King Agis of Sparta and other Greek city states attempted to break Antipater's control on their homelands—and even hoped to take the war to Macedon itself. They were defeated by Antipater at Megalopolis in 331 BC.

b) **Conquest of the Sea Peoples:** If at the start of their turn there are **NO Gold** disks beneath any **Sea Peoples** disks on the map, the Sea Peoples are eliminated and the **Sea Peoples** Civilization Display is removed from play. *In addition, remove ALL Red disks in Sea Areas.* Sea Peoples cards and mina are discarded, and no further cards or mina are drawn or accrued for the Sea Peoples. Sea Peoples' disks remain on the map, but no disks are added in Growth or for any other reason. Sea Peoples victory points are retained, *but no additional points* are accrued for any reason.

Alexander disbanded his own navy early in the campaign. Rather than combat the superior Persian navy at sea, he decided to destroy it by taking their bases—the “Gold” red Cities in the game. Without their bases, the Persian fleet could no longer contest the seas. This rule represents that effect.

c) **Conquest of the Hittites:** If at the start of their turn there are **NO Gold** disks beneath any **Hittite** Disks on the map, the Hittites are eliminated and the **Hittites** Civilization Display is removed from play. Hittite cards and mina are discarded, and no further cards or mina are drawn or accrued for the Hittites. Hittite disks remain on the map, but no disks are added in Growth or for any other reason. Hittite Victory Points are retained, *but no additional points* are accrued for any reason.

d) **Conquest of the Egyptians:** If at the start of any player turn there are **NO Gold** disks beneath any Egyptian yellow disks in Memphis and the Nile Delta, Egypt is eliminated and the Egyptian Civilization Display is removed from play. Egyptian cards and mina are discarded, and no further cards or mina are drawn or accrued for the Egyptians. Egyptian Victory Points are retained, *but no additional points* are accrued for any reason.

e) **Conquest of the Medes & Persians:** If at the start of any player turn there are **NO Gold** disks beneath any **Medes & Persian** disks on the map, the game is over and the Macedonians win. This result applies regardless of the Victory Points scored.

### 3. No Gilgamesh

The Gilgamesh Rule cannot be invoked in this scenario.

### 4. Memnon

The Great **Captain** card automatically begins the game in the Medes & Persians' hand. When the Persians play this card, or if it would be stolen or forcibly discarded, put it face-down on their Display table instead of discarding it.

Should the Persian Heartland be an NPC, they will play it in a Competition where a Gold disk is present, and in this order: in an area with a Greek Gold, in an area with Hittite Gold, and finally, in an area with a Sea Peoples Gold.

At the beginning of its Draw Step, the Medes & Persians automatically put this card back into their hand. *This does not count as one of its allotted draws.* At the beginning of any Draw Step, however, in which there are no Hittite Gold or Sea Peoples Gold on the map, the card is instead discarded.

### 5. Eagles of the Sea

The **Eagles of the Sea** card automatically begins the game in the Sea Peoples' hand. When the Persians play this card, or if it would be stolen or forcibly discarded, put it face-down on their Display instead of discarding it.

At the beginning of its Draw Step, the Sea Peoples automatically put this card back into their hand. *This will count as one of its allotted draws.* At the beginning of any Draw Step, however, in which there are no Sea Peoples Gold on the map, the card is instead discarded.

### 6. Alexander

The **Warrior King**, **Master Armorer** and **Armored Infantry** cards begin the game in the Greek hand. When any of these are played or would be stolen or forcibly discarded, put these cards face-down on the Display instead of discarding them.

At the beginning of the Macedonian Draw Step, the Macedonians automatically return the **Warrior King** to their hand. *This does not count as one of their allotted draws.* During their Draw Step, the player *may* (or in the case of a. NPC must) choose to “draw” either or both of **Master Armorer** and **Armored Infantry** from the table as if they were on the top of the Draw Pile. These **WILL** count as one of their allotted draws.

**Example:** *Warrior King* is stolen by a **Spy** card and is thus set aside face-down on the table (instead of going into the hand of the civilization which played the **Spy**). **Master Armorer** and **Armored Infantry** are then used in Competition. By the end of the Competition Phase the Greeks end up with no cards remaining in their hand. At the start of the Draw Phase they must first take back the **Warrior King** for free. They are always guaranteed to draw at least three cards. They may choose to take either one of **Master Armorer** and **Armored Infantry** and then draw two cards; or they may take both and then draw one card.

At the conclusion of the Draw Phase, the **Warrior King**, **Master Armorer** and **Armored Infantry** cards DO NOT count towards the maximum hand size of six cards

## 7. The Macedonian Empire

In the Macedonian Growth Phase on turn one, place 12 disks on the “Disks for Growth” section of their Civilization Display. This is the ONLY Growth they receive on turn one.

At the beginning of each subsequent Macedonian Growth Phase, the Macedonians will gain 1 mina and transfer four disks from Supply to their Civilization Display’s Ready Box. They will gain an ADDITIONAL disk for EACH area they control which contains a Gold disk. This is in addition to any other Growth and does not count against the guaranteed three-disk minimum for Acquisition.

## 8. The Persian Empire

The Persian Empire is split into four autonomous civilizations (Factions). Each uses its unique Civilization Display with all of its special abilities. The four Persian Empire Factions take separate turns and maintain separate hands of cards.

**Persian Turn 1:** On the first turn of play each Persian Empire faction skips the Growth Phase. Thus, the only disks any Persian faction will be able to place on the map are those allowed through card play. Beginning with turn 2, each Persian faction conducts its normal Growth Phase.

**Persian Card Limits:** During their Draw Step each Persian factions draws a minimum of only 1 card instead of 3.

**Persian Warpath:** The Persian Factions, whether run by a player or an NPC, operate under certain restrictions:

- The **Hittites** and the **Medes & Persians** will not place disks in any **Sea Area** unless by doing so it will enable the Persian to be closer to an Area with Macedonian **Gold** (i.e. any **Area where the Gold disk is now beneath a Macedonian disk**) or a Macedonian **City (in that order)** than it can by placing a disk in a Land Area. If given an equal choice between placing a disk in a Land or Sea Area, the **Hittites** and the **Medes & Persians** will choose the Land Area.
- The **Sea Peoples** Persian will not place disks in any **Land Area** unless by doing so it will enable the Sea Peoples’ Persian Faction to be in or closer to an area with Macedonian **Gold** or a Macedonian **City (in that order)**. If given an equal choice between placing a disk in a Land or Sea Area, the **Sea-Peoples** Persian will choose the Sea Area.
- The **Egyptian** Persian may NEVER place ANY disks ANYWHERE but in the Nile Delta and Memphis through Growth. If allowed to place its disks through card play, any it places MUST be in or immediately adjacent to Memphis or the Nile. Any disks it is unable to place are forfeit.

**No Persian Cohabitation:** No Persian Faction may place a disk in an area with another Persian Faction. The Persian Heartland player may not add their disks to either the Nile Delta or Memphis if Egyptian disks are already present.

## 9. Event Cards

As this game takes place over a very short period of time, the text on some of the Event Cards is ignored, and replaced with the following:

- 97 **Time Marches On**—ignore. Remove from the game and draw a replacement card.
- 98 **Hordes from the North**—The Persian Western Satrapies (or Heartland, if the Western Satrapies have been eliminated) immediately receive 4 disks. These are immediately placed as per the Growth rules.
- 99 **Eastern Powers Attack**—If drawn by the Macedonians during their Draw Phase, play as written and as if the Macedonians had the fewest VP. If drawn for any other reason the Persian Heartland immediately receives 4 disks. These are immediately placed as per the rules of Growth.
- 100 **Invaders from the Sea**—The Persian Levantine Satrapies immediately receive 4 disks. These are immediately placed as per the Growth rules. If the Levantine Satrapies have been eliminated, remove the card from the game and draw a replacement.
- 101 **Mountain Tribes Descend**—If drawn by the Macedonians during their Draw Phase, play as written and as if the Macedonians had the fewest VP. If drawn for any other reason the Persian Heartland immediately receives 4 disks. These are immediately placed as per the rules of Growth.
- 102 **Desert Raiders**—If drawn by the Macedonians during their Draw Phase, play as written and as if the Macedonians had the fewest VP. If drawn for any other reason the Persian Heartland immediately receives 4 disks. These are immediately placed as per the rules of Growth.
- 103 **Breath of God**—Each Civilization discards one card at random. If a civilization lacks any card to discard, lose one mina instead or suffer no effect if lacking both a card or mina. Shuffle all regular discards back into the deck.

## 10. Endgame

The game will end in an automatic victory for the Macedonians if at the end of any Competition Phase there are no Gold disks in areas under Persian control.

Otherwise, tally Victory Points. Score any End of Epoch bonus Victory Points—but do not conduct the Change of Epoch.

Combine all Victory Points for all three Persian Factions. Add 1 point for every area with a Gold disk under Persian control. Add 5 points if the Macedonian Homeland is in Persian control. The result is the VP total for the Persians.

The Macedonians add 2 points for every area with a Gold disk under Macedonian control. If the Macedonian control the area with the Hittite Homeland, add 2 more points. If they control the area with the Sea Peoples' Homeland, add 4 more points. If they control the area with the Egyptian Homeland add 6 points. If they control the area with the Medes and Persians' Homeland, add 10 more points.

**Player's Note:** “Aha!” You may think as a new player to this scenario... “I’ll just make a beeline to the Medes & Persians’ heartland and win a Sudden Death automatic victory by capturing all its Gold disks! (p63) Be warned. During playtesting several solitaire gamers learned to their woe that to ignore the Hittites and Sea Peoples Satrapies, to leave them active in Alexander’s rear, was to court disaster. This was something Alexander appreciated all too well and he sequenced his march of conquest accordingly.

## Rostam

### A Solitaire or Two-Player “Legendary” Scenario

Rostam is the hero of the Persian national epic, *Shahnameh* (which translates as Epic of Kings), which was written by the poet Abolqasem Ferdowsi around 1000 AD. Set in a semi-mythical era that loosely resembles the Parthian period (247 BC—224 AD), the central conflict is between the Persians and the Turanians, invaders from Central Asia whose Home Areas are situated on the far side of the Oxus River and the eastern shores of the Aral Sea. Rostam is repeatedly called upon to save the kingdom (and its hot-headed, selfish and incompetent king). This scenario is set at the period in the book where the Turanian king, Afrasiyab, sets forth on the first of his many invasions.

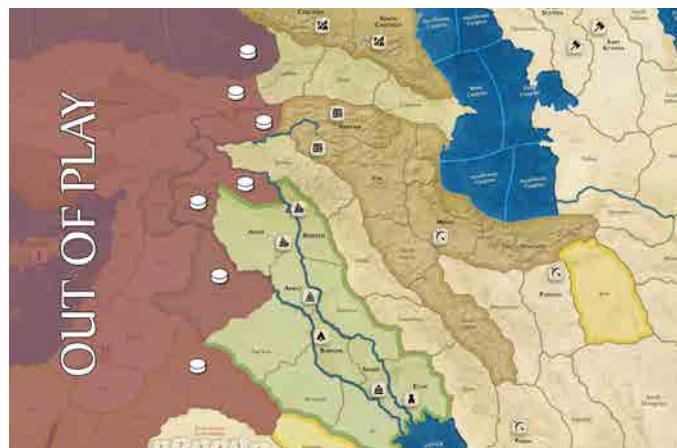
A two-player version of the scenario is also offered in which both sides are controlled by players.



## Map

This scenario uses a truncated version of the modified Eastern Map. Place a white disk in each of the following areas: Caucasus Sea, Kaska, Zab, Tel Birak, Mittani, Emar, Agrae.

This line represents the western edge of the map for all rule purposes. No piece may ever be placed into those marked areas, or any area west of them, throughout play.



## Deities

The Persian Civilization will begin with The God of War (the bonus on this card represents the hero Rostam). The Turanian Empire will begin with The God of the Forge.

## Civilizations

You will play the **Medes & Persians** (Home Area in Parthia for this scenario). The game system will run the Turanians (as represented by the **Scythians**—but with the Home Area in Sacans) as an NPC. The Turanians are always hostile to you.

**Medes & Persians (Player Civilization):** You use the Medes & Persians Civilization Display and the purple disks.

- Place a disk onto space 2 of the Turn Order Track.
- Place a City and 1 yellow disk in each of Parthia, Persis, Medes (with a Stronghold cube) and Ctesiphon.
- Place a Settlement and Stronghold cube as appropriate in each of the Elburz Mountains, Northern Zagros, Southern Zagros, Susa, Paraetaceni, Sargatians and Utians.
- Place the Purple Home Area and God of War markers in Parthia.

**Turanians (NPC or Player Civilization):** The Turanians use the Scythian Civilization Display and the green disks.

- Place a green disk onto space 1 of the Turn Order track.
- Place a City in Sacans (located in the far northeast corner of the map).
- Place a Settlement in each of Massagetans, North Sakans, South Sakans, Kharesmeians, Sogdiana and Bactria (with a Stronghold cube)

- Place the Green Home Area and God of the Forge markers in Sacans.

**Armenians (neutral, independent):** The Armenians use the blue disks. They do not have a Civilization Display and are neither a player nor an NPC. They follow the Independents rules below.

- Place a City (and a Stronghold cube) in Armenia.
- Place a Settlement in each of Colchis, Iberia, Caspians, Van (with a Stronghold cube) and Jarwan.

**Steppe Tribes (neutral, independent):** The Steppe Tribes use the burnt orange disks. They do not have a Civilization Display and are neither a player nor an NPC. They follow the Independents rules below.

- Place a Settlement in North Caucasus, South Caucasus, Chorasmia and each of the six areas of the Caspian Sea. The Steppe Tribes civilization should place Stronghold cubes as appropriate.

**Subject Peoples (neutral, independent):** The Subject Peoples use the red disks. They do not have a Civilization Display and are neither a player nor an NPC. They follow the ensuing **7. Independents** special rule.

- Place a City in each of the playable map's 10 Fertile (green) areas.

## Initial Card Hands

1. Remove the seven Event cards from the Fate Deck.
2. Shuffle the remaining Fate cards together and deal out five cards to the Turanians. Then draw five cards for your Faction: The Medes & Persians.
3. Count out 30 Fate cards face-down. Shuffle the seven Event cards into these 30. Place these face-down atop the Draw deck. (This simulates the storm of internal uprisings, raids by pirates, bandits and barbarians and incursions of Egyptian, Roman, assorted Indian and other foreign powers that the heroic Rostam was called upon to quell).

## Special Rules

### 1. Turns and Epochs

The scenario begins on Turn 1 of Epoch III. The Epoch will last all four turns. Do not check for Sudden Death during the second and third turns. Ignore any card effect that would end the Epoch early. After the Reckoning Phase, begin Epoch IV and continue until the end of turn four or until a Sudden Death result or End of Epoch card is drawn. The scenario will therefore be for 6-8 turns.

### 2. Gold and Automatic Victory

The Gold rules (p51) are in effect. If none of the four areas with Gold are controlled by the Medes and Persians, the game ends immediately in a Turanian victory, regardless of victory points.

### 3. No Gilgamesh

The Gilgamesh Rule cannot be invoked by either civilization.

### 4. Turanian Hordes

The Turanian NPC is guaranteed to receive a minimum of 8 disks during the Acquisition step of the Growth Phase, or as many disks as remain in their Supply, whichever is the lesser amount.

### 5. Turanian Path of Invasion

If two or more areas qualify equally for Turanian disk placement, either during Growth or by Card play, the Turanian NPC will always choose the area closer to a hostile Gold marker.

### 6. Rostam

The God of War Deity represents Rostam for use in the Competition Phase. If The God of War is captured by the Turanians or Barbarians, the marker is placed on the Medes & Persians Civilization Display. At the conclusion of the NEXT turn's Competition Phase, the player may place The God of War Deity in any area with friendly Gold (assuming any remain). Intrepid Rostam cannot remain captured from turn to turn!

If The God of War Deity is on the map, the Persian player may elect to use its (Rostam's) power to Negate one Great Person card INSTEAD of placing two white disks in the Competition Phase. This Negation ability can be employed either during the Card or Competition Phase, but not both.

### 7. Independents

The Armenians, Steppe Tribes and Subject Peoples represent independent tribes, city-states and even kingdoms, all of which either paid tribute to or acknowledged the sovereignty of the Persian Empire—and relied upon the Persians for protection. Thus, they are considered friendly. These minor civilizations do not acquire disks, cards, mina or Victory Points. Nor, however, do they help the Persian Empire acquire any disks, cards, mina or Victory Points.

The player may not place any of their disks into any area that contains ONLY Independents. This prohibition applies to both Deployment and card play.

If Barbarian or Turanian disks are present, however, the player may then place Medes & Persians disks in the area. **These are**

placed ATOP the Independents AS IF the Independents were **Medes & Persian disks**, up to the stacking limit. (e.g. Three Barbarian disks are placed in Elam. There is one Independent disk in Elam. The player may now place up to three of their own Medes & Persians disks in the area—as one Independent plus three Medes & Persians equals the stacking limit of four..

If Independents and Medes & Persians disks are in the same area, any cards played by the NPC to remove disks will remove those of the Medes & Persians before removing ANY Independents. Independents will always be last to be removed. The same procedure is followed in Competition. If Independents and Medes & Persians are together in an area, they are considered to be in the same stack—and no Independents will be removed until all Medes & Persians disks are removed.

At the start of the Resettlement step of the Growth Phase, the player must remove any and all of their disks in areas that contain Independents. Place these disks in the Ready Box of the player's Display in preparation for next turn's Deployment). These disks **are not** to be returned into the Player's Supply.

## 8. Two-player Variant

This scenario may be played by two players. One player plays the Medes & Persians and the other plays the Turanians (Scythians). The Turanian player is not restricted by the NPC path of invasion rule. The Turanian player does, however, receive the benefit of the Turanian Hordes rule.

## Bonus Game Setups: Here Come the Romans!

Although (with exception of the Rostam Scenario on p65) the time frame of *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* only goes up to 100 BC; it would be remiss to ignore a latecomer whose entry into this arena would have such a game-changing impact on the region—and the world: Rome.

After its victories over Carthage, Macedon and the Seleucids, Rome moved east, and in the first century BC came up against one of its most determined foes: Mithridates VI (also known as 'the Great'), king of Pontus. Born in 120 BC and heir to a kingdom that ruled over most of Asia Minor and the Black Sea coast, Mithridates' ambitions soon brought him into conflict with Rome: first over Greece and Galatia, and finally over Bithynia (*Arzawa* on the ACME map). Mithridates fought a series of wars with the Romans from 93 BC until his death 30 years later. He and his Armenian allies fought against some of the greatest of Rome's generals, notably Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey, who in defeating Mithridates set the foundation for the Roman empire in the East.

The first setup covers the **Mithridatic Wars**. After defeating the Seleucids, Rome took over many of their Greek and island areas as allied kingdoms (including Rhodes). By treaty, the Seleucids were confined to areas east of the Taurus Mountains, which, however, also left them free to go to war with Ptolemaic Egypt, which they did. Egypt and Rome were not so much allies as business partners; with Egypt supplying grain to Rome....for a price.

The second setup covers the next stage in Rome's move to the east: its **Conflict with Parthia**, an Iranian people who took over much of the former Persian empire. That conflict began badly for the Romans, when Marcus Licinius Crassus (the man who defeated Spartacus and was also the richest member of the Triumvirate that governed the Roman republic) was annihilated by the Parthians at Carrhae in 53 BC. Twenty years later Mark Antony, who governed the eastern half of the empire while Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) led the west, fared little better. But unlike Crassus, he at least survived his encounter with the Parthians—only, of course, to perish when he and Cleopatra were defeated by Octavian.

Rome and Parthia (as well as their successors, the Byzantines and Sassanids) fought almost continuously for the next six centuries, with Roman emperors taking their opponent's capital no less than three times, yet also losing it—along with several armies and two emperors—in subsequent battles. While none of these civilizations (Rome, Pontus, Parthia) are in the basic game, these bonus game setups allow players to recreate this epic clash of empires.

## 1. Mithridates the Great (4 Civilizations)

**Historical Note:** As the era of the Successors waned, new powers arose. At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the dynasty of Mithridates in Pontus became dominant in the former Seleucid lands of Anatolia while, in the east, the rising power of Parthia reclaimed most of the core of the former Persian Empire. In addition, out of the West came the Romans—who within a century would put an end to the last of the Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East.

**Solitaire Version:** In the solo version the player may be either Rome or Pontus. Whichever is the NPC begins and will always be Hostile to the player.

This game uses the **Abbreviated Western Map**.

One Civilization is **Rome**, the others are **Pontus, Egypt** and the **Seleucids**.

This game begins on Turn 1 of Epoch IV. The players do not draw a card at the end of Turn 2 to end the Epoch. The game MAY end at the conclusion of Turn 3 through such a card draw and if the game does not end with turn 3 it WILL end at the conclusion of Turn 4.

#### Initial Placement (in the following order):

Each civilization should place Stronghold cubes as appropriate.

- **Rome**: use purple disks with the **Assyrian** Civilization Display and the **Father of the Gods**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with four disks in *Thrace*. Place two disks in each of *Rhodes*, *Arzawa* and *Ilium*. Place one disk in the *Marmaran Sea*, and the *Icarian Sea*.
- **Pontus**: use blue disks with the **Greek** Civilization Display and the **God of War**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with three disks in *Pala*. Place one disk each in *Kaska*, *Kumannis*, *Hattusha*, *Tarsus*, *Karahuyuk*, *Lydia*, *Lukka*, *Caucasus Sea*, and *Pontus Euxinus*.
- **Seleucids**: use burnt orange disks with the **Medes & Persians** Civilization Display and the **Goddess of Peace**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with three disks in *Aleppo*; place three disks in *Ugarit*, *Byblos*, and *Tyre*.
- **Egypt**: use green disks with the **Egypt** Civilization Display and the **God of the Dead**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with three disks in the *Nile Delta*. Place one disk in each of *Alashiya*, *Memphis*, *Amarna*, *Abydos*, *Thebes*, *Sinai*, *Egyptian Sea*, *Sinai Sea* and *Reed Sea*.
- **Independents**: three Black disks in each of *Judah*, *Petra*, *Nabatea* and *Midian*. One Black disk in *Red Sea*, *Rhodian Sea*, *Cilician Sea* and *Levantine Sea*.

#### Special Rules

In a game with Two players, one is **Rome** and **Egypt**. The other is **Pontus** and the **Seleucids**. For players running two civilizations, the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37 apply.

In a game with Three Players, one Player will play **Rome**, the second **Egypt** and the third will play both **Pontus** and the **Seleucids**, who will abide by the **Multiple Civilizations per Player** rules on p37. (This is a more balanced and more historical game than any other combination.)

In a game with Four Players each controls one of the four Civilizations.

Each Civilization begins with four cards and the first turn is played in the order of setup.

Determine a game winner using ACME's **End Game Victory Conditions** (p28).

#### Roman Bonuses:

- **Minimum Growth**: The minimum Growth for the Romans is increased from 3 to 6.
- **Loot**: When the Romans Sack a City they gain 1 Mina in Loot IN ADDITION to the Captives required by the Assyrian Civilization Display.
- **Armored Infantry** (Card #31)

Give the Romans Card #31 at the start of the game to simulate the vast power and military killing efficiency of the Legions. This card is in addition to their initial hand.

The Romans may NEVER Discard or be forced to Discard **Armored Infantry**, not even if the **Breath of God** Event occurs. Nor may it ever be stolen from their hand (set aside **Armored Infantry** when required to lose a card at random).

If the Romans play **Armored Infantry**, turn it upside down. During their draw phase, they may either pay a mina to turn the card face up or draw one fewer card in order to turn this card face up. Once face up, **Armored Infantry** is available. A Roman NPC will always pay the mina (if available) to turn this card face up.

**Note:** **Armored Infantry** MAY be Negated through normal card play.

## Rome vs. Parthia (2 Civilizations)

**Historical Note:** By 63 BC Pontus had fallen to Rome with the last vestiges of the Seleucid Empire in and around Syria being absorbed as well. The majority of the Seleucid Empire had been overcome by the Parthians, who now became in direct militant contact with Rome. These two new superpowers began a struggle for control of the Middle East that would last well into the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, when each would be replaced and supplanted, respectively, by Byzantium and the Sassanid Dynasty.

**Solitaire Version:** In the solo version the player may be either Rome or Parthia. Whichever is the NPC begins and will always be Hostile to the player.

This game uses the **Western Map**.

There are only two active civilizations (**Rome** and **Parthia**), each of which has a DOUBLE set of disks. **Egypt** is set up but is not an active civilization (see below).

This game begins on Turn 1 of Epoch IV. The players do not draw a card at the end of Turn 2 or 3 to end the Epoch. At the conclusion of turn 4 draw a card. If there is a 1, 2, 3, or 4 in the card's identification number, the game ends. If not, play one more turn—after which the game ends. End of Epoch Victory Points are counted only at the end of the game. Do not draw for an End of Epoch Event.

#### Initial Placement (in the following order):

- **Rome and Parthia** each select TWO sets of color disks. **Egypt** and the Independents will share disks of a fifth color. A sixth set of disks, yellow, is used to mark the border between the two empires. Each civilization should place Stronghold cubes as appropriate.
- **Egypt.** Place one disk in each of *Nile Delta, Alashiya, Memphis, Amarna, Abydos, Thebes, Sinai, Egyptian Sea, Sinai Sea and Reed Sea*. Do not place a Home Area nor use Egypt's Civilization Display.
- **Independents.** Place three disks in each of *Petra, North Caucasus, South Caucasus, Colchis, Zab, Armenia, Iberia, Caspians; two disks each in the Desert areas of Midian and Nabatea* as well as one in the *Red Sea*.
- **Border.** Place one yellow disk to mark the border in each of *Kaska, Kumannis, Carchemish, Aleppo, Judah, Tyre, Petra and Midian*. These disks play NO role in the game other than to delineate the original border. They are used chiefly for Victory Point purposes and may NOT be removed/replaced by cards or Competition.
- **Rome:** use the **Assyrian** Civilization Display and the **Father of the Gods**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with three disks in *Aleppo*. Place one disk in *Kaska, Kumannis, Ugarit, Carchemish, Judah, Byblos* and *Tyre* and in every Land area (including islands) to the left (West), for a total of 20 disks.
- **Parthia:** use the **Medes & Persian** Civilization Display and the **Sky God**. Place the Home Area and Temple blocks with three disks in *Ctesiphon*, and one disk in every Land Area which does not already have a disk (a total of 29 disks).

### Special Rules

Note that this game is intended as a WAR game and thus the following Special Rules apply:

- **Rome and Parthia** each have a pre-game turn (Rome first) in which to place 12 disks as they wish, but only into areas which already contain one of their own disks.
- **Rome and Parthia** each begin with four cards; Egypt never has cards.

### Egyptian Neutrality:

Neither **Rome** nor **Parthia** may ever place any of their own disks in any Area which at that instant has an Egyptian disk. This

precludes co-existence. (They may not play cards to remove or replace Egyptian disks). The presence of neutral Egyptian disks on the map is purely cosmetic.

#### Limited Growth:

**Rome and Parthia** are guaranteed a MINIMUM GROWTH of 12 disks; but are also limited to a MAXIMUM GROWTH of 12 disks each per Acquisition Phase. (They always get 12 but ONLY 12). Consequently, there is no need for any Acquisition Phase calculation of disks... the quantity is always 12!

**Roman Bonuses:** Rome receives the same Bonuses for **Loot** and **Armored Infantry** as per the *Mithridates* scenario.

**Parthian Bonus:** *Breeder of Stallions* (Card #18). Give the Parthians Great Person card #18 at the start of the game. This card is in addition to their initial hand.

The Parthians may NEVER Discard or be forced to Discard *Breeder of Stallions* not even if the *Breath of God* (#103) Event occurs. Nor may it ever be stolen from their hand (set aside *Breeder of Stallions* when required to lose a card chosen or at random).

If the Parthians fully play *Breeder of Stallions*, turn it upside down. During their draw phase, they may either pay a mina to turn the card face up or draw one fewer card in order to turn this card face up with its four disks (if available from Parthian Supply). Once face up, *Breeder of Stallions* is available.

*Breeder of Stallions* MAY be Negated through normal Card Phase or Competition Phase card play.

A Parthian NPC will always pay the mina (if available) to turn this card face up. If a Parthian NPC does not have a mina to turn *Breeder of Stallions* face up; it will sacrifice the card of least value out of its Hand.

#### Victory Point Limitations:

NEITHER Rome nor Parthia receive ANY Victory Points for ANY City in ANY of their original Areas. They only GAIN VP for expanding their at start territory! (Thus, it is important to leave the yellow disks which mark the original border upon the map.) Consequently, Rome neither gains nor loses Victory Points for Cities in areas marked with the Border disks and any Land Areas to the West of that Border, including those in areas to the West which began as **Independents**. (Rome MAY gain VP for Cities in areas to the East of the Border regardless of whether those territories began as Independent or Parthian.)

Similarly, **Parthia** neither gains nor loses Victory Points for Cities in any Land Areas to the East of that Border, including those in Areas the East which began as **Independents**. (Parthia MAY gain VP for Cities in Border areas and in areas to the West of the Border, regardless of whether those territories began as Independent or Roman).

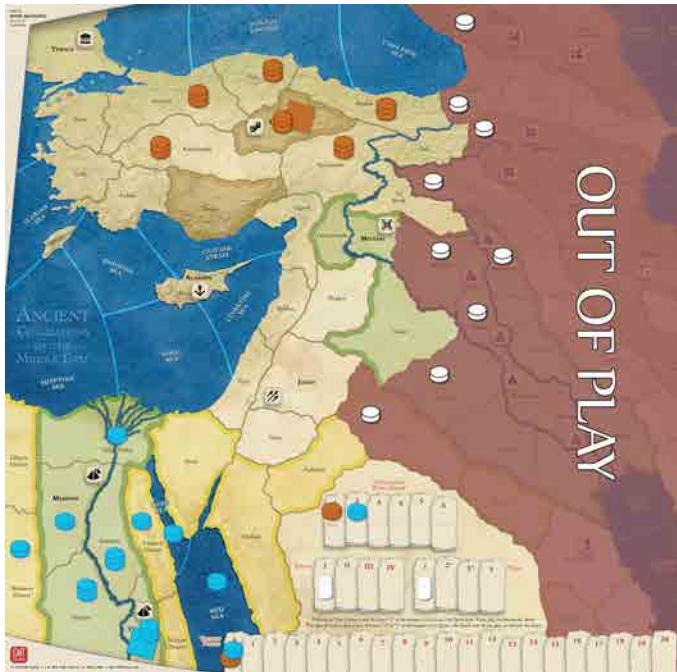
## EXAMPLE of an ACME TURN

### Setup

Those familiar with *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea's* (ACIS) Playbook example of a turn may observe similarities between that piece and this exposition. However, although both games share the same basic system, there are differences.

Let's again join Sue and Bob of the ACIS Playbook as they enjoy ACME's excitement and uncertain arena of chaos while competing against one another for advantage towards earning an *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* triumph.

This example is of a two player *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* (ACME) game between Sue and Bob who, as they make themselves comfortable at the table, agree to play for two Epochs. At the end of the 2nd Epoch, whomever has the most Victory Points shall be declared victor! As explained in ACME's Playbook (p35), they will use the **Abbreviated Western Map** portion of the board. This is accomplished by placing a white disk into each of the following 9 areas: North Caucasus, Colchis, Armenia, Jarwan, Nineveh, Assur, Akkad, Dur Kur and Agrae.



This line represents the eastern edge of the map for all rule and card purposes. Throughout play, no piece may ever be placed into these marked areas or any area beyond them to the east.

Sue chooses the blue disks and Bob the burnt orange disks for this game. Two of each colored disk goes into the zero box of

the board's Victory Point Track with two more disks placed into a opaque container to select which player goes first. Bob's disk is randomly selected from the cup and he will go first.

Consequently, Bob's burnt orange disk is placed in the "1" Box of the Civilization Turn Order Track and Sue's blue disk in the Track's "2" Box.

### Civilizations

The first color disk drawn from the cup, Bob's, means he selects either Egypt or the Hittites for this game. Bob chooses to play the Hittites and takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table before him. We will henceforth refer to Bob as the "Hittite Player" or identify his game decisions as that of the Hittites. The second player, Sue, takes the other civilization's Display: Egypt. Consequently, Sue will henceforth be referred to as the "Egyptian Player" or the Egyptians.

*"While my father was in the country of Karkamis he sent Lupakkish and Teshub-Zalmash to the country of Amqa. They left; they ravaged the country of Amqa and brought back to my father prisoners and cattle large and small."*  
—King Mursili II (1321-1295 BC) of the Hittites writing about the generals his father (Suppiluliuma I) sent on campaign near the modern border of Turkey and Syria.

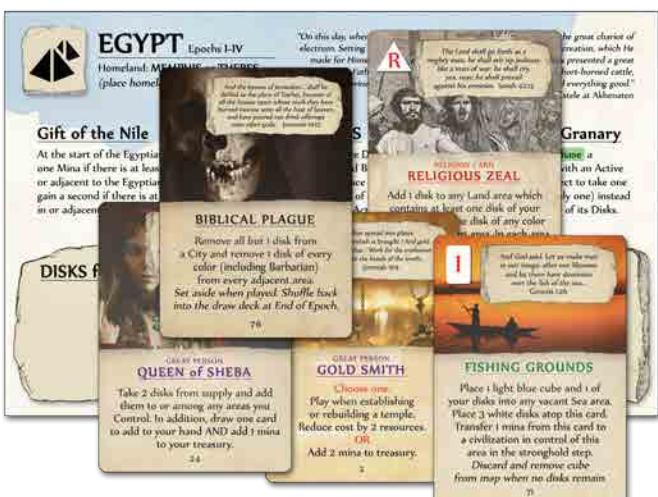
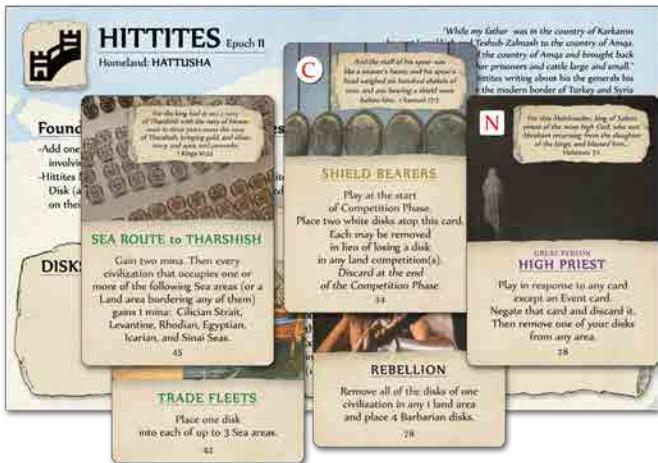
*"On this day, when One was in Akhetaten, His Majesty appeared on the great chariot of electrum. Setting off on a good road toward Akhetaten, His place of creation, which He made for Himself that He might set within it every day. There was presented a great offering to the Father, The Aten, consisting of bread, beer, long- and short-horned cattle, calves, fowl, wine, fruits, incense, all kinds of fresh green plants, and everything good."*  
—from a boundary stele at Akhetaten

**Hittite Deployment:** The Hittite player takes the large Homeland Block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in the Hittite Home Area (Hattusha). The Hittite Player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: A Settlement in each of Hattusha, Kaska, Kumannis, Karahuyuk, Arzawa and Pala.

**Egyptian Deployment:** The Egyptian Player takes the large Homeland Block corresponding to her chosen color and places it in one of the two Egyptian Home Areas: in this case, Thebes. The Egyptian Player then takes 12 disks from supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: A Settlement in each of Thebes, Abydos and Amarna. A Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea and Reed Sea.

### Card Draw

As noted in the basic setup, in Turn Order each civilization draws five Fate cards. The Event cards, which were set aside for this game start's card dealing, are then thoroughly shuffled into the remaining Card Deck and placed face down. The Players' Turn One card hands are as follows:



## Growth Phase

With the stage set; this game's **Growth Phase** is ready to commence. The Hittites go first.

**Stronghold Step:** To begin the Growth Phase, the Hittite player places a grey Stronghold cube in Hattusha (a Mountain area). Stronghold cubes are placed in any Mountain areas which fell under a Faction's Control during the previous turn or, in this case, begin the game in Control of a Faction.

**Hittite Retirement Step:** The Hittite Player now proceeds through the remaining steps of his Growth Phase. Since the game is but beginning; there's no need to retire any disks back into Supply. Later during play, as disks get committed to the board and/or Investment cards, this may not be the case (since each civilization has but 48 disks available to it).

**Hittite Acquisition Step:** The Hittites have six Settlements, but since one of them is in their Mountain Home Area of Hattusha, they get five burnt orange disks. It takes two Settlements in different Mountain areas to earn one disk of Growth and the Hittites have but a single Settlement.

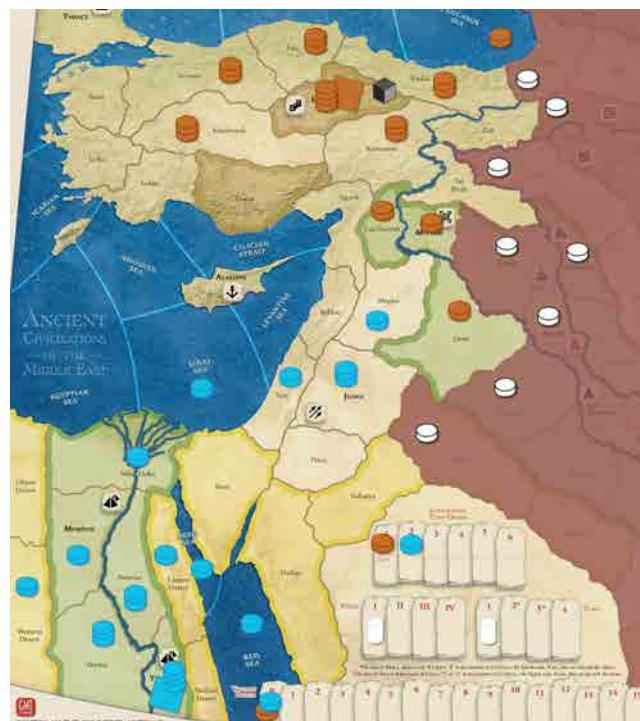
**Hittite Resettlement Step:** There are no Hittite Cities, so this Step is ignored.

**Hittite Deployment Step:** From Kumannis, the Hittite Player expands into the Fertile Crescent by placing one disk each, sequentially, in Carchemish, Mittani, Emar, and then Caucasus Sea. The fifth disk is placed in Hattusha to create a City. If this placement is left undisturbed for turn two, and the Hittites get to place the three Sea area disks *Trade Fleet* allows, they will have 10 disks of turn two Growth. Planning for the future, eh?

Now it's Egypt's opportunity to execute its Growth Phase. Egypt has no action to take for the **Stronghold, Retirement, & Resettlement Steps**; so the Egyptian Player directly proceeds to the next Step.

**Egyptian Acquisition Step:** With three Settlements and two Camps in Fertile Areas, as well as Camps in two Sea areas: six disks are generated. Note that no disks are earned for the two Desert areas Egypt Controls with one disk apiece. Egypt is not adjacent to any Hittite disk, so, as with the Hittites, no disk is received for Commerce. Through its civilization attribute; Egypt gains one mina for its Treasury. The Egyptian player chooses to keep this mina 'through thick & thin' and it shall not be again mentioned in this narrative.

**Egyptian Deployment Step:** From the Nile Delta, Egypt places one blue disk in Sinai Sea and then creates a Camp in Tyre, a Settlement in Judah, and then a Camp in Aleppo. This places Egypt adjacent to the Hittite Fertile Crescent presence and provides a block to direct Hittite land expansion towards Egypt (as well as threatening their recent Fertile Crescent acquisitions). The sixth disk is placed in Thebes to create a City.



— State of the map at the end of the turn one Growth Phase.

## Card Phase

During this Phase of Epoch One/Turn One, each civilization, in the order determined during game set-up, alternately takes one of the following three Actions: Play a Fate Card, Build a Deity, or Pass. One player can interrupt another's Action by playing a Negate card. When to play a Negate card can be a decision fraught with anxiety since once that weapon is expended, who knows what's now in the offing? Something even worse?

For this example, each Card Phase Action is identified by number. It may be helpful to reference this Playbook's ACME associated map illustration as each card affecting one or more disks is resolved.

The Hittite player starts things...

**1) Hittites:** Play *Trade Fleet* to place three Camps: one each in Icarian Sea, Rhodian Sea, and Egyptian Sea. The Hittite Player reasons if Egypt wants to threaten his Fertile Crescent presence; why not reciprocate by placing a Hittite Camp right off the Nile Delta's coast? Note that this card allows placement of disks without need of any adjacent already existing Hittite disk serving as a "base" (unlike a regular Deployment). In ACME disks placed via card play can "materialize" wherever the card permits... and in this case it's in ANY set of three or less contiguous Sea areas.



Hittite Card Play #1: Trade Fleet

**2) Egyptians:** Play *Biblical Plague* on Hattusha's City with intent of ravaging the Hittites' ability to generate disks during turn two's Growth Phase. It will remove one disk from Hattusha itself (not the two disks the card calls for due to Hattusha's special benefit to the Hittites\*) and reduce the five Settlements adjacent to Hattusha into Camps.

\*Hattusha's special benefit (per the Hittite Civilization Display) is that it can't lose more than one disk to a single Fate card play, both during the Card and Competition Phases, with the last Hittite burnt orange disk in the area immune to Fate card removal/replacement. Hattusha is a mighty fortress indeed... although it is fully vulnerable to the wiles of the *Traitor* (#22) card and that the last disk with the area's Stronghold cube can be eliminated through Competition resolution.



Egyptian Card Play #2: Biblical Plague's Nasty Evil Intent  
(indicated by an "X" for each potentially removed Hittite Disk)!

### STOP THE ACTION!!

**2N) The Hittites negate Biblical Plague** through play of *Great Person—High Priest*. Rather than lose six disks, the Hittite Player foils Egypt's nefarious intent by playing the *High Priest* Negate card. He removes a disk per the card's instruction: selecting the one in Caucasus Sea. He reasons this price a very fair exchange; one disk rather than removing six and hobbling next turn's Hittite Growth.

Since play of a Negate card does not constitute a Card Phase alternate play; it is now the Hittite's opportunity to take an Action (Play a card, Build a Deity, or Pass).



Egyptian Card Play #2 Negated by Hittite's Great Person — High Priest

**3) Hittites:** It would be good offsetting the cost of building a Deity later during this Card Phase by having something other than disks or cards to pay for it, thinks the Hittite Player. Consequently, he plays *Sea Route to Tarshish* which earns the Hittites 2 mina for playing the card and an additional mina for the Egyptian Sea Hittite Camp for a total of 3 mina into the Hittite Treasury (Kerching!). Since Egypt has a Camp in the Sinai Sea, the Egyptian Player gets a mina as well; for which she smilingly conveys her thanks with a "thumbs up" sign.



## *Hittite Card Play #3: Sea Route to Tarshish and Mina for All!*

**4) Egyptians:** As the Hittites seem to be telegraphing intent to soon acquire a Deity; the Egyptian Player reasons she should acquire one now and have first choice. Consequently, she plays *Great Person—Gold Smith*. This fortuitously acquired card reduces the usual cost of Building a Deity from five to three. The prime requirement of removing two Egyptian disks from the map is fulfilled by placing back into Supply the disks currently occupying the Eastern Desert and Western Desert. The third resource is the mina just acquired through Hittite play of *Sea Route to Tarshish*. The Egyptian Player believes having mina each turn a great benefit to a civilization such as Egypt, which already gets mina at the start of each Growth Phase, so she builds **God of the Forge**, placing its small stickered Deity block atop Egypt's Thebes Homeland Block. This Deity provides two mina at the end of each turn's Acquisition Step.



*Egyptian Card Play #4:  
Great Person — Gold Smith to Build a Deity!*

**5) Hittites:** There's no rush to acquire a Deity now, thinks the Hittite Player; building a Deity can still be done later during this Card Phase. Therefore, it's time for a bit of mischief. The Hittites play *Rebellion* on the Egyptian Thebes Home Area/temple City. With a sigh, the Egyptian Player sacrifices *Fishing Grounds*, placing that card in the Discard pile in lieu of having an Egyptian disk replaced by a black disk. Therefore, Thebes is now Contested by two black Barbarian disks and one blue Egyptian disk. The Egyptian Player knows that playing *Queen of Sheba*, unless Negated, will bring her a mina; thereby enabling a stand-off in Thebes during the upcoming Competition Phase.\*

*\* This is important, for it foils the Barbarian rebels destroying Egypt's newly built Deity. Furthermore, since Thebes at the end of Competition would be occupied by at least one Egyptian disk, the **God of the Forge** benefit can be used and Religion cards played.*



## *Hittite Card Play #5: Rebellion in Thebes!*

**6) Egyptians:** The Egyptians play *Queen of Sheba*; arguably one of the best “reward” cards in the game. The aforementioned mina is received and placed into Egypt’s Treasury. The card’s two disks, which must be deployed in Egypt Controlled areas, are placed in Abydos and Amarna, transforming those two Settlements into Cities. Finally, the Egyptian Player takes a card from the Draw Deck and gets a good one, a very good one... *Great Person—Master Armorer*. This card can be played either during a turn’s Card Phase or Competition Phase. It has both “I” (Investment Card) and “C” (Competition Card) coding. It is added to her Hand. What an unpleasant surprise to the Hittites when Egypt decides to play this card!



## *Egyptian Card Play #6: Great Person — The Queen of Sheba Brings a Torrent of Rewards!*

**7) Hittites:** With the Card Phase winding down, the Hittite Player now Builds his civilization's Deity. For the advantage of an extra card each Draw Step, **God of the Dead** is selected. Its small stickered block is placed atop the Hittite Homeland Block in Hattusha. This costs five Resources. The Hittites pay for this

with three disks from the map, since the game is young and Egypt will take the Victory Point lead anyway with the two Cities adjacent to Thebes.

The Hittite Player removes two disks from Hattusha and a third from Icarian Sea. These are combined with two mina out of the Hittite Treasury, leaving one remaining. Ah, but there's another motive for doing this as the Hittite Player silently chortles to himself; for this play means he'll have less Victory Points than Egypt and therefore control any Barbarian Event card invasions which may arise.



## *Hittite Card Play #7: Build Deity for Five Resources... Bring on The God of the Dead!*

**8) Egyptians:** Although Egypt's Home Area/temple is being Contested by black disks, this does not prevent the Egyptian Deity from being considered Active. Therefore, a Religion card may be played. The Egyptian Player does so by playing *Religious Zeal*. A blue disk is placed in Aleppo making that Egyptian Camp into a Settlement and, to the Hittite Player's dismay, this is adjacent to all three Fertile areas occupied by Hittite Camps: Carchemish, Mittani, and Emar.

The Hittites avoid two of these disks being replaced by Egyptians through expending the last mina in his Treasury and placing the *Shield Bearers* Competition card into the Discard pile. Alas, one Hittite disk must fall victim to Egyptian play of *Religious Zeal*. The Hittite Player grudgingly allows the Hittite Camp in Emar to become Egyptian.



## *Egyptian Card Play #8: Religious Zeal Woes Upon the Hittites!*

**9) Hittites:** With no cards remaining in Hand, the Hittite Player Passes thereby concluding this Card Phase for his civilization.

**10) Egyptians:** Rather than risk her remaining card being stolen next turn through Hittite play of a card such as *Great Person—Eyes of the King* (see below); the Egyptian Player plays *Great Person—Master Armorer* as an Investment card. She puts it near the Egyptian Civilization Display with four blue disks atop it.



*Egyptian Card Play #10: Great Person — Master Armorer for Future Competitions Great Person — The Eyes of the King: Card included above for reference.*

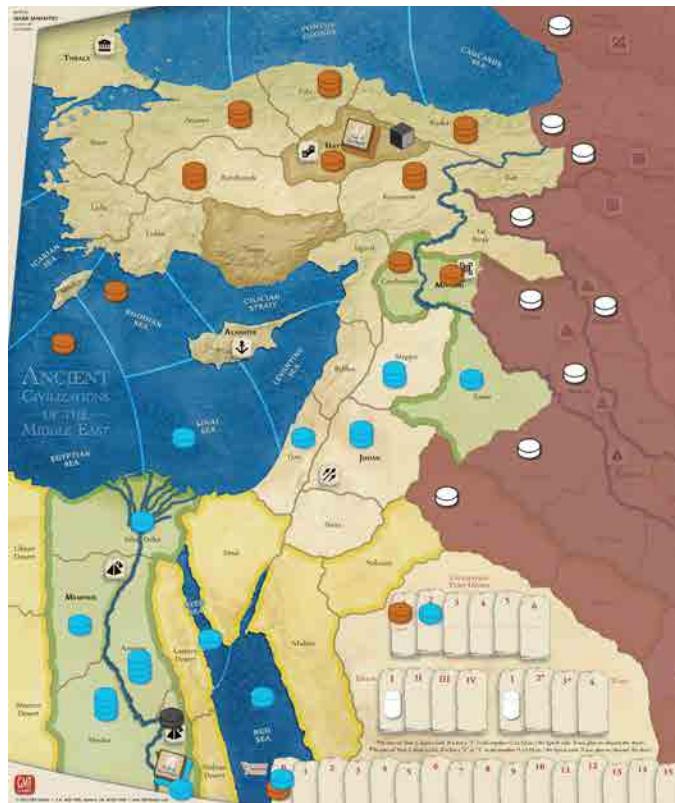
As the Egyptian Player has no cards remaining in Hand, this concludes the turn's **Card Phase**.

Play now proceeds to the **Competition Phase**.

# Competition Phase

There is but a single Competition to resolve, Thebes, where two black disks confront one Egyptian blue disk. The Egyptians, having the lesser number of disks, must first decide whether to lose one disk, which will end the competition and result in loss of Egypt's Home Area and its **God of the Forge** temple to Barbarian Control, or choose to avoid that catastrophe. Obvious choice, eh? The Egyptian Player consequently avoids the loss of a disk from Thebes by instead removing a disk from *Great Person—Master Armorer*. A single black disk is then taken from Thebes and returned into black disk Supply.

That ends the Competition by making Thebes a Shared area of one black and one blue disk. The Egyptian Player is happy with this result since it means her one remaining mina in Treasury is not expended and the sole remaining black disk should be easy Turn Two prey.



**Egyptian Master Armorer to the Rescue!**  
**Competition in Thebes is a Stalemate —**  
**God of the Forge Endures!**

Based on the situation at the end of Turn 1's Competition Phase, Turn 2's Growth Phase disk additions would be:

**Hittites (9 disks total):**

- **5 disks** for five Settlements of two disks each
- **2 disks** for two controlled Fertile Areas
- **1 disk** for two occupied Sea Areas
- **1 disk** for "Commerce" (at least one Hittite disk adjacent to an Egyptian disk)

**Egyptians (9 disks total):**

- **2 disks** for two Settlements of two disks each
- **5 disks** for five controlled Fertile Areas
- **1 disk** for three occupied Sea Areas
- **1 disk** for "Commerce" (at least one Egyptian disk adjacent to a Hittite disk)

A close game thus far, eh?

The players now prepare to address Turn One's **Reckoning Phase**.

## Reckoning Phase

**Reckoning Phase:** After checking that there are no areas with over-stacked disks, so all comply with the stacking limits of 2 in Desert/Sea and 3 in all other Land areas... and there's not a single area on the map which is not in compliance; the **Sea Domination Step** is executed. The current map situation does not result in any change due to this Step.

The **Victory Tally Step** is next: the Hittites receive one Victory Point for **God of the Dead** placed within the Hattusha temple. Egypt also gets one Victory Point for **God of the Forge** located in the Thebes temple Shared area (now occupied by one black and one blue disk) and a Victory Point each for the Egyptian Cities in Abydos and Amarna for a total of **3VP**. Both players' respective Victory Point Track disks are placed accordingly.



*Situation at the conclusion of the game's Epoch 1 / Turn 1 Victory Tally Step.*

The next step of the **Reckoning Phase** is the **Gilgamesh Step**. Neither of this game's players fulfill any condition permitting them to "bail out" of their current civilization and select another available one. This step is therefore ignored.

Since this is turn one, the **Sudden End of Epoch Step** is also ignored.

**The Draw Step** concludes this **Reckoning Phase**.

The Egyptian Player draws new Fate cards first. Before doing so, she announces she'll spend the one mina in her Treasury to gain an extra card (a player must decide how many cards to receive before gaining knowledge of any card's identity). This is in addition to the three cards Egypt is normally entitled to. She therefore selects the top four cards from the Draw deck. One of them is an Event and it is a **Barbarian Invasion...Mountain Tribes Descend!**

There are only two Mountain areas on the playable map which could serve a base for this Barbarian invasion: Tarsus and Hattusha.

The Hittite Player rolls his eyes heavenward and heaves a sigh of relief; for he is the player with fewest Victory Points and therefore controls where this Barbarian Invader's disks are placed. Had it been up to Egypt, the Hittite Player believes the Egyptian Player

may have selected the adjacent to Hattusha Mountain area of Kaska for initial placement of four black disks. This would then have added stacks of four black disks each into Zab and even more Hittite territory, namely Pala and Kumannis, to involve three Hittite Settlements. Would that have been a “big ouch”!



*The Draw Step's Hittite play of “Must Play” Event Card  
Mountain Tribes Descend.*

However, the Hittite Player chooses Lukka for the initial area which results in two more stacks of four black disks each being placed in Lydia, and unfortunately, the Hittite Settlement in Karahuyuk... but better to have one Settlement invaded than three, rationalizes the Hittite Player. Therefore, Hittite play of this Event results in Barbarian stacks in Lukka, Lydia, and Karahuyuk.

Since this is after commencement of the **Reckoning Phase** these stacks of four Barbarian disks will persist into turn two.

The Egyptians replace *Mountain Tribes Descend* with another Fate card and now have four cards in Hand for turn two.

The Hittite Player announces use of **God of the Dead**. Consequently, after drawing the first three Fate cards from the top of the Draw deck and not looking at them, he shuffles the small Discard pile and randomly takes three cards from it. Fortunately, *Mountain Tribes Descend* does not again appear so he selects one of the three cards chosen for his hand, returns the other two to the Discard pile and reshuffles it. Next, the Hittite player looks at the three cards from the Draw Deck (no Event card[s], as luck would have it) and he now has four cards for turn two.

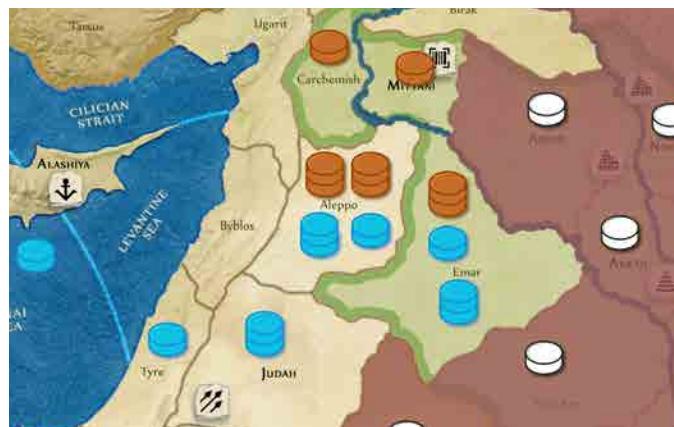
For purpose of this example of play, there is no need to reveal what Fate cards the Egyptian and Hittite players have in their respective Hands of four cards each.

The Turn Marker is moved to Epoch One’s “Turn 2.”

This concludes the example of this ACME game’s Epoch One / Turn One.

## More Competition Examples

To further demonstrate how ACME Competitions are resolved, let’s fast forward to this game’s next turn Competition Phase. Egypt used its Growth to assure the retaking of Thebes, do a bit of empire expansion, and reinforce their presence adjacent to Hittite territory: by building Cities in Aleppo and Emar. After seeing how the Egyptian player deployed her disks on the board; the Hittite Player used his Growth Phase to place two disks in Emar and a stack of four disks in Aleppo in an attempt to “take out” Egypt’s Cities threatening his presence in the Fertile Crescent. Other Hittite disk placements are not germane to this example.



*The situation as of Epoch 1 / Turn 2’s  
eve of Competition Phase.*

The Egyptian Player wonders why the Hittites only placed two disks in Emar and soon learns the harsh answer when, before any Competitions are resolved, the Hittites play *Great Person—Traitor*. All three Egyptian disks are immediately returned into their Supply. The Hittite Player receives one Victory Point and chooses to take Captives rather than one Mina of loot.

Consequently, two Hittite disks are taken from Supply and placed upon the Hittite Civilization Display’s “Disks for Growth” Box for Deployment during the next turn’s Growth Phase. Thinks the Egyptian Player, Oh, if only I had a Great Person Negate Card such as *Corrupter* or *Assassin* to kill that miserable *Traitor* before he could strike!



The next competition is for Aleppo (as it is the easternmost area: competitions in ACME, just as with ACIS, are resolved from the northeast corner of the map to the southwest corner).

Since both sides have a City in the area, the victor will earn loot. Consequently, the white cylinder to indicate a competition site is placed on the Aleppo Land area with its star side up.

A competition commences with both sides revealing the Competition cards being committed to it. Egypt must place any Competition card(s) first face-down as it ended the prior turn with the most Cities and its disk occupies the Civilization Turn Order Track's "1" Box.

Egypt has *Great Person—Master Armorer* with three blue disks upon it carried over from turn one. There is no need to announce that card's potential use since it is currently placed face-up by the Egyptian Player's Civilization Display. What is declared and placed face-down is *Mercenaries Desert*.

Egypt, due to its civilization benefit and God of the Forge, has four mina available.

The Hittite Player considers options regarding this critical competition for Aleppo. Here's what the Hittites know... two Egyptian cards could come into play for this competition:

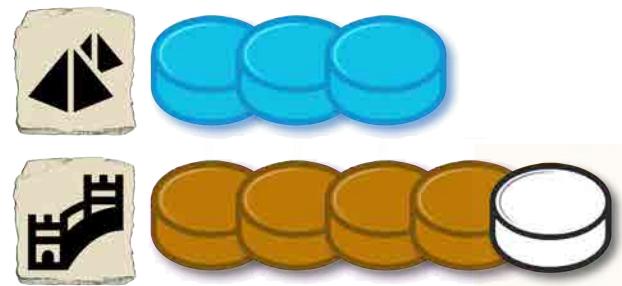


The Hittite Player, now knowing what Egypt could commit to the Aleppo competition, at least in terms of one face-up and one face-down card, places face-down *Light Chariots* and *Great Person—Siege Master*.



The Hittite Player also has "an ace in the hole" with the Negate card, *Great Person: Corrupter* being the sole card remaining in his hand. The Hittites announce use of their civilization competition benefit and add a white disk to their stack in Aleppo... which brings the Hittite stack to five disks, for the stacking limit may be exceeded during the Competition Phase. Alas, the Hittites are broke: they have no mina in their Treasury.

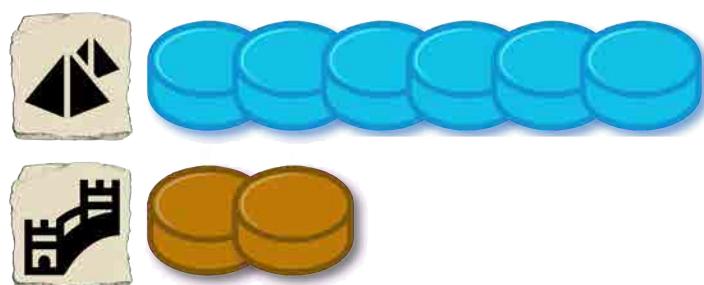
With commitment of the Hittite civilization benefit's one white disk for competition, here's the situation before resolving Competition cards, Aleppo has:



Face-down Competition cards are simultaneously revealed and the Egyptian Player, due to being in the "1" Box of the Civilization Turn Order Track, resolves her *Mercenaries Desert* Competition card. She then announces commitment of three Mina to this card's resolution, which the Hittite Player, lacking mina and being unwilling to play his one available card, can do nothing to impede.

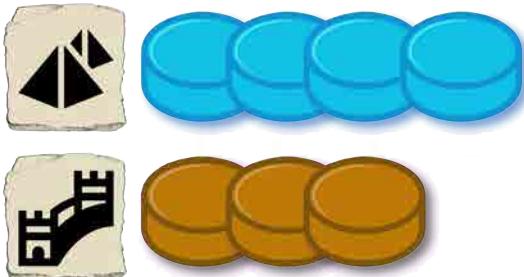
Consequently, the Hittite stack in Aleppo is reduced by three: one white and two burnt orange disks leaving two Hittite disks remaining. The Egyptians add three blue disks to their Aleppo original stack and now have six disks.

Here's the new Aleppo disk situation:



The Hittites now resolve their two Competition cards.

- *Siege Master*, which Egypt can do nothing to stop by expending its remaining mina, reduces the Egyptian stack to five.
- *Light Chariots* brings the Hittite stack up to three disks.
- When the loss of one Egyptian disk due to *Siege Master* is announced, the Egyptian Player advises she'll invoke the *Great Person—Master Armorer* to avoid that loss.
- This prompts the Hittite Player to gleefully reveal *Corrupter* out of his hand to Negate that play and compel *Master Armorer* to be placed into the Discard pile. It's three blue disks are returned into Egyptian Supply.



From the preceding Competition card play there are now three Hittite disks vs. four Egyptian disks. Each civilization must now remove disks by competition round, Hittites first as they have the lesser number of disks.

Round 1 of disk removal: Hittites remove one disk, Egypt removes one disk.



Round 2 of Disk Removal: Hittites remove one disk; Egypt expends its last Mina from Treasury to avoid removing their own.



Round 3 of Disk Removal:



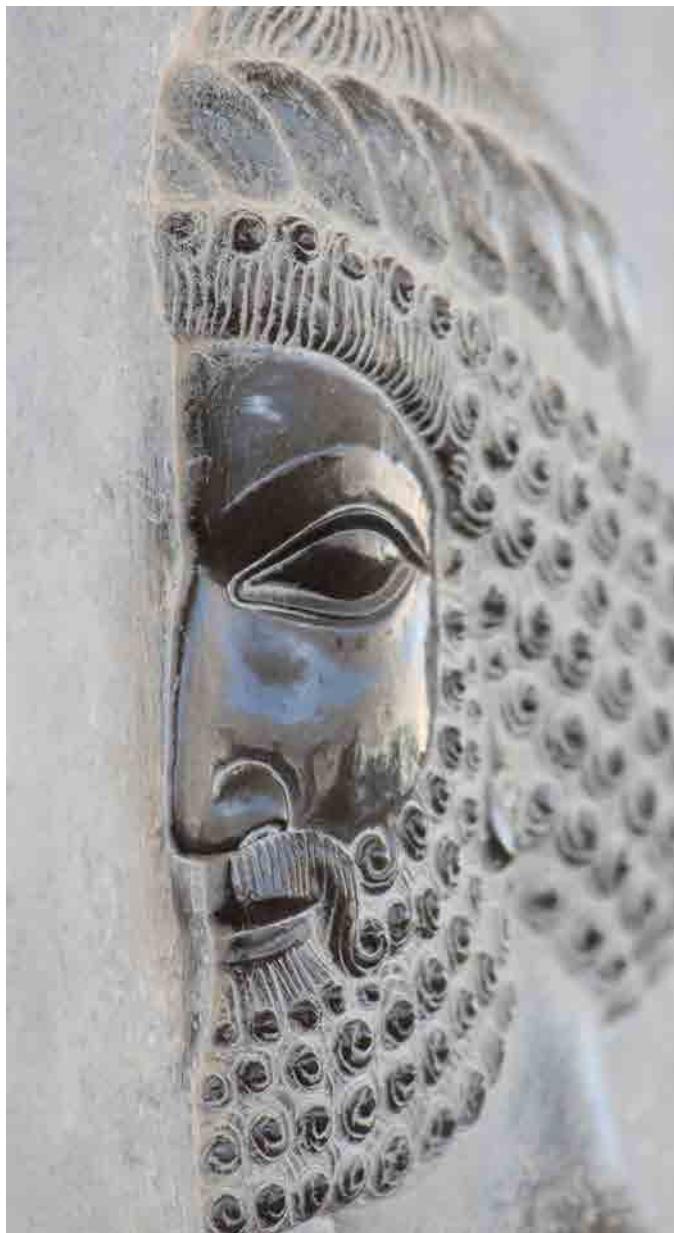
The Egyptians win the competition for Aleppo and have a City remaining in the area. Furthermore, the Hittite City which began this competition is no more. **It's been sacked.** Therefore, the Egyptian Player gains one Victory Point and chooses to take one mina of loot. That Mina white disk of loot is placed into the Egypt Civilization Display's "Sacked City Loot" Box. It will be moved into Egypt's Treasury at conclusion of the turn's Competition Phase.



*The situation at conclusion of competition resolutions in Aleppo and Emar . . . . . Each side gains a win!*

Action now moves to the remaining competitions needing resolution: the Hittites confronting the Karahuyuk stack of four black disk Barbarians and Egypt destroying the last black colored Barbarian disk in Thebes.

That concludes this turn two Competition Phase example.



## DESIGN BACKGROUND

### and Differences from *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea*

#### Civilizations Always Fall

We are so used to Civilization BUILDING games that we forget that Civilizations not only RISE but ALWAYS FALL.

EVERY Civilization goes through a period of decay and collapse—often from within, sometimes from without.

*Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* is only partly about BUILDING a Civilization; it is mostly about SURVIVING. That is the true test for the players. That is the historical reality in which the game's civilizations are placed which becomes that of the player or players. For ACME can be played both solitaire and with from 2 to 6 players.

The game's solitaire system allows a mix of both live and “Non-Player Civilizations” (NPC). During play testing, two gamers enjoyed pitting wits not only against one another, but have thrown one or two aggressive NPC into the mix... and yes, they've been beaten by ACME's well-designed and aggressive solitaire system.

Some ACIS players groused about their civilizations seeming helplessness when confronted by the game's environment. Players should note that the longer the game goes on, the more ‘mitigating’ factors you will get—as with more Cities you get more cards, which means likely more mina... ACME's “money”, (as well as cards) to expend in lieu of disk losses—as well as more opportunities to draw Negate cards.

On the other hand, as your civilization grows, you become a more attractive target for invaders (inflicted by the player in last VP place) and other problems: ranging from rebellions and civil war to disasters (the bigger you are—the more opportunity to be hit). Most of these will be played by those below you on the victory point track.

#### A World in Chaos

In *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East*, just like in the real, chaotic, horrific, apocalyptic periods it historically covers, there comes a time when empires reach their limit (as the 48 disk limit represents), and have to struggle to hold on to what they have—or save what can be saved as they struggle not to grow or dominate, but to simply survive.

A game of *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* can be as long or as short as you wish. You can set time, Epoch, turn, or victory point limits for a short game. You can also play an exploration game (as noted in this playbook) where you start and go looking for other civilizations.

The cards do not always have to be played for the effect listed. You can use cards to buy off losses from cards played by opponents and in competition and, of course, to acquire or reacquire your civilization's Deity. You can also bluff and threaten others so that they think twice about playing a card that hurts you—as you can retaliate and won't hesitate to do so by calling the wrath of the gods upon them!

The game is as much about managing—and surviving—chaos as it is about building a civilization. The longer you play, the more cards you will encounter—and especially the more powerful Event cards, notably the big Barbarian invasions. These, however, are run by the player with the fewest victory points—which helps restore game balance by making things harder for the players in the lead and perhaps even knocking them down to the level of the player who directed the invasion.

Of course, there may come a time when you, as a player, may find your current civilization in an untenable, unendurable, situation. In this case you have the “Gilgamesh” Rule (“The Aeneas Rule” in ACIS) which allows a player to exit the game as one civilization and return to it as another completely different civilization.

Such a change allows you to keep the Victory Points accumulated to the point you transition. Think of it like *Britannia*, where you play different powers during a game; except with ACME, you choose the civilization which follows the one you began the game with and it's your cumulative VP score which measures success in coping with ACME's World in Chaos.

#### Disaster Mitigation

So many civilization games become runaway races where once someone is in the lead they cannot be overtaken, or once somebody is left behind, they cannot catch up: not *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East*! In this game, it pays to be nice to the little guys—because they can unleash hell.

The Fate cards also provide a way for a player at one end of the board to strike at a player on the far side; without having to sail across the Med, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, etc. or march across the deserts to get at their foe. Interaction is what this game is all about.

In ACME, there are historical (and short) setups and scenarios such as Sargon the First, The Lion of Judah, The Sea Peoples, Agamemnon, Cyrus the Great and the Rise of Persia, Darius and the Great Rebellion, Alexander, Successors, Mithridates, Here Come the Romans, Rome vs. Parthia (as well as more!), that provide for more historical, more focused games, some of which reward players who merely survive, others of which reward players who make sure the others do not survive.

The ability for disaster mitigation is there in the game as you can expend mina and cards to limit losses—and play Negate cards to prevent them altogether. The larger and stronger your civ, the more mina and cards you have to do just that; and there's

a Deity and Investment cards you can build that give you even more cards, disks, and mina to help absorb or otherwise mitigate disasters. As such, the design folds in sanitation, roads, education and bureaucracy into that matrix.

Then there's the advantages an aggressive civilization can obtain by sacking other civilizations' Cities for loot. Loot not only denies the victim civilization a Victory Point but gains the victor a VP and a mina (or the two extra disks Captives bring). Every mina obtained is an additional buffer against a game's vengeful other players or NPC civilizations.

That said, the beauty of buying a board game is that you can make house rules. If you wish to add such advances to mitigate disaster, perhaps tying those to Victory Point Levels, The ACME Design/Development Team wholeheartedly encourages you and others to do so....you can play the game as designed...or you can modify it to be the game you want....go for it!

## Differences between ACME and ACIS

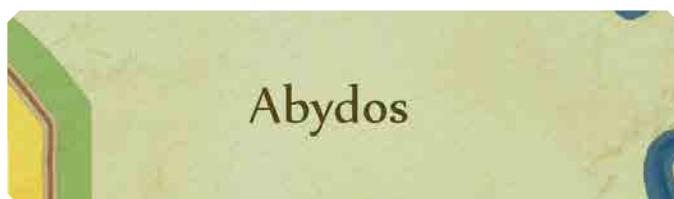
Although the basic game system is the same, here are some of the differences between ACIS and ACME:

### Terrain

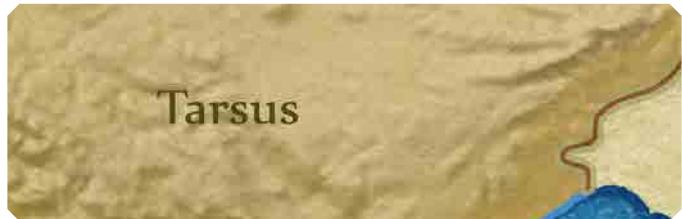
ACIS has but two types of terrain, Land and Sea (Shallow and Deep). ACME's terrain is more varied...



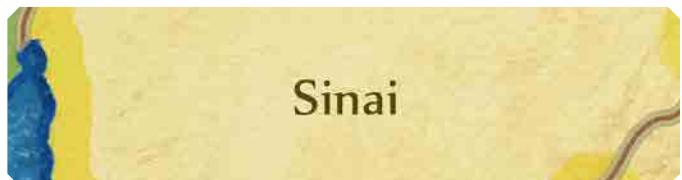
**Plains (brown)** Same as an ACIS Land Area.



**Fertile Area (green)** If controlled by a civilization, a Fertile Area will generate Growth of one disk each turn: That means a Camp, Settlement, or a City. Consequently, unlike ACIS, the owning civilization gets both a VP and a disk of Growth for a City in a Fertile Area. However, if a Fertile Area is CONTESTED, only a Settlement generates Growth. This can make sequence of civilization play important.



**Mountain Area (dark brown)** If controlled by a civilization at the very beginning of a turn, the Mountain Area gets a small "Stronghold Cube" which is the equivalent of a disk for absorbing Competition losses. It does take two Settlements in different Mountain Areas to generate a disk of Growth, so these areas, due to their enhanced defense value, tend to become good City locations. Stronghold cubes are those little grey cubes provided with the game. You can get a card to designate one of these a Gold Mine (for mina).



**Desert Area (sandy)** No growth is allowed for a Desert area and maximum stacking is two disks. But you can get a card to designate one of these an Oasis (for mina) and they can serve as a useful invasion path.

—as Mark McLaughlin did so well with his Egyptians in marching on the Game Developer's Babylon through the Desert during a New Hampshire Guys playtest game described by this InsideGMT article: [insidegmt.com/the-new-hampshire-guys-visit-ancient-civilizations-of-the-middle-east-well-at-least-via-the-game](http://insidegmt.com/the-new-hampshire-guys-visit-ancient-civilizations-of-the-middle-east-well-at-least-via-the-game)



**Sea Areas (blue)** Same as ACIS, but you can get a card to designate a Sea Area as a Fishing Grounds (for mina).

## Different “At Start” civilization disk deployments

Because there are areas of the map where civilization Home Areas are close together, particularly in the Tigris-Euphrates Fertile Crescent; all civilizations deploy their disks *after* the players select civilizations and those disks could be placed adjacent to another civilization’s Home Area (but never in a Home Area). This could result in a competition during the game’s first turn. Furthermore, an active civilization’s Home Area is represented by a large block of its color rather than being map printed.

## No Wonders—Deities instead

A Deity, one of seven (plus Monotheism), is represented by a card and small stickered block placed atop a civilization’s Homeland Block... which serves as its temple. Having a temple with an active Deity allows a civilization to utilize its “Granary” ability: during Growth, the player may trade two disks for a mina (money); an option absent from ACIS.

Each civilization can have one Deity (and only one, which is considered its primary Deity): No disks are placed atop them so their use, while active, is unlimited. A civilization can capture a Deity of another civilization for mina and VP’s. It literally takes the Deity block of the defeated civilization and places it face-down by their Civilization Display. Of course, the capturing civilization can return the Deity... statues and the like, for a VP award. The preceding just scratches the surface of what Deities bring to the game.

## More Barbarian Invaders!

These include *Hordes from the North* (98), *Eastern Powers Attack* (100), *Invaders from the Sea* (101), *Mountain Tribes Descend* (102), and *Desert Raiders* (103). There are also two Fate cards which allow the expansion of already on-board established Barbarians... a kind of “second wave”, e.g. *Barbarian Migration* (84). These are not as powerful as an Event card invasion, but they create a possibility players need to contend with.

## Religion Cards

New to ACME are Religion cards; which can only be played by a civilization possessing an active Deity. A “godless civilization” (one without an active Deity) may not play a Religion card for its effect(s), but may still discard it in lieu of losing a disk, or as a resource when establishing or re-establishing a Deity. Examples of Religion cards include: *Heresy* (89), *Blasphemy* (90), and the powerful Negate card *Hand Writing on the Wall* (94).

## Additional Investment Cards

You put your civilization’s disks on these to absorb card inflicted losses, Competition losses, or negate Fate cards played against

your civilization, etc. An example of such a card is *Giver of Laws* (19).

## No Fate Cards get Reshuffled into the Deck

Unlike ACIS, there are no Fate cards which get reshuffled into the deck after being played and only four, really nasty disasters, which when played, are set aside until an Epoch’s conclusion.

## and yes, there are now Fate Cards with disasters of truly Biblical Proportions

An example of such a devastating Fate card is pictured below: the truly fearsome *40 Days & 40 Nights* (75) which can ravage areas of the Fertile Crescent in a manner Noah himself could relate to.



Hopefully, the preceding indicates there are differences between the two games... differences which make ACME a rather different Devil’s Road of History experience from ACIS.

# The “Real History” Behind the Game

By Fred Schachter, Game Developer

Chris and Mark, ACME’s two designers, in my opinion, did a superb design job simulating the historical chaos which so plagued the game’s civilizations. That environment was not the work of capricious “Munchkins,” but of forces which ultimately brought some civilizations down into oblivion or sorely tried their ability to simply survive. There are times when a medium other than the written word best communicates what’s just been alluded to and this is one of them.

Interested readers should view a video, one of a number that can be found on YouTube concerning this topic, for related insights and a kind of overview into the historic environment depicted by ACME. Therefore, you’re encouraged to view *The Bronze Age Collapse* video at [youtube.com/watch?v=q0AIYIjZKWy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0AIYIjZKWy) or embedded below.



The last five minutes of this well-done presentation provides a summary, in the form of three key elements, of what historically lay behind the chaotic, capricious and brutal milieu of the times ACME portrays and how the game cleverly reflects those major influences through Fate cards. Those three elements and their card manifestations are: 1) Climate Change (via droughts/floods), 2) Seismic Activity (via earthquakes/volcanoes), and 3) Various Revolts/Outside Invasions (cards which deploy those nefarious black disks upon the board).

That stuff historically happened and explains why ACME, as well as ACIS before it, may not be a game for everyone... for not everyone enjoys experiencing what the game’s historic civilizations did in seeking a difficult to achieve a win via a map board in almost constant flux and replete with Fate card generated challenges. The fall of the cards dictates when “hell” is unleashed and the kind of “perfect storm” of horror which fell during the Bronze Age could happen during any Epoch. The video also includes some interesting information, along with rather violent but well-rendered graphic illustrations, which include the Sea Peoples: one of the fascinating civilizations appearing in both ACIS and ACME.

Another excellent source is a book written by a Professor whose class Chris and Mark had the pleasure of experiencing while they attended Georgetown University many moons ago. It is *The Evolution of Civilizations* by Carroll Quigley. I acquired a copy of it via Amazon and found it a most interesting read. The book’s description of civilization cycles, how they rise, expand into “universal empires”, stagnate, and fall translates well to what occurs on ACME’s map.

When playing a full four-Epoch game, which is admittedly time-consuming, the players can experience a tortuous marathon of chaos. You don’t have to play four Epochs, of course, and can limit a game to a certain number of Epochs, a Victory Point threshold, or simply time (e.g. play for two hours)... but whatever is agreed to the Fate cards will fly and players will contend with the uncertainty and torment of their historical counter-parts: those who ruled the civilizations of the age.

The play-test team prefers players deciding when, where, and upon whom Fate card inflicted terrors beset the game’s civilizations, rather than use a Random Events Table (which the game does employ within its End of Epoch procedure). Actively playing those Fate cards against one another generates an appropriate historic environment as well as being... well, fun... at least for many who enjoy this aspect of the game.

However, those who desire mitigating the game’s harsh environment are always free to do so by modifying the game through house rules and editing of the Fate card deck (e.g. remove certain Event cards from play).

An aspect of the design which promotes players assuming an historically-based role is that they are rewarded with Victory Points and “mina” (ACME’s money) for sacking other civilizations’ Cities for loot, as well as seizing their Home Areas and any Deities there for triumphantly hauling back to their own Home Areas for even more Victory Points and mina. These game mechanisms encourage players to emulate the rapacious historical attitude of so many of those who led the kingdoms and empires of the times.

For the mark of success across an *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* game is reflected by a player’s accumulation of Victory Points, which, thanks to the Gilgamesh Rule (similar to ACIS’ Aeneas Rule), can be from controlling another civilization if your initial one falters. Earning those points within the game’s challenging arena of chaos; to achieve sufficient Victory Points to win a game, is acumen which repeated plays should impart.



## Optional Rule: Cultural Development Tracks

Players desiring a bit more complexity to their games of ACME (and/or its predecessor ACIS) in exchange for adding development of culture to their respective Civilizations should appreciate this offering by designers Chris and Mark. This responds to some ACIS players lamenting the game's absence of a "Culture Arc."

When play-testing these rules; we found the added complexity acceptable. What's nice is that with exception of military-oriented developments, advancing a Civilization's culture does not entail direct overt aggression towards another player... a nice touch in my opinion to a game which already has plenty of "take that!" opportunities.

What these rules entail is another path to achieving your Civilization's victory and a new aspect to the fascinating resource allocation "puzzle" the designers provide. When trying this option, please feel free to tinker with these rules to achieve what your gamer group believes provides the best alternatives. Above all... have fun!

With that, here's what Chris and Mark offer...

—Fred Schachter, Game Developer

The Cultural Development Option allows players of *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea* (ACIS) and/or *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* (ACME) an additional path to victory. It also offers a player a chance to further customize their Civilization, as well as providing another arena in which to compete, both for victory points and for bonuses. These optional rules also offer civilizations another use for their Fate cards as Resources to obtain and further Cultural Development.

### The Cultural Development Tracks

This Card, which is provided with your copy of ACME, reflects that Cultural Development has three levels, each depicted by a Track: Military-Political, Economic-Social and Religious-Intellectual. Each Track has four stages, numbered 1-4. No civilizations, unless otherwise stated in a scenario, begin with any disks on the Culture Tracks.

Disks may not be allocated to or advanced upon a Culture Track until a civilization has paid the resources for placement/advancement on a Track. Note: if a civilization has none of its disks available in its Supply, it MAY NOT begin a new Track until it has an available disk. One disk is needed for each of the three Tracks.

Prerequisite Cities (must have at least this many):	2	4	6	8
Cost in Resources:	1	2	3	4
Military/ Political Track	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
• Any Great Person or "C" card is worth 2 Resources on this Track.	Stage 1 delivers no Benefit other than being a gateway to other Levels.	At Start of Competition Phase may add one white disk for use in... ...one Competition in which it is involved.	...each of any two Competitions in which it is involved (2 disks total).	...each of any two Competitions in which it is involved (2 disks total) OR two white disks in any one Competition in which it is involved.
Economic/ Social Track	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
• Any Great Person or "I" card is worth 2 Resources on this Track.	Stage 1 delivers no Benefit other than being a gateway to other Levels.	At Start of its Growth Phase may move one disk from its Supply to its Disks for Growth Box.	...AND receive one mina/talent into its Treasury.	
Religious/ Intellectual Track	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
• Any Great Person or "N" card is worth 2 Resources on this Track • Any "R" Card (ACME only) is worth 3 Resources on this Track	Stage 1 delivers no Benefit other than being a gateway to other Levels.	At Start of its Growth Phase may receive into its Treasury... ...one mina/talent.		...TWO mina/talents.

### Card Play Phase

During each Round of Card Play, instead of playing a card, establishing a Wonder (ACIS) or Deity (ACME), or passing, a civilization may elect to pay resources to advance one stage on one Track. A civilization may pay to advance on another or the same Track on subsequent rounds but may never advance more than one stage on one Track per round.

There is no limit (theoretically) as to how many Levels or number of stages a Civilization may advance during single turn. Only the number of needed Resources limits such advances once a civilization has a disk upon a Track. Keep in mind a Game Epoch turn comprises many years.

As per the basic Card Phase rules, once a civilization has passed in a round of Card Play, that civilization may make no advances on the Culture Track that turn.

### Requirements for Advancement

Each stage of advancement requires a civilization have a certain number of Cities (Urbanization):

- To enter stage ONE, a Civilization must have at least TWO Cities
- To enter stage TWO, a Civilization must have at least FOUR Cities
- To enter stage THREE a Civilization must have at least SIX Cities; and
- To enter stage FOUR, a Civilization must have at least EIGHT Cities.

This requirement is per stage, not per Track. Thus, a civilization with at least TWO cities is eligible to advance to the first stage in each of the three Tracks.

## Resource Costs for Advancement

To enter a stage on a Track, a civilization must pay a price in resources equal to the number of the stage to which it wishes to advance. Thus, to enter stage one requires the expenditure of one resource; to enter stage two requires the expenditure of two resources; to enter stage three requires the expenditure of three resources, and to enter stage four requires four resources.

## Resources and Resource Bonuses

Just as in building a Deity (ACME) or Wonder (ACIS), discarding one card, returning one disk from the map to supply or expending one mina/talent is worth one resource. Certain cards, however, are worth more on certain tracks:

Card Type	Track	Value
C	Military-Political	2
I	Economic-Social	2
N	Religious-Intellectual	2
R (ACME only)	Religious-Intellectual	3

In addition, ANY Great Person is worth 2 Resources on ANY Track.

The cost to enter a stage can be met by paying any combination of resources. No “change,” however, is ever returned.

In other words, if advancing to the first box on the Military-Political track, a “C” card, normally worth two points, only moves the disk to the one box. No cards, mina/talents or disks are returned to make up the otherwise lost difference in value... e.g. the player never receives any “change.”

## Bonuses Granted for Each Level of Civilization

At the beginning of EACH PHASE in a turn, players must check to see which civilization has its disk occupying each Track’s level. The Benefits of being in more than one Track may be combined.

Stage 1 delivers no Benefit other than being a gateway to other stages’ Benefit(s).

In the event two or more Civilizations are tied for the lead, no Civilization gains the Reckoning Phase VP bonus unless tied at Stage 4. Each Civilization in a Stage 4 box receives 1 VP.



## Sacking Cities (Loot) to Add/Reduce Levels of Civilization

After Sacking a City and receiving Loot as usual, the Victor draws a card from the top of the Fate deck. If the card is an Event, the Event is played immediately but not replaced by another card.

If the selected card has an even card I.D. #, the Victor may EITHER ADVANCE ONE stage on a Track where it is BEHIND the losing Civilization OR REDUCE by ONE any Track of the loser. Choosing an odd card I.D. # has no effect in this regards.

**The City (Urbanization) prerequisite for Advancement is in force when an Advance is selected through Sacking an enemy City.**

**Example:** Blue is in stage 3 of Military-Political. Green is in Stage 4. Blue sacks a Green City and draws an even I.D. numbered card from the Fate deck. For the Military-Political Track, Blue may either reduce Green down to 3 OR increase Blue to 4. However, Blue would need eight or more Cities to fulfill the Urbanization prerequisite to advance into the Stage 4 Box.

BARBARIANS ALWAYS REDUCE the highest Track of the losing Civilization by ONE (no card draw required). If advances are tied, Barbarians reduce Military-Political before Economic-Social before Religious-Intellectual.

If an NPC (Non-Player Civilization) Sacks a City, unless that NPC is the leader on a Track, it will always attempt to advance itself. If the NPC is leading on ALL three Tracks, it will attempt to reduce the loser in its leading Track as if the NPC were a Barbarian.

**Note:** A Civilization never loses progress on the Culture Track if its number of Cities drops below the level required for advancement on a Track, perhaps by Card play, End of Epoch Event, or by loss of Cities through Competition. **Culture Track progress may be reduced ONLY through Sacking of its Cities.** However, if a Civilization has lost Cities, it may not advance on the Culture Track through expending Resources during a Card Phase unless it has sufficient Cities to do so.

## NPC Levels of Civilization

NPCs will never attempt to advance on the Culture Track during the Card Play Phase. However, at the END of the Card Phase, after all Civilizations have passed, each NPC will draw in Civilization Turn Order one Fate Card to attempt to advance a stage and only if it has sufficient Cities to allow the advance:

NPC Card Drawn	Advance one stage on...
C	Military-Political Track
I	Economic-Social Track
N	Religious-Intellectual Track
R	
Great Person	any and all Tracks that will tie any other leading Civilization. If it cannot tie another Civilization, no other advance occurs.
E	all three Tracks—but only to equal, not pass, a player-controlled Civilization (then resolve Event, but do not replace the Event card).

If any other Card is Drawn, the NPC will NOT advance at all.

## Immediate, Sudden, Automatic Victory: "Lord of the Four Quarters of the World"

If a civilization reaches the fourth stage in all three Tracks, that civilization gains an automatic victory that occurs at the instant that status is achieved even if in the middle of a turn. The game immediately jumps to the Reckoning Phase. After scoring is complete (which could be relevant to Tournament Play), the civilization which earned the "Lord of the Four Quarters of the World" accomplishment is declared the winner, **regardless of Victory Point totals**.

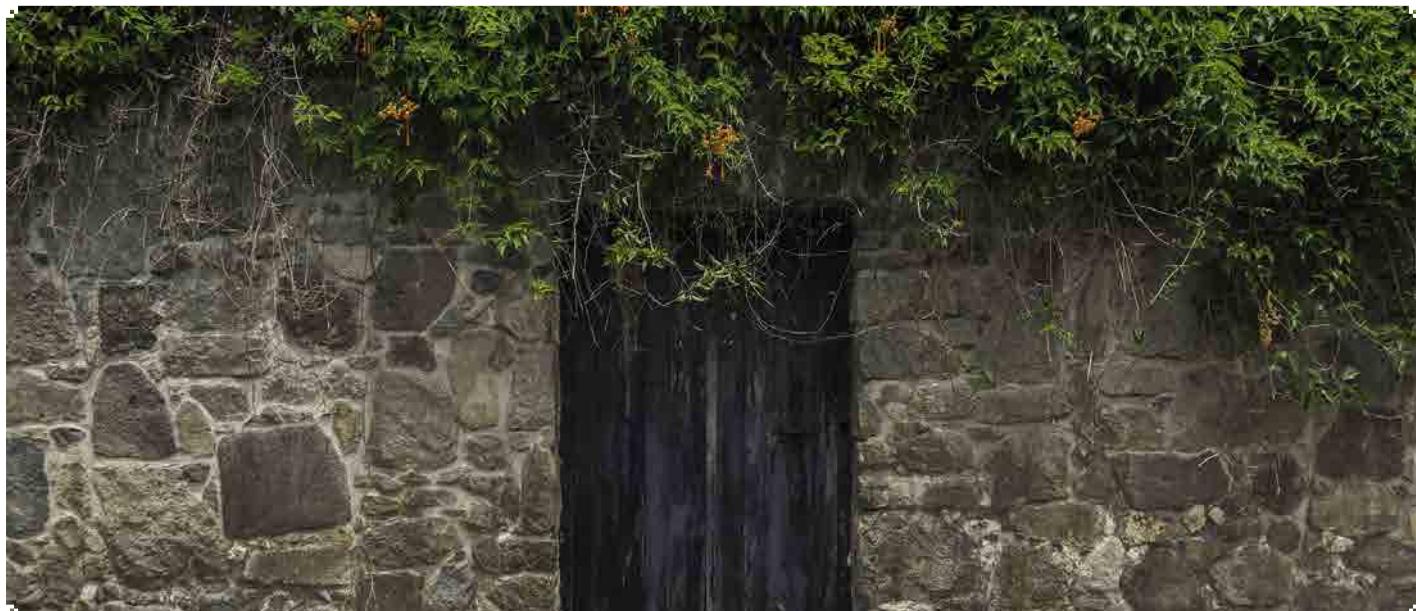
**Player's Note:** Keep your eye on where your competition has its Culture Track disks placed, along with their Resources available to advance their Track disks, to avoid an unpleasant, unexpected game loss through an opponent achieving this automatic Culture Track victory.

## Shorter Games

As the "Lord of the Four Quarters" victory is unlikely to be possible in games of three or fewer Epochs, players may agree to accelerate the process by placing at start a disk of each Civilization into the first or second stage of each Level (although they do not have the requisite number of Cities).

## Gilgamesh (ACME) / Aeneas (ACIS)—Advancement

A Civilization which uses the Aeneas or Gilgamesh Option may adjust its position forward on each Level in which it is in last place so that it is one and only one stage behind the Civilization immediately ahead of it on that Level. A Civilization which uses the Gilgamesh - Aeneas Option does not lose any progress that was previously made (it does not regress).



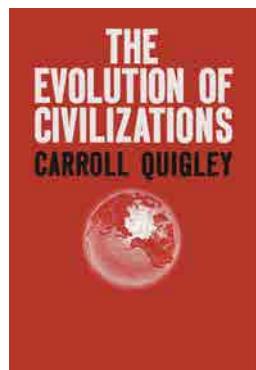
## Select Bibliography

It all began with a book – or more accurately the primary text book for a survey course given at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service to freshmen by Professor Carroll Quigley. Chris and I each took that course (he three years earlier than I), and many others with the legendary scholar – a man FDR chose to teach army officers hand-picked to administer territories liberated from the Axis, and upon whom JFK relied for advice.

That book inspired Chris to come up with the concept and initial design for the Ancient Civilizations series, of which Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea was the first, and this the second in a planned quartet. (*Ancient Civilizations of the Far East* is laid out upon my desk, and we have already exchanged some ideas on *Ancient Civilizations of the Americas*. And who knows, we might do a fifth someday on the *Ancient Civilizations of Sub-Saharan Africa*.)

What follows is just a sampling of the scores of books we have poured through in designing this series, with the place of honor going to the book that began it all:

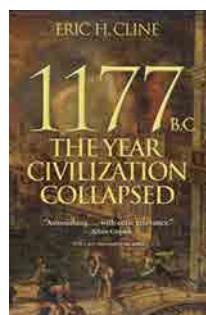
*The Evolution of Civilizations*, Carroll Quigley, New York: Macmillan Company, 1961



Special mention, however, must be given to the following, for it was the dramatic and chaotic events therein that inspired Chris to create something far more than just another typical civilization-building game system, and create a unique “civilization survival” concept for the games.

—Mark McLaughlin

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## Notes