

RULEBOOK

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ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS — OF THE — MIDDLE EAST



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INTRODUCTION

Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East (ACME) is an exciting, easy-to-learn, easy-to-play, but challenging-to-master abstract game in which players guide the renowned and legendary civilizations that rose and fell (and in some cases rose again) in and around the area known as the Fertile Crescent (which is at the core of the area we now call the “Middle East”).

ACME follows similar design concepts of its highly-acclaimed predecessor, *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea (ACIS)*, but is a separate game requiring no previous experience with *ACIS*. *ACME*, like *ACIS*, includes many scenarios and variations. It can be played in solitaire, multi-player, or a hybrid form using both player and non-player led civilizations. *ACME*’s Play Book provides the guidance needed to enter the world of *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East*.

ACME follows the course of four Epochs, each roughly adhering to the following historical periods:

- 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)

Choose Your Own Game— Short, Standard or Long

A Game of Any Length is a Complete Game

Players may choose the length of their game. Players need not play all four Epochs. They may instead choose to play until an agreed-upon number of Epochs have been completed, or until the conclusion of a turn in which an agreed-upon time limit has passed (e.g. 2 hours), or until a Victory Point score goal has been achieved by the leader. Regardless of duration, ANY GAME OF ANY LENGTH IS A “COMPLETE” GAME.

For suggestions on how to set the parameters for a short, standard, or long game, please refer to this rulebook’s Options section (p29). Other game variation suggestions may be found in the Playbook’s Sandbox Situation Scenarios section (p44).

Throughout these rules you will see numerous boxed sections such as this one. These sections are filled with examples, clarifications, play hints, design notes, historical insights and other assorted wisdom in order to help ease you along to learning and enjoying this game.

GAME OVERVIEW

In *ACME*, players will command one of 17 of the major powers/civilizations or peoples of the time: Akkad, Assyria, Babylon, Chaldea, Cimmeria, Egypt, Elam, Greek, Hittite, Indus Valley (comprising the Dravidian, Harappan, & Mauryan civilizations), Israelite, Medes & Persians, Mittani, Scythia, Sea Peoples, Sumer or Urartu.

The goal of the game is to have your civilization accumulate more Victory Points (VPs) than any other player’s civilization. There are several ways for players to earn VPs, such as building Cities, raising—and capturing—Deities, looting Cities, accumulating wealth (which in this game is represented by “mina”) and dominating the sea.

A game can last up to four Epochs, each of which is broken down into two to four turns. During each turn there are four Phases which must be conducted one at a time in the following order:

Growth Phase

Card Phase

Competition Phase

Reckoning Phase

At the end of the last turn of each Epoch there is a fifth “End of Epoch” Phase (which is optional if it is the end of the last turn of a game’s final Epoch).

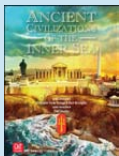
End of Epoch Phase

Additional scenarios found in the Playbook may start in later Epochs or end in earlier ones, have varying victory conditions, or add special rules.

To see in-depth articles by the game’s design/development team, as well as brief historical summaries of ACME’s seventeen civilizations, please visit:
gmtgames.com/p-836.aspx



What's different from *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea*?



Those who played the first game of this series, *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea (ACIS)*, should be able to jump right in as both games use almost all the same rules and mechanisms with three significant exceptions:

1. Homelands

In ACIS there were 10 Homelands, one per each civilization in the game. In ACME there are 22 Homelands and 17 civilizations. Some civilizations have two (or in the case of the Medes & Persians, three) Home areas from which to choose, depending upon the set-up or scenario selected.

2. Terrain

In ACIS all Land areas were the same. In ACME Land areas will be differentiated into one of 4 possible types:

- **Fertile** (Green)
- **Plain** (Light Brown)
- **Mountain** (Dark Brown)
- **Desert** (Sandy)

Veteran ACIS players should familiarize themselves with the bonuses and limitations of each terrain type and should especially note the introduction of Strongholds (grey cubes) in a civilization's controlled Mountain areas. Furthermore, with ACME, a Controlled Fertile Land area with a City or single disk (Camp) can generate one disk of Growth each turn just as if it were a Settlement. For more detail, see Playbook p80.

3. Deities

Whereas ACIS had Wonders, ACME instead has Deities. Like the Wonders in ACIS, the Deities in ACME deliver bonuses and accrue Victory Points. In ACIS a civilization could have multiple Wonders, but in ACME each civilization may have only a single Deity. Deities can be captured and taken back to the conqueror's Home area where they accrue a VP each turn. (They may be recaptured and reinstated.)

Unlike the Wonders in ACIS, the use of a Deity's attribute is not limited by placing a civilization's disks upon it. It can be used every turn by its originally acquiring civilization, even if it has been captured, as long as the civilization has at least one of its disks occupying its own Homeland. It need not control the Homeland, merely have at least one disk present.

IMPORTANT GAME TERMS

There are several terms that you should become familiar with to better understand the rules that follow.

Barbarians



Barbarians, which also represent various and sundry rebels, revolutionaries, pirates, etc., solely enter the game through card play. They use the game's black disks. Barbarians are not a civilization. *Their stacks are never Cities and thus cannot be looted; card effects that apply specifically to civilizations do not affect Barbarians, etc.*

Camp



In an area, a Camp is a stack of exactly 1 disk belonging to a single Faction. Camps (only) from multiple Factions can occupy the same area without triggering Competition; they peacefully coexist. *At sea you could think of a single disk as a group of fishermen.*

City



In a Land area (only) a City is a stack of 3 or more disks belonging to a single civilization. Cities from multiple civilizations can occupy the same area (which would create a Contested area). *Barbarians can have stacks of three or more disks, but do not have Cities. Think of them rather as vast camps.*

Civilization

A player's civilization uses one set of colored disks and has a specific Home area (or, in some cases, a choice of two or more Home areas) on the map. *Note: depending on the scenario played (see Playbook pp34-44), a player could control more than one civilization or the civilization could be run by the game system (an NPC... a "Non-Player Civilization").*

Competition Card



A type of Fate card, coded with a "C", whose text applies during the Competition Phase and usually affects only the current competition.

Control

An area solely occupied by a single Faction - that is, it contains no opposing disks—is Controlled by that Faction. A Faction (see definition below) exerts Control when only its disk(s) occupy an area.

Contested

When two or more Factions occupy an area and at least one Faction has two or more disks present, that area is Contested. Contested areas will have a Competition resolved within them during the Competition Phase.

Dominate

A civilization that Controls all Land areas adjacent to a Sea area and has at least one disk in the Sea area itself also Dominates that Sea area. Barbarians may not Dominate a Sea area even if they control all the Land areas adjacent to a Sea area they occupy.

Enemy (& Primary Enemy)

In scenarios with one or more Non-Player Civilizations (NPCs); one or more opposing civilizations may be enemy to each NPC, drawing its system-guided ire. If an NPC has more than one enemy, one of them will be determined to be its Primary Enemy, drawing its enmity preferentially.

Epoch

Game play is broken down into four Epochs: I, II, III and IV. Each Epoch consists of 2-4 turns and each turn has several distinct phases.

Event Card



A special type of Fate card, coded with an “E.” that must be played immediately when drawn or revealed.

Faction

Usually refers to one civilization or Barbarians, unless otherwise stated in a scenario. If a player is controlling multiple civilizations, each civilization remains a Faction to itself.

Fate Card

A deck of 103 cards that provide Events, Great Persons, benefits and disasters in the game.

Investment Card



A type of Fate card, coded with an “I”, that is played face-up on the table with a variable number of white or a civilization’s disks atop it. The removal of a disk at a later point of the game gives its owner a benefit.

Mina(s)



A measure of wealth (currency) represented by white disks, which are awarded as loot, bonuses from card play and some established Deities, as well as for some civilizations as a regular benefit during Growth. A mina may be expended in lieu of losing a civilization’s disk through Competition, card play, and/or to acquire a Fate card during a Draw Phase. Minas, in quantities of three, may also be converted into Victory Points at an Epoch’s conclusion.

Negation or Negate Card



A type of Fate card, coded with an “N”, that can negate all effects of another played card or for another purpose as specifically defined by that card.

NPC (Non-Player Civilization)

In solitaire play as well as some multiplayer scenarios (*see Playbook p48*), an NPC civilization is run by the game system instead of a player.

Occupy

A Faction occupies an area if that area contains at least one of its disks.

Opposing

All Factions (including **Barbarians**) and their disks oppose all other Factions, even if controlled by the same player. A civilization’s own disks never oppose one another. In card text, opposing refers to every Faction *other than* the one playing the card.

Religion Card



A red “R” inside a triangle indicates a Religion card. A “godless civilization” (one without a 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

Settlement



In an area, a Settlement is a stack of exactly 2 disks belonging to a single Faction. Settlements from multiple Factions can occupy the same area (which would create a Contested area). *At Sea you could think of a stack of two disks as a raiding party or small fleet.*

Shared

A shared area is an area occupied by two or more Factions.

Stronghold



A Stronghold is a gray cube only placeable in a Mountain area. It represents the defensive benefit of controlling “the high ground” (and the passes and defiles) of such an area.

Supply

When not on the board, on its Civilization Display, or on an Investment card, a civilization’s disks are kept in a Supply pile on the table in front of their owning player or NPC. When instructed to “remove” a disk from the map or from a card, place it back into its Supply unless explicitly stated otherwise. If you are instructed to “place” a disk onto the map or onto a card, take it from your Supply unless explicitly instructed otherwise.

GAME COMPONENTS

THE BOARD

(also referred to as “the map”)

Areas

The main focus of the board is a map of the region and environs of the Fertile Crescent (also known as Mesopotamia - “the land between two rivers” and, more recently, as the Middle East). This map consists of spaces called “areas,” each identified by a unique name. These include:

Land Areas (of which there are four distinct types):

- **Fertile** (*Green*)—Example: Nile Delta.
- **Plain** (*Light Brown*)—Example: Lydia
- **Mountain** (*Dark Brown*)—Example: Tarsus
- **Desert** (*Sandy*)—Example: Sinai

and **Sea Areas** (*Blue*)—Example: Sinai Sea

Borders

Land areas are separated from one another by either dark brown borders or thick meandering dark blue borders (e.g. Rivers, such as the Nile, Indus, Tigris and Euphrates); Sea areas by light blue borders. A Land area and a Sea area can be separated by a combination of the two. Areas are considered adjacent to one another if they share a common border.

*Examples: Abydos & Amarna are separated by a River border; they are adjacent to one another. Reed Sea is adjacent to Nile Delta. (The river within the Nile Delta Land area is **not** a border. It strictly a graphic device.)*

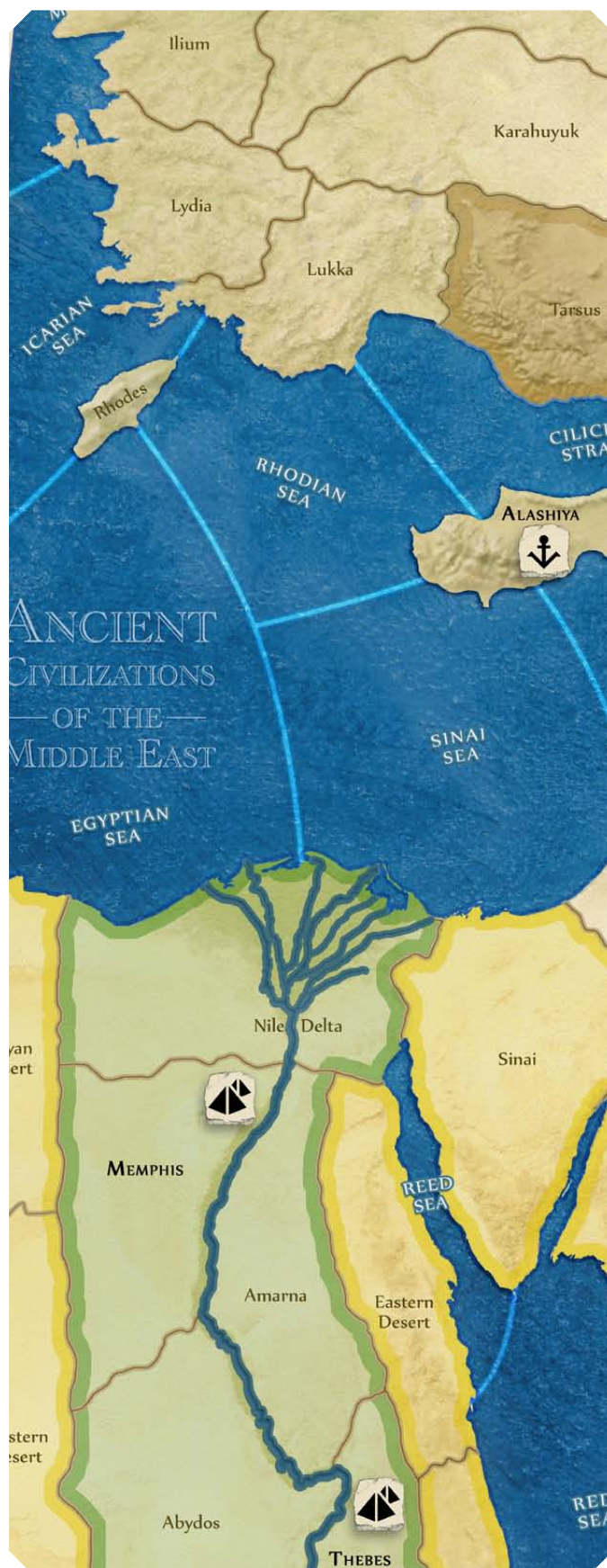
Islands

There are two islands in the game: Rhodes and Alashiya (modern Cyprus). Each is a Land area surrounded by numerous Sea areas. For example, Rhodes is adjacent to the Icarian Sea, Egyptian Sea and Rhodian Sea.

Home Areas

For the game’s 17 civilizations, Home areas are the 22 areas which contain a unique illustration, an indicia, associated with its matching civilization. Each is also marked by having its name appear in all-caps.

Note that while most civilizations have a single Homeland, some civilizations have two or even three possible Home areas from which to choose, or which vary with the scenario chosen. For example: the Egyptian civilization has two: **MEMPHIS** and **THEBES**.



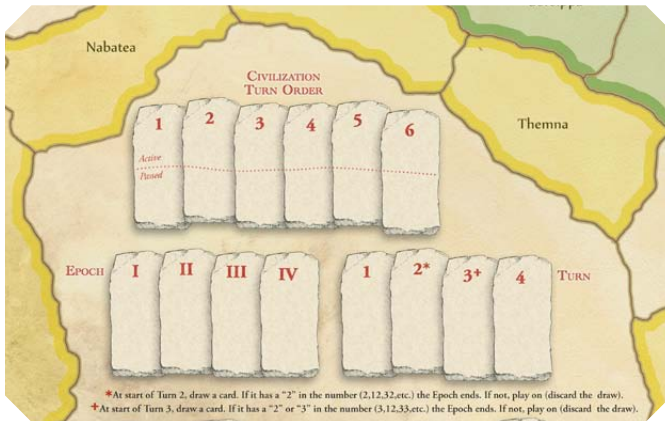
Victory Point Track

The board contains a Victory Point (VP) Track for players to keep track of their civilizations' cumulative VPs throughout the game. If a civilization's score goes above 20, place a white disk underneath its VP marker—each such disk indicates a “+20.” A civilization's VP total can never drop below 0.

Should there be a particularly high scoring civilization, it may employ an unused color, or if there are none, a black disk, to represent 50VP.

Miscellaneous

The board, above the Victory Point Track, contains a general records area for keeping track of the current Epoch, turn, and player/civilization order (sequence). This space is NOT an area, and is out-of-play in the game. For Fate card purposes, its “border” functions as a southern map edge.



THE CARDS

There are two types of cards in the game: Fate and Deity.

Fate Cards



I. Code

Some cards contain a red letter code at upper left:

N A red “N” inside a square indicates a Negate card that can be used to cancel all effects of another card of a particular type or for another purpose as specifically defined by that card.

I A red “I” inside a rectangle indicates an Investment card that is played face-up on the table with its associated disks for future benefits.

C A red “C” inside a circle indicates a Competition card that can only be played for its effect during the Competition Phase. Some Great Persons and Investment cards may also be Competition cards.

R A red “R” inside a triangle indicates a Religion card. A “godless civilization” (one without a 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.

E A horizontally-aligned card with a red “E” inside a hexagon indicates an Event card that must be played immediately when drawn or revealed. There are eight such cards in the game numbered 96 to 103. Five are Barbarian invasions and three are Events of note. When an Event is drawn, it is immediately replaced by another card drawn for the civilization's hand. (*The only exception is if drawn to determine the result for the End of Epoch Phase, after which it is simply shuffled back into the deck.*)

II. Flavor

Each Fate card includes a relevant illustration and Biblical quote. (All quotes are from the King James version and almost all are from the Old Testament.)

III. Name

The specific historical reference represented by the card.

IV. Text

Instructs the player when to play the card and what its effects are.

V. Legend

Some cards contain italicized instructions for the player as to what happens to the card after it's been played (if not discarded).

VI. ID Number

Each card's unique identifier, sometimes used for various game functions.

Drawing & Discarding

Fate cards are drawn from the top of a shuffled face-down deck throughout play. After a Fate card is played, it is discarded to the top of a face-up discard pile next to the draw deck unless its legend specifically states otherwise. If the draw deck should become depleted during the middle of a turn, shuffle the cards in the discard pile together to form a new draw deck.

Deity Cards

Available Deities begin a game face-up next to the board, in a kind of array, with their corresponding stickered block (temple) atop them. Each Deity card includes:



I. Code



A red “N” indicates the Deity is a kind of Negate card (this only applies to *God of the Skies* and *God of Peace*) that can be used to cancel all effects of another card of a particular type.

II. Flavor

A relevant illustration and the Deity’s unique icon.

III. Name

The specific type of the ancient Deity worshipped by a civilization as represented by the card.

IV. Text

Instructs players as to when the card can be used and what its effects are.

V. Legend

Some cards contain italicized instructions for the player as to what happens to the card after it’s been played.

VI. ID Number

Each card’s unique identifier.

Deities are always in one of four states:

- “**available**” if they are still next to the board waiting to be established;
- “**established**” if they are face-up and active in front of a player;
- “**inactive**” through a card effect, e.g. *Blasphemy* (card #90) or *Forsaken by God* (card #92) or
- “**captured**” by an opposing civilization.

Captured Deities’ wooden stickered blocks are placed upon the Deity card of the civilization which captured them. Deity cards of captured Deities remain with their original owning civilizations.

Note that Deities may also be recaptured or otherwise returned and thus re-established.

Using Deities



A Deity’s benefit may only be used if the owning civilization occupies the area containing its associated temple at the moment of use. A temple may only be placed atop a civilization’s Homeland block.

Hand Size

Each civilization’s maximum Fate card hand size is 6. If a civilization ever has 7 or more Fate cards in its hand, it must immediately choose and discard the excess—this discard occurs after any drawn Event cards are resolved, since they are never put into a player’s hand. *A civilization’s hand does not include cards it has played face-up on the table (e.g.: Investment cards—those marked with an “I”).*

Note: The Mittani civilization is an exception to the preceding as they could have a maximum hand of 7 cards, provided at least one is a “C” - for Competition Card - with receipt of an 8th card triggering a discard.

Revealing Cards

Whenever you are instructed to reveal the top card of the draw deck, if the revealed card is an “E” Event card, resolve it immediately (by following the Event’s instructions) then discard and replace the card.

The Golden Rule

Whenever a card effect contradicts a rule or conflicts with an ability on a Civilization Display, the card always takes precedence.

Clarifications of some card effects can be found at the end of this Rulebook.

THE WOODEN BITS



Cubes—Small gray cubes are used to mark the presence of Strongholds in Mountain areas. There are also three colored cubes to represent areas of the map temporarily designated as special through card play: green for *Oasis* (card #70), light blue for *Fishing Grounds* (card #71), and yellow for *Mountain of Gold* (card #69).

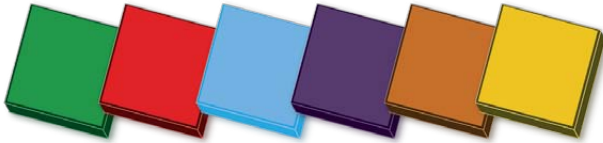


Cylinders—The white cylinders are used for marking the current Epoch, the current turn, and to sometimes mark an area needing consideration during the Competition or Card Phase.



Small Blocks—There are eight small blocks: seven stickered with the name and symbols of Deities and one to indicate Monotheism. These are used to raise temples and mark the current locations of Deities and the central temple of a civilization practicing Monotheism. Each block has one sticker, one for its front and a duplicate one (“spares”) for its back (if desired).

Large Blocks—The six large colored blocks are used to mark the current Homeland for the civilization represented by that color.



Disks—Each civilization will use the 50 disks of one of the six civilization colors: green, red, blue, purple, burnt orange or yellow.

Designers’ Note: These disks represent not just population, armies or navies, but also economic and cultural forces. These include those elements and shared patterns of thought, beliefs, rituals, and actions that propel a people’s common ethos and represent “the soul” of a civilization. Hence, a Land area with one disk represents a rather dormant or stagnant culture that is not growing. It’s a kind of subsistence existence—with perhaps a trading post, hunting grounds, mission, border guard fort, and the like. A Land area with two disks represents a more thriving culture: a Settlement, with its farms, mines, towns, and forts. A Land area with three disks represents the crown jewel of a civilization: a City. At sea a single disk represents fishing cultures or local trade, while two disks represent an interest in sea control (such as raiders, a large merchant fleet, or a naval squadron), not necessarily an improved cultural construct.

The 50 black disks are used to represent Barbarian tribes and various and sundry rebels, revolutionaries, bandits, and pirates. These are collectively referenced as Barbarians. The 50 white disks are used as minas (currency) and for various administrative purposes.

CIVILIZATION DISPLAYS

Each of the 17 civilizations in the game has an associated Civilization Display. Each Display includes:

I. Its name, Icon, Epochs, and Home area(s)—Some civilizations have a choice of initial Home areas or start in different areas depending on the scenario or set-up as found in the Playbook.

II. Its unique special abilities.

III. Disks for Growth—This area is used to hold its colored disks that are available for placement on the map that turn—or the upcoming turn when “captives” (p25) are involved.

Note: This is not to be confused with its “Supply” which is merely a pile from which these disks are drawn.

IV. A reminder of where to place the civilization’s Active Deity and any Captured Deities.

V. Temple Granary—a reminder that during the Growth Phase a civilization with an Active Deity may elect to return two Growth Phase disks drawn from Supply in exchange for a mina added immediately to its treasury. The Growth disks that were converted may then be used to satisfy that civilization’s total growth allotment for the turn. A maximum of two disks may be so converted into a mina.

VI. Treasury Box—Used to hold white disks representing its current wealth, measured in “minas.”

VII. Sacked City Loot Box—Used as a temporary holding area for minas earned from sacking Cities during Competition.

VIII. Flavor— A little historical insight into this particular civilization.

Ability Precedence

Whenever an ability on a Civilization Display contradicts a rule, the ability always takes precedence.

BABYLON Epochs II-III
Homeland: **BABYLON**

*“...then Anu and Bel called by name me, Hammurabi, a prince, who feared God, to bring about the rule of righteousness in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil-doers; so that the strong should not harm the weak, so that I should rule over the black-headed people like Shamash and enlighten the land, to further the well-being of mankind.
-from the Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC)*

II

Revered City of Gods & Archivists

- At the start of the Babylonian Growth Phase gain one Mina if there is a Babylonian City in Babylon.
- At the end of each Draw Step may Discard one Card to Draw two new Cards: keep one and Discard the other.

IV

DEITIES

- Place Active Deity Block Face Up on Homeland Block and Captured Deities Face Down beside Display.
- At the end of each Turn Score 1 VP per each Active and Captured Deity.

V

Temple Granary

In Growth Phase a Civilization with an Active Deity may elect to take one Mina (but only one) instead of taking two of its Disks.

III

DISKS for GROWTH

VI

TREASURY - Minas

Expend 1 Mina to prevent the loss of

VII

Sacked City Loot

Put Loot to the Victor

BASIC SETUP FOR ALL GAMES AND SCENARIOS

If this is your first time playing the game, we recommend that after setting up you follow along with the two-civilization Example of an *ACME* Turn in the Playbook (p70).

REMINDER: Before your first game, apply appropriate stickers to each of the 8 small Deity blocks.

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

White Disks - Place the white disks next to the board to form a Supply pile.

Black Disks - Place the 50 black disks on the table to form a Supply for the Barbarians.

Cylinders—Place a white cylinder onto the Epoch I space, and another onto the Turn 1 space. Set aside the other cylinders for now. Some scenarios may specify different starting boxes.

Color Disks—Each player chooses a different color (green, red, blue, purple, yellow or burnt orange) to represent each civilization the player will control (usually one, but some scenarios allow a player to control two or three civilizations). Place the 50 colored disks on the table in front of each respective player to form a Supply pile for each civilization.

VP Markers—Place one disk of each game civilization's color being used on the 0 space of the Victory Point Track.

Turn Order—Take a disk of each color in use, place them in an opaque container, draw each randomly and place them in the order drawn on the Civilization Turn Order track starting with space 1. This will determine the order in which players will choose their civilization, deploy disks, draw Fate cards and the order of play for the game's first turn. Note that some scenarios specify the civilization turn order at start.

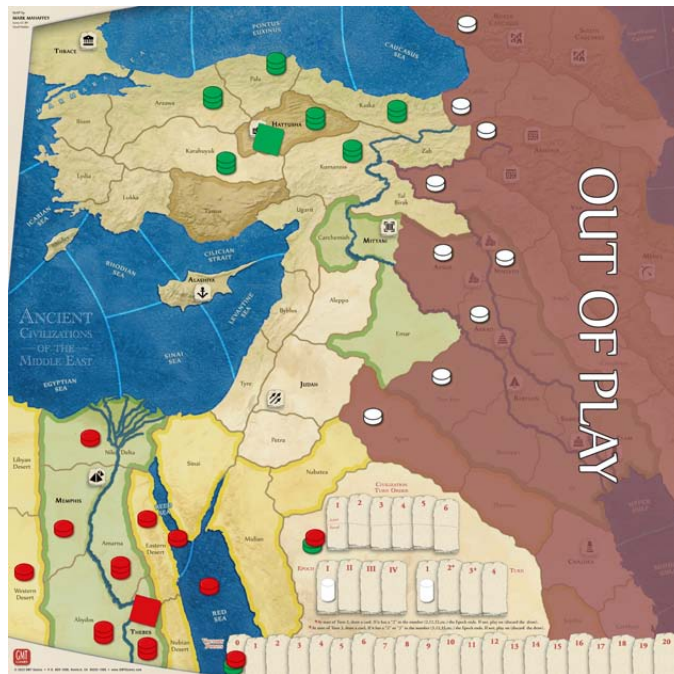
Deity Cards—Place the seven Deity cards face-up next to the board. Place each Deity's associated block (temple) atop its card—along with the Monotheism block nearby should *Monotheism* (card #95) enter play.

Fate Cards—Remove the eight "E" Event cards from the Fate deck and shuffle the remaining Fate cards together. Place this stack face-down into the play area as a draw deck. After each civilization places its initial disks on the map, that civilization draws five Fate cards. Players may look at their own cards and should keep them hidden from other players. Once all civilizations have deployed and drawn cards, shuffle the Event cards into the remaining deck and place it face down as the draw deck.

BASIC 2-PLAYER SETUP

To set up a basic game for 2 players, follow the procedure outlined below. You can find many additional scenarios for all player counts (including solo play) in the Playbook.

A. This setup uses the **Abbreviated Western Map** portion of the board. Place 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 east of them:



B. Civilizations—The player whose color disk is in space 1 of the Civilization Turn Order track selects either Egypt or the Hittites, takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table in front of them. The second player takes the other civilization's Display. The deployments described below should be completed in turn order (which may differ from the order given below).

C. Hittite Deployment—The Hittite player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in the Hittite Homeland (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.

D. Egyptian Deployment—The Egyptian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Egyptian Homelands (in this case the player chose 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, and a Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea, and Reed Sea.

E. Initial Hands—As noted above in the basic setup, in Turn Order, each civilization draws five cards. The Event cards are then shuffled into the remaining card deck and placed face down.

F. Begin Play—Place the Player Aid Cards nearby. Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play with the first Growth Phase by the civilization whose disk is first on the Civilization Turn Order track.

BASIC 3-PLAYER SETUP

To set up a basic game for 3 players, follow the procedure outlined below. You can find many additional scenarios for all player counts (including solo play) in the Playbook.

This game adds a third Civilization—Assyria—to the basic two-player game and moves the boundary of the map a few areas to the east.

A. This setup uses the **Western Map** portion of the board. Place a white disk into each of the following 8 areas: Northwest Caspian, West Caspian, Southwest Caspian, Elburz Mountains, Paraetaceni, Persis, Utians, and Lower Gulf. 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 east of them:

B. Civilizations—In Turn Order, each player selects any unselected Civilization of Assyria, Egypt or the Hittites, takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table in front of them. The deployments described below should be completed in turn order (which may differ from the order given below).

C. Hittite Deployment—The Hittite player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places

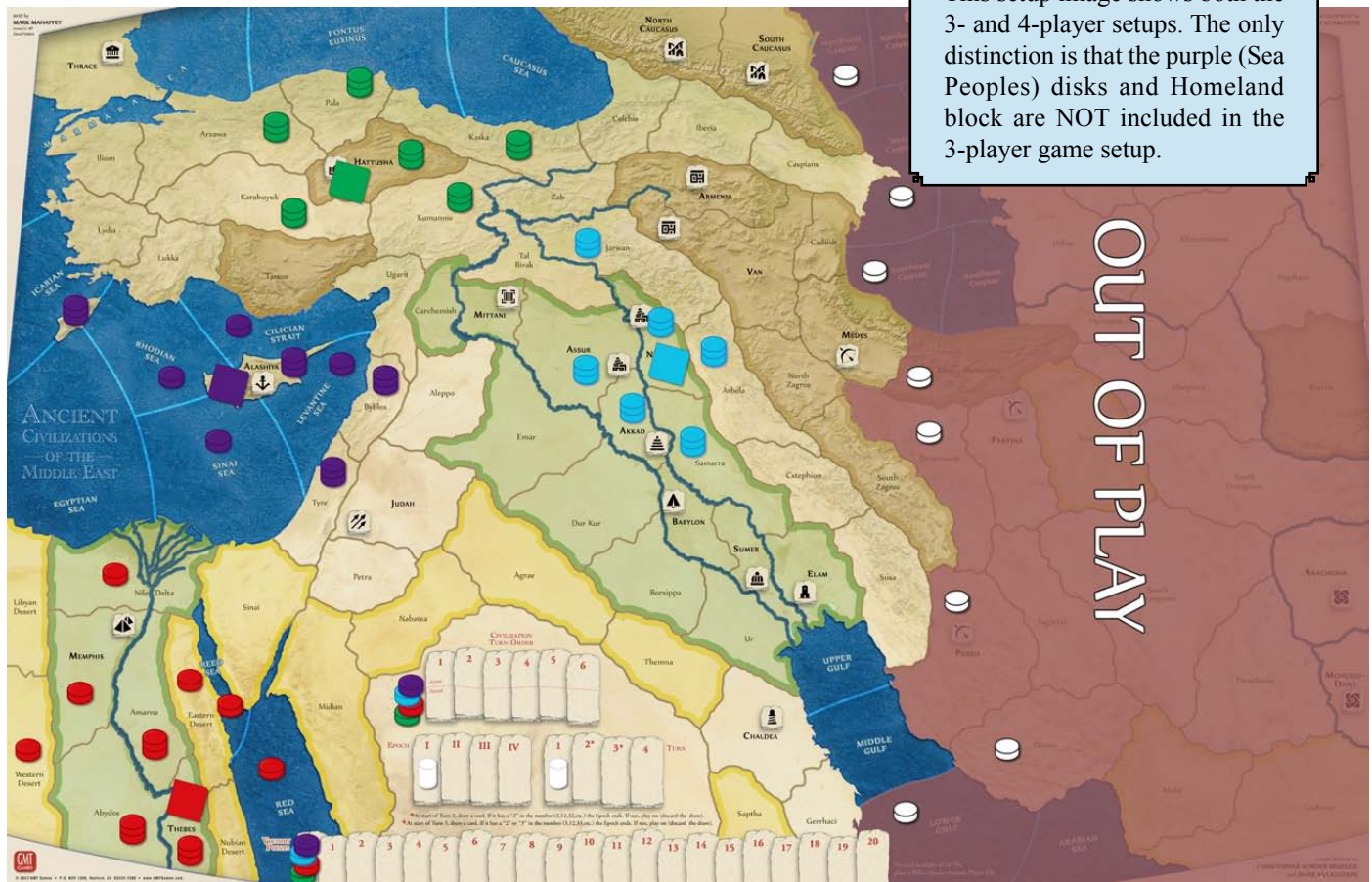
it in the Hittite Homeland (Hattusha). The Hittite player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement in each of Hattusha, Kaska, Kumannis, Karahuyuk, Arzawa, and Pala.

D. Egyptian Deployment—The Egyptian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Egyptian Homelands (in this case the player chose 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, and a Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea, and Reed Sea.

E. Assyrian Deployment—The Assyrian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Assyrian Homelands (in this case, Nineveh). The Assyrian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Nineveh, Jarwan, Arbela, Samarra, Akkad, and Assur.

F. Initial Hands—As noted above in the basic setup, in Turn Order each civilization draws five cards, the Event cards are then shuffled into the remaining cards deck and placed face down.

G. Begin Play—Place the Player Aid Cards nearby. Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play with the first Growth Phase by the civilization whose disk is first on the Civilization Turn Order Track.



This setup image shows both the 3- and 4-player setups. The only distinction is that the purple (Sea Peoples) disks and Homeland block are NOT included in the 3-player game setup.

BASIC 4-PLAYER SETUP

To set up a basic game for 4 players, follow the procedure outlined below. You can find many additional scenarios for all player counts (including solo play) in the Playbook.

This game adds a fourth Civilization—The Sea Peoples—to the basic three-player game.

A. This setup uses the Western Map portion of the board. Place a white disk into each of the following 8 areas: Northwest Caspian, West Caspian, Southwest Caspian, Elburz Mountains, Parataceni, Persis, Utians, and Lower Gulf. This line represents the eastern edge of the map for all rule and card purposes. Throughout play, no piece may ever move or be placed into these marked areas or any area east of them.

B. Civilizations—In Turn Order, each player selects any unselected Civilization of Sea Peoples, Assyria, Egypt or the Hittites and takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table in front of them. The deployments described below should be completed in turn order (which may differ from the order given below).

C. Hittite Deployment—The Hittite player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in the Hittite Homeland (Hattusha). The Hittite player then takes 12 disks from their Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: A Settlement in each of Hattusha, Kaska, Kumannis, Karahuyuk, Arzawa, and Pala.

D. Egyptian Deployment—The Egyptian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Egyptian Homelands (in this case the player chose Thebes). The Egyptian player then takes 12 disks from their Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement in each of Thebes, Abydos and Amarna, and a Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea, and Reed Sea.

E. Assyrian Deployment—The Assyrian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Assyrian Homelands (in this case, Nineveh). The Assyrian player then takes 12 disks from their Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Nineveh, Jarwan, Arbela, Samarra, Akkad, and Assur.

F. Sea Peoples Deployment—The Sea Peoples player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it on the map to mark the Sea Peoples' Homeland. For purposes of this setup, the Sea Peoples' Homeland is the Island of Alashiya. The Sea Peoples player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement on Alashiya, Rhodes, Byblos and Tyre, and a Camp into each of the Sinai Sea, Levantine Sea, Cilician Straits, and Rhodian Sea.

Unlike all of ACME's other 16 civilizations, the Sea Peoples do not have a fixed Homeland. They have a variety of areas to choose

from as their Civilization Display notes: Alashiya or any one Land area or island within two areas of Alashiya—provided that the area is not adjacent to the Homeland of one of the civilizations that are available to players in the current set-up.

As an example, for the 4-player scenario, the Nile Delta would not be an available choice for the Sea Peoples' Homeland.

G. Initial Hands—As noted above in the basic setup, in Turn Order each civilization draws five cards, the Event cards are then shuffled into the remaining cards deck and placed face down.

H. Begin Play—Place the Player Aid Cards nearby. Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play with the first Growth Phase by the civilization whose disk is first on the Civilization Turn Order track.

BASIC 5-PLAYER SETUP

To set up a basic game for 5 players, follow the procedure outlined below. You can find many additional scenarios for all player counts (including solo play) in the Playbook.

This setup removes one Civilization—The Sea Peoples—from the basic four-player game and adds in two others: the Medes & Persians and the Scythians. It also removes the white boundary disks—thus opening the entire map for play.

A. This setup uses the entire board.

B. Civilizations—In Turn Order, each player selects any unselected Civilization of Scythia, Medes & Persians, Assyria, Egypt, or the Hittites, takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table in front of them. The deployments described below should be completed in turn order (which may differ from the order given below).

C. Hittite Deployment—The Hittite player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in the Hittite Homeland (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.

D. Egyptian Deployment—The Egyptian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Egyptian Homelands (in this case the player chose 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 and a Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea, and Reed Sea.

E. Assyrian Deployment—The Assyrian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it

in one of the two Assyrian Homelands (in this case, Nineveh). The Assyrian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Nineveh, Jarwan, Arbela, Samarra, Akkad, and Assur.

F. Scythian Deployment—The Scythian player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the two Scythian Homelands (in this case, West Scythia). The Scythian player then takes 12 disks from their Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: A Settlement into each of West Scythia, Chorasmia, East Scythia, North Sakians, and South Sakians, and a Camp into each of the East Caspian and Northeast Caspian Sea areas.

G. Medes & Persians Deployment—The Medes & Persians player takes the large colored block corresponding to his chosen disk color and places it in one of the three Medes & Persians Homelands (in this case, Persis). The Medes and Persian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Persis, Utians, Sagartia, Susa, Paraetaceni, and South Zagros.

H. Initial Hands—As noted above in the basic setup, in Turn Order each civilization draws five cards, the Event cards are then shuffled into the remaining cards deck and placed face down.

I. Begin Play—Place the Player Aid Cards nearby. Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play with the first Growth Phase by the civilization whose disk is first on the Civilization Turn Order track.

BASIC 6-PLAYER SETUP

To set up a basic game for 6 players, follow the procedure outlined below. You can find many additional scenarios for all player counts (including solo play) in the Playbook.

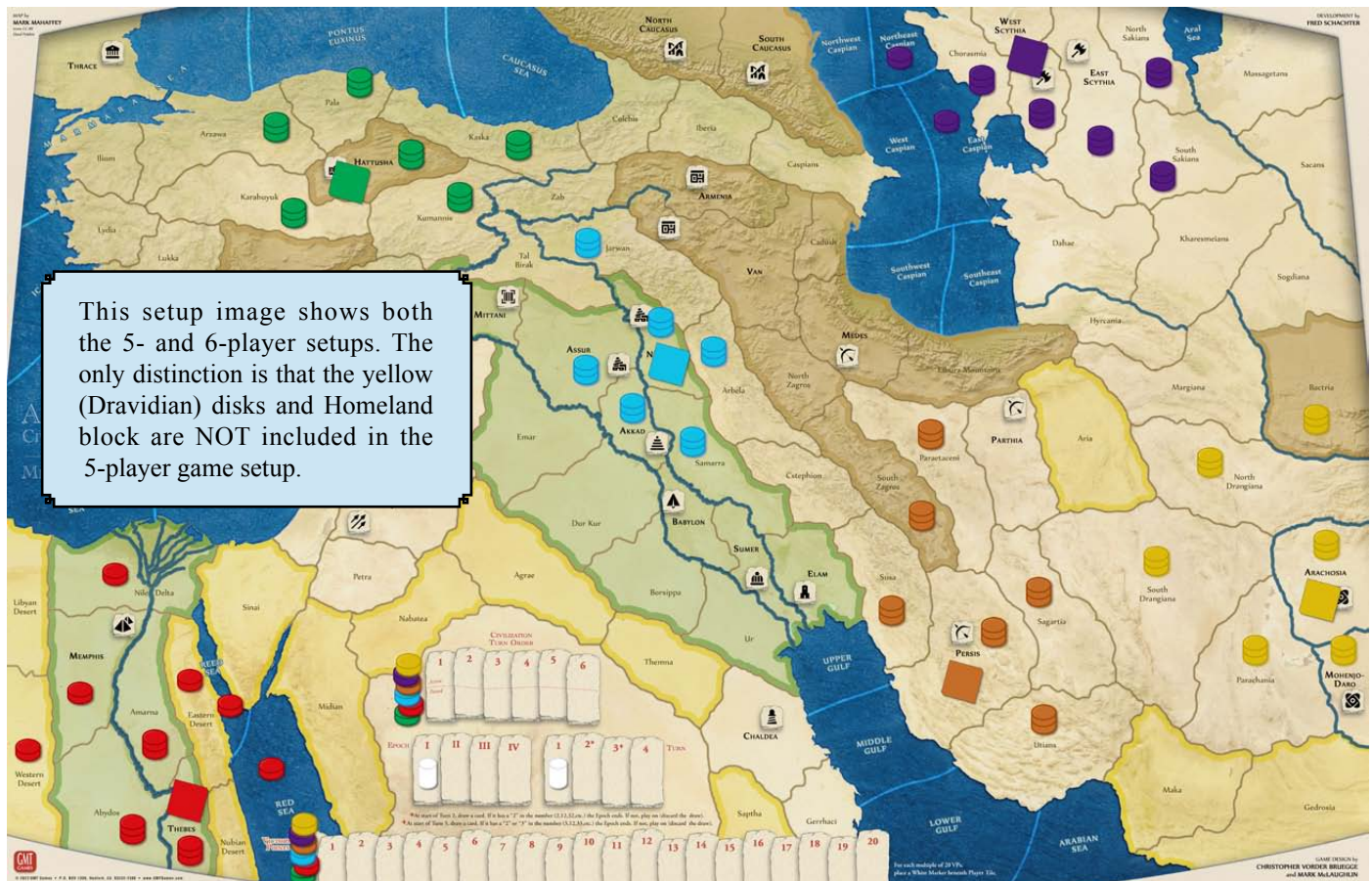
This game adds a sixth Civilization—the India-originating Indus Valley: Dravidians—to the basic six-player setup.

A. This set-up uses the entire board.

B. Civilizations—In Turn Order, each player selects any unselected civilization of Indus Valley: Dravidians, Scythia, Medes & Persians, Assyria, Egypt, or the Hittites, takes its associated **Civilization Display** and places it on the table in front of them.

C. Hittite Deployment—The Hittite player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in the Hittite Homeland (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.

D. Egyptian Deployment—The Egyptian player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in one



of the two Egyptian Homelands (in this case the player chose 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 and a Camp in each of Memphis, Nile Delta, Eastern Desert, Western Desert, Red Sea, and Reed Sea.

E. Assyrian Deployment—The Assyrian player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in one of the two Assyrian Homelands (in this case, Nineveh). The Assyrian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Nineveh, Jarwan, Arbela, Samarra, Akkad, and Assur.

F. Scythian Deployment—The Scythian player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in one of the two Scythian Homelands (in this case, West Scythia). The Scythian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of West Scythia, Chorasima, East Scythia, North Sakans, and South Sakans, and then places a Camp into each of the East Caspian and Northeast Caspian Sea areas.

G. Medes & Persians Deployment—The Medes & Persians player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in one of the three Medes & Persians Homelands (in this case, Persis). The Medes and Persian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Persis, Utians, Sagartia, Susa, Paraetaceni and South Zagros.

H. Indus Valley: Dravidians—The Dravidians player takes the large block corresponding to his chosen color and places it in Arachosia (as directed by the Indus Valley Civilization Display for Epoch I). The Dravidian player then takes 12 disks from Supply and distributes them onto the map as follows: a Settlement into each of Arachosia, Mohenjo-Daro, Parachania, South Drangiana, North Drangiana, and Bactria.

I. Initial Hands—As noted above in the basic setup, in Turn Order each civilization draws five cards, the Event cards are then shuffled into the remaining cards deck and placed face down.

J. Begin Play—Place the Player Aid Cards nearby. Set aside all other pieces for now. Begin play with the first Growth Phase by the civilization whose disk is first on the Civilization Turn Order track.

STACKING

Throughout the game there are limits to how many disks belonging to a single Faction can “stack” in an area. White disks, Stronghold markers (grey), and the three other types of colored cubes (green, blue, and yellow) do not count toward stacking limits.

Stacking During the Growth & Card Phases

During both the Growth Phase and the Card Phase, each Faction can never have more than:

- 4 disks in a non-desert **Land** area
- 2 disks in a **Desert** or **Sea** area

If either of the above limits are exceeded, immediately remove excess disks back to their Supply.

Note: The *Royal Roads* card creates a temporary exception to this limitation.

Stacking During the Competition Phase

During the Competition Phase, there is no limit to the number of disks that can occupy a Land or Sea area.

Stacking at the Beginning of the Reckoning Phase

At the beginning (only) of the Reckoning Phase, each Faction can never have more than:

- 3 disks in a **non-Desert Land** area
- 2 disks in a **Desert** or **Sea** area

All Factions’ disks in excess of these stacking limits (*left over from Competition*) must be removed to their respective Supplies along with any white disks.

Design Note: So why are four disks permitted in non-Desert Land areas during some Phases but then reduced to three after the Competition Phase? Well, the fourth disk represents a surge of cultural, martial, or Barbarian power into a nearby area or a build-up to resist such a surge. If a civilization is moving first, for example, and suspects another civilization of harboring evil thoughts about destroying one of its Cities via card play or direct Competition (attack), it might add that fourth disk for defensive purposes.

When placing after another civilization, an aggressive civilization might move into an opposing City area (of 3 disks) with 4 disks, thereby giving the placing civilization a possible advantage during the upcoming Competition.

Similarly, there are even lower stacking limits for Deserts and Sea areas, as the former is able to support far fewer people than other Land areas and, for the latter, large fleets rarely lingered for long.

Note: Should a *Barbarian Invasion* Event card (#98-102) be played during the Reckoning Phase, its stacks of four black disks would not be reduced until the beginning of the next turn’s Reckoning Phase (if not diminished to comply with the stacking limits during that turn’s Card and/or Competition Phase).

GROWTH PHASE

If this is your first time playing the game, after reading this section you may find it helpful to visit the example of a Growth Phase in the Playbook.

STRONGHOLDS STEP



At the very start of the Growth Phase, each Faction (including Barbarians) simultaneously checks to see if it may place any Strongholds. It may place one Stronghold cube atop its disk(s) in each Mountain area under its control (e.g. it is the only Faction with disk[s] present). There are 12 Stronghold cubes and 12 Mountain Areas. Each Mountain Area may contain no more than one Stronghold cube.

After all Strongholds have been placed, each civilization, in Turn Order, performs the following steps in the order shown:

1. Retirement Step
2. Acquisition Step
3. Resettlement Step
4. Deployment Step

The civilization first in Turn Order performs all four steps, then the civilization second in Turn Order performs all four steps, and so on until all civilizations have performed their own individual Growth Phase.

Play Hint: A key aspect of this game is managing your supply of disks. You have a total of 48 disks to deploy. Certain Fate cards require you to “invest” disks to them to reap their benefits. This presents opportunity costs in that the disks are tied up and cannot be used for other purposes upon the map.



GRAIN STOREHOUSES

Place 4 disks from supply atop this card. During the Card Phase you may remove disk(s) from this card in lieu of losing disks. Discard when no disks remain.

RETIREMENT STEP

During this step you may remove any number of your civilization’s disks from the map except from a Land area containing a City (three disks of your color) and place them back into Supply.

Play Hint: You are unlikely to do this early in the game, but as your civilization expands you may find yourself running short of disks in Supply. This step allows disks that are not ideally placed to become available for redeployment later in the Phase (during step 4) or for during the Card Phase to make use of a Fate card. (Some cards also allow you to place disks in Competition and, of course, you must have them in Supply in order to do so.) You may also wish to withdraw disks if you are facing a massive Barbarian invasion, or perhaps acting after another civilization has expanded into some of your occupied areas and you do not wish to contest their expansion.

Cautionary Note: Removing disks may result in generating fewer disks during the Acquisition Step, but also gives you a larger supply from which to draw.

ACQUISITION STEP

During this step, transfer disks from your Supply to the Disks for Growth of your civilization’s Display in preparation for deployment onto the map. The number of disks you may transfer depends upon the terrain and disks in areas you occupy. You may transfer a number of disks *sequentially* according to the following criteria:

Area Presence

- **Sea:**
Transfer 1 disk for every two Sea areas you occupy.
- **Mountains (Dark Brown):**
Transfer 1 disk for every TWO Mountain Areas which each contain one of your Settlements (stacks of exactly two disks).
- **Plains (Light Brown):**
Transfer 1 disk for every Plains area containing one of your Settlements.
- **Fertile (Green):**
Transfer 1 disk for every Fertile area you Control **OR** which contains one of your Settlements.

Thus, whether you have a Camp, Settlement or City in a Fertile Area, if you Control it, you may transfer a disk. However, *remember there’s no Growth for a Fertile area with a City or Camp not under your Control. Defend accordingly.*

- **Desert** (*Sandy*):

Deserts do not generate disks but are counted for purposes of Commerce.

- **Commerce**

Transfer 1 disk for each opposing civilization that has a disk in or adjacent to a Land or Sea area that you occupy.

In scenarios where you control two or more civilizations, these civilizations perform commerce with one another. And, yes, you trade with all civilizations controlled by other players, even aggressively hostile ones; but Commerce does not generate more than 1 disk per opposing civilization. Multiple adjacencies to the same civilization do not generate additional Commerce disks.

Example: A civilization has 10 disks in Supply. However, it has no Settlements on the map and no controlled Fertile areas and has no Growth bonus from a Deity or its Civilization Display. It has two Sea areas occupied and is adjacent to one other civilization for Commerce. Hence it would net only two disks to transfer. In this case, it will get the minimum of three disks.

Special Abilities and Deities

Transfer disks according to abilities on your Civilization Display and your Active *Earth Mother Goddess* Deity, if any.

At the end of the Acquisition Step, transfer two mina into your Civilization Display's Treasury if you have the Active *God of the Forge* Deity.

Temple Granaries

In addition, as noted on the Civilization Display, if you have an Active Deity you may elect to take 1 mina (but only one) *instead* of transferring two disks from Supply to your "Disks for Growth." (Those disks must be available from Supply and can be any two gained from Area Presence, Commerce, Special Abilities, or Deities, or a combination from any two of those sources.)

Temple Granaries are not only a way to gain a mina, but also are a useful tool for retaining two disks in Supply. Remember to acquire disks by criteria sequentially: e.g. first for Sea area occupancy and last for a civilization's Special Ability and/or Deity.

RESETTLEMENT STEP

During this step, you may transfer up to 1 disk each from any number of your Cities on the map to the Disks for Growth of your Display (in preparation for deployment back to the map during step 4).

Play Hint: If Cities provide critical VPs and bonus cards, why would you voluntarily reduce a City to a Settlement just to get one disk to redeploy? Perhaps if another civilization moved before you and placed a large number of disks into one of your City areas, you might decide that you do not want to defend it and risk giving that aggressive civilization any Loot (see Loot in the Competition Phase section, p25). Another occasion is a "lost cause" Barbarian invasion: you may as well redeploy one of that City's disks to somewhere more useful. The Resettlement rule allows you to remove a disk from such an endangered City, reducing it to a mere Settlement.

DEPLOYMENT STEP

During this step, place the disks in your Disks for Growth Box onto the map. Not all available disks need be placed, but any that remain in the Disks for Growth Box at the end of this step are returned to Supply. *They do not carry over to future turns.* You may place an available disk from your Disks for Growth Box, subject to these four stacking limits:

- into an area you Control or a Contested area you occupy (regardless of the ratio of disks between Factions—a single disk in a Contested area allows you to place disks there);
- into an area adjacent to an area you Control;
- into an area adjacent to a Contested area you occupy, but only if your civilization already has at least as many disks in that Contested area as those of the largest opposing Faction. (**Note:** *Treat a Stronghold cube as a disk for this purpose.*)
- in or adjacent to your Home area regardless of your Control or presence there, but only if you have exactly zero disks on the map at the start of the Deployment Step.

Minimum Acquisition

A civilization may always transfer a minimum of 3 disks, if available, even if the preceding criteria would yield fewer.

Note: Two of these disks could be returned for the Temple Granary benefit if eligible. Disks acquired during the prior turn through the taking of "captives" do not count against this Minimum Acquisition.

Design Note: Later in the game, if you have built a lot of Cities in non-Fertile areas, you may not have such generous growth—and that is one of the great trade-off puzzle challenges to solve with this game.

Design Note: With regard to this last option, if your civilization did not occupy any areas at the beginning of this Phase you will have had no Growth other than the minimum growth of 3 disks. This placement option is provided as a social tool to keep a player who has suffered the slings and arrows of misfortune in the game. In all likelihood, though, that player may be wiped out each turn. Therefore, we included the Gilgamesh Rule to allow players to begin afresh with a new or renewed civilization. (See the Gilgamesh Step of the Reckoning Phase, p26.)

Example 1: Green has 3 disks and a Stronghold and Blue has 2 disks in a Mountain area. Purple must place at least 4 disks (thereby equaling Green's presence) before being able to place disks in an adjacent area to the contested one... that is, traversing it.

Example 2: If a civilization has three disks and a Stronghold in an Area, another civilization would need to EQUAL that combination by placing four disks before deploying from there into an adjacent area. Note that by increasing the number of disks in an area with a Stronghold to four, the player controlling that area can, in effect, create a 5-piece barrier to "pass through" Deployment by Factions which deploy later during the Phase (as they cannot equal that number).

Play Hint: The case may arise where a civilization does not meet criteria to legally place a disk as it most desires. There are several solutions to this challenge:

1. Talk with the other player(s) and make a deal. As they are very likely to be ahead of you in Turn Order considering your dire situation, ask one of them to either remove a disk from an area you share in their Retirement Step (thus ceding you control as the sole occupant) or, in their Deployment, to place another disk in a shared area so as to create a Contested area for you. Note that you can always offer to either do or not do something in return; such as place (or not place) a disk somewhere.

Remember, you can always threaten to hit them with one or more nasty cards if they do not give you a way back in to deploy.

2. As the Retirement Step is the first step in the Phase, you can always remove your disks from all of the areas you share, thus having zero disks on the map which, in turn, either lets you do the last bullet of the four in deployment or

3. Conduct Option Two above and just not place any new disks on the map, thus setting yourself up for the Gilgamesh Step -- and then you can tell them you will return and vengefully go all Gilgamesh on them...or just threaten this "Biblical Wrath" option should they refuse your ever-so-reasonable requests from Option One.

Design Note: During the ensuing Card Phase, you may be able to play cards that allow you to ignore this restriction since you're not traversing any area—think of such cards as everything from political uprisings, to religious conversions, to bribing generals or chieftains... whatever your imagination can concoct.

Chaining

You may "chain" disks outward as you place them, meaning newly-placed disks may be placed into areas adjacent to previous newly-placed disks. Once in a Contested Area, however, you to need to match the number of disks belonging to the Faction with the largest number of disks in order to place from there into an adjacent area.

You could, in theory, traverse the entire map in a single Deployment Step.

Cohabitation

You may place disks into areas containing opposing Factions.

Such placement will likely create a Contested area, leading to Competition (see Competition Phase).

Play Hint: A word about strategy. Will you expand rapidly by emphasizing growth, but at the expense of non-Fertile area Cities (and thus lower VPs), or will you focus on an intensive civilization that emphasizes building Cities at the expense of further growth? Or do you pursue something in between? No single strategy is right for every civilization or even every player, and it can vary during a game depending on the proximity of encroaching civilizations and which of them is currently in the victory point lead. ACME is something of a "get the leader" game if all players are to have an opportunity for victory. To gain the lead is one thing; to keep it, quite another.



CARD PHASE

Note: If this is your first time playing the game, after reading this section you may find it helpful to visit the example of a Card Phase in the Playbook.

During the Card Phase, each civilization will, one at a time in Turn Order, perform one of the following three actions:

- **play a Fate card;** *or*
- **establish, rebuild or return ONE captured Deity** (no civilization with an active Deity may establish a different Deity: there is no multi-deism (Polytheism) in terms of this game, think of a civilization's Deity as its primary one); *or*
- **pass.**

Civilizations will continue, in Turn Order, to perform one of the above three options until all civilizations have passed, at which time the Card Phase ends.

The Golden Rule

Whenever a card effect contradicts a rule, the card always takes precedence.

Event Cards

E Eight Fate cards are oriented sideways with a red E within a hexagon; these are termed “Event” or MUST PLAY cards.

Drawing Events & Revealing Events

Whenever an Event card is drawn either from the draw or discard deck (e.g. with Chaldea or Akkad's Civilization attributes), that player must immediately reveal the card and play it. After resolving its effect(s)—or after being negated - that player draws another card to replace it.

Which could be another Event card; in which case, repeat the above process.

Similarly, whenever players are instructed to reveal the top card of the Draw deck or select several cards (e.g. via *Master Scribe* (card #1) or *The God of the Dead's* (card #108) Deity ability) and an Event card is revealed, that Event card is immediately resolved before implementing the activity called for by the reveal (e.g. Sudden End of Epoch Step).

Multiple Events

If multiple Event cards need to be resolved at once, resolve them in high-to-low ID number order unless one of them is *The Breath of God* Event (card #103). When this card is played with other Events, only its Event is played.

PLAY A FATE CARD

Negation/Negate Cards

N

The Fate cards with a red N inside a square are termed “Negation” or “Negate” cards. Negation cards will state within their text which played cards they can respond to, entirely cancelling - “negating” - that other card's effects. A civilization may play Negation cards out of turn sequence and even after they have passed.

Whenever a card is negated, **it is automatically discarded** regardless of what its legend may indicate at the bottom of the card; it is not considered to have been played and none of its effects are implemented. If a Negation card targets another Negation card that was itself negating a third card, that originally played card will take effect since the negation targeting that card was itself negated.

Example: Egypt plays the *Philosopher King* card. Assyria does not want it to resolve so attempts to negate it by playing *Corrupter* in response. Egypt attempts to cancel Assyria's negation by playing a Negation card of its own: *Assassin*. If there are no further responses, *Assassin* ends up negating *Corrupter*, which means that *Corrupter* never occurs: thus *Corrupter* does not negate *Philosopher King*. *Philosopher King* now resolves. The two Negate cards cancel each other out (as if they were never played) and are discarded.



Negate Card Decorum: When a civilization plays a card, which includes removing a disk from an Investment card, it must specify how and where its effect(s) will occur. That player should allow opposing civilizations—especially the one(s) being targeted—an opportunity to briefly review their cards in hand so as to decide whether to counter with an appropriate Negation card before the effects of the card begin resolving. It is also possible to Negate a card such as *False Prophet* after it has been played. This immediately removes the Negated card's effect(s).

Investment Cards

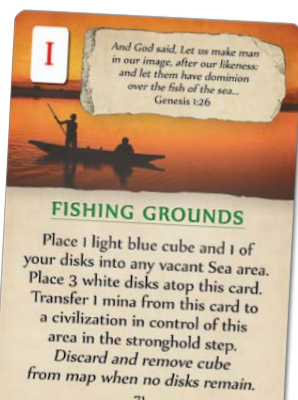
The Fate cards with a red I inside a rectangle are termed “Investment” cards. There are two types of Investment cards: those which place a civilization's colored disks upon them and those which place generic white disks upon them.

Investment cards with a civilization's own disks placed upon them: These cards allow a civilization an opportunity to invest in future gains. An Investment card is played face-up to the table in front of that player/civilization with the specified number of disks atop it from its owner's Supply. If the civilization has fewer disks remaining in Supply than what is called for, they place as many as they have available and ignore the remainder. The deficit, if any, may not be subsequently made up.

Investment cards will instruct the player as to when they can remove one or more disks from the card to gain its benefit. This is considered “playing” that card. Investment cards are placed into the Discard pile when the last disk is removed.

Investment Negation Note: An Investment card may be Negated whenever it is played OR a disk is removed to trigger its attribute. If an applicable Negate card is successfully played, any disks on the Investment card are returned to Supply and the card is sent to the Discard pile.

Investment cards with generic white disks placed upon them: A civilization must have at least one of its disks available for placement on the map to play one of these cards (#69, #70, #71) and the appropriate vacant area must also be available upon the map). If both conditions are met, follow the card's instructions. Note that the civilization controlling the area may “harvest” its benefit... not necessarily the civilization initially playing this type of Investment card.



Note: Some cards may have both an “I” for Investment and a “C” for Competition, and/or be marked as “Great Person” and ALSO have a “C” for Competition. These are **dual-purpose cards** and are not mutually exclusive.

Example: *Great Person—Master Armorer* (#20), with both “I” and “C” coding, could be initially played out of a civilization's hand either during the Card Phase or Competition Phase.



Resolving Fate Card Effects

A player must resolve their card's effects as much as possible and in the order they are presented, only ignoring any portion that is impossible to implement given the current game state.

Supply

The word “Supply” in a card's text refers to that civilization's Supply unless stated otherwise. Whenever a card instructs a civilization to place disks somewhere, those disks come from its Supply unless stated otherwise. Whenever a card instructs a civilization to remove disks from somewhere, those disks are put back into their owner's Supply unless stated otherwise.



Exception: Barbarian disks and white disks are always taken from and placed back into their own Supply.

Disk Placement & Removal

Whenever a card effect instructs a player to place one or more disks on the board, they may place the disks into any areas(s) unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Reminders: A Stronghold cube is not considered a disk except that it does count as a disk for determining the ability of another civilization to expand through an area.

It can be taken to satisfy a disk loss during Competition (only).

During a Card Phase, if there is not at least one disk of the Stronghold-owning Faction in place, the Stronghold cube is immediately removed from the board.

Similarly, whenever a card effect instructs a player to remove one or more disks from the map, they may come from any area(s)—and can belong to any Faction—unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Alternate Loss

Whenever a civilization would have one of its disks removed from the map for any reason, it may instead choose to:


- lose 1 mina; *or*
- discard 1 card from its hand.

If it does, the disk that would have been removed remains where it is instead of being put back into Supply.

Clarification: Replacement and Removal


Some Fate cards call for the “*replacement*” of one civilization’s disks with those of another. If the active civilization does not have sufficient disks in their Supply to replace them, the disks to be replaced are still removed. A civilization may expend a mina or discard a card in lieu of losing a disk. If a disk that is to be “*replaced*” is so rescued, the active civilization, or Barbarian, does not place their own disk (*what has not been removed cannot be replaced*).

Competition Cards

 Some Fate cards have a red C within a white circle. These are Competition cards and are only playable during the Competition Phase: they cannot be played for their text during the Card Phase. They may, however, be discarded in lieu of losing a disk at any time or as a resource for establishing a Deity.

Note: Some Competition cards also have the I of an Investment card. These cards are *dual-purpose cards* and can be played for either purpose.

Religion Cards & Godless People

 The Fate cards with a red R inside a triangle are termed “Religion” cards. In order to play a Religion card for its effect(s), a civilization must have established a Deity. A civilization that has not established a Deity is considered “a godless people” for purposes of Religion card play.

A godless people may not use their Civilization Display’s Granary ability. A godless people may expend a Religion card as a resource when establishing or re-establishing a Deity (see below) and may still discard a Religion card in lieu of losing a disk for any reason but may not play it for its text described effect(s).

Barbarian Invasion Event Cards

There are five (5) Barbarian Invasion Event Cards in ACME (#98 - #102) playable by the civilization (in descending order):

- With the sole lowest Victory Point total, or
- With the sole lowest number of Cities, or
- Determined randomly from those civilizations tied for lowest number of Cities and lowest VP.

Example: A Barbarian Invasion Event Card has been drawn. The Hittite and Scythians are tied for the lowest VPs. Since neither has sole lowest VP, they reference the next tie-breaker. They see that the Hittite player has fewer Cities than any other player tied for lowest VP and can, therefore, be the player who chooses how to play the Barbarian Invasion card.

The civilization playing an invasion chooses the initial Land area for the first stack of four black Barbarian disks and then follows the card’s instructions for placing any other stacks of black disks. If an area already contains one or more black disks, only sufficient disks to meet the area’s stacking limit may be placed.

Play Hints and Examples: If a player wishes to be benign and has control of a Barbarian Invasion, but is only the player with lowest VP by one or two points from the game’s other players, it may be prudent not to risk victimizing another civilization and earning its vengeful wrath. Consequently, in a full map game when in control of Hordes from the North (#98), making Thrace the northern map edge initial placement area “ground zero” will limit the Event’s black disk incursion to only that single area, since Barbarian Event disk placements are halted by Sea areas. Another alternative is to pick a “ground zero,” a Land area along with its adjacent Land area(s), which are already occupied by black disks.

Conversely, a Barbarian Invasion can be potentially crippling to a civilization or at least distract it from other planned priorities. A good example of this is playing **Desert Raiders** (#102) on an Egypt who has a seemingly comfortable VP lead. Select Amarna as “ground zero” (it’s adjacent to the Eastern Desert area) and all five Fertile areas of Egypt will receive a stack of four black Barbarian disks each.

ESTABLISH A DEITY

Historical Note: Through the Epochs covered by ACME, there were literally thousands of gods or variously named gods among the region’s civilizations. In ACME these are represented by seven “generic” Deity cards, each with its own unique attributes. Civilizations are not required to worship the god or goddess they historically adopted, but may choose the Deity whose attributes will complement the player’s vision for their civilization to best weather the turbulence of time, the travails of the game, and the grief one’s opponents may inflict.

During the millennia covered by ACME, when a civilization declared its worship of a god, it often considered a statue of that entity to be the physical manifestation of that divine being. (There were exceptions, e.g. monotheistic Israel, with Monotheism being the game’s eighth Religion.) It constructed a temple, usually in the form of a ziggurat, to house and protect that Deity. That edifice was the central point of worship as well as headquarters of the Deity’s priestly establishment and it was usually constructed in the civilization’s capital.

When one city, culture, kingdom or civilization conquered another, it would take the statues of their enemy’s gods as trophies, and bring them back to their own temple, where they would be laid at the feet of the victor’s god(s). This demonstrated the superiority not only of the victor over the vanquished, but of the victor’s god over those of the vanquished. To regain these “gods”, civilizations frequently went to war or made diplomatic deals to regain these precious religious symbols. Returning such symbols was also seen as a sign of magnanimity—or of a god speaking to a conqueror to “let my people go.” Temples also became civilizations’ treasuries and tax administrative centers as the priests accepted taxes and offerings in kind, dispensed rations for workers, and used the surplus for various projects to propitiate their Deity.

There are seven available Deities in the game, each represented by a lengthwise (landscaped layout) Deity card and a matching stickered block—or “temple.”



A civilization may have only one Deity at a time. During the Card Phase, each civilization may establish its one Deity from those available. To establish a Deity, the civilization:

- must Control its Homeland (e.g. at least one disk of that civilization must be present in the area AND there must be no opposing disk(s) present, **and**)
- may not have another established Deity card on its Civilization Display. (A civilization may, however, have one or more captured Deities in the civilization’s possession.)

If these pre-conditions are met, it may then pay 5 resources in any combination of:

- return of disks on the map to Supply (minimum 2, see below),
- pay one or more mina from its Treasury,
- discard 1 or more cards from its hand.

At least two of the five resources must come from the first indicated item: disks removed from the map. The remaining three resources may comprise any combination of the above (including additional disks).

Example: Egypt wishes to establish the *God of the Dead*.

In order to be eligible to do so, it must be in Control of its Homeland (Thebes, in the basic set-ups and for the purpose of this example. Note that in some scenarios and set-ups in the Playbook Egypt may choose either Memphis or Thebes as its Homeland). There also must not be any other Deity card on its Civilization Display. Egypt removes 2 disks from the map (these need not be from Thebes but may be removed from anywhere on the map). Egypt then expends 2 minas from its Treasury and discards one card from its hand, for a total of 5 resources (2 disks, 2 minas, 1 card).

When a Deity is established, that civilization:

1. Places the Deity card face-up on or alongside the Deity space of their Civilization Display.
2. Places the Deity’s associated block (“temple”) on the map in its Home area: e.g. place it atop the large colored Homeland block with its name facing the player.
3. Gains the benefits listed on that Deity’s card during the relevant Phase (Growth, Card Play, Competition, Turn Order Reset or the Draw Step of the Reckoning Phase) as noted on the card.
4. May now play a Religion card for its listed effect(s).
5. May make use of the Temple Granary option as noted on its Civilization Display. For the civilization to make use of that ability, however, it **must** have at least one of its disks present in the area containing the established Deity’s temple.
6. Gains one VP during the Victory Tally Step of each turn’s Reckoning Phase, but **only** if it has at least one of its disks present in the area containing the established Deity’s temple.

Remember: A Deity must be fully active to enjoy the preceding noted abilities. Certain Fate cards may limit those abilities (read them carefully).

Captured Deity

A Deity may be captured and taken as a trophy by the victor. At the end of the Growth, Card or Competition Phase, if an opposing civilization Controls another civilization's Homeland, the temple of any active Deity, represented by its stickered block, is immediately removed from the map and placed on the appropriate section of the victorious civilization's Display.

As a reward for capturing an active Deity, the victor (even if their own Deity is captured or destroyed) *immediately* gains the following:

- 1 VP *and*
- 1 mina (as Loot)

These gains are in addition to any City capture Loot. (See Loot section of the Competition Rules).

Any inactive Deities held captive by that defeated civilization are also placed on the victor's Display; the victor, however, does not gain the immediate additional reward noted above for capturing one or more other Deities previously held by the defeated civilization in that one area. It will gain the 1VP for each such Deity thereafter in the Victory Tally Step.

If Barbarians or a godless civilization control an area with another Faction's active Deity, the godless people destroy that Deity's temple, which is placed on the Deity Card of the affected civilization. This represents the callous disregard such people have for other peoples' beliefs. The godless civilization receives one mina of Loot for the worth of the temple valuables they seize, but do not get a VP nor transfer the captured Deity to the godless civilization's Homeland temple. Barbarians never get Loot or VPs.

If multiple previously-captured inactive Deities are also present when Barbarians or a godless civilization destroy a temple, those temple blocks are removed from the afflicted civilization's Display and are returned to the Deity Card on the original owner civilizations' Displays. This includes the just-destroyed Deity. Thus, in this rare case, multiple civilizations would be able to rebuild/re-establish their respective Deities (see below).

To clarify, a **captured** Deity temple block sits on the capturing civilization's Display and is considered inactive. A **destroyed** Deity temple block is placed on the Deity card of the civilization that built it and can be rebuilt.

Consequences to a Civilization whose Deity is Captured or Destroyed

A civilization whose Deity has been captured or destroyed retains the associated card and all of the benefits on that Deity's Card

(including the ability to play Religion Fate cards) as long as it has *at least one* of its disks present within its Homeland, but

- does not receive the VP in the Victory Tally Step for having an established Deity and/or a VP for each of its subsequently captured Deities, and
- May not establish a new replacement Deity (*Exceptions: converting to Monotheism, #95), and Prophet, #9), and*
- May not make use of the Temple Granary option until the Deity is re-established.

A civilization whose Deity has been captured or destroyed and has its Homeland Controlled by another civilization or Barbarians cannot utilize its Deity in any manner whatsoever.

Benefits of a Captured Deity

During the Victory Tally step of each Reckoning Phase, a civilization with an active uncaptured/undestroyed Deity gains one VP for its own Deity and an additional one VP for each opposing civilization's captured temple on its Civilization Display.

Returning a Deity to its Original Owner

During the Card Phase (instead of playing a Card, passing, or establishing a Deity), a civilization which has a captive Deity may offer to return the captured temple to the civilization which established it and has no active Deity—or - a civilization which had its Deity captured may request the return of its captured temple if it has no active Deity. It is not mandatory to accept the offer or request in either case.

If the offer/request is accepted, the civilization returning the Deity gains 2 VPs; the civilization receiving its captured Deity loses 1 VP (unless its VP total is currently 0). The returned Deity stickered temple block is placed on that Deity's card.

Note: If the civilization receiving its Deity back already passed during the Card Phase when its Deity becomes available for re-establishment, it must wait until the next Card Phase to re-establish that Deity.

Re-establishing a Deity

During the Card Phase, a civilization whose Deity either has been destroyed or has been returned per the preceding "Return" rule *and* which is in Control of its Homeland may rebuild that Deity's temple and return it to the map in lieu of playing a card. To do so it must expend two resources of any type (Cards, mina, removal of disks from anywhere on the board). Thereafter, the civilization may again gain 1VP per turn for its Deity and use its Temple Granary benefit. It does not regain any formerly held captive Deities. Those remain with their current captor.

Note: Returning a Deity and Re-establishing that Deity is a two-step process, each in lieu of a card being played during a Card Phase.

Homeland Empty of Disks

In the rare event a civilization has no disks in its Home area but no other Civilization's or Barbarian disk(s) are present, the civilization has not lost its Deity, but may not:

- use its Deity bonus,
- gain a VP for itself or any captured Deity,
- employ its Granary option

until it manages to occupy its Homeland with at least one disk. It may still play Religion cards.

Once reoccupied, the Deity benefits are immediately available. During the hiatus, the civilization does not become a godless people... its god is simply ineffective.

Barbarian (Black Disk) Limits



If a card effect would place more Barbarian disks onto the map than what remains among their Supply, that player may take Barbarian disks from other areas as if those areas were the Barbarian

Supply. (See also optional Barbarian Hordes rule later in this rulebook).

Mina (White Disk) Limits



If a card effect, special ability, or Deity would place more mina into play or grant a civilization more than what remains among the white disk Supply, the mina is forfeit. However, if white disks are deployed on the map to delineate its playable area when less than the full map is used for a game, immediately substitute an unused colored disk (or coins during a six civilization game) to free those white disks' return to their Supply.

Exception: See *White Disk Supply in Competition* in the Competition section of this rulebook.

PASS

When a civilization cannot, or chooses not to, establish, return or rebuild a Deity, or play a Fate card, it must "pass." Once a civilization passes, it must choose to pass every time the Turn Order comes back around to it for the remainder of that Card Phase. A civilization that has passed can still discard one or more cards from its hand to prevent a disk loss and play one or more Negation cards from its hand in response to opposing card play.

Once all civilizations have passed, the Card Phase ends and the turn proceeds to the Competition Phase.

COMPETITION PHASE

Note: If this is your first time playing the game, after reading this section you may find it helpful to visit the example of a Competition Phase in the Playbook (p74).

During the Competition Phase, you will resolve a competition in every area that contains:

- Either a Stronghold cube with at least 1 disk or 2 or more disks belonging to a single Faction *and*
- 1 or more disks belonging to any opposing Faction(s).

These are termed "Contested" areas and are the only areas that can be affected during the Competition Phase.

Empty areas and areas containing no more than a single disk belonging to each Faction will remain at peace. Single disks represent basic subsistence agriculture and trade; they do not incite competition amongst one another UNLESS a Stronghold cube is also present (this is the ancient equivalent of "this town ain't big enough for the both of us").

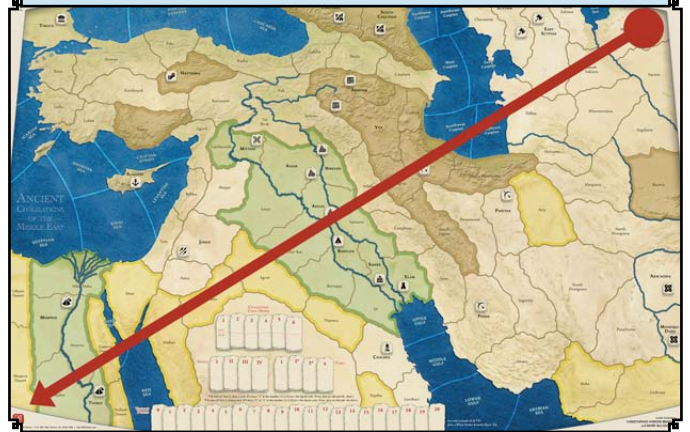
Stacking in Competition

Remember there are no stacking limits during the Competition Phase.

Order of Competition Resolution

Resolve competitions one at a time in northeast-to-southwest order—that is, beginning with the Contested area closest to the upper right side of the map and ending with the Contested area closest to the lower left.

Note: In some scenarios, the order of competitions changes to accommodate special situations and NPC civilizations.



Fully resolve a competition in each Contested area before proceeding to the next Contested area.

Exceptions: Unless Negated, card 22 **Traitor** is played before any other competition is resolved; the Assyrian civilization Siege Train benefit is resolved before the first competition of a turn has any Competition card(s) played (which includes the **Traitor** card).



Play Hint: You may wish to use a cylinder to indicate where the current competition is taking place. If there is a chance that loot may result from the competition and/or the capture of a Deity, place the cylinder with its star face-up as a reminder. Having marked the area in this manner, if it is a particularly large competition, you may wish to remove all involved disks to a convenient side location where they can more easily be arrayed.

Disk Removal

Whenever a civilization would have one of its disks removed from the map for any reason, it may instead choose to:

- lose 1 mina from its Treasury; *or*
- discard 1 card from its hand; *or*
- discard its Mountain area stronghold cube (if one is present, see below).

If it does, the disk that would have been removed remains where it is instead of being returned to Supply. If disks from more than one civilization are being removed simultaneously, this option must be exercised in Turn Order. A Barbarian disk, not being a civilization, is always removed first.

Note: This option can be used whenever you see fit, and as many times as you desire, so long as you still have minas or cards available—including an Investment card whose disk(s) can negate a loss such as the **Master Armorer** (card #20).

White Disks in Competition

White disks that a civilization adds to an area—via card play, Deity bonus, or a civilization’s special ability—become a temporary “Ally” of that civilization. During competition, a civilization’s Allied disks must be the first disks it removes. Allied disks are always returned to the white Supply pile when removed from the map; never to a civilization’s Supply. At the end of every Competition Phase, remove any surviving Allied disks from the map.

White Disk Supply in Competition (only): There is no limit on white disks. If you run out at any time, use any other convenient marker (disks of an unused color, coins, paperclips, candy, etc.)

Stronghold Cubes in Competition

During Competition, a Stronghold cube is removed in lieu of removing a disk from beneath it. It is the first piece removed after any and all white Allied disks are removed, unless the Stronghold cube loss is cancelled through expenditure of a mina or card from the civilization’s hand.

Competition Cards



Some Fate cards have a red C within a white circle. These are “Competition” cards and are playable for their effect only during this Phase, usually at the start of a competition. There are competition cards which can affect one or more Competitions. Further, some Negation cards have the ability to Negate certain Competition cards—otherwise, no other cards may be played during the Competition Phase other than in lieu of satisfying a disk loss.



Competition cards often cause the removal of disks from the map, which can create a situation where a Contested area that was slated to have competition within it no longer qualifies due to Factions being reduced below the requisite number of disks. For example, 3 blue disks are set to compete against 1 red disk in a Land area. Red plays **Improved Bow** (Card #36) which eliminates two blue disks. With only 1 blue and 1 red disk remaining in an area, it is no longer Contested and the ensuing competition is canceled.

It is possible by play of such cards that all disks may be eliminated from an area. If, in our example above, blue had also played a Competition Card, that card must be resolved. It is thus possible that, after all cards have been played, some or even all disks in an area may be eliminated.

Competition cards can only affect Contested areas—current or pending, as indicated by the card. A competition card can never be used to *initiate* competition by adding disks when there otherwise would not be a competition.

Competition Procedure

Competition occurs in any area in which disks of two or more colors exist and at least one color has two or more disks present (i.e., the area is Contested). Competition, after resolution of any Competition cards, will occur in one or more rounds until one of two conditions exist: either only one color's disk(s) remain or there are only single disks of multiple colors present. As soon as either condition occurs, competition ceases in that area even if in the middle of a round.

Perform competitions one at a time, beginning with the Contested area nearest the northeast corner of the map and proceeding towards the southwest corner. In each competition, perform the following six activities in the order given:

1. Each civilization present in the area may, in Turn Order, do any and all of the following:

- play any number of Competition cards from its hand face-down on the table;
- announce the use of a relevant special ability on its Civilization Display or Investment card;

If applicable—there is no need to announce the use of **Master Armorer** (card #20) or **Shield Bearers** (card #34) since their benefit is to cancel an owning civilization's disk loss... which has not occurred at this point.

- announce use of a relevant Deity with Competition abilities—*God of War* (card #106), *God of the Skies*(card #110).

2. Simultaneously reveal all played Competition cards. Civilizations now have an opportunity to play Negation cards in an attempt to cancel revealed Competition cards and/or a Civilization's Competition special ability. The opportunity to play a Negation card should be offered in civilization Turn Order.

3. In Turn Order, resolve:

- all announced Deities;
- all announced special abilities;
- and all played Competition cards that were not Negated.

Master Armorer (card #20) or **Shield Bearers** (card #34) effects can now be announced and played for their abilities (if needed, and which makes them vulnerable to negation once their use is announced).

4. Participating Factions, again in Turn Order, now begin losing 1 disk at a time in the following manner:

- Remove 1 disk belong to each Faction with exactly one disk present in the competition area. (Note that a civilization or Barbarians with a Stronghold counts that cube as if it were an additional disk.)

- Then remove 1 disk belonging to each Faction with exactly 2 disks present in the contested area, followed by the loss of 1 disk for each Faction with at exactly 3 disks present, then 4 disks present, and so on.

• A civilization's Allied white disks, if any, must be removed before disks of their own color or a Stronghold cube are removed.

• A Stronghold cube must be removed before any of the disks of the Faction's color are removed.

Example: 1 red, 2 blue and 2 green disks are in an area during the Competition Phase.

Unless a mina is expended, a card is discarded, or some Competition card is played to affect the situation, the 1 red disk will always be removed. If red had been opposed by only a single Faction (e.g. blue), the blue Faction with 2 disks does not suffer any removal vs. a single disk.

As there are two civilizations each with 2 disks and one civilization with a single disk, however, the civilization with the single disk (red) will lose that disk. Then the two civilizations which each have 2 disks (green and blue) will each lose one disk—at which point Competition will end, as no civilization has more than one of their disks in that area. Thus, Competition for that area will end with one blue and one green disk sharing the area peacefully.

BEFORE



AFTER



Remember: A civilization may spend a mina or discard a card or remove a Stronghold cube in lieu of removing one of its disks. Competition card effects may affect the loss of a disk.

Immediately stop removing disks (and step 4 ends) when any of the following occur:

- every participating Faction has lost 1 disk (or has canceled the loss of a disk) and the condition for competition no longer exists;
- every participating Faction has exactly 1 or 0 disks remaining;
- only a single participating Faction remains.

5. If the area remains Contested, repeat step 4. Otherwise, proceed to step 6.

Thus, the final situation after each competition will be (a) an empty area; (b) only one Faction's disk(s) remain; or (c) multiple disks remain but no more than one belonging to each Faction. The latter case suggests that the hostile cultures have worn themselves out. The only way an area will end up with no disks present is if competition cards wiped out all disks prior to the actual competition disk reduction rounds.

6. Check for possible Loot and the possible capture of Deities (see below). Then end the current Competition and proceed to the next one, beginning again with step 1. If there are no more Contested areas, the Competition Phase ends and the turn proceeds to the Reckoning Phase.

See more competition examples in the Example of an ACME Turn Section of the Playbook (p74, as well as p76).

Loot (Sacking Cities)

At the conclusion of every Competition in a Land area, a civilization earns both 1 mina and 1 VP if it fulfills both of the following conditions:

- It Controls the area; *and*
- 3 or more disks belonging to a single opposing civilization (*not Barbarians, white disks, nor a Stronghold cube*) were removed during the competition.

A maximum of 1 mina and 1 VP is gained per competition, even if multiple opposing civilizations had a City destroyed there.

Place all mina collected via looting into the Loot Box of the victorious civilization's Display. Looted minas are not part of a civilization's Treasury and thus cannot be spent for any reason during the Competition Phase they're earned. At the end of the Competition Phase, every civilization transfers its looted mina into its Treasury, ready for use in the upcoming Reckoning Phase or beyond.

Captives

All civilizations have the option to take captives instead of taking a mina for Loot. **Assyria** and **Babylon** (as noted on their Civilization Displays) must take captives instead of taking a mina for Loot.

To take captives instead of a mina for Loot, the civilization takes two disks from its Supply and places them onto the "Disks for Growth" section of its Civilization Display. These are available to be placed in the next Growth Phase (which could be the next Epoch, should the current Epoch end due to Sudden Death). They are in addition to any other disks acquired during Acquisition

and do not count as part of the "minimum growth" allotment. If a civilization does not have 2 disks in Supply, then it must take a mina rather than captives for Loot. (This applies even to **Assyria** and **Babylon**, who would otherwise be required to take captives).

Historical Note: While enslavement of defeated peoples was common in the ancient world, there were civilizations that required some or all of the peoples of a conquered city or land to leave their homes and settle elsewhere in the conqueror's empire.

RECKONING PHASE

Note: If this is your first time playing the game, after reading this section you may find it helpful to visit the example of a Reckoning Phase in the Playbook.

During the Reckoning Phase, after adjusting disks upon the board to comply with stacking limits, perform the following six steps in the order shown for all civilizations:

1. Sea Domination Step
2. Victory Tally Step
3. Turn Order Reset Step
4. Gilgamesh Step
5. Sudden End of Epoch Step
6. Draw Step

Each of the above steps must be completed in its entirety before moving to the next step.

Sea Domination Step

During this step, determine which civilizations, if any, Dominate Sea areas. Check the following criteria for every Sea area. If a civilization:

- occupies the Sea area, *and*
- that civilization Controls every adjacent Land area to that Sea area,

it is said to "Dominate" the Sea area: remove all other Factions' disks from that Sea area.

Remember that "**Control**" is when only a single Faction occupies the area. Remember also that the Land area of an island is adjacent to all Sea areas touching it.

Design Note: The control of all land abutting a sea represents the denial of ports of call to opposing cultures.

Victory Tally Step

During this step, each civilization gains 1 VP for:

- Each of its Cities.
- For a Temple in its Homeland (if it occupies that Homeland).
- For each captured Temple on its Civilization Display (if its own Temple is active).

Note: *Monotheism* contains some exceptions. See Religion card #95 for details.

Turn Order Reset Step

During this step, adjust the Civilization Turn Order track. The civilization with the most Cities on the map places its Turn Order marker into the “1” space, and so on down the line based on the number of Cities each civilization currently controls.

If there is a tie for number of Cities, a tied civilization with an active temple in its Homeland chooses which space to occupy. If there is still a tie, the tied civilization with the lowest VP total chooses which Turn Order space to occupy among the tied civilizations. If there is also a tie for fewest VP, those tied civilizations randomly determine the new Turn Order for the open Turn Order slots under contention.

Note: The civilization controlling an active *Father of the Gods* Deity (#104) or playing the *Great Person—Grand Astrologer* Fate card (#5) could adjust the Turn Order and overrule the above. See those cards for details.



Gilgamesh Step

During this step, each civilization may, in Turn Order, choose to invoke the Gilgamesh Rule. The Gilgamesh Rule cannot be invoked during the game’s final Epoch, and each civilization may only invoke it once per game. To invoke the Gilgamesh Rule, a civilization must either:

- a. have at least 5 fewer VPs than every other civilization individually; *or*
- b. have no disks on the map.

If invoked, the civilization performs the following seven activities in the order given:

1. Remove all its colored disks from its Investment cards, as well as any Captive disks from the preceding Competition Phase, and return them to Supply. *Discard the Investment cards.* If in play, do not discard and remove white disks from Investment cards 69, 70, and/or 71 if their areas were in the Gilgamesh departing civilization’s Control/occupancy. Those areas are now available to all players (as well as Barbarians).

2. If the civilization has established a Deity, return that Deity card and its temple (whether on the map or on another civilization’s Display), as well as any captured Deities, to the table area of available Deities. If the temple is removed from another civilization’s Display, that civilization receives two VP immediately in compensation for its removal.

3. Convert all of its disks on the map, if any, into Barbarians.

4. Select a new civilization from the playable map area that is not currently active. If a particular game has no available inactive civilization, the player must return with the civilization just abandoned. Swap the current Civilization Display for the new Civilization’s Display. Place the Homeland block that matches the civilization’s color in the Home area of that civilization. (If a civilization has multiple Home Areas, select one).

Note: The placement of the Homeland block and disks by the civilization making use of the Gilgamesh rule may set the stage for one or more competitions during the upcoming turn.

5. Transfer 16 disks from Supply to its Disks for Growth. Transfer 2 additional disks for every Epoch that has been completed.

Note: If starting a game with a later Epoch, the preceding Epochs are considered complete. For example, if commencing a game with Epoch III, Epochs I and II are concluded for purpose of the Gilgamesh rule (e.g. gain 4 additional disks for a total of 20).

6. Place allotted disks from the Disks for Growth onto the map. Not all Ready disks need be placed, but any that remain in the Disks for Growth at the end of this procedure are returned to Supply. Ready disks may be placed, subject to stacking limits:

- into the Home Area of the new civilization (minimum of 1 disk);
- then into one or more areas adjacent area to that Home area;
- into area(s) adjacent to an area it now Controls;
- into area(s) adjacent to a Contested area it occupies, but only if it already has at least as many disks in that Contested area as the opposing Faction with the largest number of disks in that area.

Note that in the above procedure there is no prohibition on placing disks into areas occupied by opposing disks nor expanding into opposing civilization Home areas (a distinct possibility in the densely congregated Home areas of the Tigris/Euphrates Fertile Crescent). Placement of these disks could create a Contested or Controlled area.

These Gilgamesh Step placed disks will consequently be on the map to calculate that civilization's new disks during the Acquisition Step of the upcoming turn's Growth Phase.

7. The civilization keeps any cards it has in hand, retains all minas it has in its Treasury, and maintains its current Victory Point total. It is, however, a godless people until it erects a new Deity.

Sudden End of Epoch Step

During this step, perform one of the following activities depending on the current turn number.

- **If this is turn 1** of the Epoch, proceed directly to the Draw Step.
- **If this is turn 2** of the Epoch, reveal the top card of the Draw deck:
 - If the revealed card was an Event card, conduct the Event before resolving the sudden End of Epoch process. Then, use the ID of the Event card drawn to determine the Sudden End of Epoch as explained below. (Do not take a replacement for this Event card.)
 - If the revealed card's ID contains the number "2" anywhere within it (2, 12, 27 etc.), **the Epoch immediately ends**; skip the Draw Step and proceed directly to the End of Epoch Phase.
 - If the revealed card's ID does not contain the number "2" proceed to the Draw Step.
 - If the revealed card was not an Event card, shuffle it back into the Draw deck.

- **If this is turn 3** of the Epoch, reveal the top card of the Draw deck:

- If the revealed card was an Event card, conduct the Event before resolving the sudden End of Epoch process. Then, use the ID of the Event card drawn to determine the Sudden End of Epoch as explained below. (Do not take a replacement for this Event card.)
- If the revealed card's ID contains the number "2" or the number "3" anywhere within it (3, 13, 24, etc.), the Epoch immediately ends; skip the Draw Step and proceed directly to the End of Epoch Phase.
- If the revealed card's ID does not contain the number "2" or number "3"; proceed to the Draw Step.
- If the revealed card was not an Event card, shuffle it back into the Draw deck.

- **If this is turn 4** of the Epoch, skip the Draw Step and proceed directly to the End of Epoch Phase.

Draw Step

Draw Cards

During this step each civilization, in Turn Order, draws a total of:

- 3 cards; *plus*
- 1 card for every 4 Cities it has on the map (round fractions down); *plus*
- 1 card for each mina it spends—this expenditure must be announced and paid for before any cards are drawn.

A civilization may also be able to draw additional cards at the start of this step due to a Deity (*God of the Dead card #108*), Investment Card (*Master Scribe card #1*) and/or its civilization's special ability.

A civilization draws all allotted cards at once, resolving and replacing any Event cards drawn. If a civilization ends up with more than 6 cards in its hand, it must discard the excess (*exception*: see the **Mittani** Civilization Display). A player may not examine any selected card until all decisions to acquire additional cards are made (e.g., spend mina).

Advance the Turn

At the end of the Draw Step, advance the Turn marker one space to the right and begin the next turn's Growth Phase.

END OF EPOCH PHASE

When an Epoch ends—either due to the end of turn 4 or due to a successful Sudden End of Epoch check—perform the following activities depending on whether the Epoch ended was the final Epoch of the game or not. While a full game will go until the End of Epoch 4, other games may end at the conclusion of an earlier Epoch if:

- a scenario (from the Playbook) specified an earlier conclusion; or
- players agreed ahead of time to play only a limited number of Epochs; or
- players agreed ahead of time that the game would end once a certain time limit (e.g. two hours) or a pre-determined Victory Point level was reached and that occurred.

If this was the Game’s Final Epoch, each civilization scores Epoch VPs as follows:

- 1 VP for the civilization with the most Cities. If tied, no one gets the VP.
- 1 VP for the civilization with the most established and captured Deities on its Display. If tied, no one gets the VP.
- 1 VP for every 3 Sea areas it Dominates (round fractions down).
- 1 VP for every 3 mina in its Treasury (round fractions down).

After scoring the above VP(s), the game ends. Proceed to the Endgame to determine a winner.

If this was not the Final Epoch, perform the following eight steps in the order shown:

1. All civilizations discard their card hands.
2. Shuffle the Discard pile, along with any cards that were “set aside” (e.g. cards 75 & 76) when played, back into the Draw deck.
3. Resolve an event on the **Change of Epoch Table** (located on the back of the Player Aid Card) by performing the following activities in the order shown:
 - Reveal the top card of the Draw deck.
 - If the revealed card is an Event Card with an ID of 97-103, this triggers the *Barbarians at the Gates* procedure. If the revealed card was not one of the *Invasion Events* (98-102), do not execute its effect but instead continue drawing until two of the *Invasion* cards are drawn.

Resolve each as it is drawn. If the revealed card is one of the *Invasion Events* (98-102) resolve it and continue drawing until a second *Invasion* card is drawn (98-102) and then resolve it. *Do not execute the effects of any other Event card revealed (e.g. 97 & 103). After resolving the second invasion, return all cards to the deck and reshuffle.*

- If the ID on the drawn card is not an Event Card, locate the revealed card's ID on the **Change of Epoch Table** then execute the associated event.

4. Each civilization scores Epoch VPs (see Final Epoch scoring above).

Note: The End of Epoch Event can influence this scoring, e.g. **Black Death** reducing one or more Cities.

5. Return all remaining minas to Supply (minas do not carry over from one Epoch to the next).

6. Each civilization, in Turn Order, draws 5 cards. (Resolve any Events as they are drawn).

Note: This is **not** a Draw Phase... no other cards may be obtained by any civilization.

7. Shuffle the card(s) drawn to determine the Change of Epoch Table Event back into the Draw deck.

8. Advance the Epoch marker one space to the right to indicate the next Epoch. Move the turn marker to the “1” box. Begin the next turn’s Growth Phase.

ENDGAME

At the end of the game, the player with the most VPs wins. In case of a tie, the tied players check the following tie-breaker criteria for each player’s current civilization in the order given:

1. The civilization with the most temples (including those on the board and captured, and regardless if it has a currently Active Deity) wins (but only if it also occupies or Controls its own Homeland).
2. The one which controls the most active civilization Homelands wins (but only if it also occupies its own).
3. The one with the most Cities wins.
4. The one with the most disks on the map wins.
5. The one occupying the most areas on the map wins.
6. A player taking the Gilgamesh Option wins (by dint of persistence).
7. If none of the preceding applies; the game is a draw.

DIPLOMACY

Players are not allowed to show or specifically describe their cards to other players.

Players are not allowed to trade or give away their civilization's cards, disks, minas, or VPs to other civilizations, even between multiple civilizations that player controls. Captured temples (only) may be returned to another civilization, but only through the mechanism as described in the relevant rules section.

Players may make verbal agreements amongst themselves—for example, when or where to place disks—but such agreements are not considered binding and may be broken at any time without penalty.

Trust between players is what they make of it... welcome to the wonderful World of *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East!*

OPTIONS

These five optional rules may be used singularly or in any combination players desire and agree to.

Game Length

Recommended parameters for Short, Standard, Extended and Campaign *ACME* Games:

Players may choose the length of their game. Players need not play all four Epochs. They may instead choose to play until an agreed-upon number of Epochs have been completed, or until the conclusion of a turn in which an agreed-upon time limit (e.g. two hours) has passed, or until a pre-agreed Victory Point score goal is achieved by the leader. Regardless of length, any game of any length is a “complete” game.

Here are recommended parameters—but players are encouraged to modify these to fit their desires.

Type of Game	Epochs or	Time or	Victory Points
Short	1	1 hour	25
Standard	2	2 hours	50
Extended	3	3 hours	75
Campaign	4	4 hours	100

Example: Players who decide upon a Standard game would agree to play for two Epochs—or—for two hours—or—to 50 Victory Points.

Note: When choosing a time limit, note that the more players participating the longer each turn and each Epoch will last. Thus, for example, two to three players should be able to finish an Epoch in an hour; six players could take two hours. Your experience, based on player personalities, may vary.

End of Epoch Event Option

Unless using the Optional Rule for a “Final Epoch Event” (see below), the End of Epoch Event does not occur in the final Epoch of any game. Therefore, a Short game that ends with Epoch I will not have an End of Epoch Event. A Standard game that is set to end at the conclusion of Epoch II will have an End of Epoch Event at the conclusion of Epoch I, but not at the conclusion of Epoch II, and so on.

A game that is scheduled to end based on time played or Victory Points earned, however, may go several Epochs, depending on Sudden Death and card play. Thus, for example, a Standard two player game may go through three Epochs in a scheduled four hours. In that case, there would be an End of Epoch Event at the End of Epochs I and II, but not at the end of Epoch III.

Counting Down the Clock

If playing to a certain time limit, and depending upon the personality types of the players, it may be advisable to set a timer to limit how long each player spends on their acquisition and placement of disks. Limiting that to two, three, or four minutes prevents players from intentionally dawdling to “run out the clock.” Such a limit, however, should be agreed upon in advance by all players and, in the spirit of honest play, sportsmanship and good manners, be enforced gently and with the utmost decorum.

Historical Wargame Scenarios

The historical wargame scenarios each set a specific turn or Epoch limit but, while recommended for play balance, even those may be curtailed as per the preceding if necessary.

Final Epoch Event

Prior to setup, if all players agreed, there will be one final End of Epoch Event that occurs at the conclusion of the game's final Epoch.

This rule is optional because, as was learned during playtesting, some players strongly disliked a final End of Epoch Event possibly deciding the game's winner. Others, however, thought it added a bit of “authenticity”, as it were, since the peoples of antiquity could not escape the wrath of the uncertain and whims of the gods. The Final Epoch Event may only be implemented if **ALL** players agree.

To conduct a Final Epoch Event, reveal cards from the top of the Fate deck until a card with an ID less than 69 is revealed. Do not resolve any Event cards revealed this way. Find that ID on the Change of Epoch Table and implement the associated event.

Barbarian Hordes

If you have fewer than 6 players, to ensure not running out of Barbarians during play, you may wish to add all the disks of one unplayed civilization's color to the Supply of black Barbarian disks. Treat these colored disks as if they were Barbarian disks for all rule purposes.

Note that this will significantly increase the Barbarian threat, especially to the VP lead(ing) civilization[s], but also will give the civilization in last place an even greater ability to level the playing field, as there are more Barbarian disks available for invasions, etc.

More than one Gilgamesh Return per Game

Players may decide prior to play to allow a qualifying civilization to take the Gilgamesh option a second time during a game prior to the start of the game's final Epoch. It may not, however, be taken during the same Epoch.

Homeland Defense

To simulate the sheer size, majesty and concentrations of population in the areas from which the great civilizations of the Middle East arose (and to make those areas more difficult to conquer), the designers suggest this optional rule:

The last disk of a civilization in its own Homeland may not be removed by card play during the Card Phase. It may only be removed through Competition.

No card played during the Card Phase may remove the last disk of a Civilization on its own Homeland. Any and all other disks that are to be lost are so lost (unless saved by the expenditure of mina/cards), but one disk **MUST** remain. The last disk in a Civilization's own Homeland may be removed **ONLY** during the Competition Phase.

Inventory

Inside the *Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East* box, gamers will find:

- a 34" x 22" mounted game board
- 416 round wooden playing disks - 52 each in 8 colors. *(Two extra disks of each color are provided as replacements for any lost. During play, each color is limited to 50 disks in Supply.)*
- 8 small square ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") wooden blocks with stickers (front and back); 7 for "Deities" and one for ***Monotheism*** (#95).
- 6 larger square (1") wooden blocks matching the six colors for civilizations' Home Areas
- 3 large white cylinders with a star on one side and 2 pawns to designate the Epoch, Turn and location of an upcoming Competition and/or Areas which require special Competition-related consideration.
- 12 gray cubes to represent mountain strongholds
- 3 cubes (one each in green, yellow and light blue) to mark bonus locations identified by card play
- 6 Player Aid Sheets (double-sided with the End of Epoch Event Table on the reverse)
- 1 Solitaire Player Aid Sheet (double-sided)
- 1 Civilizations' Special Abilities Summary card with Deity Attribute Summary
- 1 Optional Rule Cultural Development Tracks card with Bonus Summary (one sided) for *ACME & ACIS*
- 17 Civilization Display Cards
- 110 Playing Cards
- this Rule Book and a Playbook - which includes Solitaire Rules, Suggested Setups for games of 1 to 6 players, Historical Scenarios, Examples of Play and Optional Rules.



Fate Card Notes

9. **Prophet**: A captured Deity or a Deity rendered inactive through play of the **Blasphemy** (#90), **False Prophet** (#30), or **Forsaken by God** (#92) cards may be **freely** replaced with another available Deity. Having a **Prophet** is a good and easy method for a civilization to escape a Deity conundrum.
18. **Breeder of Stallions**: Any white disk generated by this competition card's allocation is determined as and when the owning civilization requires, in any configuration desired. For example, all four disks can be assigned to a single competition or spread out to more than one competition over more than one Competition Phase.
40. **Mercenaries Desert**: Can only be played against the disks of an opposing civilization (its own colored disks or those of its white disk Allies). If a civilization is under the effect of 32. **Siege** or 35. **Blockade** it cannot expend mina to avoid disk losses for this card.
88. **Royal Roads**: During this card's disk movement, over-stacking is permitted (having more than 4 disks in a Land area as any disk passes through). No area may have more disks than permitted by stacking limit when execution of this card's disk movement concludes.
95. **Monotheism**: A captured Deity or a Deity rendered inactive through play of the **Blasphemy** (#90), **False Prophet** (#30), or **Forsaken by God** (#92) cards may be **freely** replaced by **Monotheism**. Converting to **Monotheism**, which is a Deity lacking a Deity Card, is a good and easy method for a civilization to escape a Deity conundrum.

Playing Your Role as a Royal Conduit to the Gods or... disasters are not player-controlled “smart weapons” — but the wrath of their god.

When players take control of any of the Civilizations in the game, it may help to think of whom they actually represent. The kings of the age were not mere heads of state, but were thought of, even by themselves, as conduits to the gods. Thus whenever a player inflicts an Earthquake or Flood or similar apocalyptic event of Biblical proportion upon another, think of this as if your prayer to those on high had been answered—while your opponent's prayers fell on deaf ears. Or, in Biblical terms, think of yourselves as the various sowers described in the parable of the same name in Mark 4:5:

“Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

So when you draw a Plague of Locusts (#64), an Earthquake (#67) or a Biblical Earthquake (#68) it is not actually you who are directing this event—but the god whom you have pleased that has seen fit to answer thy prayers to smite thine foe.

Furthermore, the cards and the chaos they create simulate the historic times these civilizations had to endure. To ignore them is to create a bucolic world which did not exist. Of course, as gamers, we can modify the games we play to make them less random...but if you want to experience the historical challenges and the occasional outright horror of living during the times of **Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East**... play the game as designed. The player who best survives this environment will triumph.

A Closing Thought...

He who changes, neglects, transgresses, erases the words of this tablet, may the great gods of heaven and earth, who inhabit the world, all those that are named in this tablet, strike you down, look with disfavor upon you, may they chase you away from both shade and sunlight so that you cannot take refuge in a hidden corner; may food and drink forsake you, and hunger, want, famine and pestilence never leave you, may the bellies of dogs and pigs be your burial place, let tar and pitch be your food, donkey urine your drink, naphtha your ointment, river rushes your covers, and evil spirits, demons, and lurkers select your houses (as their abode).

—inscription from ancient Sumerian clay tablet

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In Memoriam: To my beloved wife **Marlene**, who brought light and joy into my life, a wonderful mother, grandmother, and life's companion.

The righteous perish, and no one layeth it to heart; the devout are taken away, while no one understands. For the righteous are taken away from calamity; she enters into peace; they rest in their beds who walk in their uprightness. —Isaiah 57:1-2

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Special Acknowledgement to the late **Chad Jensen** whose exemplary work in editing the first game of this series, *Ancient Civilizations of the Inner Sea*, set the standard and the model for this and all subsequent games of this series.

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