

VIA SALARIA



Via Salaria

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GDD 100 Spring 2018
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Overview

Genre:

Eurogame

Demographic/Rating

Ages 10+

Platform

Analog (Board Game)

Concept

Via Salaria is a gamewhere players put themselves in the shoes of a traveler along a route based one the Via Salaria, a trade route that ran through Italy during the Roman Empire. The game feels much like a eurogame, because players do not conflict directly but rather by affecting each other by triggering boardwide events at the Forums and player movement. The final goal of the game is to obtain the most Victory Points by buying items from shops, eating at Inns, and visiting wonders.

Rules

How to Win:

A player wins by having the most VP at the end of the game.

Set-Up:

Shuffle all card decks separately. Each player receives 2 pawns of the same color, One for board movement, the other for tracking VP. Each person selects the forum space they wish to start at. Distribute 3 salt to each player. Each player gets 1 character card. All players start at the lowest carry capacity on their card. All players start at 0 VP.

Your Turn:

- First roll the die to determine movement limits. You may move up to a number of spaces equal to the number rolled (if you roll a 3 you can go 1, 2, or 3)
- Perform the action the tile you landed on requires unless optional
- Pass die to next player to signal your turn is over.

End Game Bonuses:

For each of the tracked items.(Salt, Carry Limit, Food, Shop Items) you gain 1 VP for every person you have more of that item then. EX. You have 5 salt when someone hits 25 VP player 2 has 5, player 3 has 2 and player 4 has 1. You receive 2 VP along with player 2, Player 3 gets 1 VP, and player 4 gets no VP for the salt category. Do this system for all 4 tracked items. You add this VP onto what you already have. If you get 6 from your bonuses and you landed on the 25 first you would be at 31 VP.

Winning Conditions:

First player to 25 VP triggers end game bonuses.

Distribute end game bonuses(See end game bonuses for more info)

In the event of a tie the top 2 players were found to be cheating and the person in last wins.

Tiles:



Forum

Landing on a forum space triggers an event. Draw 1 card from the forum deck and follow the text on it.



Mine

Landing on this space will provide you with 2 salt if you have enough carry capacity to hold it.



Shop (Strongman look below for further instruction)

Draw the top 2 cards and choose to buy one none or both of the cards.



Meet (Senator look below for further instruction)

Draw the top card and follow what it says.



Wonder(Priestess look below for further instruction)

Gain 2 VP for landing here



Inn(Soldier look below for further instruction)

Pay 1 salt to gain 1 food and 1 VP(Optional)



Gamble

Bet any amount of salt you have. Roll a 3 and you double your bet, Roll anything else you lose it all.(Optional)



Stable

Can buy either a horse(+2 carry) and/or a wagon(+3 carry) here. (Optional)

Characters:

Strongman: The first item you buy at each shop costs 1 less salt. (Applies both to shops and stables)

Priestess: Landing on a wonder space gives you 3 VP instead of the 2 VP you would have received.

Soldier : Receives free use of inns.

Senator: Draws 2 meet cards and gets to pick 1 of which to follow.

Conclusion

One of the major additions we would make is a modular board. Early on in prototyping, we used a series of notecards to change the board each game. This eventually evolved into an idea involving a static route but interchangeable stops along the board to afford a more variety. This fell through in the end but is something we all agree would make a good addition.

Another possible addition would be a larger character roster. Several ideas were tossed up for additional characters: a miner (which was used early in production, but didn't work out), a gambler (making better use of gambling tiles), a noble (who could pay to enter occupied tiles), and several more were all tossed as ideas. Had we more time, we would probably add another 2-4 playable characters.

Lastly, we would probably add more event cards. We are rather happy with the ones we currently have but feel that there could always be more variety. Events were by far the hardest to make, having to balance fun, ease of play, and uniqueness, walls were often hit when attempting to design additional event cards.

As for decisions, the largest one we had that spanned several weeks was the now-removed Miner character and the salt gained through salt mines. Initially, salt mines gave a single salt and miners had the ability to gain an additional salt from them (effectively doubling their yield). However, this ended up feeling weak and, after large amounts of debate and testing, we found balance by completely abandoning the miner and giving everyone two salt at the mines.

Designing the paths has been another major issue we've been wrestling, with the final path having been settled upon a bit more than a week before release. There were a variety of issues, ranging from adding/removing locations such as the gambling spot to entirely re-ordering sections of the board (such as a path filled with wonders that ended up being incredibly powerful). Overall, the board brought us a moderate but frequent issue.

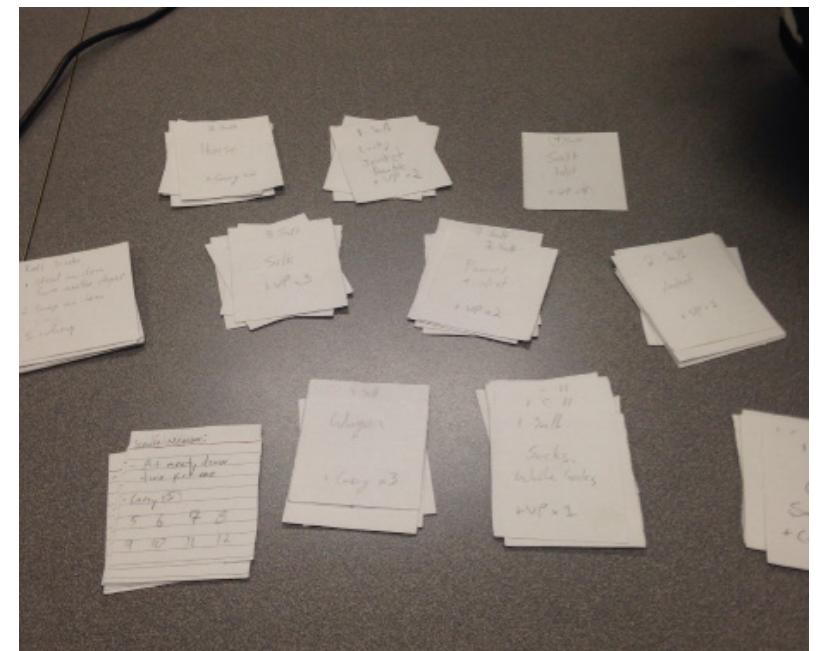
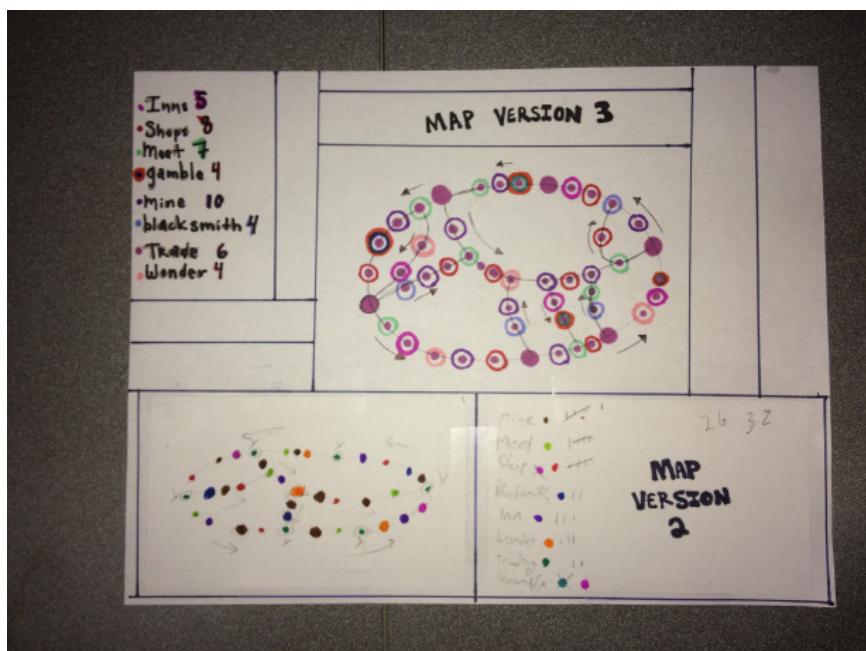
A third issue we had come about from the Strongman who, while remaining mostly static throughout the game, became more and more powerful as changes were made. Initially, he had a 1 salt discount on all shop cards, which combined with the change to the salt mines, allowing him to hoard items until we ran out of cards, meaning other players couldn't get any. We realized this was a rather large issue and changed it so he would only get a discount on one card at the shop at a time. Additionally, we tripled the number of cards in the deck, now typically outlasting the length of the game, barring strange circumstances.

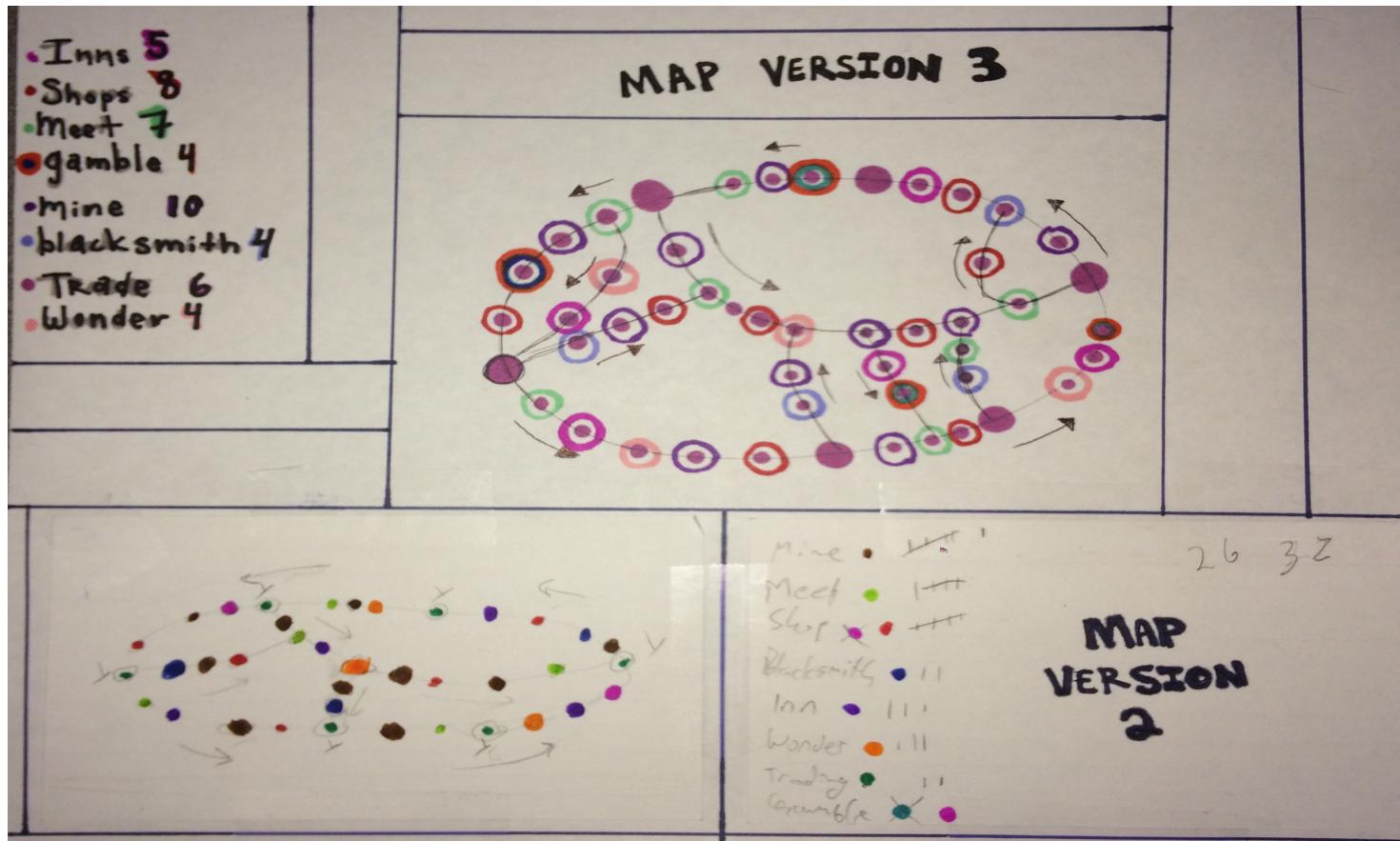
The final "issue" we had was less of a game issue and more of a fluff problem. Initially, we were unsure where/when our game would be set, so we instead threw in aspects of Chinese, Roman, Aztec, and even Modern culture, planning to theme the game around all of them. This eventually proved incoherent, so we ended up simplifying down to Roman culture. As such, several characters had their names changed (the Bhikkhuni, a Chinese monk, became the Senator, for example). However, this history can be seen in a few minor places, such as the Salt Idol

Overall, we are rather happy with the product we've output, but would be willing to continue expanding the project. The game itself sits in a decent spot, and the only ways it could be improved largely involve minute balance changes and the integration of new mechanics/characters. We've learned quite a bit about the game development process throughout the project:

Mechanics

Our game itself doesn't hold a strong, overpowering message: it's largely intended to be fun. That being said, our game does largely draw mechanics from real life. The first and most obvious display of this comes from the shop cards. With items such as gold, silk, and clothing, we displayed various items sold along trade routes in exchange for goods such as salt. Another major mechanic, despite being one in a large amount of games, is that of moving directionally down a branching path. Merchants often travelled in caravans, and paths less traversed would've been risky when carrying large amounts of goods. As such, more-traversed routes (in our case, roads) would be a much safer and more viable route with a higher guarantee of not losing goods. One final mechanic that draws inspiration from real life would be the Meet/Forum cards. Various people besides merchants would travel along the Via Salaria to travel to other parts of the country. As such, people encountered on the road may be helpful or harmful, and encounters prove a risk of loss just as much as they have chance of gain. These mechanics combine to form a relatively realistic depiction of caravanning along the Via Salaria





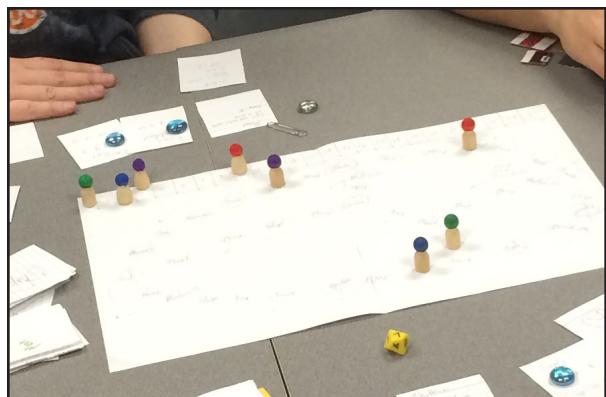
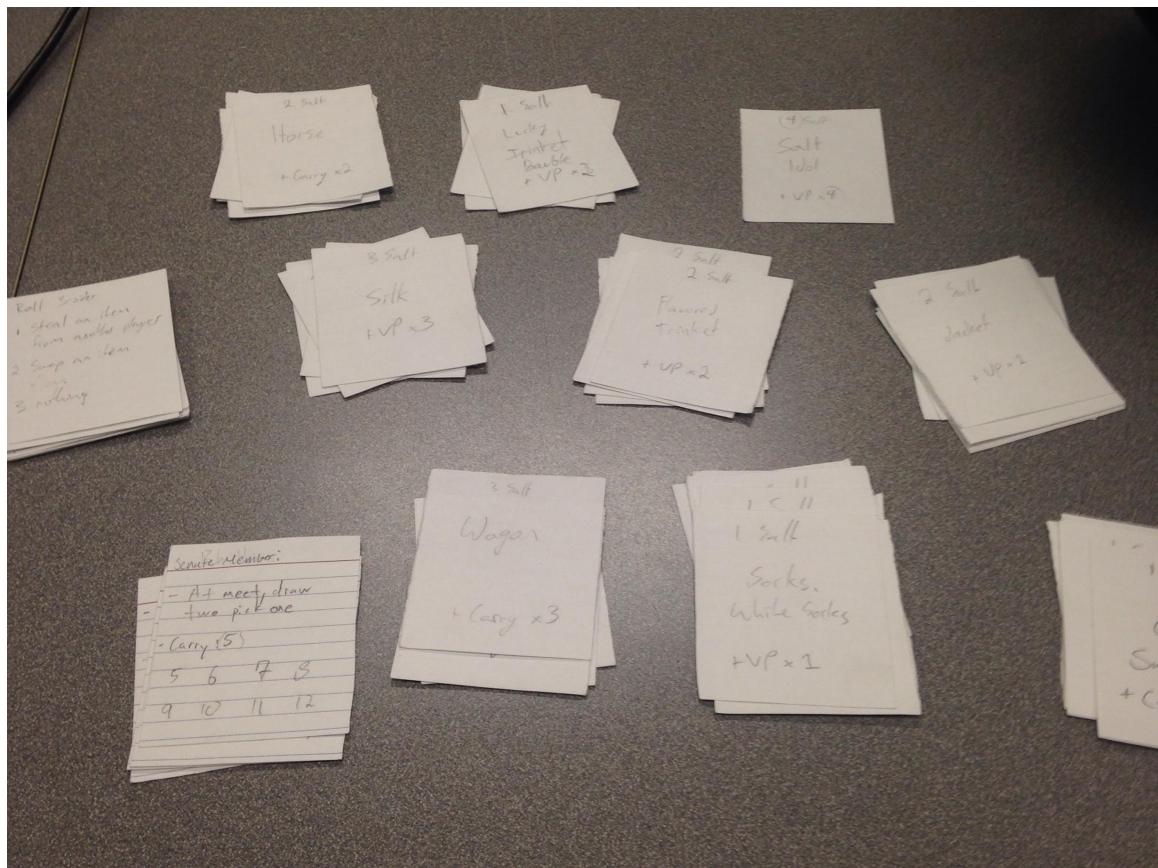
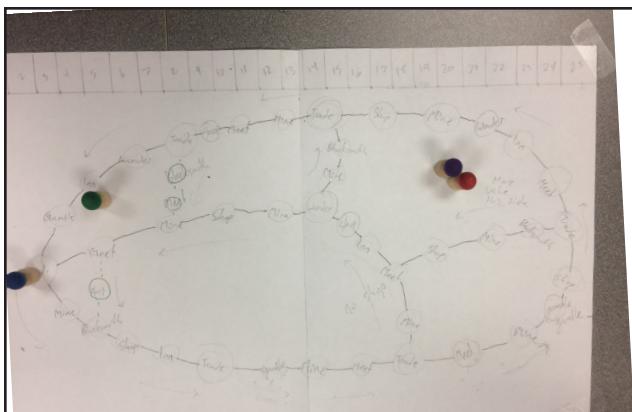
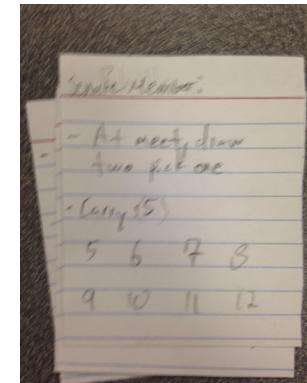
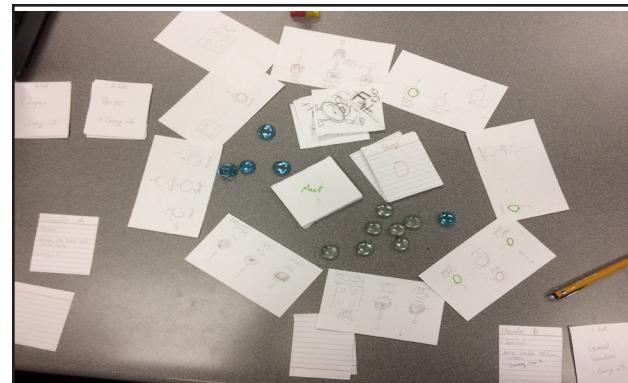
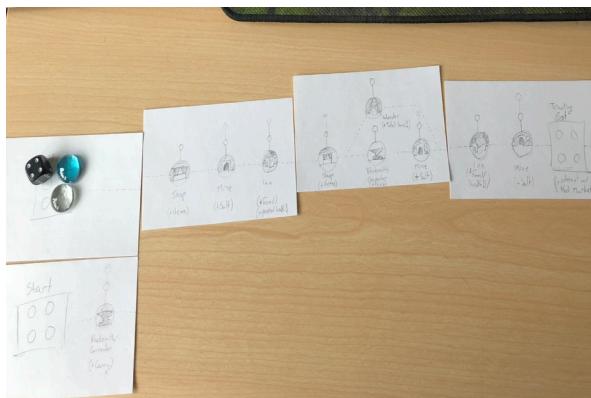
Our first map, with a modular take.

Mini maps to keep track of the amount of spaces and what spaces were what



The second map we made, we added all new changes.

Paper Prototypes







* Strongman

o A rather burly merchant with a knack for convincing merchants into cheaper prices.

Description: Generic, Male

Abilities: Increase your carry capacity by 1. Decrease the cost of goods at shops by 1 (minimum 1).

* Legionnaire/Soldier

o A soldier earning a wage both fighting and trading.

Description: Roman, Male

Abilities: Gain a salt every time you stop at an Inn.

* Priestess

o A holy-woman on a quest to sanctify a great many wonders.

Description: Female

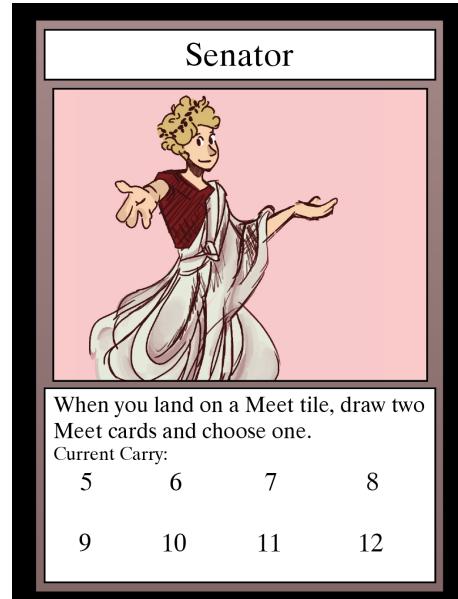
Abilities: Gain a salt and an additional Victory Point when stopping at a wonder.

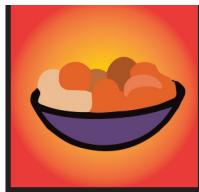
* Senator

o A well-renowned politician on the campaign trail.

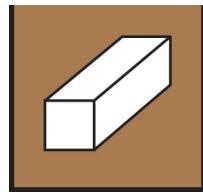
Description: Roman, Male

Abilities: When drawing a meet card, you may draw two and pick one, returning the other to the deck.





Food token



Salt token

Reference Card		Reference Card	
	Gain 2 Salt		Gain 2 Salt
	Take the top 2 shop cards and buy 1 none or both.		Take the top 2 shop cards and buy 1 none or both.
	Draw the top meet card and do what it says.		Draw the top meet card and do what it says.
	Pay 1 salt to get 1 VP and 1 food.(Optional)		Pay 1 salt to get 1 VP and 1 food.(Optional)
	Gain 2 VP for landing here		Gain 2 VP for landing here
	Buy either a horse or wagon		Buy either a horse or wagon
	Roll a 3 to win double what you bet(Optional)		Roll a 3 to win double what you bet(Optional)
	Draw the top forum card follow what it says.		Draw the top forum card follow what it says.

SHOP



dOHS

Small Painting

Cost: 1



Gain 1 VP.

A landscape painting of the very road you are travelling on.

Trinket

Cost: 1



Gain 1 VP.

A simple knick-knack.

Tunic

Cost: 2

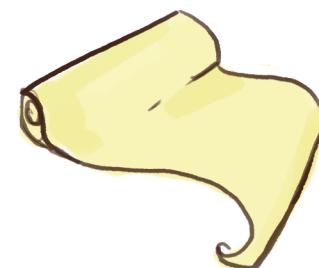


Gain 1 VP.

A rather comfortable tunic, perfect for resisting the cold Mediterranean weather.

Fine Silk

Cost: 3



Gain 3 VP.

Much easier to sleep on than salt.

Bauble

Cost: 1



Gain 1 VP.

A simple trinket.

Lucky Bauble

Cost: 1



Gain 1 VP.

A bauble blessed by a goddess. At least, that's what the shopkeeper told you.

Salt Cube

Cost: 2



Gain 1 VP.

Just a salt cube. Did you expect anything more?

Salt Idol

Cost: 4

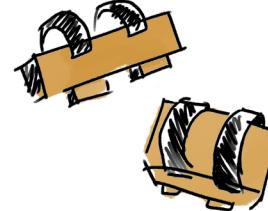


Gain 4 VP.

A well-crafted idol to an Aztec goddess. What is it doing on the Via Salaria?

Good Sandals

Cost: 1



Gain 1 Carry.

Every little bit helps.

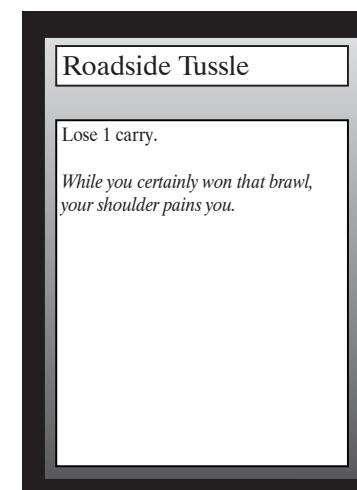
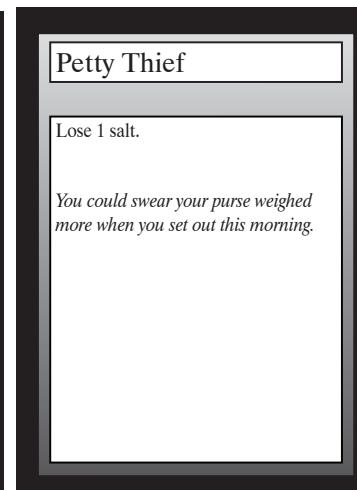
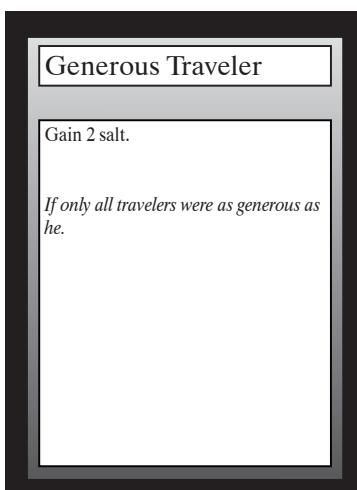
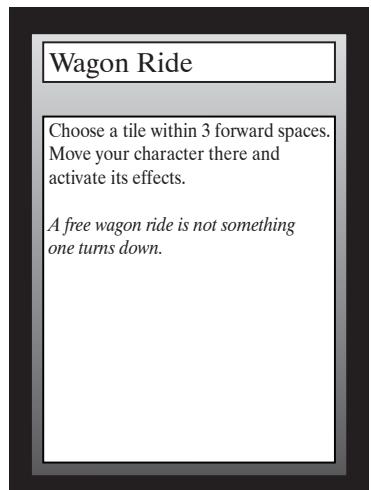
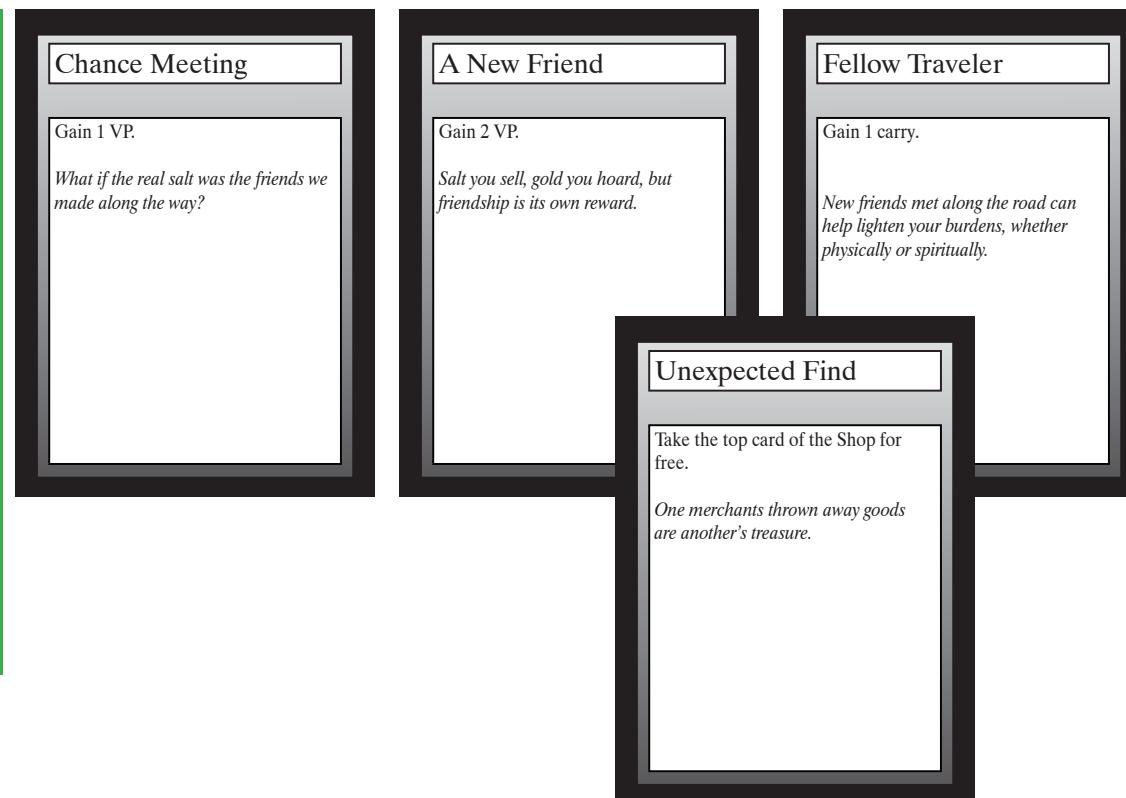
Knick-Knack

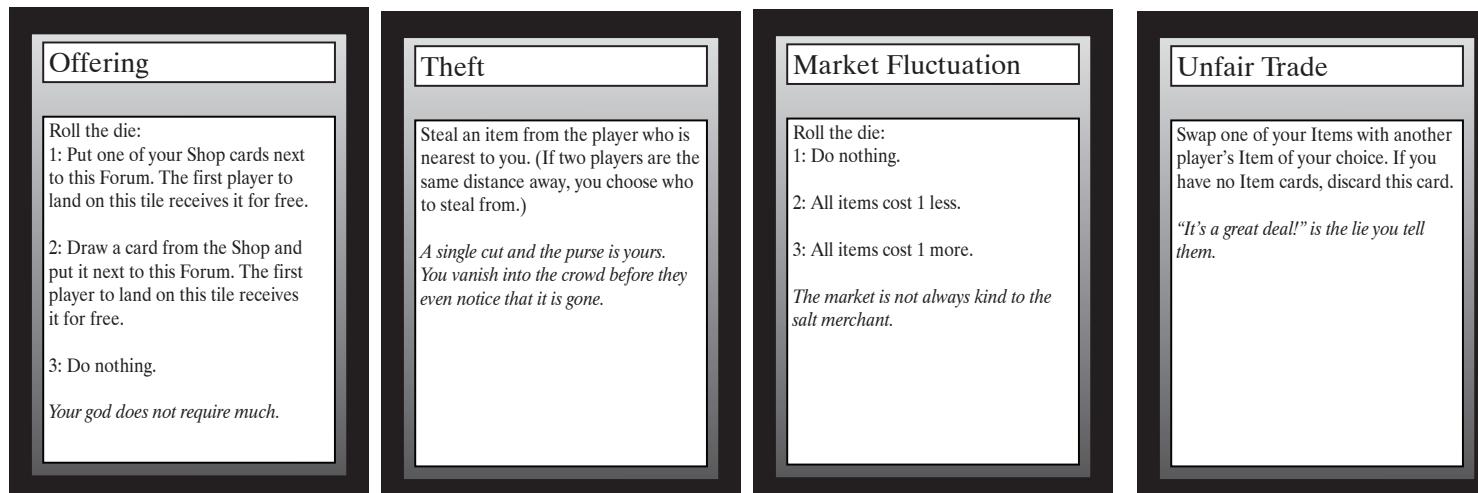
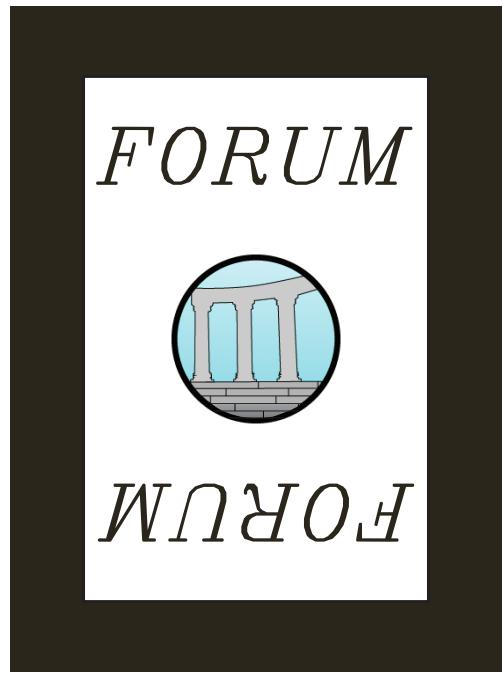
Cost: 2



Gain 2 VP.

A simple bauble.





STABLE



STABLE

Horse

Cost: 2

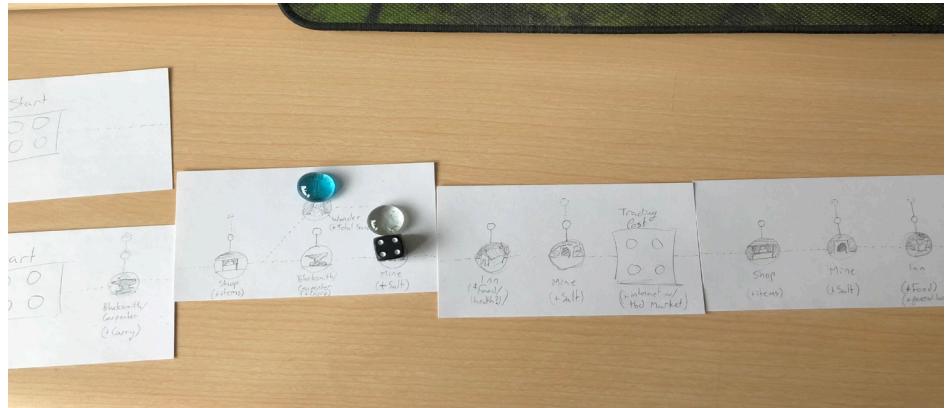
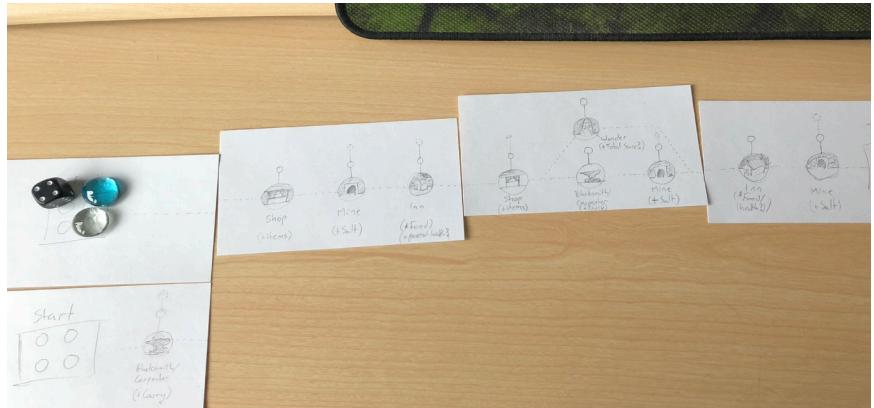
Gain 2 Carry.
Place in front of wagon for maximum efficiency.

Wagon

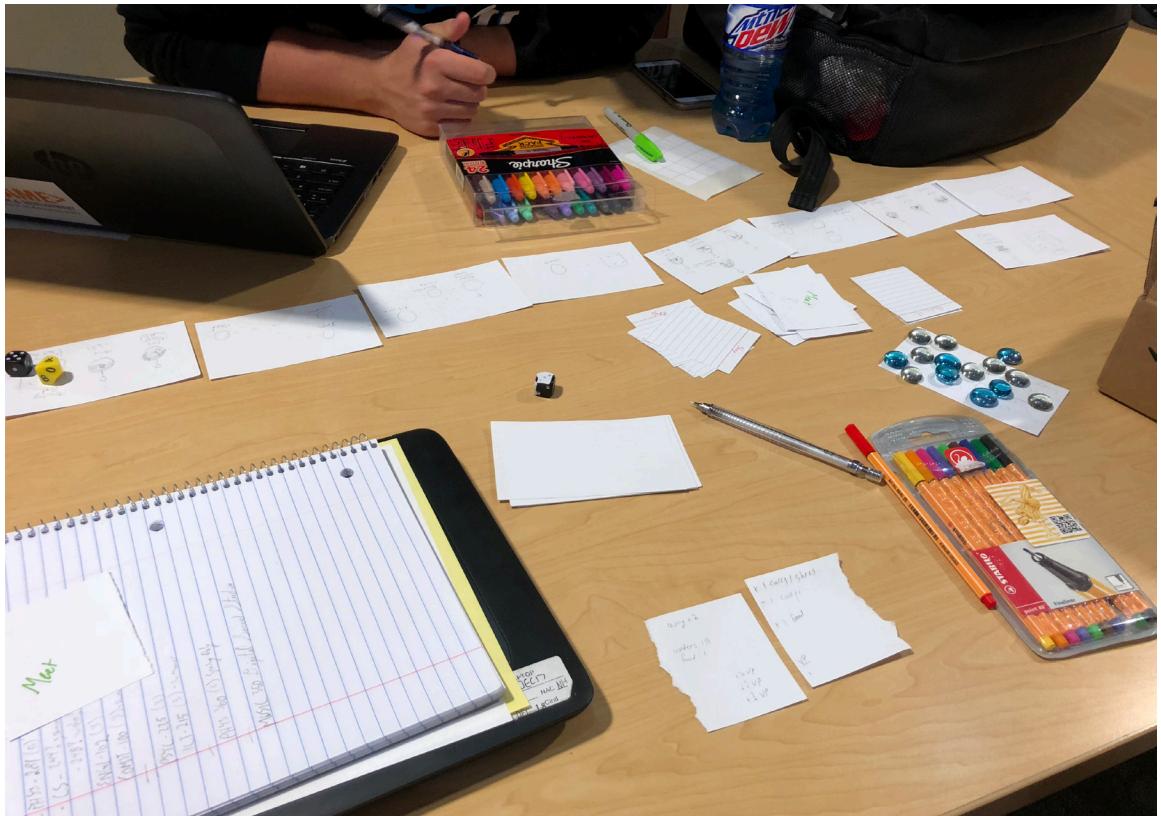
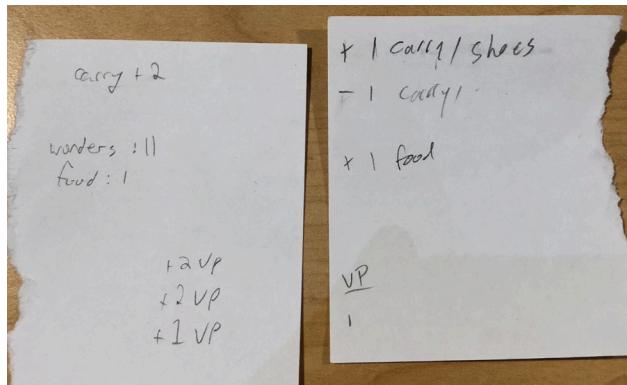
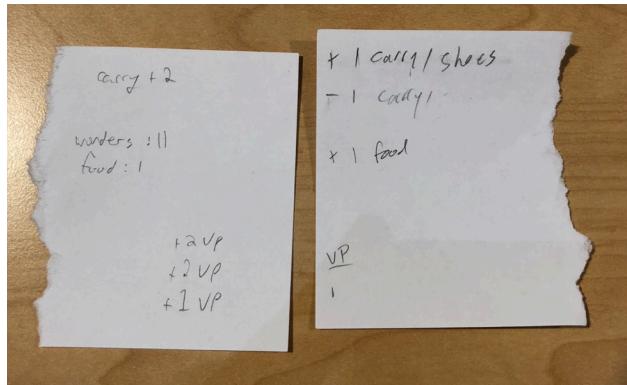
Cost: 3

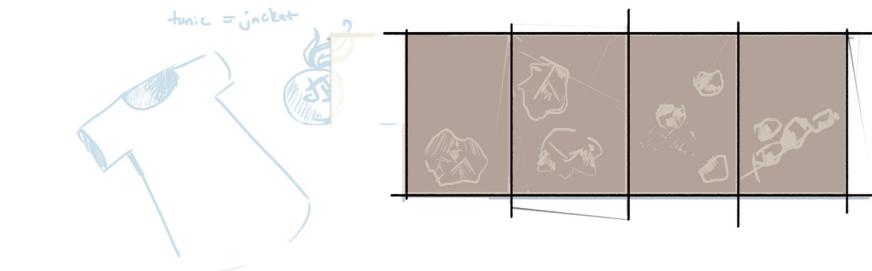
Gain 3 Carry.
Don't put it before the horse.

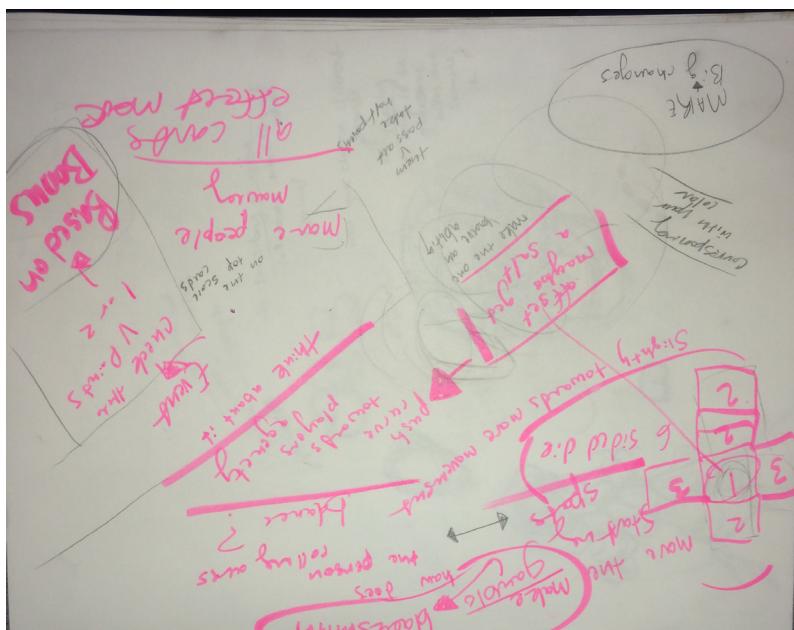
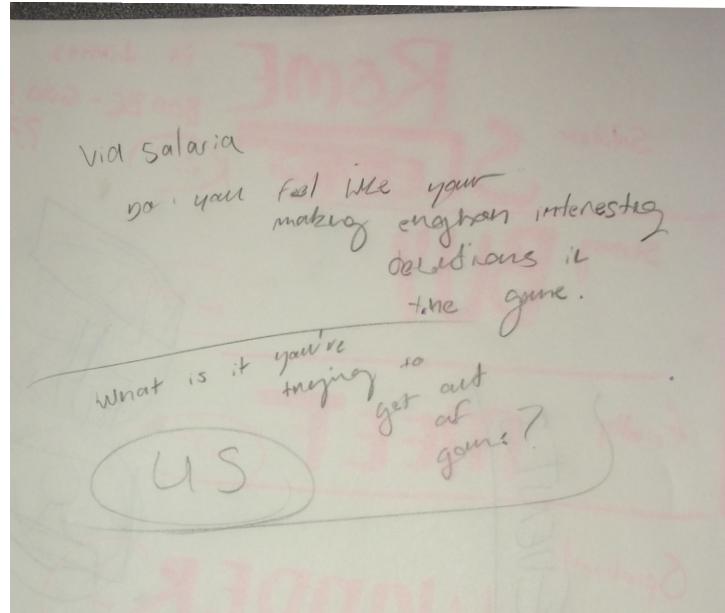
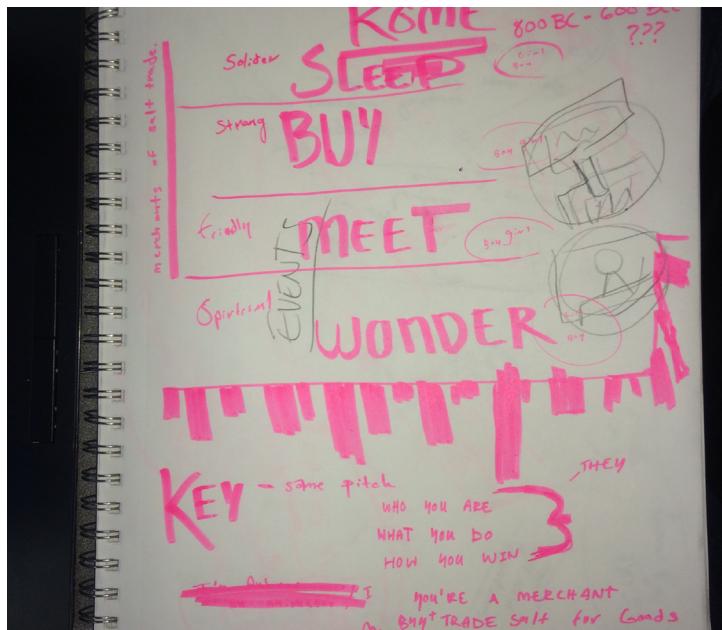
Appendix I



Original Modular Salt Road Board







PROJECT TITLE:	
ACTION NOTES:	
AUBREE'S GAME NOTES	
I rolled 3 landed on The Mine / salt spot	
Mich went 1 landed on Shop Drew 2 and both too expensive	
Blake drew 2 cards got a trumpet VP+2	
Michael rolled 3 went to wonder got two VP	
I rolled 1 got meat and good snorkels.	
Mich went to Mine got 2 extra salt	
Blake moved forward didn't do any tho Michael rolled 1	
I got 4-2	
Mich rolled 3 got meat and great	
Blake got Salt	

PREPARED BY: DATE:
 PROJECT TITLE:
 ION NOTES:
 PROJECT PLANNING NOTES:
 1 Michael got 1 and a
 2 meet +2 VP
 3
 4 Aubree
 5 got 1 meet → go to shop
 6 2 VP's
 7 Michael got 1
 8 meet → 2 salt
 9
 10 Blake rolled 1/2 meat
 11 and
 12 great
 13 - 1 salt by cans
 14
 15 Michael rolls 2 mine
 16 +1 salt
 17
 18 Blake wonde +2 VP
 19
 20 Michael +1 sal
 21
 22 Aubree 2 shop +0
 23
 24 Michael
 25 Inn -1 salt Wreath +1 foot
 26
 27
 28

PREPARED BY: DATE:
 PROJECT TITLE:
 ICTION NOTES:
 PROJECT PLANNING NOTES:
 29 Roman Nibe God
 30 Strange resemblance
 31 to Sneaker
 32
 33 Take + do Esq
 34 dice roll
 35 1-3 → pick
 36 choices
 37 Salt merchant
 38 What's the critical
 39 → DIVIDE AND CONQUER
 40 → new track
 41 theme location
 42
 43 Stats for 4
 44 range of styles
 45
 46 Wonder kid is OP
 47 Africa Roman African
 48 multi cultural
 49
 50 TRAP + salt
 51 China
 52 Africa - Rome
 53 gambler card
 54

PREPARED BY:

PROJECT TITLE:

ACTION NOTES:

19:23

Miles
at
3?

I want
more
house
more VP
in items

gamble?
throw away
space?

PROJE

1																							
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PROJECT TITLE:

ACTION NOTES:

more choice?

if can switch

wonder has another effect?

like what?

+1 salt

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