A•G•O•G
~A Game of Golems~
by Christopher St. Clair

In a secret complex deep in the mountains, the Ancient Guild of Golemancy plies its trade, creating life where before was only base matter. Two journeyman golemancers feverishly prepare their master works, for there is but one position available among the Golemancery Elect. Both know that if they could but obtain their rival's research, they would surely be able to create the greater work. The night before their creations are to be judged, each plots to infiltrate the other's sanctum of knowledge, using their legion of early prototypes to subtly outmaneuver the other.

*In **A•G•O•G,** players attempt to be first reach their opponent's sanctum, or failing that, to take their opponent captive and in so doing keep them from completing their masterpiece. If one of your golems manages to enter their sanctum, they may bring you back some sundry inventions to better equip your remaining creations, but your eyes alone will know what to look for within their volumes of research. Will you have what it takes to outwit your rival and take your place among the Masters of Golemancy?*

SETUP
A•G•O•G is a game of subtle strategy for two players. Played on a standard 8x8 checkers board, players sit at opposite dark-colored corner squares. The square closest to each player is their "sanctum." One player's units are white and the other's are black.

Each player starts with 20 golems, shaped like checkers pieces, and 1 journeyman golemancer (journeyman for short), comprised of a stack of 3 checkers: white-black-white for White; black-white-black for Black. The journeyman starts on the player's sanctum with the golems filling the 5 rows of squares in front of them, leaving the three middle rows unoccupied between the two players' ranks.

White goes first. On their turn, the acting player must move one unit or make a capture with one unit. Players alternate turns until one of them is victorious.

UNITS
All unit movement in **A•G•O•G** is orthogonal relative to the squares; diagonal relative to the players. Units can only move forward (towards the enemy sanctum), but can capture enemy units forward or backward.

Units capture by jumping over an enemy unit and landing on an unoccupied square beyond them. Units cannot jump over more than one enemy at a time, and cannot move or jump off the edge of the board. If a unit making a capture lands on a square from which they can make another capture, they are compelled to do so and continue the capturing sequence until they land on a square from which no further captures are available. Captured units are immediately removed from play.

If a capture is available on the acting player's turn, they are compelled to take it instead of moving a unit, and if multiple captures are available, they are compelled to take the capturing sequence that will capture the most enemy units. For example, if the acting player could either capture two enemy golems or capture the enemy journeyman alone, they are compelled to capture the two golems even though capturing the journeyman would win them the game.

The Golem: The basic unit of **A•G•O•G.** Golems can move forward one square at a time and can capture only adjacent enemy units, landing on the square immediately beyond them.

The Hulk: If a golem ends the turn placed on the enemy sanctum, its player may choose to either to place it atop any of their other golems or remove it from play. If the player chooses the former, the two stacked golems become a new unit: the hulk. If a hulk ends the turn placed on the enemy sanctum, its player may either create a new hulk with the top golem of the stack and remove the bottom from play, or may remove both stacked golems from play. If they have no other golems in play when one of their units ends the turn on the enemy sanctum, that unit must be removed from play.

Augmented with stolen inventions from the enemy sanctum, the hulk is the most powerful unit in the game. They can move forward any distance in a straight line, and can capture at any distance in a straight line, landing on any unoccupied square beyond the captured unit (provided they do do not jump over more than one unit at a time and that they land such that they can capture the most possible enemy units in the sequence).

The Journeyman: The most important unit. If captured, their player loses the game, whereas if a journeyman ends the turn on the enemy sanctum, their player wins the game.

The journeymen move and capture the same as golems. However, when jumping over an enemy unit, they may "corrupt" the jumped unit instead of capturing it. To create a corrupted unit, the acting player places one of their golems that has been removed from play atop the jumped unit. This unit is now under the control of the player that corrupted it and becomes a "corrupted hulk". If an enemy hulk is jumped by the acting player's journeyman, it can be corrupted by removing the top stacked enemy golem and replacing it with one of the corrupting player's that has been removed from play. If the corrupting player does not have any golems that have been removed from play, they cannot corrupt units and must capture them instead.

Corrupted hulks behave the same as regular hulks of their color, with the following exceptions:

1. A corrupted hulk cannot be corrupted again and must be captured if jumped by the enemy journeyman.
2. If a corrupted hulk ends the turn on the enemy sanctum, the acting player may either place the top stacked golem of their color atop another of their golems, creating a standard hulk, and remove the bottom stacked enemy golem from play, or they may remove both stacked golems from play.

WINNING
A player wins immediately under any of the following conditions:

1. Win by Capture: The player captures the enemy journeyman.
2. Win by Sanctum: The player's journeyman ends the turn on the enemy sanctum.
3. Win by Immobilization: The player's opponent has no legal moves on their turn.
4. Win by Resignation: The player's opponent resigns.

Draws are not possible in **A•G•O•G.**