

Empires of the Ancient World

This presentation of the rules created by: Daniel Berger - January 4, 2025

[1.0] ABOUT THIS VERSION

What started as an effort to simply port the rules into a PDF with a larger font that my poor eyes could handle turned into a bit of rules overhaul instead. I've made some changes in general sentence structure, verbiage, layout and capitalization.

I've also added a case system so that it's easier to reference things.

There are no rules changes, except that I've added any updates or clarifications from Martin Wallace that I could find online.

Notably, I've occasionally changed "the player" (when referring to the active player) with simply "you".

This presentation of the rules were created using LaTeX (TeXstudio). They are freely available on github.

I may also add some graphics at some point.

[2.0] GAME OVERVIEW

Empires of the Ancient World is set in the Mediterranean world between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. Each player's goal is to conquer as much of the known world as possible, not just militarily but also through trade.

The heart of the game is the card system. Players decide the tactics of their armies by recruiting cards. Each type of card has a strength and a weakness. For example, Pike units will beat Cavalry but will suffer at the hands of sword wielding Infantry. Skirmishers can be used to attempt to screen units but must be wary of being hit by Cavalry. Players can also engage Merchants to increase their trading capacity, use Engineers to build Fortifications, and Diplomats to influence neutral provinces.

The game is for 3 to 5 players and should take between 2 and 3 hours to complete.

[2.1] Components

- Rule book
- Map
- Empire Army cards (yellow and green borders)
- Available Army cards (red borders)
- Player Control markers(disks)
- Player Trade markers (cubes)
- Fortification markers (black disks)
- Battle blocks (black cylinders)
- Two six-sided dice
- 1st Player marker (wooden pawn)
- Round and Tum Markers (black cylinder)

[2.2] Common Words and Phrases

If the rules say "roll a die", it means roll 1d6. If the rules say "roll the dice", it means roll 2d6.

If the rules say "you", it's generally referring to the active player. It's you, you're the player.

[2.3] Cards trump Rules

In any case where the cards conflict with the rules, the cards are considered correct.

Note that there is a Foot Skirmisher without its text box. This was a production error. Text from other Foot Skirmisher cards applies.

[3.0] SETTING UP THE GAME

Each player should select a set of control and trade markers, and one Warehouse card where you will store your trade markers (cubes). Your Warehouse is public information and should be kept in front of you.

There are six sets of Empire Army cards, marked from A to F, half with a green border, the remainder with a yellow border. These should be arranged into six piles, with the three green-bordered sets (North) placed at the top of the map and the other three sets (South) at the bottom of the map. Each set of three stacks should be turned face down and shuffled around so that players don't know which set is which.

Roll a die to see who will become the 1st player (for purposes of setup only). In clockwise order, starting with the 1st player, each player places one control marker in a land province of their choice. As soon as you place a control marker you take one set of Empire cards. If the marker was placed in a northern province then you take one of the green-bordered sets at the top of the map. If placed in a southern province then you take one of the yellow-bordered sets at the bottom of the map. A maximum of three players can start in the north, and three players can start in the south. Any unclaimed decks are returned to the box, unexamined.

Players retain their Empire cards throughout the game. They form the backbone of their army and guarantee that a player will always have the minimum number of cards to fight a land battle (though not necessarily a sea battle).

[3.1] North and South

Northern provinces are all those north of the Mediterranean and west to Asia Minor. Southern provinces are south of the Mediterranean and east of Thrace. Sicily is a northern province, while Crete and Cyprus are both southern provinces.

[3.2] Cards and Markers

Shuffle the available Army cards and then lay out 6 cards, face up by the side of the map. Place the remaining deck at one end of the line of six cards.

Place a black marker on the first space of the Turn track and a black marker on the first space of the Round track. Place the three Battle Blocks in the "Center Ground" box of the Battle Display.

[4.0] PLAYING THE GAME

Each turn consists of three phases, as shown below. The game lasts for four turns. Each turn consists of a series of action rounds.

[4.1] Turn Sequence

1. Revolt Check
2. Collect Trade markers and determine 1st Player
3. Action Rounds

The Revolt Check, Trade marker collection and first player determination happen only once at the start of each turn. There are multiple action rounds.

[5.0] Revolt Phase

There are two Revolt Tables printed on the board. Roll one die to determine which of the two tables to use. Then roll a second die to determine which column on the table applies. This column will list a number of provinces which are subject to revolt. If a province revolts then one control marker must be removed from it. This will cause it to become neutral if there are no control markers remaining.

If a player still has one or more control markers in the province after removing one from a revolt, then that player retains control of the province.

No control markers are removed from a province which contains a fortification.

Trade markers are unaffected by a Revolt.

[6.0] Trade Markers and 1st Player Determination

[6.1] Trade Markers

Each player places five trade markers on their Warehouse card. Place an additional trade marker for every province you control that contains an Amphorae symbol, as well as one for each Merchant card on display.

Any markers left on the card from the last turn stay on the card and do not affect the number of markers placed. Each player has a limited supply of trade markers which represents a hard limit to the number of trade markers that may be placed in your Warehouse.

Certain actions require the expenditure of trade markers. Any expended trade markers are placed back in the player's stock, which means they are again available for placement on the following turn.

[6.2] Determine First Player

On the first turn, each player rolls the dice. The player with the highest sum is the 1st player (re-roll any ties). Note that this may be a different player from the player who placed the first control marker. In subsequent turns the 1st Player marker moves on to the next player, going clockwise.

The Round marker should be placed on the space matching the present turn. so on the first turn it starts on the "1" space, on the second turn it starts on the "2" space, etc.

[7.0] ACTION ROUNDS

The Action Round phase is the meat of the game. In player order, going clockwise from the first player, each player will select one action. Once each player has completed an action the Round marker is increased one space and players carry out another action. The phase ends when the Round marker cannot be advanced any further.

A player can choose from the following actions:

1. Attack a province
2. Recruit an available army card
3. Fortify
4. Place trade markers
5. Place a control marker

[7.1] Attacking a Province

You can attack any province or sea area that is adjacent to a province or sea area you already control. You simply state which province or sea area you wish to attack.

[7.11] ATTACKING A NEUTRAL PROVINCE

A province that does not have a control marker in it is regarded as being neutral. Roll a die to see if the you place a control marker in the province. On a 3 or higher the attack succeeds and you place a control marker in the province.

If the attack fails then the action phase proceeds to the next player, i.e. the only penalty for failure is the loss of an action.

[7.12] ATTACKING A SEA AREA

A sea area that does not have a control marker in it is regarded as being neutral. To take control of it you have to make a successful sea movement roll. This is covered in the rules concerning Sea Movement and Battles.

If you want to attack a controlled sea area then this will involve a sea battle. See the rules on Sea Movement and Combat below.

[7.13] ATTACKING ACROSS MOUNTAINS OR STRAITS

If you are attacking a neutral or controlled province across either mountains or a strait then you must make a die roll to see if you complete the successful movement of your army. On a roll of 2 or more the attack proceeds normally. If you roll a 1, then your action turn ends immediately.

[7.2] Battle

A battle occurs when you a province that is controlled by another player. Each player must now select five army cards from those they hold in order to fight.

[7.21] AMBUSH

If the defender has a Military Leader card on display then he may choose to fight in terrain that will favour skirmishers. He declares whether he wishes to do so after both players have selected the cards they will play with, but not the order in which they will be played. The effect of an ambush is to give every skirmisher card (on both sides) a +1 die roll modifier. The cards affected by this are Foot Skirmishers, Archers, and Light Horse.

[7.22] FIGHTING THE BATTLE

The goal of each player in battle is to win the most battle blocks, up to three. These start the battle in the 'Centre Ground' box of the Battle Display.

Players must arrange their cards in the order they will be played, with the first card to be played at the top, last card to be played at the bottom. The cards are kept face down to keep them secret from the opposing player.

There are restrictions on how the cards are ordered. All fast cards must be played before slow cards. The only slow cards are Sword, Pike, Spear and Warbands. All other cards are regarded as fast. If a player has a Military Leader, then he can play one card out of sequence, e.g. one slow card before one fast card or one fast card after a slow card.

Note: Although there is nothing on the cards to explicitly designate speed, you can distinguish slow units by the artwork. Any infantry type unit with a large shield is a slow unit.

Players now simultaneously reveal the top card from their pile. The unit with the highest value wins the combat. The winner moves one of the battle blocks to their side of the battle display (either the attacker's or defender's side). If there are no blocks left in the center ground, then the player moves one block from the opposing player's side back to the center. If both units have the same value then the combat is tied and no block is moved.

Players then reveal the next card, resolving each battle, until each player has revealed all five cards. The player who has the most battle blocks on their side is the winner.

Note that the terms “kill”, “block”, etc, do not mean that the card is removed or lost in any way, they are simply used to describe an outcome (win, lose or tie). Casualties only happen at the end of combat.

To make combat more interesting units have certain modifiers depending on which unit they are facing, as described below.

[7.23] UNIT TYPES

SWORD - If a Sword unit is drawn against a Warband or Pike unit then increase its value by 1. If opposed by an Elephant then the combat is tied, unless the Elephant rampages.

PIKE - If a Pike unit is drawn against a Cavalry or Heavy Cavalry unit then increase its value by 1. If opposed by an Elephant then the combat is tied, unless the Elephant rampages.

SPEAR - If opposed by an Elephant then the combat is tied, unless the Elephant rampages.

WARBAND - To find out the final strength of the unit the player rolls one die and adds it to its base strength of 3, giving a possible strength between 4 and 9.

CAVALRY - If drawn against a Sword or Warband then increase its strength by 1.

HEAVY CAVALRY - If drawn against a Sword or Warband then increase its strength by 1.

ELEPHANT - The owner must roll a die to see if the unit rampages. On a roll of 1 it rampages, automatically losing the combat. If drawn against another Elephant that also rampages then the combat is a tie. If drawn against Cavalry then the unit increases its strength by 1.

FOOT SKIRMISHERS - This unit does not have a strength. Instead, the owning player rolls a die to see what effect it has. On a roll of 4 or 5 the unit blocks the opposing unit, resulting in a tie. On a roll of 6 or more the unit kills the opposing unit, winning the combat. Against an Elephant the unit gains a +1 die modifier. Against Cavalry the unit suffers a -1 die modifier. Against Heavy Cavalry the unit suffers a -2 die modifier.

If both players play a Foot Skirmisher the result is a tie.

ARCHERS - Archer units work the same way as Foot Skirmishers except that they kill instead of block on a 5 or 6. If drawn against Elephants they gain a +1 die modifier. Against Cavalry they suffer a -1 die modifier. Against Heavy Cavalry they suffer a -2 die modifier.

If both players play an Archer the result is a tie. Archers and Foot Skirmishers also negate each other.

LIGHT HORSE - These are a form of mounted skirmishers. They block on a 4 or 5 and kill on a 6, the same as Foot Skirmishers. However, if they meet Foot Skirmishers or Archers then they automatically win. If drawn against Elephants they gain a +2 die modifier, against Cavalry they suffer a -1 die modifier, and against Heavy Cavalry they suffer a -2 die modifier.

ARTILLERY - The owner player rolls a die to see if the unit hits its target, which is considered a kill. Against infantry and elephants it must roll a 6 or more. Against a Galley, other Artillery, and any units involved in a Siege Combat, a 5 or more must be rolled. If the unit misses then it loses the combat

Artillery always misses Cavalry, Heavy Cavalry, Foot Skirmishers, Archers and Light Horse in Open Combat.

In Siege Combat the Artillery result overrides a Skirmisher result, i.e. if an Artillery unit hits then it automatically wins, regardless of what the Skirmisher result is, but loses otherwise, i.e. the Skirmisher does not need to roll.

If the owner has an Engineer card on display then he gains a +1 die modifier. If two Artillery units simultaneously hit each other then the result is a tie.

SIEGE TOWERS - Siege Towers can only be used in Siege Combat, in which case they have a strength of 9. If the player has an Engineer card on display then it has a strength of 10. Both the attacker and defender may play a Siege Tower in Siege Combat.

[7.24] Siege Combat

If the defender has a Fortification in the province being attacked then the defender has the option to choose to fight from inside the fort, resulting in a siege combat. The defender may also choose to fight in the open instead, in which case the Fortification has no effect.

In Siege Combat the players only choose three cards each (instead of the normal five). The cards can be played in any order and there is no Ambush allowed. Neither side may use mounted units (Cavalry, Heavy Cavalry, Elephants and Light Horse).

[7.3] Winning the Battle

At the end of the battle, after all the cards have been played, the player with the most battle blocks on their side wins the battle. If there is a tie then the defender wins. Both sides must now take casualties. The attacker and defender each randomly loses one card from those played for every battle block on the other player's side.

Neither side can lose an Empire army card. If one is drawn then this still counts towards the casualty total but is retained by the player. Thus, it is possible for you to avoid losing an available Army card if you use a number of Army cards.

Each available Army card drawn as a casualty is placed in the discard pile. If the attacker won then remove all of the defender's control markers in the province, and place one of the attacker's control markers there.

[7.31] ROUTS

If, at any time during combat, one player has all three battle blocks on their side then the battle ends immediately in a rout.

If the attacker routs then defender, then he can take another action. This does not necessarily have to be an attack action. If the attacker achieves a second rout, he does not gain another free action.

If the defender routs the attacker then the defender takes 2 trade blocks from the attacker's Warehouse, if available, and places them on his own Warehouse.

[7.32] PLUNDER

If the attacker wins then any trade blocks in the province just captured that are not of his color are removed and placed on the attacker's warehouse card. These will count as victory points.

[7.33] THE LAST PROVINCE

A player cannot lose their last province, which means there is no point in attacking it.

[7.4] Example of Combat

John has decided that he wishes to attack Syria from his own province of Cappadocia. Syria is part of Geoff's empire. Both players now select five cards from their respective hands. John selects his cards and places them in a pile, facedown, in the following order:

1. Light Horse,
2. Heavy Cavalry 7
3. Pike 7
4. Spear 7
5. Foot Skirmisher

Normally the Foot Skirmisher would have to be played before the Pike or Spear, as it is a fast unit. However, John has a Military Leader on display, which allows him to play one card out of sequence.

Geoff selects his cards and places them in the following order:

1. Light Horse
2. Elephant 7
3. Heavy Cavalry 7
4. Pike 7
5. Sword 7

Each player now reveals the top card of their respective piles. Both players have played Light Horse, which results in a tie.

They each reveal their next card and Geoff has to roll a die to check whether or not his Elephant rampages. He rolls a 3, which means the unit is effective. Its strength is increased to 8 because it is facing a Cavalry unit, resulting in a score of 8-7, and a win for Geoff. He moves a battle marker to the defender's side of the Battle Display.

The next cards are revealed and John's Pike unit beats Geoff's Heavy Cavalry since the Pike unit gains a +1 bonus against Heavy Cavalry units. John moves a battle marker to the attacker's side of the Battle Display.

The next two revealed cards - Spear 7 and Pike 7 - result in a tie, so no markers are moved.

The last card of each player is now revealed. John rolls a die to see how effective his Foot Skirmishers are. He rolls a 6 which means he defeats the opposing unit and so moves a battle marker to his side of the display.

John has ended up with two battle markers to Geoff's one marker, making John the winner. He replaces Geoff's control marker in Syria with one of his own.

John must randomly lose one of the five cards that he played, since Geoff gained one battle marker. Geoff must randomly lose two cards since John gained two battle markers against him.

[7.5] Sea Movement and Battles

Black lines represent straits, blue lines represent sea lanes.

There are three sea areas - Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean. The Atlantic and the Black Sea are not sea areas in this game. The only movement allowed in the Atlantic is between Lugudenensis Gallia and Britannia via straits.

If you control a province that borders at least one of the Mediterranean sea areas then you can attack any land province that is adjacent to **any** of the three sea areas.

Roll a die. On a roll of 4 or more you succeed and continue with your attack. On a 3 or less the attempt has failed and your action turn ends. You gain a +1 die modifier for attacking along a sea lane and a further +1 modifier if the area/province being attacked is adjacent to a sea area that you control.

EXAMPLE: If you wish to attack Britannia then you would first need to make a die roll for sea movement. You would have to roll 3 or higher, gaining a +1 modifier for the sea lane. If you succeeded then you would attack Britannia, which would require another die roll if neutral.

[7.51] SEA BATTLES

If you want to take control of a sea area from another player then you will have to fight a sea battle. You first roll for sea movement and, if successful, instigate a sea battle.

Sea battles work in a similar manner to a land battle but with a number of restrictions. It is only possible to select either one Sword or one Spear unit to fight (ship-borne soldiers), one Foot Skirmisher or Archer (ship-borne skirmishers), and one Artillery unit.

You can use any number of galley cards to bring the number of cards up to five. Cards are played in any order, since there are no fast or slow units in sea battles. For the purposes of Artillery fire all targets are regarded as being galleys. Artillery takes precedence over Skirmishers and/or Archers.

Note: Galley cards may not be used in land combat.

It may occur that you cannot play as many cards as your opponent. Both players still play cards as normal to start, but eventually you will not be able to play cards. You lose a combat round for each card you cannot match, i.e. the other player moves a battle block to their side of the display.

If you win then you take control of the sea area, and may also take plunder. The Rout rule is also in effect.

Note that control of a sea area doesn't allow you to stop somebody else from attacking through it. It only means the other player cannot gain the +1 modifier.

[7.6] Diplomatic Attacks

You do not have to use an army to attack a province. Instead, you can use diplomacy to attempt to take control of an adjacent neutral province or sea area.

A diplomacy attempt requires the expenditure of two trade markers from your Warehouse, then roll a die. On a 2 or higher you take control of the province or sea area. You do not need to roll for sea movement, mountains or straits.

If you have a Diplomat card on display then the cost is only one trade marker (instead of two) and the attempt is automatically successful.

You may also attempt to remove another player's control marker from an adjacent province or sea area. Roll a die. On a 6 or higher remove one control marker from the targeted area. You gain +1 to the die roll for every trade marker, up to a maximum of three trade markers. If the area becomes neutral then place one of your own control markers in the region and take control of it.

No plunder is gained from diplomatic attacks.

[8.0] Recruit and Disband

[8.1] RECRUIT

You may take one of the six face-up cards on display. You have the option of first discarding all six cards on display and drawing six new cards by expending one trade marker from your Warehouse. This option may only be taken once during the current action round.

Once you have taken a card, draw a new card to replace it so that there are always six cards on display. If the deck is exhausted, then reshuffle the deck first before drawing.

There is no limit to the number of cards that a player may hold.

The following cards must be placed on display in front of a player if selected: Military Leader, Engineer, Merchant, and Diplomat. A player may only have one Military Leader, Engineer or Diplomat on display, but may have any number of Merchants.

You may only take a card marked "North" if you control at least one area in the north, and may only take a card marked "South" if you control at least one area in the south. You never lose a card if you take one of these cards and later lose all of your provinces in the north or south.

[8.2] DISBAND

Instead of taking a card, you may choose to discard a card (disband). You cannot discard a card that is on display, i.e. you cannot discard a Military Leader, Engineer, Merchant or Diplomat.

[9.0] Fortify

As an action, you may place a Fortification marker (black disk) in a province you control by expending four trade markers from your Warehouse. If you have an Engineer card on display then the cost is only two trade

markers.

There can only be one Fortification marker in a province. Sea areas cannot be fortified.

The presence of a Fort in an area allows the defender to resolve a battle there using Siege Combat instead of fighting in the open. See the rules on Siege Combat for details.

Forts have no effect on Diplomatic attacks. Forts change owners if a Diplomatic attack succeeds against an area with a Fort.

There are a limited number of fortification markers. This is a hard limit on the number of fortifications that may be placed on the board.

[10.0] Trade Markers

As an action, you may place up to two trade markers from your Warehouse onto the map. The markers can be placed in or adjacent to any province or sea area that already contains one of your control markers.

The markers do not have to be placed in the same province or sea area, nor are you required to control the area. The markers are placed one at a time, and the placement of the first marker allows the second one to be played adjacent to it, i.e. you can "chain" the trade markers.

The total number of markers allowed in a province or sea area is equal to the victory point value of the province/area. For every Merchant card on display, you may place an extra marker from their Warehouse.

You can attempt to displace another player's trade marker if the province or sea area is full. Roll a die. On a 5 or higher you may remove another player's marker and replace it with your own. For every Merchant card on display you gain +1 to the die roll. If the attempt fails then the trade marker is placed back into your stock.

[11.0] Place Control Marker

You may place a second control marker in an area that you already control. This can be useful to protect the area from Diplomatic attacks or Revolts.

You may place a maximum of two control markers in an area.

[12.0] End of Turn

When the Round marker cannot be advanced any further then the turn ends and the Turn marker advances. At the end of the second, third and fourth turns victory points are also scored. At the end of the fourth turn the game ends.

Reset the Round marker. The number of rounds is reduced by one every turn, i.e. on turn 2 there will be 9 action rounds, on turn 3 there will be 8 action rounds and on turn four there will be 7 action rounds.

Players score VP's for controlling provinces and sea areas and by having trade markers in them.

[12.1] Victory Points

A player with a control marker in an area/province scores VP equal to the VP value of the area/province.

The player with the most trade markers in an area/province scores VP equal to half, rounded down, of the area/province. If there is a tie for trade markers then no player gains these points.

Players must also reveal all the available Army cards they have in their possession, along with those already on display. Many of these cards have a negative value in the top right corner. These are the number of VP lost for holding that card.

Players receive one VP for every trade marker gained through plunder. These markers are then returned to the owning player.

Keep track of each player's score on paper. At the end of the fourth turn, the scores from each player turn should be added together to create a final total. The player with the most VP's wins.

The new first player is the player to the left of the previous first player, i.e. clockwise.