

## CREDITS



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# AGAINST THE RUINS

Number of Players: 3-5  
(5 Players are highly recommended)

For Ages 12+

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## LORE

A groundbreaking discovery has been revealed to the Expedition: a sprawling city underneath the very feet of humanity. Four Archaeologists have been tasked to explore this hidden civilization full of novelties and secrets of humanity. Along the way, however, the Archaeologists realize that they are being watched, not by who, but what.

The city has been bestowed with unknown power during the height of its civilization, giving rise to Sentinels whose very body is the ruins itself. Their unchanging task from inception was to protect the city at all costs, and if not the city, the history that remains within its crumbling buildings.

The Archaeologists now has to take risks and manage it well to take as much historical artifacts as possible, including rare relics that mimic those of what humanity up above knows. The Ancient's duty is the same as ever: protect the city, and protect its history.

## CLARIFICATIONS

→ **DANGER** - represents an Archaeologist's life, in reverse: a higher Danger means more peril.  
→ Each Danger Point is marked with a Green Dice of the corresponding Archaeologist, which means the more Danger they are in, the less dice they can roll. 4 Danger eliminates an Archaeologist from play.

→ **BANISH** - allows a player to reroll specific dice according to a card effect. Rerolls must be done after the initial Roll Phase.

→ **HAZARD** - is a mechanic preventing the Ancient from playing stronger cards. This value is determined by the Alert Value: Hazard One is equivalent to an Alert Value between 0 and 3, Hazard Two is equivalent to an Alert Value between 4 and 7, and Hazard Three is equivalent to an Alert Value between 8 and 10.

## UNEXPECTED SCENARIOS

**No Dice to Roll:** If, by a combination of Danger and cards played, an Archaeologist has no dice that they can roll (or the Ancient has no dice allocated for a specific Archaeologist due to cards and neglect), then they roll no dice. If they have Flat Value Tokens on play, these are added to the roll score.

**No Trinkets, but Relics in Play:** If at the later parts of the game, the Ancient can no longer award Trinkets, but still has Relics in play, game continues, but the Ancient does not reward Trinkets anymore. If, through cards or Relics, the Ancient gains Trinkets, then normal game resumes. Trinkets that should have been gained in previous rounds are voided.

## OVERVIEW

Take on the role of one of four Archaeologists of the Expedition as they delve to a strange ruin previously unknown to mankind, or be one of the derelict Ancient Guardians brought to life by the wanton looting of your domain.

Play cards, use Abilities, expose Relics, and roll dice to earn Trinkets or prevent losing them. With a massive deck for both the Expedition and the Ancient, as well as multiple Abilities and Relics to choose from every game, each expedition allows for a varied playstyle where you have to constantly adapt and strategize.

Will the Expedition live to tell the tale of a bygone era, or will the Ancient prevent further destruction of the Crumbling Expanse?



## COMP

## PHASE BREAKDOWN

### 1 ANCIENT BOARD



### 4 EXPEDITION BOARDS



### 16 WHITE DICE



### 16 GREEN DICE



### 16 GOLD DICE



### 100 TRINKETS

optional: 25 each  
of unique patterns



### 4 RELIC TOKENS

optional: relic  
standees/3d tokens



### DICE TOKENS

10  $\pm$  3 Dice Tokens  
24  $\pm$  4 Dice Tokens  
24  $\pm$  5 Dice Tokens  
24  $\pm$  6 Dice Tokens



### RECOUP PHASE

Any Archaeologist worth their  
Trinkets clean up after themselves.  
Otherwise, history is destroyed, one  
trash at a time.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- Discard all Pip Dice, whether used  
or disabled.
- Return any disabled or borrowed  
Permanent Dice to original holder.
- Compare Risk Score to Current  
Alert Level:

If an Archaeologist's Risk Score is  
equal or higher than the Current  
Alert Level, nothing happens.

Otherwise, Increase Danger by 1.

- Discard/Banish Placed Cards  
during the round.
- Reduce all Cooldowns by 1.

### ELIMINATION METHODS

#### (ARCHAEOLOGIST)

An Archaeologist is Eliminated  
from play when their Danger  
reaches 4 at any point. Any  
Trinkets and Cards they hold are  
not discarded; these are  
permanently removed from the  
current game session.



### VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game session ends in two  
ways: an Ancient Victory, or an  
Expedition Victory, depending on  
the conditions.

### ENTRY STAGE (ROUND ZERO)

READY PHASE (EXPEDITION)  
RALLY PHASE  
ROLL PHASE  
REWARD PHASE  
RECOUP PHASE

### DELVE STAGE (ROUNDS 1+)

PRE-ROUND/REFRESH PHASE  
READY PHASE (ALL PLAYERS)  
RALLY PHASE  
ROLL PHASE  
REWARD PHASE  
RECOUP PHASE

### ROUND FLOW

### ANCIENT VICTORY

The Ancient wins when there are  
no more Archaeologists in play,  
which is achieved through  
increasing their Danger to 4.

### EXPEDITION VICTORY

The Expedition wins when there  
are no more Trinkets AND Relics  
on the Ancient Board. Eliminated  
Archaeologists share the victory.

## PHASE BREAKDOWN

### PRE-ROUND/REFRESH

The Pre-Round is the setup phase of every round.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- Resolve Effects from Last Round.
- Card Draw/Discard
- Reveal Influence Cards
- Alert Increases by 1 (Passive)

### READY PHASE

The Ready Phase is where the Archaeologists spend their time planning and placing cards, and where the Ancient quietly plans the Expedition's demise.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- Activate Relics
- Initiate Heist
- Place Cards

### RALLY PHASE

The Rally phase is where the Archaeologists prepare, and where the Ancient's machinations churn.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- Placed Card effects are resolved, starting with the Ancient's, then the Archaeologists', left to right from the Archaeologist's perspective.

### ROLL PHASE

Where strategy meets an immense amount of luck (based on the number of dice), the Roll Phase determines whether the Archaeologists succeed in an exploration.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- All players roll all non-disabled dice on hand.
- Reroll effects from cards are resolved.
- Other effects during the Roll Phase are resolved.

### REWARD PHASE

The Archaeologist gains Trinkets during this Phase, much to the Ancient's chagrin and anger.

#### OCCURRING EVENTS:

- Archaeologist gains Trinkets: On a Successful Roll, gain 4. On a Failed Roll, gain 1.
- If a Heist has been Initiated, Heist Mechanics are resolved. Refer to Player Actions for more detail: On a Successful Roll, Claim Trinket, Gain 1 White Die. On a Failed Roll, Danger Increases by 1.

## ITEMS

### 16 RISK TOKENS



### 24 COOLDOWN TOKENS



### 10 ALERT TOKENS



### 48 PIP DICE



### 16 STARTER EXPEDITION CARDS



### 5 STARTER ANCIENT CARDS



### 80 EXPEDITION CARDS 60 ANCIENT CARDS

### 6 RELIC CARDS

### 6 ABILITY CARDS

### 12 INFLUENCE CARDS

### 12 NEGATIVE CARDS





## TOKENS

**TRINKET** - is the main resource of the game, one of the two goals of the Expedition, and one of the two lifeforce of the Ancients. There is exactly 100 physical Trinkets in standard play.

When Trinkets are spent during play, the spent Trinkets enter the shared Trinket Discard.



**DICE TOKENS** - used when adding or subtracting from the ROLL Score of any player (e.g. -5, +3). These numbers are represented by the Dice Tokens, which represent set values of the dice.



**COOLDOWN** - triggers when an Ability or Relic is used. Cooldown Tokens are placed on top of the used card, preventing use until there are no more Cooldown Tokens remaining.



**ALERT** - a mechanic designed to force the Expedition to riskier cards, as well as for the Ancient to be able to play stronger cards. Alert passively increases by 1 after the Entry Stage, unless prevented by specific cards.



**HAZARD** - Divisions for the Alert System. The Ancient can only play cards whose Hazard Value is equal or lower than the highest Hazard Level this round.

**RISK** - Risk is represented by the sum of the Risk Values present in most Expedition cards as well as additional Risk Tokens from other Archaeologists' actions. As long as the total Risk of an Archaeologist is not lower than the current Alert Value, they will be safe. Otherwise, they will gain Danger.



Each Danger Point is marked with a Green Dice of the corresponding Archaeologist, which means the more Danger they are in, the less dice they can roll.

## PLAYER ACTIONS

### OUT OF PHASE

**PLAY INSTANT CARDS** - Instant Cards may be played any time, or on specific phases. These still cost Trinkets, but must be placed ahead of the Danger Meter to be played. Using Instant Cards are not considered as placing a card.

**USE ABILITY** - Archaeologists may use their abilities during specific phases to improve their odds. The Ability must be resolved before play can proceed. When using an Ability with a Cooldown, Cooldown Tokens are placed on top of the Ability Card upon its use.

**STRATEGIZE** - Archaeologists are free to converse and plan with each other, and may even look at cards of other Archaeologists. However, they cannot:

- place cards for any other Archaeologist other than themselves;
- trade trinkets and cards with other Archaeologists; or
- roll for other Archaeologists unless a card states otherwise.

If the Ancient cannot or refuses to place a card, they lose 1 Trinket to each playing Archaeologist at the Recoup Phase.

If an Archaeologist cannot or refuses to place a card, they gain 1 Danger at the Recoup Phase.

When placing a card, players are also required to place the corresponding Trinket Cost on the top of the card, as well as any additive effects. Subtractive effects, such as dice or card disabling, only occurs during the Rally Phase.

If a card effect necessitates the use of a token, these tokens are placed on top of the said card. If a card effect affects all Archaeologists, dice or tokens corresponding to this effect are placed on the empty space in front of the Danger Meter.

An Archaeologist's turn is finalized once they place all active Dice ahead of the Danger Meter. The Ancient's turn is only finalized once everyone else is ready to proceed.

## PLAYER ACTIONS

### IN PHASE

**CARD DRAW/DISCARD** - Players must draw or discard cards until they hold exactly 5 cards in their hand. Relic and Ability Cards do not count towards this hand limit. If a deck becomes empty during play, all discarded cards (excluding Banished Cards) are reshuffled and added back to the deck.

**REVEAL INFLUENCE** - The Ancient must show any Influence Cards they draw, placing one on the Influence Discard, resolving its effects, and repeating if necessary.

**ACTIVATE RELICS** - The Ancient may Activate Relics during the Ready Phase. Relic Effects only resolve during the Ready Phase unless it affects dice and its values. An Activated Relic is Exposed at the end of the round. Every 2nd round after the Entry Phase, an Unexposed Relic must be Activated. If not, an Unexposed Relic chosen by the Archaeologists is immediately Exposed. Activating a Relic is not considered as placing a card.

**INITIATE HEIST** - Any Archaeologist may Initiate a Heist to claim an Exposed Relic for the Expedition.

The Initiator may only place one card during a Heist. The Alert mechanic is ignored for the Initiator.

#### On a Successful Roll:

- The Relic is Claimed. The Relic Card and Token is given to the Initiator.
- The Initiator gains 1 White Die, which is immediately rolled. On a 1 or 2, nothing happens. On any other value, Alert increases by 1 immediately.

#### On a Failed Roll:

- The Initiator gains 1 Danger.

**PLACE CARDS** - All players must place at least one card on a Card Slot. Card effects are resolved after the Ready Phase.

The Ancient can place up to 4 cards (3 if a Relic is Activated), while an Archaeologist can place up to 2 cards (1 for a Heist Initiator).

## BOARDS

The Ancient Board is composed of a Trinket Field in the center surrounded by the Alert Meter, 4 Card Slots, an Ancient Draw Pile, an Expedition Draw Pile, and an Influence Discard Pile.



An Expedition Board is composed of a empty field by the short parallel side of the board, a Danger Meter, an Ability Slot, 2 Card Slots, and a Trinket Pile where gained Trinkets are placed.



## DICE TYPES

**PIP DICE** are temporary dice. When rolled or disabled, they are discarded and removed from play. They may be reused when a card says "Gain 1 Pip Die" or similar effects.



**WHITE DICE** are permanent dice. These are not discarded when rolled or disabled, but they do not count as "life" for the Archaeologists.



**COLORED DICE** are permanent dice of the players.

• **GREEN DICE** are used for Danger Tokens; once used this way, they cannot be rolled anymore unless a card removes Danger.



• **GOLD DICE** are the Ancient's Dice, representing the machinations of the Ruins they reside in.





## CARD TYPES

### STANDARD CARDS

• **Starter cards** are what every player holds during the beginning of the game. These are low-cost, low value cards that allow players to still participate without much worry of thinking very early on.

- **Action** cards are any card that primarily affects the Rally or Roll Phase. Action cards may have Effects in its description.

• **Effect cards** are any card that primarily affects any other phase or subphase than the Rally or Roll. Event cards may add or disable dice during the Rally.

Functionally, the only distinction between Action and Effect cards is its primary target: the Roll, or any other mechanic.

• **Instant cards** are cards that can be played immediately. Some of these cards can only be played on a specific phase; the card's description will clearly tell this.



## STARTER CARD



## ACTION CARD

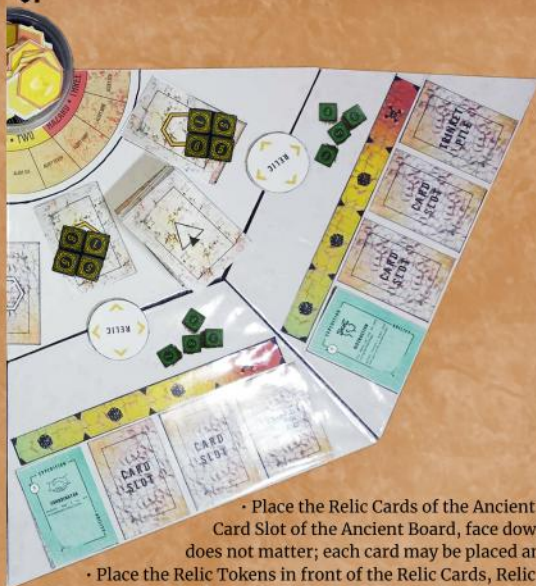


## EFFECT CARD



## INSTANT CARD

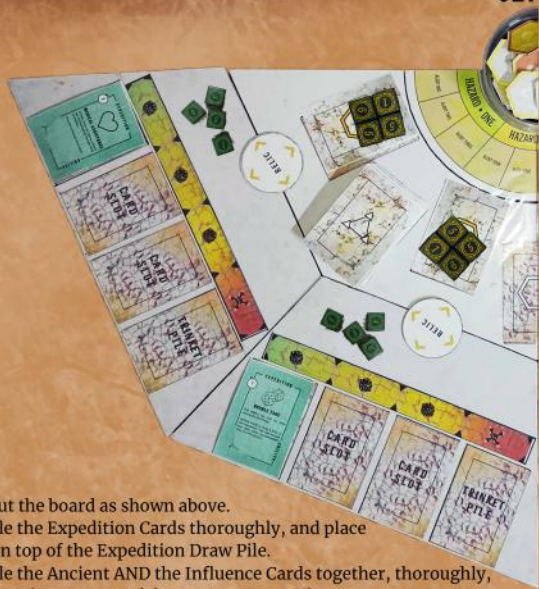
-UP



- Place the Relic Cards of the Ancient on each Card Slot of the Ancient Board, face down. Order does not matter; each card may be placed anywhere.
- Place the Relic Tokens in front of the Relic Cards, Relic side up.
- Place the Ability Cards of each Archaeologist on the Ability Slot in the Expedition Board, face up. All other cards are either not placed in any of the boards, or held by the players in the case of the Starter Cards.
- All other tokens are kept off the board, preferably nearest the player who owns them.



## SET



- Lay out the board as shown above.
- Shuffle the Expedition Cards thoroughly, and place them on top of the Expedition Draw Pile.
- Shuffle the Ancient AND the Influence Cards together, thoroughly, and place them on top of the Ancient Draw Pile.
- The Influence Discard Pile in the center is intentionally left empty.
- The Trinket Pile, preferably with a bowl (this is optional), is placed on the Trinket Section of the Ancient Board.
- Green Dice are placed ahead the Danger Meter, while 4 Gold Dice are placed on top of each Card Slot.

## CARD TYPES

### SPECIAL CARDS

• **Ability** cards are permanent cards of the Expedition, allowing them to act without using any cards, or giving bonuses to other Archaeologists, or giving a permanent bonus to themselves.

• **Relic** cards are analogous to Ability cards of the Archaeologists, except way more powerful, but also vulnerable to being stolen when Exposed.

• **Influence** cards are the actions of the Crumbling Expanse outside of the Ancient's control. These are shuffled randomly within the Ancient's Deck, and is played immediately when drawn. The Ancient cannot draw an additional card to replace the played Influence Card.

• **Negative** cards are detrimental cards for the Expedition, which are only shuffled to their deck via Influence Cards. These have a corresponding Risk Value, allowing it to be used to prevent Danger, but carries undesirable effects.



### ABILITY CARD

### RELIC CARD



### INFLUENCE CARD

### NEGATIVE CARD



## CARD ANATOMY

Each card in *DELVE* contains various identifiers referring to the various mechanics in the game. Below is a basic breakdown of what each card may contain. Not all cards will have the same identifier; this is an asymmetrical game, after all.



## SET-UP

Each Archaeologist takes the following:

- 1 Expedition Board
- a 4-card deck containing Trowel, Scrolls, Precautions, and Cutter
- 4 Green Dice
- 2 White Dice
- 8 Pip Dice
- 4  $\pm 6$  Dice Token
- 4  $\pm 5$  Dice Token
- 4  $\pm 4$  Dice Token
- 4 Risk Tokens
- 4 Cooldown Tokens

The Ancient takes the following:

- the Ancient Board
- 100 Trinkets (optional bowl)
- a 5-card deck containing 2 Guardians, 2 Loose Gravels, and 1 Surveillances
- a 12-card deck containing 4 of each: Ruin, Snare, Stumble
- 16 Gold Dice
- 16 Pip Dice
- 8  $\pm 6$  Dice Token
- 8  $\pm 5$  Dice Token
- 8  $\pm 4$  Dice Token
- 10  $\pm 3$  Dice Token
- 10 Alert Tokens
- 8 Cooldown Tokens
- 4 Relic & Exposed Tokens

The Expedition, or the Archaeologist Team, is given 6 Ability Cards to choose from. The Ancient is given 6 Relic Cards to choose 4 from. Players may either willingly choose, or rely on luck through drawing from the given cards, back side facing the player. The rest of the Abilities and Relics can be stored away; they will not be used for the rest of this game.

In the event that there are less than 4 Archaeologists during the start of the game, the Ancient removes 4 Gold Dice, 1 Relic Card, 1 Relic Token, and 25 Trinkets for each Archaeologist missing.

*Note: This will make the game unbalanced!*