

Manual

THE GAME. ARCHON depicts the eternal struggle between Light and Darkness as a contest of action and strategy between opposing forces wrought from myth and legend. The Light Side and the Dark Side are equal in number, balanced in strength, but not identical. Their aim, however, the same, conquest of the five "power points" or the elimination of the opposite side.

ICONS. The various fantastic creatures at your command are represented by specific images - "icons" - stylized pictures of knights, goblins, manticores, and the like.

THE TWO SCREENS. ARCHON is played on two screens. On one - the strategy screen - you and your opponent take turns maneuvering your icons into favorable positions. When you place an icon on a square already occupied by one of your opponent's icons, the game shifts temporarily to the second screen display, the combat arena.

HOSTILITIES. In old-fashioned and - admit it - somewhat dull board games (chess backgammon, and their ilk), the "defending" piece gets removed quietly from the board and the "attacker" wins the "battle" - and the square - without a blow being struck.

In ARCHON, we do not allow such docility, such rank defeatism on the part of the defender. No! If you want that square, you have to fight for it! When you try to occupy a square held by the enemy, the disputed square expands to fill the entire screen...and then, in the words of a certain orange-skinned monster of comic book fame, "IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME".

INITIAL STRATEGY SCREEN

THE LUMINOSITY CIRCLE. ARCHON's strategy screen changes. While some squares are always white or always black, others - "luminance" squares (marked with a hexagon) - vary in brightness throughout the game in a simple pattern: black - dark - barely dark - barely light - light - white... and reverse. Back and forth, throughout the game, the cycle continues, the luminance shifting after every other turn.

POWER POINTS. The five "power points" are indicated on the screen by flashing red symbols. Icons on power points heal faster than usual and are protected from the effects of magic spells. If your icons occupy all five power points you win the game.

MOVEMENT. If the hallow square of "frame" is on your side, it's your turn. (Simple eh?) Use your joystick to move the frame atop the icon you want. Once you push the button to confirm your choice, you must move that icon somewhere. (If an icon has nowhere to go, the computer will not allow you to "pick it up".). Once you move the icon to its destination (again, with the joystick), push the button again, and the obedient image will freeze in place.

Movement comes in three flavors: ground, fly, and teleport. Ground movers cannot move through occupied squares; fliers are restricted only in where they land. Fliers can also move diagonally, ground icons cannot. Only the Wizard and the Sorceress and teleport, but for practical purposes you can think of them as fliers in disguise.

On any turn, you can move an icon as far as its range allows in any direction or combination of directions. It can stop on any square not already occupied by one of your own icons.

Note: If you change your mind while maneuvering a ground mover, you must backtrack. Otherwise, the computer, being very literal minded, will assume you are trying to extend your move unlawfully,

THE COMBAT ARENA

COMBAT. Action in the combat arena is immediate and simultaneous; there is no taking turns. Joysticks direct movement of the icons. Pressing the button initiates an attack - swinging the sword, firing an arrow, casting a fireball - in the direction the joystick is pointed. You can attack or move in any of eight directions: up, down, left, right, and the four diagonals. Important: your icon cannot move while the button is pressed.

Combat is of three general types. Knights and Goblins are sword swingers and club wielders; they must be very near an opponent to inflict damage.

The Banshee and the Phoenix inflict damage in a circular area around themselves; the longer the opposing icon is in that circle, the greater the damage it sustains. Such "area" attacks need not be aimed.

All the other icon "throw" missiles of some sort and can, consequently, do damage from a considerable distance. See the Quick Reference Card for a detailed comparison of the speed ("Attack Speed") of a damage done ("Attack Force") by the different missiles.

THE ATTACK INTERVAL. While combat is fast and furious, you can't just fire away as fast as your finger twitches. It takes a moment to raise a sword into position to strike; longer to conjure even a fast fireball; and the better part of two whole seconds (!) to rip a boulder out of the ground and lift it high enough to throw.

Pushing the button before your icon is ready to strike will accomplish nothing - except to keep your icon from moving. At the exact instant you can launch another attack, the computer rings a bell - a high note for the Light Side, a lower one for the Dark Side - to let you know.

BARRIERS. The obstacles or barriers in the arena go through luminosity cycles of their own. Be careful; they can be as tricky as an opponent!

Normally, a barrier is impenetratable. However, when its cycle changes a barrier's luminance to exactly match the color of the background, the barrier disappears...for a few seconds. You can walk over it, shoot past it, anything. It's gone.

Furthermore, for a few seconds before a barrier vanishes and after it reappears, you can walk or fire a missile through it, but you (or the missile) will be slowed down.

If this seems at all confusing, just remember that the more solid a barrier looks, the more solid it is. If you have any doubts, avoid the barrier entirely - and get out of the way of oncoming missiles.

LIFE, DEATH, AND WOUNDS. The "lifelines" at either end of the arena indicate the current lifespan (health/strength) of the two battling icons. When an icon is wounded, its matching lifeline is reduced in proportion to the severity of the wound. When its lifeline is gone, the icon is "dead" and combat is over.

A victorious icon returns to the strategy screen in control of the disputed square. However, a seriously wounded icon is easier to defeat the next time it is forced to fight. Even the strongest icon can be worn down by waves of attackers.

On the strategy screen, wounded icons are healed slowly by the simple passage of time, more quickly, by resting on a power point; or instantly and completely, by a Heal spell.

MAGIC SPELLS

Magic is arguable the most significant strategic element in ARCHON. Only the two mages (magicians) - the Wizard and the Sorceress - can cast spells, and each mage can cast each spell only once. While the spells are powerful, they have one drawback: each spell weakens the mage casting it, leaving the mage progressively less able to defend itself against direct attack.

A spell may cast instead of a regular move on the strategy screen. Simply move the frame atop your mage, as if you were going to move it. Push the button, and the usual message appears. Without moving the icon, however, just push the button again, and you will get a new message: "SELECT YOUR SPELL".

Push the joystick up or down to survey the spells still available, and push the button when you find the one you want. If further actions on your part are required, additional messages will direct you appropriately.

Remember that you can't conjure the same spell more than once, and you can't cast a spell against power points or icons on them.

Details are given below.

TELEPORT

EFFECT: This spell moves - teleports - any one of your icons any distance from one square on the strategy screen to another.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: After selecting the spell, move the frame to the icon you want; push the button; and then move the icon to its destination -

Just as if it were a normal move.

RESTRICTIONS: You cannot move an enemy icon. You cannot move onto a square already occupied by one of your own icons (as usual). You cannot teleport onto or off a power point. You cannot teleport an imprisoned icon.
(See IMPRISON).

ADDITIONAL NOTE: Do not confuse this spell with a mage's normal three square movement. That is minor magic, on the same order as casting fireballs, and is not bound by the restrictions of the seven major spells.

HEAL

EFFECT: This spell instantly heals any icon of all wounds it has sustained in the combat arena.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: After selecting the spell, move the frame to the wounded icon, and push the button.

RESTRICTIONS: You cannot heal an icon resting on a power point. You can "heal" an already healthy icon, but why bother.

SHIFT TIME

EFFECT: Two effects are possible. Most often, the spell reverses the flow of time: i.e., the direction of the luminosity cycle of the delta squares. Squares that had been growing gradually darker now grow lighter - until the cycle peaked. However, if the spell is cast when the luminosity cycle is at either peak, SHIFT TIME will cause the cycle to shift abruptly to the opposite extreme (from black to white, or vice versa).

ACTION REQUIRED: None after selecting the spell.

RESTRICTIONS: None

EXCHANGE

EFFECT: This spell causes any two icons on the strategy screen to trade places.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: Move the frame to one of the icons you wish to transpose, and push the button. Then do the same to the other icon.

RESTRICTIONS: Neither icon can be imprisoned or on a power point.

SUMMON ELEMENTAL

EFFECT: This spell allows you to attack any enemy icon with a new temporary icon representing one of four elementals - animated spirit of the ancient elements of earth, air, fire and water. Combat is conducted in the combat arena as usual, except that the elemental vanishes after the battle, win or lose.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: Once the spell is selected and the elemental appears on your side of the strategy screen, move it to the icon you wish to attack. In the combat arena, direct the elemental just as you would any other icon.

RESTRICTIONS: You cannot attack an icon on a power point. You cannot direct the elemental to a vacant square or one occupied by one of your own icons. You cannot choose which elemental will respond to your summons.

REVIVE

EFFECT: This spell restores to the game an icon previously lost ("killed") in combat.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: The procedure is similar to a TELEPORT spell or a normal move, except that the revived icon comes from a special display by the side of the strategy screen, and its destination must be a vacant square next to the mage.

RESTRICTIONS: You cannot "revive" an icon not already dead. One of the

(initially five) squares adjoining your mage must be vacant, and you must put the revived icon on one of those vacant squares.

IMPRISON

EFFECT: This spell keeps an icon on the strategy screen from leaving the square. The icon can fight its attackers in the combat arena, but it cannot be moved off its square. Important: an imprisoned mage cannot cast spells! Imprisonment is temporary. A Dark Side icon would remain imprisoned until the delta squares turn black; a Light Side icon would be freed when delta squares turn white.

ACTIONS REQUIRED: Once the spell is cast, move the frame to the target icon, and push the button.

RESTRICTIONS: You cannot imprison an icon on a power point. You cannot imprison any icon at a time when the luminosity cycle would automatically free it.

CEASE CONJURING

This is not a spell; it is a way to avoid casting a spell if you miscalculate. If you change your mind while selecting a spell, or if the spell you want is unavailable or canceled, you may push the button when CEASE CONJURING is displayed. This will allow you to start your turn over.

THE OPPOSING FORCES

LIGHT SIDE

THE WIZARD: An ancient man of vast supernatural power, the WIZARD is the leader of the Light Side. In battle, the WIZARD casts devastating balls of fire. He rarely ventures from the safety of his home power point, however, and is more commonly used to cast one of the seven spells (See MAGIC SPELLS).

THE UNICORN: Resembling a great white horse with the tail of a lion and a sharp, spiral horn set at its brow, the UNICORN is swift and agile. The beautiful creature can fire blinding blots of energy from its magical horn.

THE ARCHERS: The ARCHERS are fearless Amazon warriors of legendary skill with their fine, whitewood bows. They are endowed with magical quivers that can never be emptied.

THE GOLEM: A GOLEM is an artificial being shaped from a stone and gleaming metal, and animated by magic. Roughly man-shaped, it is hugh, twice the height of a man. Its weapons are boulders ripped from the earth and hurled with devastating force.

THE VALKYRIES: VALKYRIES are beauteous blonde war maidens from the legions of Valhalla. Each of these ferocious females is endowed with two great magical gifts: first the ability to stride the air as if it were solid ground; and, second an enchanted spear, which, when thrown, returns to her hand of its own accord.

THE DJINNI: The DJINNI is a magical being from another dimension, a plane of tempest and storm. In form he is a hugh, superbly muscled man whose body is partly flesh and partly swirling currents of air. A cousin to the wind itself, the DJINNI can raise a small tornado with a gesture and control it with a thought.

THE PHOENIX: The PHOENIX is a flaming bird of immense size and power. In battle it can explode into a seething mass of fire, scorching anyone on the perimeter of the blaze and burning severely any enemy unfortunate enough to be caught near the incandescent core. Not only is the PHOENIX unscathed by its own flames, but, while undergoing its fiery metamorphosis, it cannot be harmed by any attack known.

THE KNIGHTS: The KNIGHTS are foot soldiers armed and armored against foes far larger than themselves. Although they cannot withstand more than one blow from many of their enemies, they need not be mere cannon (or dragon)

fodder. Provided they are swift and clever, their speed of attack gives them a chance to survive and triumph.

DARK SIDE

THE SORCERESS: The equal of the old WIZARD only in power, the eternally young and ever beautiful SORCERESS is his counterpart in all ways. Her lightning bolts are swifter and surer than his fireballs, if a shade less potent. Fierce in battle but safest on the black power point, she is most often used to cast the seven spells (See MAGIC SPELLS).

THE BASILISK: The BASILISK is a small, crested reptile with a scaly body of a lizard and the bulbous glowing eyes of a gorgon. Although it is relatively short-lived, the beast's quick movements and deadly glance make it a terrifying opponent.

THE MANTICORE: The MANTICORE resembles a large golden lion with a human face and a scorpion's thorny tail. This nasty appendage bristles with great quills like spikes, which the fell beast can fling over its head with surprising accuracy.

THE TROLL: A dweller in caves and dark places, the misshapen TROLL is a shambling giant, dull but strong, clumsy but hard to slay. Like the GOLEM, it carries no ready-made weapons; instead, it seizes boulders, tree trunks - whatever comes to hand - and catapults the massive objects at its enemies.

THE SHAPESHIFTER: The SHAPESHIFTER is a doppelganger, a demonic creature without true shape or form, save what it steals from its enemies. In battle it becomes the mirror image of its opponent, strongest on squares where its enemy is weakest, turning the enemy's powers against itself. It has no fixed lifespan; all wounds that do not prove fatal will heal as soon as it assumes a new form.

THE DRAGON: The DRAGON, a monstrous serpentine reptile, is without peer in the combat arena. One gout of its flaming breath will kill many creatures, and a second blast is almost always fatal. Highly mobile and very difficult to slay, its awesome powers make it second in value only to the Sorceress.

THE BANSHEE: The BANSHEE is an undead spirit that feeds off the souls of her opponents, a ghostly apparition that attacks with her keening wail, draining the life from anyone in range of the sound (the shaded area around her). Prolonged exposure to the terrifying shriek can be fatal.

THE GOBLINS: GOBLINS are hideous dwarves, twisted of limb and misshapen of feature, unfriendly and often violent. Their mutual antagonism is kept in check only by the powers of the Sorceress. On dark ground their gnarled clubs are more than a match for the swords of the Knights and if well-directed they can bring down the most potent of enemies.

PLAYING HINTS

STRATEGY SCREEN: OPENINGS

CONSERVATIVE OPENINGS. This involves moving your unfavorably located icons onto more favorable squares (white squares for Light icons, black squares for Dark icons). The idea is to establish a strong, balanced position early on. Since the corner icons (the Valkyrie/Banshee) are mobile and especially vulnerable to magical attack (via the Summon Elemental or Teleport spells), these are often the first to be moved. Being a ground-mover, the Unicorn/Banshee will be stuck on the "wrong" square until you clear an escape route, either directly by moving the Knight/Goblin in front of it or indirectly, and more slowly, by moving other Knights/Goblins and then adjacent icons in the back rank.

MAGICAL ASSAULT ("BIG JUJU" OR "MAJOR MANA" OPENING). The aim here is to wipe out the strongest enemy icon right off the bat, before it can do any harm. This is most easily done with a combination of spells: Imprison, Summon Elemental, Teleport, and if needed, Reverse Time. The first spell holds the victim immobile while you attack with an elemental and then one of your strongest icons teleported across the board. Shift Time may be used to prevent the imprisoned icon from getting away before you can finish it off.

MONSTER ROMP. This is risky but fun and sometimes surprisingly effective. Just fly or teleport one of your strongest icons (the DJINNI/DRAGON or PHOENIX/SHAPESHIFTER) to the other side of the board, and take it on a

rompin' stompin' tour of all the occupied squares unfavorable to the icons stuck on them. This procedure tends to throw new players into a panic, which is always helpful. More experienced players will either imprison the attacker or counter with a monster romp of their own. Rapid attrition on both sides follows such a counterattack.

STRATEGY SCREEN: GENERAL HINTS

STAY ON YOUR COLOR! The effect of a square's luminance on the life of your icon is large - often as much as 50%. Attack on unfavorable squares only if you have an overwhelming superiority over the defending icon.

PLAN AHEAD. Most successful attacks require more than one move to execute. Before taking a square consider what you will do afterwards. What icon will continue the assault if the first attacker dies?

AVOID TRAFFIC JAMS. Make openings in your front line for ground-movers to pass. The greater your force's mobility, the greater flexibility and strength.

PROTECT YOUR MAGE! The Wizard/Sorceress may be a tough hombre in the combat arena, but doom is nigh should you lose your mage early in the game. Since power points are immune to magic spells, it is a wise idea to keep your Wizard/Sorceress at home.

STRATEGY SCREEN: SPELLS

TELEPORT: This spell is handy for tossing a slow or unfavorably placed icon into your opponent's back rank to raise a ruckus. Alternatively, you can teleport a wounded icon out of danger.

HEAL: Never heal the Shapeshifter! Since it regenerates completely between battles, the spell would be wasted.

SHIFT TIME: Use this spell to prolong an imprisonment by reversing the flow of time before the luminance cycle peaks, free the enemy icon. Conversely, especially if you are playing second, you can free your own imprisoned icon early by casting the spell at the opposing luminosity peak: in that case, the cycle will jump to your peak, and your icon will be freed. A more strategic use of the spell could allow you to make a concerted attack on the power points - and possibly win the game - by keeping the luminance favorable.

EXCHANGE: An enemy advance can be frustrated temporarily by exchanging a menacing intruder (e.g. an opposing Dragon/Djinni) in your territory with a weaker icon (a Goblin/Knight) from your opponent's rear ranks.

SUMMON ELEMENTAL: Since elementals are neutral beings, unaffected by changes in luminance, they are well suited to attacking an annoying enemy icon that remains on squares favorable to it. The spell is also de rigueur against mages that venture from their home power points.

REVIVE: Revive only strong icons. Also, avoid placing a revived icon on an unfavorable square, or it may die again immediately.

IMPRISON: The real trick with this spell is timing, coupled with Shift Time, if necessary, prolong the effect. Imprison a threatening intruder to blunt an attack, or immobilize a strong icon on a delta square; then attack when the luminance cycle is most favorable.

TIPS ON STRATEGY

COMBAT ARENA: GENERAL HINTS

DON'T MOVE IN STRAIGHT LINES. Monsters are tricky; you should be too. Dodge and weave. Don't become predictable.

HIT AND RUN. Don't just fire a shot and then sit there waiting for a retaliatory strike. Take your finger off the button immediately after firing, and boogie on out of there! If you hit something, it can probably hit you.

USE DIAGONAL SHOTS! Although difficult to master 45 degree - angle shots will improve your performance dramatically. Few players manage consistent diagonals.

TRAP YOUR OPPONENT IN A CORNER. This is especially helpful for sloggers with slow, easily dodged missiles and for the poor infighters (Knights/Goblins).

FEINT! Trick your opponent into attacking by moving into the line of fire momentarily. Then, in the interval before the enemy icon can attack again, close in and loose your own attack.

CONFUSE YOUR OPPONENT. When at close range, dodge back and forth to keep from being nailed. This is especially important when you cannot afford an exchange of blows and is vital for a Knight/Goblin.

KNOW YOUR ICON'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. Different icons require different tactics - sometime radically different - and the nature of your immediate enemy should also affect your course of action.

COMBAT ARENA: THE ICONS

WIZARD. Avoid using the Wizard in combat unless attacked. In a fight, approach

mid-range but no closer. Stay in the open; fireballs are easily stopped by barriers.

SORCERESS. Avoid combat if possible! The speed of her lightening bolts makes the Sorceress effective at long range. Play defensively, and use the barriers to trap an enemy long enough to zap it.

UNICORN/BASILISK. Speed and distance are their prime weapons. Never close, especially if the opponent is in the open. Try to use lines of barriers as alleys for fire.

ARCHER. The Archer's arrows are not fast, so she must get fairly close to ensure a hit. Slower targets, of course, allow greater range.

GOLEM/TROLL. The advantages of these slow-moving creatures are their long lives and deadly attacks. (Those boulders hurt!) Since the rocks travel slowly, the Golem/Troll must get close to the enemy. Be aggressive!

DJINNI/DRAGON. You have power to spare here, so be brazen in attack. Avoid possible entanglements of cluttered terrain when fighting an icon with a fast attack.

VALKYRIE. The Valkyrie is basically a tougher archer with a more damaging but slower moving attack. Use similar tactics.

PHOENIX. Get close - the closer the better. Trap fast foes in corners. Avoid firing alleys, and use the explosive attack defensively when necessary to keep from being hit never sit still when vulnerable.

SHAPESHIFTER. The success of this icon is solely dependent on the proper battleground. Avoid white squares like the plague! Ignore the Knights. (Why take a chance on getting killed for so small a prize?) Attack strong icons on black or dark squares.

MANTICORE. This beast has the advantage of a broader attack than its counterparts, especially on diagonals. Be bold against weak opponents, but remain at mid-range when fighting more dangerous adversaries.

BANSHEE. The Banshee requires - and rewards - great skill; she is worth the extra effort needed. Stay out of firing lines until the moment of attack; then come in from the side, where the area of effect is greatest. Release the joystick button immediately after pressing it, and follow the opponent closely to prolong the exposure to the scream. Avoid the Golem (sometimes known as "the Banshee Curse").

KNIGHT/GOBLIN. Where these infighters are concerned, he who hesitates...is dog food. Move quickly but erratically. Get in close and stay there! Dodge back and forth or circle your enemy to avoid return fire and fluster your opponent. Never stand still, and attack constantly. In a Knight-Goblin conflict, use feints and stop thrusts. Accept an exchange of blows only if you have a significant luminosity advantage.

ELEMENTALS. The four elementals are quite different from one another. The Earth elemental should be played like a Golem/Troll which it greatly resembles. Of the other three, Fire has the fastest and most damaging attacks, and Water the longest lifespan. Tactically, you can think of Fire as a Wizard, Air as an Archer, and Water as a Manticore. REGARDLESS of which elemental you have, however, be aggressive!!!! Remember that it wounds don't matter, since it will not outlast the battle, anyway.

COMMAND SUMMARY

Notice: This product requires Kickstart version 1.1.

To Start: Kickstart your Amiga and then insert your Archon disk in the internal drive. It will boot automatically. If your Amiga is already up and running, insert your Archon disk and "warm boot". Pressing the SPACEBAR during the introductory screen takes you to the introduction of the icon; pressing it again bypasses the rest of the introduction and takes you directly to the Main Menu.

Main Menu: Select Main Menu choices with the joystick plugged into Port #2.

As you move the joystick, the selection arrow moves from box to box. Make your selection by pressing the joystick button when the arrow is in the appropriate box.

Options: Choose from the following options for each side:

Human: Human makes all moves for that side.

Computer: Computer makes all moves for that side.

Cyborg: Human player makes the moves on the strategy board, while the computer controls combat on the battleground. You can override the computer by pressing the joystick button when prompted, before the battle begins.

Handcapping: The greater the difference in rank between the two players, the greater the higher ranked player's handicap. A handicapped player's icons and missiles move more slowly, and the missiles take longer to reload. For the

maximum possible handicap, the weaker player should choose Beginner and the stronger player Advanced.

Start Play: To start play with the Light side moving first, move the selection arrow into the Left (Light) Start box and press and release the joystick button. Conversely, to start play with the Dark side moving first, press the joystick button with the selection arrow the Right (Dark) Start box. If you make no choice, the computer will play a demonstration game.

Joystick Control: If you are playing against the computer, plug your joystick in Port #2. For a two-player game, you will need two joysticks. In that case, Port #1 controls the Light Side and Port #2 controls the Dark Side.

MOVING

1. **Strategy.** Use your joystick to move icons and frames, and press the button to start and finish moves. If you change your mind about moving a particular icon on the strategy board, just move it back to the square you picked it up from, and press the button. You can then start your turn over by picking up another icon.

2. **Combat.** Use the following instructions for each icon:

Knight or Goblin: Move the joystick toward the enemy and press the button to swing your weapon.

Banshee: Press button to initiate attack. Banshee can move while screaming.

Phoenix: Press button to initiate attack. Phoenix cannot move until the explosion is over.

All Others: Move joystick in the direction your wish to fire, and then press button to fire.

Note: Because of the 3-D simulation on the battlefield, a "hit" on the lower portion of an icon is likely to pass harmlessly in front of it. For best results, aim at the upper portion of the icon.

Pausing or Quitting: During play, pressing the SPACEBAR at any time pauses the game. Resume play by pressing it a second time. Pressing Q (for "Quit") ends the game and returns you to the Main Menu.

ARCHON -- QUICK REFERENCE CARD

The Opposing Forces -- Light Side

WIZARD
MOVEMENT: Teleport-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Fireball
ATTACK FORCE: Great
ATTACK SPEED: Medium
ATTACK INTERVAL: Average
LIFESPAN: Average
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

UNICORN
MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Energy Ball
ATTACK FORCE: Moderate
ATTACK SPEED: Fast
ATTACK INTERVAL: Short
LIFESPAN: Short
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

ARCHER
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Arrow
ATTACK FORCE: Minor
ATTACK SPEED: Medium
ATTACK INTERVAL: Average
LIFESPAN: Short
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

GOLEM
MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Slow
ATTACK MODE: Boulder
ATTACK FORCE: Great
ATTACK SPEED: Slow
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Long
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

VALKYRIE
MOVEMENT: Fly-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Magic Spear
ATTACK FORCE: Moderate
ATTACK SPEED: Slow
ATTACK INTERVAL: Average
LIFESPAN: Average
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

DJINNI
MOVEMENT: Fly-4
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Whirlwind
ATTACK FORCE: Moderate
ATTACK SPEED: Medium
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Very Long
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

PHOENIX
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Fiery Explosion
ATTACK FORCE: Great
ATTACK SPEED: Slow
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Long
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

KNIGHT
MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Club
ATTACK FORCE: Minor
ATTACK SPEED: Instant
ATTACK INTERVAL: Very short
LIFESPAN: Short
NUMBER ON SIDE: 7

ARCHON -- QUICK REFERENCE CARD

The Opposing Forces

DARK SIDE

SORCERESS

MOVEMENT: Teleport-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Lightening Bolt
ATTACK FORCE: Moderate
ATTACK SPEED: Fast
ATTACK INTERVAL: Average
LIFESPAN: Average
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

SHAPESHIFTER

MOVEMENT: FLY-5
SPEED: Varies
ATTACK MODE: Varies
ATTACK FORCE: Varies
ATTACK SPEED: Varies
ATTACK INTERVAL Varies
LIFESPAN: Unknown
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

BASILISK

MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Eye Beam
ATTACK FORCE: Great
ATTACK SPEED: Fast
ATTACK INTERVAL: Short
LIFESPAN: Short
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

DRAGON

MOVEMENT: Fly-4
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Fiery Breath
ATTACK FORCE: Very Great
ATTACK SPEED: Medium
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Very Long
NUMBER ON SIDE: 1

MANTICORE

MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Tail Spikes
ATTACK FORCE: Minor
ATTACK SPEED: Slow
ATTACK INTERVAL: Average
LIFESPAN: Average
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

BANSHEE

MOVEMENT: Fly-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Scream
ATTACK FORCE: Moderate
ATTACK SPEED: Instant
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Average
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

TROLL

MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Slow
ATTACK MODE: Boulder
ATTACK FORCE: Great
ATTACK SPEED: Slow
ATTACK INTERVAL: Long
LIFESPAN: Long
NUMBER ON SIDE: 2

GOBLIN

MOVEMENT: Ground-3
SPEED: Normal
ATTACK MODE: Club
ATTACK FORCE: Minor
ATTACK SPEED: Instant
ATTACK INTERVAL: Very Short
LIFESPAN: Short
NUMBER ON SIDE: 7

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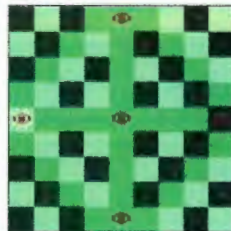
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STRATEGY SCREEN

1. TERMS

- **Player Turn:**
Constitutes an action performed by a human or a computer-player.
- **Peak:**
When the shifting color is Full Light or Full Dark.
- **Cycle Turn:**
Composed by the 2 Player Turns. The shifting color changes at each Cycle Turn.
- **Cycle:**
Formed of 10 Cycle Turns, the time needed to a shifting color to do a complete loop (Excepted when the Shift Time spell is used).

2. THE BOARD



The board is composed of 3 square types and 5 Power Points:

Element	Description
	Light Side square
	Dark Side square
	Shifting square
	Power Point

3. SHIFTING COLOR

All the Shifting Squares share the same color. At each Cycle Turn, this Shifting Color is increased or decreased by 1 according to the Time Direction. When the Shifting Color reaches a Peak, the Time Direction is reversed. So, it continuously goes from one Peak to another:

Square Color	Description
	Light Peak
	Dark Side starting color
	Light Side starting color
	Dark Peak

The starting color and time direction depend of the starting side:

Starting Side	Starting Color	Time Direction
Light		To Dark Peak
Dark		To Light Peak

4. POWER POINTS

The Power Points have the following effects:

- They prevent any Spell to be casted on the Squares they are located.
- They heal any icon located on them every Cycle Turn.
- A player wins if he owns the 5 Power Points.

5. PLAYER TURN

The following actions are done at the beginning of each Player Turn:

- If the player belongs to the Starting Side, a new Cycle Turn begins.
- Game end conditions check.
- AI: If the player is controlled by the computer, he thinks.
- Finally, the player does an action.

6. CYCLE TURN

The following actions are done at the beginning of each Cycle Turn (when the player belongs to the Starting Side):

■ Color shifting:

- The color advances according to the direction of the Time Direction.
- If a Peak is reached, the time reverses its direction.
- If the color goes beyond the Peak (because of a Shift Time spell at the previous Cycle Turn) the color becomes the opposing Peak (full cycle reverse).

■ Peak reaching:

The player belonging to the side of the Peak color has:

- His imprisoned icon released.
- All his icons healed by 1 lifespan.

■ Power Point healing:

- All the icons located on a Power Point gain 1 lifespan.

7. GAME END CONDITIONS

The ending conditions are checked at the beginning of each Player Turn:

Type	Conditions
Victory	One of the two players has eliminated all enemy icons or owns the 5 Power Points.
Stalemate	12 Cycles Turns have elapsed without a combat versus a computer and both players have at least 1 icons remaining.
Tie	No icon remains to both players.
Defeat	The last icon of the current player is imprisoned.

8. AI

TODO

Squares rating:



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OPPOSING FORCES

1. ATTRIBUTES

Durations are given in Jiffies. For example, duration of 80 jiffies is equal to 1.6 seconds on a PAL System (80/50):

System	1 jiffy	1 second
	Duration	
PAL	1/50 s	50 jiffies
NTSC	1/60 s	60 jiffies

The attributes used by the icons are:

Attribute		Description
Lifespan		An icon dies when his lifespan reaches 0. It can never exceed the original value.
Attack	Force	The damage done when the icon hits his enemy. The Phoenix and the Banshee inflicts damage on a period of time (Duration): - Phoenix: Up to 5 times 2 damage on 50 jiffies (max 10 damage). - Banshee: Up to 8 times 1 damage on 40 jiffies (max 8 damage).
	Speed	The greater the Attack Speed is, the faster the missile moves. Only used by firing icons.
	Interval	The time in jiffies the icon must wait before attacking again. It begins as soon as the player attacks (not when the attack finishes).
	Duration	The time in jiffies the attack lasts. Only used by non-firing icons.
Movement	Type	Only used on the board. Ground: Icon can't move above other icon nor diagonally. Fly: Icon can move above other icon and diagonally. Teleport: like Fly.
	Range	Only used on the board. The number of squares the icon can move (a diagonal move counts as 1 square).
	Speed	The motion speed reference of the icon during flight.
AI (*)	Attacking Range	The range until which the computer player will fire.
	Fleeing Range	The range until which the computer player will flee.
	Dodging Thickness	The horizontal and diagonal thickness the computer player tries to stay away from his enemy. The vertical thickness is superior by 3.

(*) See 'Combat Arena - AI' for a visual explanation.

2. ICONS

Icon	Lifespan	Attack						Movement			AI		
		Weapon	Type	Force	Speed	Interval	Duration	Type	Range	Speed	Attacking Range	Fleeing Range	Dodging Thickness
	Unicorn	9		Energy Bolt	7	7	60	Ground	4	100 %	138	78	0
	Wizard	10		Fireball	10	5	80	Teleport	3	100 %	116	66	8
	Archer	5		Arrow	5	4	80	Ground	3	100 %	84	44	6
	Golem	15		Boulder	10	3	100	Ground	3	75 %	78	48	9
	Valkyrie	8		Magic Spear	7	3	80	Fly	3	100 %	66	36	6
	Djinni	15		Whirlwind	6	5	90	Fly	4	100 %	116	66	8
	Phoenix [1]	12		Fiery Explosion 2 (*5)		100	50	Fly	5	100 %	15	20	21

Knight	5		Sword	5	40	15	Ground	3	100 %	12	15	8
Basilisk	6		Eye Beam	9	7	60	Ground	3	100 %	143	73	7
Sorceress	10		Lightning Bolt	8	6	80	Teleport	3	100 %	126	66	6
Manticore	8		Tail Spikes	4	3	80	Ground	3	100 %	70	40	8
Troll	14		Boulder	10	3	100	Ground	3	75 %	78	88	3
Shapeshifter	[2] 10	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	Fly	5	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Dragon	17		Fiery Breath	11	4	120	Fly	4	100 %	92	53	7
Banshee	8		Scream	1 (*8)		100	Fly	3	100 %	18	10	13
Goblin	5		Club	5	40	15	Ground	3	100 %	12	15	8
Air Elemental	[4] 12		Air	5	4	70			100 %	95	44	8
Fire Elemental	[4] 10		Fire	9	5	60			100 %	111	55	8
Earth Elemental	[4] 17		Earth	9	3	100			75 %	78	48	8
Water Elemental	[4] 14		Water	6	3	100			100 %	71	33	8

- [1] Phoenix becomes invincible during his attack (but is unable to move).
[2] See the special rule in 'Combat Arena - Lifespan'.
[3] Shapeshifter gets the value of the opposing icon.
[4] No square color lifespan bonus.

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SPELLS

1. DESCRIPTION

Spell	Description
Imprison	Imprisons an enemy icon. Not allowed if the Shifting Color is at the Peak of the opposing color or the enemy icon is on a Power Point.
Shift Time	Reverses the Time Direction. See 'Strategy Screen - Cycle Turn' for a detailed description of the consequences of this Spell.
Summon Elemental	Summons a random Elemental (different than the previous one) to fight an enemy icon. Not allowed if the enemy icon is on a Power Point.
Teleport	Teleports a friendly icon. Not allowed if the friendly icon is imprisoned or one of the concerned squares has a Power Point on it.
Revive	Revives a friendly died icon on a charmed square (a square around the caster). Not allowed if no square is available around the caster or the selected square has a Power Point on it.
Heal	Restores Lifespan of a friendly icon to its original value. Not allowed if the friendly icon is on a Power Point.
Exchange	Swaps 2 friendly icons. Not allowed if one of the concerned icons is on a Power Point.

2. AI

The AI chooses the first Spell matching all the necessary criteria (following the priority order). If no spell is chosen, he moves an icon.

Spell	AI Priority	Description
Imprison	1	TODO Aims the enemy caster if not on Power Point. Else counts the enemies in caster proximity (other than Knight or Goblin). Each enemy adds 25% to the cast probability. Else 25% to cast on Djinni/Phoenix or Dragon/Shapeshifter.
Shift Time	2	TODO Casted if enemy attempts a Peak Reverse. Casted to try a Peak Reverse if he has an imprisoned icon.
Summon Elemental	3	TODO Aims the enemy caster if not on Power Point. Else counts the enemies in caster proximity (other than Knight or Goblin). Each enemy adds 25% to the cast probability. Else 25% to cast on Djinni/Phoenix or Dragon/Shapeshifter.
Teleport	4	TODO Aims the enemy caster if not on Power Point. Else 25% to cast.
Revive	5	Casted if: - Djinni/Phoenix or Dragon/Shapeshifter is dead. - There's a free square without Power Point around the caster. - The free square color is half part of the caster color side (three lightest or three darkest).
Heal	6	Casted if Wizard/Djinni/Phoenix or Sorceress/Dragon has \leq 5 Lifespan and not located on a Power Point (Shapeshifter never need to be healed, see 'Combat Arena - Lifespan').
Exchange		Never casted.

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COMBAT ARENA

1. LIFESPAN

At the beginning of a combat, the lifespan of each fighting icon is computed by adding the following values:

▪ Current Lifespan:

Special rule concerning the Shapeshifter: Versus an elemental, his Lifespan is equal to 10, otherwise it gets the original value of the opposing icon type. So, the Shapeshifter never needs any healing.

▪ Square color lifespan bonus (Not applied to elementals):

Square Color	Lifespan Bonus	
	Light Side	Dark Side
	+7	+0
	+6	+1
	+4	+3
	+3	+4
	+1	+6
	+0	+7

▪ Casted Spell lifespan penalty (Only applied to the Wizard and the Sorceress, they lose 1 lifespan for each spell casted):

# Spells Casted	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lifespan Penalty	-0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7

At the end of the combat, the remaining Lifespan of each fighting icon becomes their current Lifespan.

2. OBSTACLES

18 Obstacles, classed in 3 groups of 6 Obstacles, are randomly scattered in the Arena:

Obstacle Color	Group	Initial Combat Time Direction
	Starting color Group 1	To Dark Peak
	Starting color Group 2	To Light Peak
	Starting color Group 3	To Light Peak

During the combat, the color of each group shifts according to the Combat Time Direction and reverses when it reaches a Peak. The shifts of all groups occur at the same time: every 5.12 seconds (PAL) or 4.27 seconds (NTSC):

Obstacle Color	Description
	Lightest
	Group 1 initial color
	Group 2 initial color
	Group 3 initial color, Darkest

The obstacles are barriers to the players and missiles motions, but:

- When a group is exactly of the same color than the fighting Square Color, the obstacles of the group temporarily disappear until the color shifts and don't alter any motion.
- When a group has a color next to the fighting Square Color, the obstacles of the group only slow down the motions.

3. COMPUTER DIFFICULTY

The computer player adapts his level to the player level by adding latency before and after an attack.

The latency is computed at the beginning of the combat and will be the same throughout this one.

The value of the latency (in jiffies) is equal to the base 3 added by the number of icons alive he has, minus the number of icons alive his enemy has. If the combat is held on a Power Point, the latency is deducted by 3.

(harder). The minimum value of the latency is 1.

Criterion	Latency
Base	3
Remaining Icons (Computer player)	+X
Remaining Icons (Enemy)	-Y
Held on Power Point	-3

4. AI

The computer player has 2 behaviors in combat, depending of the state of his attack:

- His weapon is loaded: Ready behavior.
- His weapon is reloading: Reloading behavior.

1. READY

The computer player has the Ready behavior when his attack is reloaded.

He will attack as soon as the enemy red point enters the attacking area and no obstacle is on the path of his line of sight.

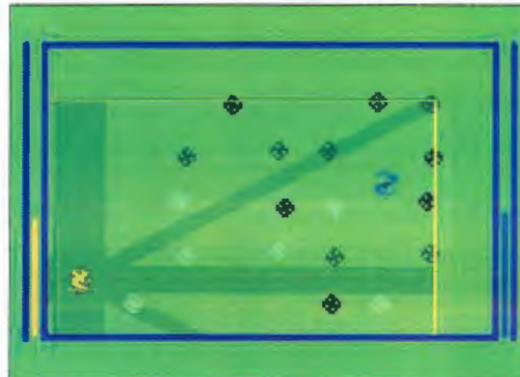
When the enemy isn't in the attacking area:

- If his enemy attacks, he dodges the enemy attack using the dodging area (like in the Reloading behavior).
- Else, he positions himself:
 - If his enemy is located in the attacking range: Aim enemy by approaching his nearest axis toward his enemy until he enters the attacking area.
 - If his enemy is located outer the attacking range: Reach attacking range by approaching him using the shortest path.

The properties of the attacking area are:

Direction	Thickness	Length
Horizontal	18 pixels	Attacking Range
Diagonal	18 pixels	Attacking Range* 2 (Manhattan distance)
Vertical	12 pixels	Attacking Range

The attacking area (in dark green) and the attacking range (in yellow) of the Djinni:



To sum up, the order of his actions is:

- Dodge all attacks.
- Reach attacking range.
- Aim enemy.
- Attack enemy.

2. RELOADING

The computer player has this behavior when his attack is reloading:

- If his enemy is reloading and will reload after him, he positions himself to attack like in the Ready behavior (Reach attacking range and aim enemy).
- If his enemy is located in the dodging area:
 - He will try to make him leave (with a side step) to avoid the line of sight of his enemy.
 - If his enemy is located in the fleeing range (and in the dodging area), he will move away his enemy.
- If his enemy is located outer the dodging area, he moves randomly.

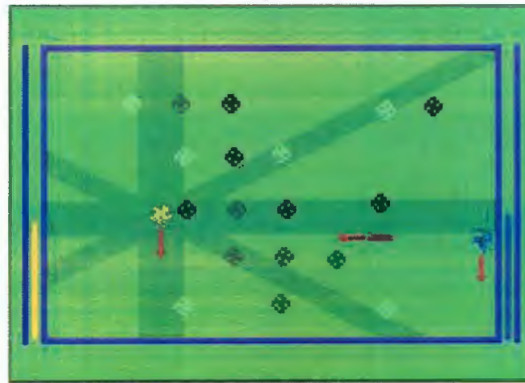
The properties of this dodging area are:

Direction	Thickness	Length
Horizontal	Horizontal Dodging Thickness	Fleeing Range
Diagonal	Diagonal Dodging Thickness	Fleeing Range* 2 (Manhattan distance)
Vertical	Vertical Dodging Thickness	Fleeing Range

The dodging area (in dark green) and the fleeing range (in yellow) of the Djinni:



Here's an example. The Dragon player fires and moves away staying out of the dodging area while the enemy is going down:



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Archon: The Light and the Dark

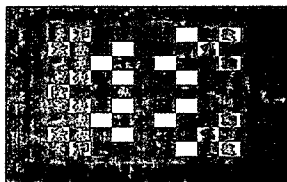
Archon: The Light and the Dark is a 1983 video game developed by Free Fall Associates and one of the first five games published by Electronic Arts. It is superficially similar to chess, in that it takes place on a board with alternating black and white squares, but instead of fixed rules when landing on another player's piece, an arcade-style fight takes place to determine the victor, and each piece has different combat abilities. The health of the player's piece is enhanced when landing on a square of one's own color.

Archon was originally written for Atari 8-bit computers and then ported to the Apple II, Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC, ZX Spectrum, Amiga, IBM PC (as a self-booting disk), Mac, PC-88, and NES. It was designed by Paul Reiche III (who also created the graphics for the game) and Jon Freeman and programmed by Anne Westfall.

A sequel was released in 1984: *Archon II: Adept*.

Gameplay

Overview and objective



C64 screenshot

The goal of the game is either to occupy five power points located on the board, to eliminate all the opposing pieces, or to eliminate all but one remaining imprisoned piece of the opponent's. Accomplishing any one of these goals results in a win.^{[1]:2}

When one piece lands on the same space as an opposing piece, the removal of the targeted piece is not automatic. Instead, the two pieces are placed into a full-screen 'combat arena' and must battle (action-style, with the players operating the combatants) to determine who takes the square.^{[1]:2[2]} A stronger piece will generally defeat a weaker piece, but not always, and a fight can result in both pieces being eliminated. This uncertainty adds a level of complexity to the game.

Different pieces have different abilities in the combat phase. These include movement, lifespan, and weapon. The weapons vary by range, speed, rate of firing, and power. For example, the pawn (represented by knights on the 'light' side and goblins on the 'dark' side) attacks quickly, but has very little strength; its weapon, a sword or club, has limited reach and power. A dragon is stronger and can attack from a distance, while a golem moves slowly and fires a slow but powerful boulder.

Game board

The board is visually similar to a chessboard and is laid out with nine columns and nine rows. There are five "power points", arranged at the center of each edge and the center of the board. A piece on a power point heals faster and is immune to spells cast by the opponent.^{[1]:3}

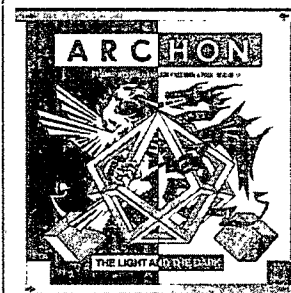
A piece's powers are affected by the square on which the battle takes place, with each player having an advantage on squares of their own color.^{[1]:3} Each quadrant of sixteen squares (e.g., A1:D4) in each corner of the board has six dark squares, six light squares, and four oscillating squares which cycle between light and dark, making them dangerous to hold over time; these quadrants are separated by oscillating squares along the middle column (E) and row (5). In total, 27 squares on the board ($\frac{1}{2}$) oscillate between light and dark.

The three power points in the middle column (E) are on oscillating squares. The two power points on the left and right edges are permanently assigned (A5 = light, I5 = dark) and are the respective starting squares for the spellcaster/leaders of each side.

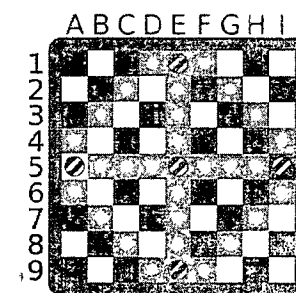
Icons

Each player starts with 18 icons, or pieces, from 8 different types,^{[1]:2} arranged in the two columns on either side of the board, Light starting on the left and Dark starting on the right.

Archon: The Light and the Dark



Developer(s)	Free Fall Associates
Publisher(s)	NA: Electronic Arts EU: Ariolasoft
Designer(s)	Jon Freeman Paul Reiche III
Programmer(s)	Anne Westfall
Platform(s)	Amiga, Amstrad CPC, Apple II, Atari 8-bit, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Mac, NES, PC-88, ZX Spectrum
Release	1983
Genre(s)	Strategy, action
Mode(s)	Single player, Two-player



9x9 board for Archon

Archon icons^[1]:10–11^[3]

Light							Dark							Qty	Movement		
Name	Weapon	F ^[a]	S ^[b]	I ^[c]	Life ^[d]	Start ^[e]	Name	Weapon	F ^[a]	S ^[b]	I ^[c]	Life ^[d]	Start ^[e]		Type	Range ^[f]	Spe ^[g]
Wizard	fireball	5	3	3	3	A5	Sorceress	lightning bolt	3	5	3	3	I5	1	Teleport	3	Nor
Djinni	whirlwind	3	3	3	5	A4	Dragon	fiery breath	6	3	1	6	I6	1	Flying	4	non
Phoenix	fiery explosion	5	1	1	5	A6	Shapeshifter	varies	var.	var.	var.	unknown	I4	1	Flying	5	non
Unicorn	energy bolt	3	5	5	3	A3, A7	Basilisk	eye beam	5	5	5	1	I3, I7	2	Ground	4(3) ^[a]	non
Golem	boulder	5	1	1	5	A2, A8	Troll	boulder	5	1	1	5	I2, I8	2	Ground	3	slc
Valkyrie	magic spear	3	1	3	3	A1, A9	Banshee	scream	3	6	1	3	I1, I9	2	Flying	3	non
Archer	arrow	1	3	3	1	B1, B9	Manticore	tail quills	1	1	3	3	H1, H9	2	Ground	3	non
Knight	sword	1	6	6	1	B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8	Goblin	club	1	6	6	1	H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8	7	Ground	3	non

Notes

- Force measures the impact of an individual attack landing on the opponent, rated on a scale of 1–6, with 1 being "minor", 3 being "moderate", 5 being "great", and 6 being "very great".
- Speed of an individual attack, rated on a scale of 1–6, with 1 being "slow", 3 being "medium", 5 being "fast", and 6 being "instant".
- Attack Interval is the recharge time before another attack can be made, rated on a scale of 1–6, with 1 being "long", 3 being "average", 5 being "short", and 6 being "very short".
- Length of this icon's life bar, rated on a scale of 1–6, with 1 being "short", 3 being "average", 5 being "long", and 6 being "very long".
- Starting square for this icon.
- Radius of movement, in squares.
- Basilisk has a movement radius of 3; unicorn has a movement radius of 4.

Each piece has one of three movement types: ground, flying, or teleport. Ground types cannot move diagonally or through an occupied square. Flying and teleport types do not have these restrictions but cannot end their move in a square already occupied by that player's pieces.^{[1]:5}

Most pieces have missile attacks, except the knight/goblin (short-range swinging attacks) and banshee/phoenix (short-range area attacks). Barriers in the combat arena cycle through light and dark; when the barriers match the background color, they are effectively no longer present.^{[1]:6}

Some pieces have special abilities. The phoenix can turn into a ball of fire, both damaging the enemy and shielding itself from enemy attacks. The shapeshifter assumes the shape and abilities of whatever piece it is up against. *MikroBitti* magazine once wrote that the phoenix and the shapeshifter facing each other usually end up as the most boring battle in the entire game; both combatants' capabilities are simultaneously offensive and defensive, and they tend to use it whenever they meet each other, and thus both rarely get damaged.

Each side also has a spellcaster piece, who are the leaders: the sorceress for the dark side and the wizard for the light side. The sorceress and the wizard can cast seven different spells. Each spell may be used only once per game by each spellcaster.^{[1]:5}

Archon spells^[1]:6–7

Name	Effect
Teleport	Moves a friendly piece to another location, unless the piece is imprisoned or the destination is not already occupied by a friendly piece or is a power point. Opposing pieces cannot be <i>teleported</i> .
Heal	<i>Heals</i> all wounds to a friendly piece, unless the piece is on a power point.
Shift Time	Shifts direction of oscillation cycle (e.g., if squares are changing from light to dark, <i>shift time</i> will result in cycling back towards light); if the cycle is at its peak, it abruptly shifts squares to the opposite peak (e.g., swaps light for dark tiles).
Exchange	Swap the locations of two selected pieces. If either piece is imprisoned or on a power point, an <i>exchange</i> is not possible.
Summon Elemental	<i>Summons</i> a temporary elemental to battle any opponent piece that is not on a power point; the elemental disappears after the battle, regardless of the outcome. The elemental is one of four types (air, earth, fire, or water), chosen randomly.
Revive	<i>Revives</i> any friendly icon previously removed from the board after combat onto an empty square adjacent to the spellcaster.
Imprison	<i>Imprison</i> confines an opponent piece to the square it is currently occupying, preventing it from moving but combat is still possible if a friendly piece is moved onto that square; if the square is shifting colors, the imprisonment is ended once it matches the opponent's color. Imprison cannot be used for pieces on a power point, nor can it be used on a piece that would be freed based on its background color.

The computer opponent slowly adapts over time to help players defeat it.^[4] The game is usually won when either one side destroys all the opposing pieces or one of the sides is able to occupy all of the five power points. More rarely, a side may also win by imprisoning its opponent's last remaining piece. If each side has but a single piece, and the two pieces destroy each other in combat, then the game ends in a tie.

Reception

Archon was very well received. *Softline* praised the game's originality and said that "it's an announcement that Free Fall does games. And it does them well."^[5] *Video* magazine reviewed the game in its "Arcade Alley" column where reviewers described it as "truly a landmark in the development of computerized strategy games" and suggested that "no review could possibly do more than hint at [*Archon*'s] manifold excellence."^[6]³² *Computer Gaming World*'s reviewer called *Archon* "a very good game, with lots of care put into its development."^[7] For Atari version, the magazine said that it "is a good first step towards what will be an exciting new class of game. Its play, despite the lack of depth or variation that will be possible, is fast moving."^[8] For Amiga version, the magazine recommended both *Archon* and *Adept* for those interested in a challenging strategy games.^[9]

Orson Scott Card reviewed the game for *Compute!* in 1983. He gave *Archon* and two other EA games, *M.U.L.E.* and *Worms?*, complimentary reviews, writing that "they are original; they do what they set out to do very, very well; they allow the player to take part in the creativity; they do things that only computers can do."^[10] Leo LaPorte of *Hi-Res*—a tournament chess player—unfavorably compared the complexity of its rules to that of chess and *Go*, but concluded that *Archon* was "a very good game" that "struck a fine balance between a strategy game and an arcade shoot-'em-up."^[11] *BYTE*'s reviewer called *Archon* one of the best computer games he has ever played, stating it was "rewarding and varied enough to be played again and again."^[12] *The Addison-Wesley Book of Atari Software 1984* gave the game an overall A+ rating, describing it as "one of the most creative and original games that has come along in several years ... It has great graphics, and will give a lifetime of pleasure."^[13]

In 1984 *Softline* readers named *Archon* the most popular Atari program of 1983.^[14] It was awarded "1984 Most Innovative Video Game/Computer Game" at the 5th annual *Arkie Awards*, where judges noted that "few games make better use of a computer's special abilities than *Archon*."^[15]²⁹ In 1996, *Computer Gaming World* ranked *Archon* as the 20th best game of all time.^[16] It was also ranked as the 50th top game by *IGN* in 2003, who called it a "perfect marriage of strategy and action". The reviewer commented: "Whether on the computer or NES, *Archon* is an intense, engaging match of wits and reflexes, and boasts some of the coolest battles in gaming history."^[17] In 2004, *Archon* was inducted into *GameSpot*'s list of the greatest games of all time.^[18] They also highlighted it among their ten games that should be remade.^[19] In 2005, *IGN* ranked it again as their 77th greatest game.^[20]

Legacy

Free Fall developed a sequel for the same platforms, *Archon II: Adept*, released by Electronic Arts in 1984. Ten years later an enhanced version of the original was published by *Strategic Simulations* as *Archon Ultra*.

The original game was rewritten for *Palm OS* in 2000 by Carsten Magerkurth, who contacted members Free Fall Associates for feedback on creating an improved version released in 2003.^[21]

Archon: Evolution used code from the original 8-bit version with the blessing of Jon Freeman.^[22]

In 2008, React Games acquired the license from Free Fall to develop the *Archon* title across multiple platforms. It released an *iPhone* version in June 2009.^[23] A follow-up title *Archon: Conquest* was released in October of the same year for the *iPhone*.^[24] *Archon: Classic* for Windows was released in November 2010 with optional gameplay elements not found in the original game.^[25]

Archon influenced Reiche's game *Star Control*, which featured a similar combination of turn based strategy and real-time combat.^[26]

An updated version of the game has been announced for release exclusively for the *Intellivision Amico*.^[26]

See also

- *Mortal Kombat: Deception*, has a Chess Kombat mini game that is very similar, with almost the same rules.
- *The Unholy War*, a 1998 *PlayStation* game with a similar structure.
- *Wrath Unleashed*, a 2004 *PlayStation 2* and *Xbox* game with a similar structure.

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External links

- The *Archon* series (<https://www.mobygames.com/game-group/archon-series>) at MobyGames
- Archon: The Light and the Dark* (https://archive.org/details/msdos_Archon_1984) can be played for free in the browser at the Internet Archive
- Archon* at c64sets.com (<http://www.c64sets.com/archon.html>) - images of the package and manual.
- A reverse engineering of *Archon* (<http://bringerp.free.fr/RE/Archon/news.php5>)

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