Crescent Moon

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As the sun rises over the deserts, rivers, and oases of the Caliphate, a delicate balance has been upset. As one of many rival powers in the region, you now have the opportunity to alter the course of history and seize power for yourself. The ambitious Sultan sits in a golden palace, presiding over great works of architecture. The secretive Murshid works to covertly undermine the central authorities through an expansive network of agents. The wandering tribes of the Nomad aim to sow discord in order to secure employment for their experienced mercenary citizenry. The ravaging forces of the Warlord sweep across the land, chasing after promises of plunder. And, in the face of chaos and uncertainty, the Caliph aims to preserve order through military might. Will you successfully navigate this web of rivalries and rise to prominence, or will you squabble with your lesser adversaries and fade into obscurity?

Historical Note

Crescent Moon takes place amidst the dramatic rise and fall of powers across the Middle East in the 10th century and onward – the Seljuk Sultanate, Ghaznavid dynasty, Fatimid Caliphate, and Byzantine Empire, amongst many others. Through diplomacy and conflict, these empires waxed and waned, repeatedly wresting power and territory with one another in the lands east of the Mediterranean, as well as pushing into north Africa, the Iberian peninsular and deeper into south and central Asia. And just as the imperial balance of power remained fluid, so too did their affiliations, languages, and ethnicities, intersecting with one another in ways that may confound a contemporary sense of 'identity'. Rulers transgressed sectarian boundaries through marriage in pursuit of power; dynastic families of Turkic ethnic origin often Persianised their mores to cultivate a stronger link to a pan-Islamic cultural prowess.

Accordingly, the design of the cards, cover, and map in *Crescent Moon* are primarily inspired by Middle Eastern art history, as well as neighbouring Persianate traditions that had enduring influence across the region. The primary illustrator, himself of Muslim origin, referenced a variety of artwork from across the Islamic world. Naming conventions, mechanics, and the demographic composition of the characters were overseen by a cultural and historical consultant for the game, also of Muslim background and trained in the historiography of the region in this period. With that said, *Crescent Moon* is more an abstraction of this particular period than an approximation. Historical accuracy and artistic freedom were ideals held in tandem with the pursuit of an experience that evokes the ebbs and flows of power, contingent even when change to the status quo seems unimaginable.

Components

Component Limit

Coins and victory points are not intended to be limited. All other components are intended to be limited.

Common Pieces

Market board

Far market

Middle market

Near market

Far Market

Middle Market

Near Market

Sultan's market

Sultan's Market

66 coins

45 ×   21 ×

1 challenge token

2 tracker pieces

81 victory point tokens

25 × 1   25 × 3   21 × 5   10 × 10

1 phase tracker

INCOME   RESERVES   UPKEEP   ACTION 1   ACTION 2   ACTION 3   ACTION 4

Preparation Phase   *Action Phase*   *Scoring Phase*

1 year tracker

Year Tracker

YEAR 1   YEAR 2   YEAR 3   YEAR 4

16 terrain hexes

69 power cards

Assassinate

COMBAT
Choose a **character** card played by any player during this combat. Discard it without resolving it.

INFLUENCE CONTEST
Choose a card played by any player during this combat. Discard it without resolving it.

5 combat reference cards

Combat

1. **Select** action cards
2. Reveal and **resolve** cards
3. **Determine victor** – attacker wins ties
4. Take half of opponent's strength as **casualties** (move to supply)
5. All of loser's units **retreat** (ordinary units to reserves, mercenary units to supply)
6. **Remove cards** – return to hand, discard, place / in front of you
7. Attacker may **capture strongholds**
8. Attacker must **sack uncaptured strongholds** and may **sack settlements**

5 influence contest reference cards

Influence Contests

1. **Select** action cards
2. Participants **declare** as supporter or defender
3. Reveal and **resolve** cards
4. **Attacker's influence**: military + civilian + supporters' civilian + card influence
5. **Defenders' influence**: military + civilian + card influence
6. **Determine victor** – attacker wins ties; winning attacker places influence token
7. **Remove cards** – discard, place in front of you

Warlord Pieces

24 units

Ordinary unit

Mercenary unit

4 forts

2 castles

6 influence tokens

1 player booklet

The Warlord

1 reserves card

TOTAL RESERVE -3

During the preparation phase, if there are fewer on board and this combined than total reserve, add on this card to make up the difference.

do not count towards this total.

1 component bag

Murshid Pieces

6 units
Ordinary unit

Mercenary unit

6 forts

3 castles

12 influence tokens

1 player booklet

The Murshid

1 component bag

Sultan Pieces

6 units
Ordinary unit

Mercenary unit

8 forts

3 castles

6 towns

5 cities

8 influence tokens

1 player booklet

The Sultan

1 component bag

Caliph Pieces

12 units
Ordinary unit

Mercenary unit

8 forts

4 castles

1 palace

8 influence tokens

1 player booklet

The Caliph

1 reserves card

TOTAL RESERVE -

During the preparation phase, if there are fewer on board and this card combined than total reserve, add on this card to make up the difference.

do not count towards this total.

1 component bag

Nomad Pieces

12 units
Ordinary unit

Mercenary unit

6 forts

3 castles

8 influence tokens

1 player booklet

The Nomad

1 reserves card

TOTAL RESERVE - 3 +

During the preparation phase, if there are fewer on board and this card combined than total reserve, add on this card to make up the difference.

1 component bag

Overview

Crescent Moon is an asymmetric area control game for four or five players. In the game, players take actions to affect a shared map, which is made up of terrain hexes. Each player will try to achieve different things on this map. Most players will be aiming to gain military control of certain hexes (by having pieces with combat strength in the hex) or gain political control of hexes (by having an influence token in the hex).

The game is divided into years. During a year, each player takes four actions. At the end of a year, players score points according to their character's unique objectives. Each character comes with a player booklet that lists their objectives and available actions. At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins.

Terminology

Units

Units are represented in the game by double-sided wooden discs. When showing its 🐫 side, a disc represents a mercenary unit. When showing its blank side, a disc represents an ordinary unit.

In a five-player game you will need the agreement of the Nomad player to field new mercenaries (using the hire and bribe mercenaries actions, which are covered on page 10).

The **Caliph** and **Warlord** can field both ordinary and mercenary units.

The **Murshid**, **Sultan**, and **Nomad** will only ever have mercenary units.

Combat Strength

Some pieces in the game have combat strength.

Ordinary units, mercenary units, and forts have a combat strength of 1.
Castles and the **Caliph's** palace have a combat strength of 2.

Only one player can have pieces with combat strength in a hex. If multiple pieces with combat strength controlled by different players ever share a hex, combat occurs. This is explained on page 14.

Control

A player has control of a hex if they have pieces with combat strength in it.
Only one player can have control of a hex.

Influence

A player has influence in a hex if they have an influence token in it.
Only one player can have influence in a hex.

Presence

A player has presence in a hex if they have any of their pieces in it (units, strongholds, settlements, or influence tokens).

Multiple players can have presence in the same hex.

Supply

All pieces not in hexes or on cards are considered to be in a supply.

Control, Influence, and Presence

It is important to distinguish between presence, influence, and control. One player can **control** a hex, while another player has **influence** in it. In that scenario, both players have **presence** in that hex, and another player could also have presence there if they have a town or city in the same hex.

🐍 Influence and presence

𝖨𝖨𝖨 Control and presence

🏯 Presence

Setup

1. Each player chooses a character to play and takes the corresponding player booklet. If playing with four players, you cannot choose the Nomad. *If you wish to make an informed choice about which faction to play, consult the 'Counsel from an Old Advisor' section in each player booklet.*

2. Arrange yourselves in the following order, clockwise: Warlord, Murshid, Sultan, and Caliph, and Nomad (if in use).

3. Take the pieces listed in the components section for your character. Place them in front of you in a supply, sorted by type.

4. The Nomad, the Caliph, and the Warlord each place their reserves card face up next to their supply.

5. Select one map setup from page 20-22 of this rulebook. Arrange the hexes and starting pieces, in the centre of the playing area, according to the chosen map. If all players are experienced, you may instead use the variable setup rules on page 23.

6. The Caliph places the palace in a hex where they have one or more pieces.

7. Give each player their starting coins:

   : 3 ×   : 16 ×   : 0 ×

   : 3 ×   : 8 ×

8. Give each player five victory points. These are stored secretly, face down.

9. Place the market board to the side of the playing area. The board should be aligned so that the far market is to the left, the middle market in the middle, and the near market to the right.

10. Place the Sultan's market close to the market board.

11. Place the year tracker and phase tracker to the side of the playing area. Place one tracker piece on the income step of the phase tracker. Place the second tracker piece on the year 1 step of the year tracker.

12. Give the Warlord the Warfare power card. Shuffle the remaining power cards together to form the power deck. Place the power deck face down near the market board. Draw and place a card from the power deck face up in the leftmost empty slot of the market board. Repeat this until all nine slots have been filled. Then, do the same for the Sultan's market, until all three slots have been filled.

13. Give each player one combat reference card and one influence contest reference card.

14. Decide whether to play a standard game of three years or a longer game of four years. *For your first game, we recommend you play a standard game of three years.*

15. The Murshid takes a plot action, as outlined on page 12.

The Map

The map is made up of hexes, which are the spaces on which the game takes place.

TERRAIN

Each hex has one **terrain type**.

A hex's terrain type affects the income it generates (see page 7).

A hex's terrain type may also affect building costs (see page 9).

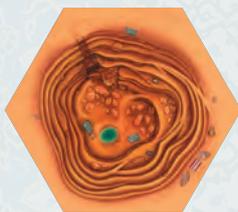A hex's terrain type is referenced by some power cards and objectives.

Fertile land   Wilderness   Mountain

Quarry   Desert

FEATURES

Some hexes have a **feature** in addition to a terrain type.

All players have objectives relating to the **holy site** feature.
The holy site feature is on a desert hex.

The **river** and **river crossing** features affect adjacency as explained in the next section.
The river and river crossing features are all on fertile hexes.

Holy site   River   River Crossing

ADJACENCY

When two hexes share an edge, they are considered **adjacent**.

Adjacency is broken by **rivers**. Each river feature follows two edges of the hex. Hexes that share these edges are **not** considered adjacent.

The **river crossing** feature does not indicate any edges, and is adjacent to all hexes it shares an edge with (unless a river feature next to it breaks that adjacency).

Adjacency Example

The red lines in the above example show which hexes are **not** adjacent to one another.

For example, Hex A is not adjacent to hex C. Hex A is adjacent to hex B. Hex B is adjacent to hex C.

Even though the river crossing does not break adjacency, the river features in the nearby hexes break adjacency to and from that tile.

How to Play

The game is divided into a series of years. Each year consists of three phases:

1. Preparation phase
2. Action phase
3. Scoring phase

During the preparation phase, players collect income, adjust their reserves, and perform upkeep.

In the action phase, each player in turn will perform one action, until all players have taken four actions.
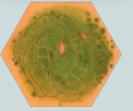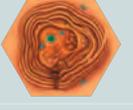
Finally, in the scoring phase, players will earn points for achieving their objectives. Play then moves on to the next year.

After the scoring phase of the final year (year three in a standard game and year four in a long game) the player with the most points wins.

PREPARATION PHASE

Income

First, all players collect income from the following sources in hexes they **control**. *You control a hex if you have combat strength in that hex.*

SOURCE		INCOME
	Town	
	City	
	Fertile land	
	Quarry	
	Sultan influence	

In addition, the **Sultan** collects extra income of ⬤ per town, ⬤ ⬤ per city, and ⬤ per Sultan influence on the map regardless of whether or not the Sultan controls the hex. This is on top of the income the Sultan earns from controlling hexes with those pieces.

Then, advance the tracker piece on the phase tracker to the reserves step.

Income Example

During the income step, the board looks like this:

The **Warlord** controls two fertile hexes, so earns 2 coins. They earn nothing from the fertile hex they influence but don't control.

The **Murshid** controls a fertile hex with a city and a hex with the Sultan's influence token, so earns a total of 4 coins. They earn nothing for influencing a fertile hex.

The **Caliph** controls a fertile hex and a quarry hex, so earns a total of 4 coins. They earn nothing from controlling a mountain hex.

The **Sultan** controls a hex with a Sultan influence and two hexes with a town, for a total of 3 coins. In addition, there are two towns, one city, and two Sultan influence on the map, so they earn an extra 6 coin, bringing their overall total to 9!

Reserves

After all players have collected income, the Caliph, the Warlord, and the Nomad calculate their **reserve value**.

The **Warlord's** reserve value is always three.

The **Caliph's** reserve value is equal to the total number of Caliph castles and Caliph influence tokens combined on the map.

The **Nomad's** reserve value is equal to three times the number of Nomad influence tokens on the map.

The Warlord, Caliph, and Nomad then calculate their **current strength**.

The **Warlord's** current strength is equal to the total number of their ordinary units on the map and on their reserves card.

The **Caliph's** current strength is equal to the total number of their ordinary units on the map and on their reserves card.

The **Nomad's** current strength is equal to the total number of mercenary units on the map (belonging to all players) and on their reserves card.

If your **reserve value** is higher than your **current strength**, add units from your supply to your reserves card to make up the difference. The **Warlord** and **Caliph** add ordinary units to their reserves card. The **Nomad** adds mercenary units to their reserves card.

If your **reserve value** is equal to or lower than your **current strength**, do nothing.

Then, advance the tracker piece on the phase tracker to the upkeep step.

Upkeep

Skip this step in year one.

If any character ⚜ or battalion 🚩 power cards are face up in front of you, return them to your hand. See page 11 for details on power cards.

Then, move the two power cards from the near market into a face up discard pile next to the power deck.

Then, replenish the market.

Finally, advance the tracker piece on the phase tracker to the action 1 step.

Replenish the Market

At the end of the upkeep step, replenish the market. You also do this after any player has completed a buy power cards action.

To replenish the market, first slide all the cards in the near, middle, and far markets as far to the right as possible, so each card slot has exactly one card in it. Cards may move between markets as they move towards the near market, if there are empty card slots.

Then draw cards from the power deck and place them in the leftmost empty slot of the market board until every slot is filled. If the power deck is empty, shuffle the power card discard pile into a new deck.

The Sultan's market is only ever replenished through the Sultan's conspire action.

In this way, more cards enter the market, and they become cheaper to buy as they move from the far market to the near market.
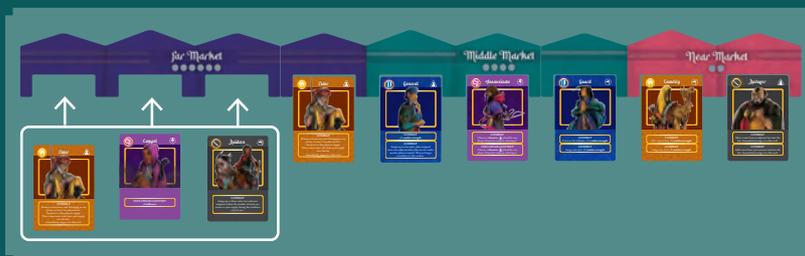
ACTION PHASE

During the action phase, each player in turn performs one action, until all players have taken four actions. The actions available to each player are shown in their player booklet.

Players perform actions in the following order:

1. ⚔ Warlord
2. 🐍 Murshid
3. 🏛 Sultan
4. 🏛 Caliph
5. 🐪 Nomad (if in use)

Before the Warlord performs an action, advance the tracker piece on the phase tracker. After all players have performed four actions, advance the tracker piece to the scoring phase.

Actions

The actions available to you are listed in your player booklet. The following list of actions is intended as a reference. The character icons next to each action denote which players can take the action.

Influence   ⚔ 🐍 🏛 🏛 🐪

Chose a hex where you have presence or adjacent to a hex where you have presence. You cannot choose a hex where you have an influence token.

If no other player has presence in the chosen hex, and the Murshid does not have an influence token in an adjacent hex, place one of your influence tokens in the chosen hex. Otherwise, place a challenge token in the hex and resolve an influence contest.

Influence contests are explained on page 16.

Build X   ⚔ 🐍 🏛 🏛 🐪

Build up to X strongholds (forts and castles) or settlements (towns and cities) in any combination. The value of X , and the strongholds and settlements your character can build, are listed in your player booklet.

You cannot build multiple times in the same hex in the same action.

For each stronghold or settlement you build, you must pay a building cost by returning the required number of coins to the supply. Their building costs and any restrictions on where they can be built, are listed in your player booklet.

Every stronghold or settlement you build in a **mountain** or **quarry** hex costs one additional coin.

Every stronghold or settlement you build in a **desert** hex costs two additional coins.

🏛 *The **Sultan** is the only player who can build towns and cities.*

🏛 *The **Caliph** pays less to build forts and castles.*

Strongholds and Settlements

Forts and castles are strongholds, which have combat strength. Towns and cities are settlements, which have no combat strength. The palace has combat strength and is both a stronghold and a settlement.
The distinction between strongholds and settlements is particularly important in influence contests. This is explained on page 16.

Move X   ⚔ 🐍 🏛 🏛 🐪

Move any number of your units from one hex to an adjacent hex where no other player has control.

You may do this up to X times, as specified in your player booklet.

The same unit may move multiple times.

You may never start a combat or sack buildings with a move X action.

Unit Limit

You have a unit limit of five units per hex (seven for the **Warlord**). The unit limit is explained in more detail on page 17.

Assault   ⚔ 🐍 🏛 🏛 🐪

Choose **one** of the following options:

- Move any number of your units from one hex to an adjacent hex where another player has control. This starts a combat. Combat is explained on page 14.

- Move any number of your units from one hex to an adjacent hex where no other player has control and where there is a town or a city. Sack that town or city, removing it from the map, and take two coins (for a town) or four coins (for a city) from the supply.

Recruit X

Recruit up to X units. The value of X is listed in your player booklet.

Place up to X units from your reserves card in one or more hexes. You cannot place units in hexes controlled by another player.

You may place multiple units in the same hex.

You cannot recruit more units than you have on your reserves card.

The **Caliph** may only place units where they already have presence. They always recruit ordinary units. The Caliph may recruit up to three units with each recruit action.

The **Warlord** may only place units where they already have presence. They always recruit ordinary units. The Warlord may recruit up to two units with each recruit action.

The **Nomad** may place units on any hex not controlled by another player. They always recruit mercenary units. The Nomad may recruit up to two units with each recruit action.

> You have a unit limit of five units per hex (seven for the **Warlord**). The unit limit is explained in more detail on page 17.

Bribe Mercenaries
FIVE-PLAYER GAME

This action is only available when playing with five players.
There is no alternative action for a four-player game.

Before taking this action, choose a hex that contains at least one Nomad mercenary unit. Then agree with the Nomad on a number of Nomad mercenary units in that hex that you will bribe (either one or two) and a number of coins (any number, including zero). If you cannot agree with the Nomad, you must take another action instead.

Pay the agreed number of coins to the Nomad, then remove the agreed number of Nomad mercenary units from that hex. Place an equal number of mercenary units from your supply in the hex.

If there are still Nomad pieces with combat strength in the hex, immediately resolve a combat. You are the attacker. Combat is explained on page 14.

If there was no combat, you may take a move 1 or assault action (see page 9). You may only move the mercenary units that you have just placed.

Hire Mercenaries
FOUR-PLAYER GAME

This action is only available when playing with four players.
See the next action for the five-player version.

Choose one of the following options:

- Pay two coins to the general supply. Then place one mercenary unit from your supply in a hex where you have presence and no other player has control.

- Pay six coins to the general supply. Then place two mercenary units from your supply in hexes where you have presence and no other player has control. You may place the units in the same or different hexes.

Hire Mercenaries
FIVE-PLAYER GAME

This action is only available when playing with five players.
See the previous action for the four-player version.

Before taking this action, agree with the Nomad on a number of mercenary units from their reserves card that you will hire (either one or two) and a number of coins (any number, including zero). If you cannot agree with the Nomad, or they have no units on their reserves card, you must take another action instead.

Pay the agreed number of coins to the Nomad. Then place the agreed number of mercenary units from your supply in hexes where you have presence and no other player has control. The Nomad then returns that many units from their reserves card to their supply.

You may place the units in the same or different hexes.

Buy Power Cards

Before taking this action, you may agree with the Sultan on a card in the Sultan's market and a number of coins (any number, including zero). If you cannot agree with the Sultan, you **may** take another action instead.

Choose **any number** of the following options. Resolve each chosen option once.

- Buy one card in the near market for two coins.

- Buy one card in the middle market for four coins.

- Buy one card in the far market for six coins.

- Buy the agreed card in the Sultan's market for the agreed number of coins. You may not choose this option if you did not agree a card and number of coins with the Sultan.

When you buy a card from the near, middle, or far market, pay the required number of coins to the player aligned with the card.

If you buy a card that you are aligned with, instead pay half the required coins to the supply.

If you buy a Nomad-aligned card in a four player game, instead pay the required number of coins to the supply.

When you buy a card from the Sultan's market, always pay the agreed amount to the Sultan, regardless of who is aligned with the card.

The Sultan can always buy a card from the Sultan's market at no cost.

Add all the cards you buy into your hand.

The number of power cards in your hand is public information.

After you have finished buying cards, replenish the market as explained on page 8.

Hand Limit

You may never have more than eight cards in hand. If you go above eight cards, discard cards until you have eight. The hand limit is explained in more detail on page 17.

Play Power Card

Choose one power card in your hand with the **action** keyword listed. Resolve it, and then place it in the power card discard pile.

Playing a card with the **anytime** keyword does not cost an action, and can instead be played during any other action in the action phase.

Collect

Gain one coin from the supply.

Power Cards

1. **Aligned character:** Each card is aligned with a character, which only matters when buying cards. The colour of the card matches the aligned character. No cards are aligned with the Sultan.

2. **Type:** Each card is an event ⚡, a character 👤, a battalion 🏴, or a strategy 🔺. The card type may be referenced by other cards. Event ⚡ cards are discarded after use. Character 👤 and battalion 🏴 cards are placed face up in front of you after use, and are returned to hand during the preparation phase. Strategy 🔺 cards are returned to hand after use.

3. **Keywords:** Each card has one or more keywords, written in capitals, which indicate when the card takes effect. An effect listed after the **combat** keyword applies when the card is assigned to a combat. An effect listed after the **influence contest** keyword applies when the card is assigned to an influence contest. An effect listed after the **action** keyword applies when the card is played as an action. A card with the **anytime** keyword can be played at any point during the action phase. **If a card has multiple keywords, you may apply all the keywords that relate to the situation in which the card is played.**

   With the exception of the Warfare card, all card effects are optional. Some combat effects require you to assign units to the card. For details, see the combat section on page 14.

4. **Effects:** Each cards lists what the card does when it is played. Some cards have two effects, each associated with a seperate keyword.

The Warfare 🔺 card is a different colour, as it starts the game in the Warlord's hand. It is the only card that must be resolved in full if it is played.

Unique Actions

Each of the following actions is available to only one player.

Uprising

Choose one hex where you have an influence token and another player has control. Remove your influence token and place two ordinary units there. Then resolve a combat.

Combat is explained on page 14.

Mass

In **each** hex where you have an influence token and no other player has control, choose one of the following options:

- Place one ordinary unit from your supply there.

- Place two ordinary units from your supply there, and remove your influence token from the hex.

You may choose different options in different hexes.

Plot

Look at the top seven cards of the power deck. If you have no power cards in hand, secretly select two Murshid-aligned cards and add them to your hand. Otherwise, secretly select one Murshid-aligned card and add it to your hand.

Shuffle the remaining cards and place them back on the top of the power deck.

If the seven cards you look at contain fewer Murshid-aligned cards than you are allowed to take, take as many as are available. Gain one coin for each card you would have been allowed to take but were unable to. When you shuffle the remaining cards, place them at the **bottom** of the power deck instead.

Conspire

Look at the top ten cards of the power deck. For each empty slot in the Sultan's market, select one power card and place it there. Then shuffle the remaining cards and place them at the bottom of the power deck.

Move Palace

Choose a hex where you have presence and no other player has control. Place your palace in the hex.

If your palace has been sacked, this action returns it to the map. Otherwise, this action moves the palace.

Desert

Remove any number of mercenary units, controlled by any player, from a single hex. Return those units to their owner's supply. For each mercenary unit removed, add one mercenary unit from your supply to your reserves card.

SCORING PHASE

In the first year, you score points according to every objective in your player booklet. In subsequent years, you score points according to every objective in your player booklet **except** for your year one objective.

Many objectives have conditions listed. Only score the indicated number of points for those objectives if you have fulfilled the listed condition.

When you have finished scoring, announce the number of points you have scored in this phase. You do not need to announce your current total.

Whenever you score points, take victory point tokens equal to that value from the supply. Keep these face down.

You may always check how many points you have scored, but you may not look at other players' victory point tokens.

After all players have announced their scores, advance the tracker piece on the phase tracker to the preparation phase of the next year, and advance the tracker piece on the year tracker.

The Warlord scores for their primary objective during the action phase, after resolving combat and sacking settlements and strongholds. They announce their points immediately, rather than during the scoring phase.

Game End

When players have completed the agreed upon number of years (three in the standard game and four in the long game) the game ends.

All players reveal their victory points. The player with the most points wins!

If there is a tie, the player with the most coins wins.

If there is still a tie, the tied player earliest in the turn order wins: Warlord, Murshid, Sultan, Caliph, Nomad.

Additional Rules

COMBAT

When a piece with combat strength is placed in a hex that contains another player's piece with combat strength, a combat occurs. This happens immediately after the action that caused it has been completed.

A combat can only start as the result of the following actions: assault, uprising, bribe mercenaries, and play power card.

The player that performed the action that initiated the combat is the **attacker**. The other player is the **defender**. *Combat is only ever between two players.*

Resolve the combat as follows:

1. **Select:** The attacker and the defender secretly select any number of power cards with the **combat** keyword from their hands. You may select zero cards. *The number of cards you select is secret. You can use your reference cards to obscure the number of power cards you are selecting.*

2. **Resolve:** Simultaneously reveal all the selected cards and resolve them in the following order:

   A. The Warfare ▲ card.

   B. The attacker's Assassinate ⚡ card(s).

   C. The defender's Assassinate ⚡ card(s).

   D. The attacker's remaining cards, in the order they choose.

   E. The defender's remaining cards, in the order they choose.

If a card effect asks you to assign units to it, place those units on the card. Units assigned to a card **cannot** be assigned to another card. For all purposes, they are considered to be in the hex where the combat is taking place. This may result in new units being brought into – or moved out of – the combat. Unless otherwise specified, only units in the hex can be assigned to cards. A card may refer to the hex a combat is taking place in as the active hex.

3. **Determine victor:** Calculate the attacker's total combat strength and the defender's total combat strength by adding the combat strength of all pieces on the hex (including any on cards) and any strength provided by the power cards played. The player with the highest total strength wins. In the case of a tie, the attacker wins.

4. **Casualties:** Starting with the attacker, each player returns to the supply a number of units from the hex, or assigned to their cards, equal to half their opponent's combat strength, rounded down. Then return any remaining units assigned to cards to the hex.

5. **Retreat:** The player who lost the combat returns all their remaining mercenary units in the hex to their supply and returns all their remaining ordinary units from the hex to their reserves card.

6. **Remove cards:** Place any character ⛊ or battalion 🛡 cards that you played face up in front of you. Return the Warfare ▲ card to hand if it was played. Place all played event ⚡ cards into the power card discard pile.

7. **Capture:** If the attacker has one or more units in the hex and the hex contains a fort or castle, they may capture it. If they do, the attacker returns that stronghold to its owner's supply and replaces it with a matching one from their supply. *The attacker cannot choose to capture a fort or castle if they do not have the matching piece in their supply.*

8. **Sack:** If the attacker has one or more units in the hex and the hex contains a fort, a castle, or the palace, they must sack it (if they did not capture it). The attacker returns that building to its owner's supply and gains one coin (for a fort), two coins (for the palace), or three coins (for a castle) from the supply. Then, if there is a town or city in the hex, the attacker may choose to sack it. If they do, the attacker returns that settlement to the Sultan's supply and gains two coins (for a town) or four coins (for a city) from the supply.

If the attacker has no units left in the hex, they may not capture or sack strongholds or settlements, even if they won! The defender may never capture or sack strongholds or settlements.

If the attacker cannot capture a stronghold and a power card effect prevents them from sacking it, the piece is instead removed.

If a combat occurs in or adjacent to a hex in which the Murshid has influence and the Murshid is not the attacker or the defender, the Murshid may secretly select cards as if they were the attacker or the defender during the select step. At the start of the resolve step, if the Murshid has selected one or more cards, they must declare that they assign all those cards to either the attacker **or** the defender. The cards are then considered to have been played by that player. Character ⛊ or battalion 🛡 cards played in this way must be placed in front of the Murshid during the remove cards step.
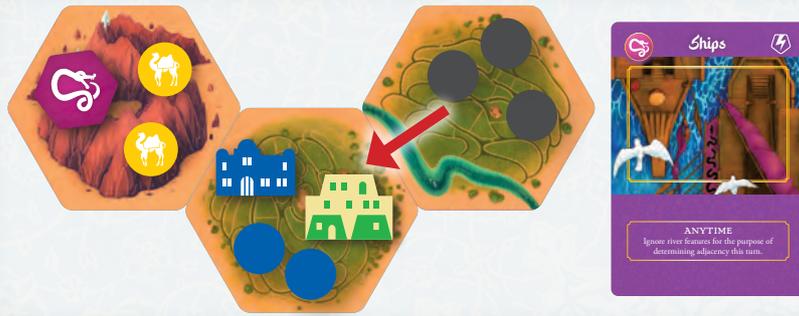
If a tied combat occurs in a hex where the Murshid has an influence token, during the determine victor step, the Murshid decides whether the attacker or defender wins the combat.

If the Nomad loses a combat, they return all their remaining mercenary units from the hex to their reserves card instead of their supply during the retreat step.

Example Combat

The Warlord performs an assault action. They play the Ships power card, as it has the **anytime** keyword, which allows them to move across the river. They move three ordinary units into a hex where the Caliph has combat strength, which initiates combat.

As the Warlord took the action that instigated the combat, they are the attacker and the Caliph is the defender.

The Murshid has an influence token in a hex adjacent to where the combat is taking place. The Murshid offers to support the Warlord using their *deal* attribute in exchange for two victory points, promising to play power cards with their *interfere* attribute. The Warlord agrees.

1. Select
The Warlord, Sultan, and Caliph secretly select power cards and reveal them.

The Warlord reveals the Warfare and Elder cards. The Caliph reveals the Siege Engines card. The Murshid does not reveal any cards.

2. Resolve
The Warfare card is always resolved first. As the Warlord has three units in the hex, they must assign one unit to the card, granting them +1 combat strength.

No Assassin cards have been played, so the Warlord, as the attacker, resolves their remaining card next. They remove a Nomad mercenary unit from the adjacent mountain hex, returning it to the Nomad's supply. Then, they place one of their own mercenary units in the hex where combat is taking place and immediately assign it to the Elder card.

Finally, the Caliph resolves their Siege Engines card. As they are the defender and have a stronghold in the hex, the card grants them +1 combat strength.

3. Determine victor
The Warlord has a three ordinary units and one mercenary unit in the hex (including those assigned to cards), and gains +1 combat strength from the Warfare card, for a total of 5 strength.

The Caliph has two ordinary units and a fort in the hex, and gains one combat strength from the Siege Engines card, for a total of 4 strength.

The Warlord wins the combat, and must give the Murshid two victory points, even though the Murshid did not provide the support they promised.

Finally, the Warlord unit assigned to the Warfare card is returned to the supply and their mercenary unit assigned to the Elder card is returned to the hex.

4. Casualties
The Caliph's combat strength was four, so the Warlord must return two units to the supply. They return one mercenary and one ordinary unit as casualties.

The Warlord's combat strength was five, so the Caliph must return two units to the supply as well (as strength is rounded down). They return both their units to the supply.

5. Retreat
As the Caliph has no units left in the hex, they have no units to retreat.

6. Remove cards
The Warlord returns the Warfare card to their hand as it's a strategy ▲ card, and places the Elder card in front of them as it's a character 🛆 card.

The Caliph places the Siege Engines card in front of them, as it's a battalion 🏴 card.

7. Capture
The Warlord may now choose to capture the fort on the tile, but decides not to.

8. Sack
The Warlord must sack the fort, as they did not capture it. It's returned to the Caliph, and the Warlord gains one coin from the supply.

The Warlord then chooses to sack the city, returning it to the Sultan and gaining four coins from the supply for doing so.

Finally, the Warlord immediately gains seven victory points from their primary objective – two for removing two Caliph units as casualties, one for sacking a fort, and four for sacking a city.

INFLUENCE CONTESTS

An influence contest begins when a player takes the influence action in a hex where another player has presence or that is adjacent to a hex where the Murshid has an influence token.

The player that took the action is the **attacker**. All other players with presence in the hex are the **participants**.

Resolve the influence contest as follows:

1. **Select:** The attacker and the participants secretly select any number of power cards with the **influence contest** keyword from their hands. You may select zero cards. *The number of cards you select is secret. You can use your reference cards to obscure the number of power cards you are selecting.*

2. **Declare:** All participants declare whether they are **supporters** of or **defenders** against the attacker. If there is more than one participant, they declare their position in turn order: Warlord, Murshid, Sultan, Caliph, Nomad.

3. **Resolve:** Simultaneously reveal all the selected cards and resolve them in the following order:

    A. The attacker's Assassinate ⚡ cards.

    B. The supporters' Assassinate ⚡ cards.

    C. The defenders' Assassinate ⚡ cards.

    D. The attacker's cards.

    E. The supporters' cards.

    F. The defenders' cards.

    If there are multiple defenders, resolve their cards in the turn order: Warlord, Murshid, Sultan, Caliph, Nomad.

4. **Attacker's influence:** Calculate the attacker's total influence by adding the following:

    Military influence (max one): If any units or strongholds in the hex belong to the attacker or any of their supporters, the attacker gains one influence. *Multiple pieces provide no additional influence.*

    Civilian influence (max one): If the attacker has a settlement in the hex, the attacker gains one influence.

    Supporters' civilian influence (max one per supporter): For each supporter with a settlement or an influence token in the hex, the attacker gains one influence. *Multiple pieces belonging to a single supporter provide no additional influence.*

    Card influence: Add any influence gained from the played power cards.

5. **Defenders' influence:** Calculate the defenders' total influence by adding the following:

    Military influence (max one): If any units or strongholds in the hex belong to any of the defenders, the defenders gain one influence. *Multiple pieces provide no additional influence.*

    Civilian influence (max one): If a defender has a settlement or an influence token in the hex, the defenders gain one influence. *Multiple pieces (belonging to one or more players) provide no additional influence.*

    Card influence: Add any influence gained from the played power cards.

6. **Determine victor:** If the attacker's influence is equal to or greater than that of the defenders', the attacker wins and places an influence token in the hex. If there is already an influence token in the hex, remove it. If the defenders have more influence than the attacker, nothing happens. In either case, remove the challenge token.

7. **Remove cards:** Place any character 👤 cards that you played face up in front of you. Place all played event ⚡ cards into the power card discard pile.

    If an influence contest occurs in a hex adjacent to a hex where the Murshid has influence, the Murshid is considered a participant, even if they do not have presence in the hex where the influence contest is taking place.

    If an influence contest ends in a tie and it occurred in a hex where the Murshid has influence, the Murshid decides whether the attacker wins.

Settlements, Strongholds, and the Palace

Forts and castles are strongholds, and count towards military influence.

Towns and cities are settlements, and count towards civilian influence. The Caliph's palace is both a stronghold and a settlement, and counts towards both military and civilian influence.

Example Influence Contest

The Caliph takes the influence action and selects the river crossing tile, placing the challenge token there. The Caliph is the attacker, as they took the action. The Sultan and the Murshid are both participants, as they both have presence in the hex.

1. Select

The Caliph, Sultan, and Murshid all secretly select power cards and reveal them.

The Caliph reveals the Rebel card, and the Murshid reveals the Imam and Corrupt cards. The Sultan reveals no cards.

2. Declare

As they are earlier in the turn order, the Murshid declares first, choosing to be a defender. The Sultan then declares as a supporter.

3. Resolve

As the attacker, the Caliph resolves their card first. The Rebel card grants them +2 influence, as there is a city in the hex.

The Murshid then resolves their cards. First, the Imam card grants them +2 influence. Then, they use the Corrupt card against the Sultan, which grants their side -1 influence.

4. Attacker's influence

The attacker gains +1 influence from military influence (the Caliph's units), +1 influence from supporters' civilian influence (the Sultan's city), +2 influence from the Caliph's Rebel card, and takes -1 influence from the Murshid's Corrupt card, for a total of 3.

5. Defenders' influence

The defenders gain +1 influence from civilian influence (the Murshid's influence token) and two influence from the Murshid's Imam card, for a total of 3.

6. Determine victor

Normally, the attacker would win a tie, but the Murshid's *sway* attribute means they instead get to decide who wins. They decide the defenders win, and the Caliph removes the challenge token.

7. Remove cards

The Sultan takes the Corrupt card into their hand, as per its card effect.

The Caliph discards the Rebel card, as it's an event ⚡ card.

The Murshid places the Imam card in front of them as it's a character 🛡 card.

Unit Limit

The number of units you may have in the same hex is limited to five.

This limit includes both ordinary and mercenary units.

Check the unit limit at the end of each action. If there are more units on a hex than a player's unit limit allows, they must remove units until this is no longer the case. Mercenary units are returned to their supply, while ordinary units are returned to their reserves card.

🗡 The **Warlord's** unit limit is seven per hex.

Hand Limit

You may never have more than eight cards in your hand.

Whenever you have more than eight cards in hand for whatever reason, discard cards until you have eight cards in hand. *This is most likely to happen after a buy power cards action, but can occur for a number of reasons, including after returning cards to hand during the upkeep step.*

Reference cards and reserves cards do not count towards the hand limit.

UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES

Each of the following attributes only applies to one player.

Marauder

You score for your primary objective after any combat you are involved in, and not during the scoring phase.

Immediately take the appropriate victory points and declare them to the other players. They are then kept face down as normal.

Champion

You can recruit a large number of units directly from your supply by using the mass action.

Destroyer

You do not have access to the build action. You are the only player who cannot build strongholds or settlements.

Conqueror

During setup, you are given the Warfare card. You may play this card in any combat you are involved in. It returns to your hand immediately after the combat.

Ravager

The maximum number of units you can have in a single hex is seven.

Raider

You can make three moves in a single move action.

Sway

In combats and influence contests in hexes where you have an influence token, you choose whether the attacker or the defender wins in the case of a tie. *Normally, the attacker wins ties.*

Meddle

You count as a participant in any influence contests that occur in hexes adjacent to hexes where you have an influence token. *Normally, only players with presence in the hex where the influence contest take place counts as participants.*

If you do not have presence, you can only affect the outcome of an influence contest by playing power cards.

Interfere

If a combat occurs in or adjacent to a hex where you have influence and you are not the attacker or the defender, you may secretly select cards as if you were the attacker or the defender during the select step. At the start of the resolve step, if you selected any cards, assign them all to either the attacker **or** the defender. The cards are then considered to have been played by that player. However, character 🛡 or battalion 🚩 cards played in this way are placed in front of you during the remove cards step.

Deal

At the start of an influence contest or a combat that occurs in or adjacent to a hex in which you have an influence token, if you are not the attacker or the defender, any other participant may offer you up to five victory points in exchange for your support.

Your support may include using your *sway* attribute to break ties in their favour, or your *meddle* or *interfere* attributes to play cards.

If you agree to support a player, they must give you the agreed number of victory points if they win the combat or influence contest. They must do so even if you did nothing to help them win. However, if they lose, you receive no points, even if you did everything you promised to do.

No deals can be made after cards have been revealed.

Intrigue

More power cards are aligned to you than to any other player.

Prestige

You count as having presence in any hex that contains a town or a city.

You are the only player who can build towns and cities.

Prosperity

During the income step, you will earn bonus income for each of your towns, cities, and influence tokens on the map.

This means you will earn some income from your towns, cities, and influence tokens in hexes that other players control, **and** you will earn additional income from those pieces in hexes you do control.

Clout

All players earn money for controlling hexes with a Sultan influence.

Wealth

When you buy power cards, you can take one card from the Sultan's market for free.

Builder

You can build three times in an action. Most other players can only build twice.

Seat of Power

The palace is available only to the Caliph. It is placed during setup after all the other players have placed their pieces.

The palace has a combat strength of 2. It is considered both a settlement and a stronghold, so it contributes to military **and** civilian influence in influence contests.

Pillars of the Caliphate

Building forts and castles is cheaper for you than for any other player. This discount is reflected in your build action.

Where the Wind Blows

You can recruit units into hexes where you do not have presence and no other player has control.

For a Price

Your units are mercenaries. Whenever you recruit units, place them with the mercenary side up.

Other players may recruit mercenary units from your reserves card or even directly from the map by using the hire mercenaries and bribe mercenaries actions. When they do, you remove your units from that area and they replace them with mercenary units that match their player colour but show your icon. If you have no units on your reserves card, other players cannot take the hire mercenaries action.

Other players can only gain mercenary units from these actions at a price you agree. You can choose to set a price of zero, or a price they cannot pay. If they refuse your price, they will have to take another action instead.

Mercenary units count as belonging to the player whose colour matches the token, but all mercenary units count towards your own current strength.

When you lose a combat, during the retreat step, return your remaining mercenary units from the hex to your reserves card instead of your supply.

Many cards refer to mercenary units, and your desert action can remove any player's mercenary units from the map.

MAP SETUPS

Divided Land

Five Players

Four Players

Fresh Meltwater

Five Players

Four Players

Fertile Valley

Five Players

Four Players

Open Plains

Five Players

Four Players

Meeting Point

Five Players

Four Players

VARIABLE SETUP RULES

1. If you are playing with four players, return two wilderness hexes and one mountain hex to the box. Otherwise, use all the hexes.

2. Place the river crossing hex in the centre of the table.

3. Shuffle the hexes face down and deal three to each player. Keep your hexes secret.

4. Take the starting pieces listed for your character and separate them into two groups as described.

5. Beginning with the Warlord, and continuing in turn order (Warlord, Murshid, Sultan, Caliph, Nomad), place one hex. Unless you are placing a river hex, you must place the hex adjacent to as many other hexes as possible. Repeat this step until all players have placed all their hexes.

   Placement rules:

   - A river hex must be placed so it extends the river.

   - A non-river hex cannot block the river from being extended. *There must always be at least one viable place to extend the river in each direction.*

6. Beginning with the Warlord, and continuing in turn order, place one of your groups of pieces on on an empty hex that is not a quarry or the holy site. Repeat this step until all players have placed both of their groups of pieces.

STARTING PIECES

Warlord's groups

- 1 ordinary unit and 1 influence token

- 1 influence token

Murshid's groups

- 1 fort

- 1 influence token

Sultan's groups

- 1 city

- 1 town, 1 fort, and 1 mercenary unit

Caliph's groups

- 1 castle and 1 ordinary unit

- 1 castle

Nomad's groups

- 1 mercenary unit and 1 influence token

- 1 influence token

Quick Reference

COMBAT

1. **Select:** Secretly select power cards.

2. **Resolve:** Reveal and resolve cards in the following order: Warfare ▲ card, attacker's Assassinate ⚡ cards, defender's Assassinate ⚡ cards, attacker's cards, defender's cards.

3. **Determine victor:** Most combat strength on hex and assigned to cards wins. If tied, attacker wins.

4. **Casualties:** Both players take half of opponent's combat strength (rounded down) as casualties, returning them to their supply.

5. **Retreat:** All of loser's remaining units retreat: return mercenary units to supply, return ordinary units to reserves card.

6. **Remove cards:** Place character 👤 and battalion 🔰 cards in front of you. Return Warfare ▲ card to hand. Discard all event ⚡ cards.

7. **Capture:** If attacker won and has units left, **may** capture fort or castle in hex.

8. **Sack:** If attacker won and has units left, **must** sack any fort, castle, or palace in hex (if not captured) and **may** sack a town or city in hex. Remove sacked buildings and gain coins:

SACKING INCOME		
🏛️	Fort	⬤
🕌	Palace	⬤ ⬤
🏰	Castle	⬤ ⬤ ⬤
🏠	Town	⬤ ⬤
🏘️	City	⬤ ⬤ ⬤ ⬤

INFLUENCE CONTESTS

1. **Select:** Secretly select power cards.

2. **Declare:** In turn order, declare as **supporter** or **defender.**

3. **Resolve:** Reveal and resolve cards in the following order: attacker's Assassinate ⚡ cards, supporters' Assassinate ⚡ cards, defenders' Assassinate ⚡ cards, attacker's cards, supporters' cards, defenders' cards.

4. **Attacker's influence:**

   - 1 influence for any number of attacker/supporter units and strongholds in hex

   - 1 influence for attacker's settlements in hex

   - 1 influence for **each** supporter with settlement or influence token in hex

   - Influence gained from cards

5. **Defenders' influence:**

   - 1 influence for any number of defenders' units and strongholds in hex

   - 1 influence for any number of defenders' settlements and influence tokens in hex

   - Influence gained from cards

6. **Determine victor:** Most influence wins. If tied, attacker wins. If attacker wins, place attacker's influence token on hex (removing any influence token already in hex).

7. **Remove cards:** Place character 👤 cards in front of you. Discard all other cards.

HAND LIMIT

Up to 8 cards in hand.

UNIT LIMIT

Up to 5 units per hex at the end of any action.

🗡️ Up to 7 units per hex at the end of any action.