# Epic Domination
Rules of Engagement

Goal of the game: To crush all your foes in a struggle for world domination, either by being the first player to control over half the cities on the board, or by having the highest morale when your empire's resources are exhausted.

Contents:

Eight double-sided board pieces
160 unit tokens (3/4 inch plastic discs, 40 in each of 4 different colors)
80 control markers (20 in each of 4 different colors)
120 unit markers (small wooden cubes, 20 in each of 6 different colors)
12 unit cards
8 twenty-sided combat dice
24 fortification tokens
20 magic spell cards
8 sea-frame pieces
One income track
4 'reserves' bags
`   4 'dead' bags
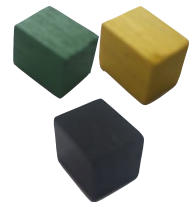
Unit markers

A board piece
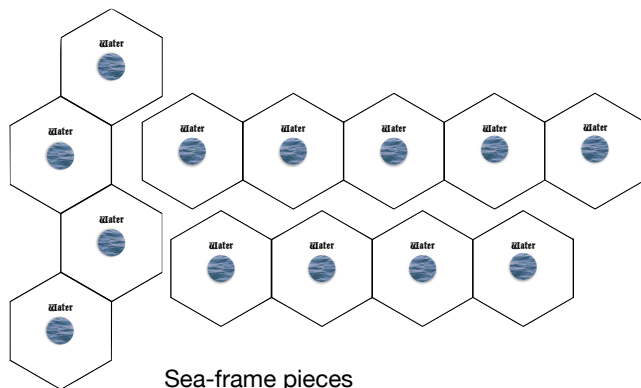
Combat die

Sea-frame pieces

Part 1: The Battle Begins

Setup:

The game includes twelve unit cards. For the first game, play with three of them: Militia, Knight and Griffin. For each type of unit, choose one of the six colors of unit markers to represent it. I don't care which color you choose to represent each unit. Maybe the gold reminds you of the knight's chivalry, or blue of the griffin's ability to fly through the sky. Personally, I always choose black for militia, but perhaps you prefer pink. Really, it doesn't matter.

Put one unit marker of the chosen color on each unit card so you don't forget which color represents which unit. Each player chooses a color. Give each player a 'reserves' bag with all the unit tokens in that color, along with a 'dead' bag (empty, of course. The war hasn't started yet) and a bag of control markers (you will use these to mark the territory that you've conquered from your enemy).

In this game (and in all diagrams used in this rulebook) militia are black, griffins are yellow, and knights are red

Set aside the magic spell cards and the remaining unit cards and unit markers. You won't use them this game.

Now, you and your fellow players are ready to choose your starting territory. Each player selects one board piece, then combines their pieces with the other players to form the board.
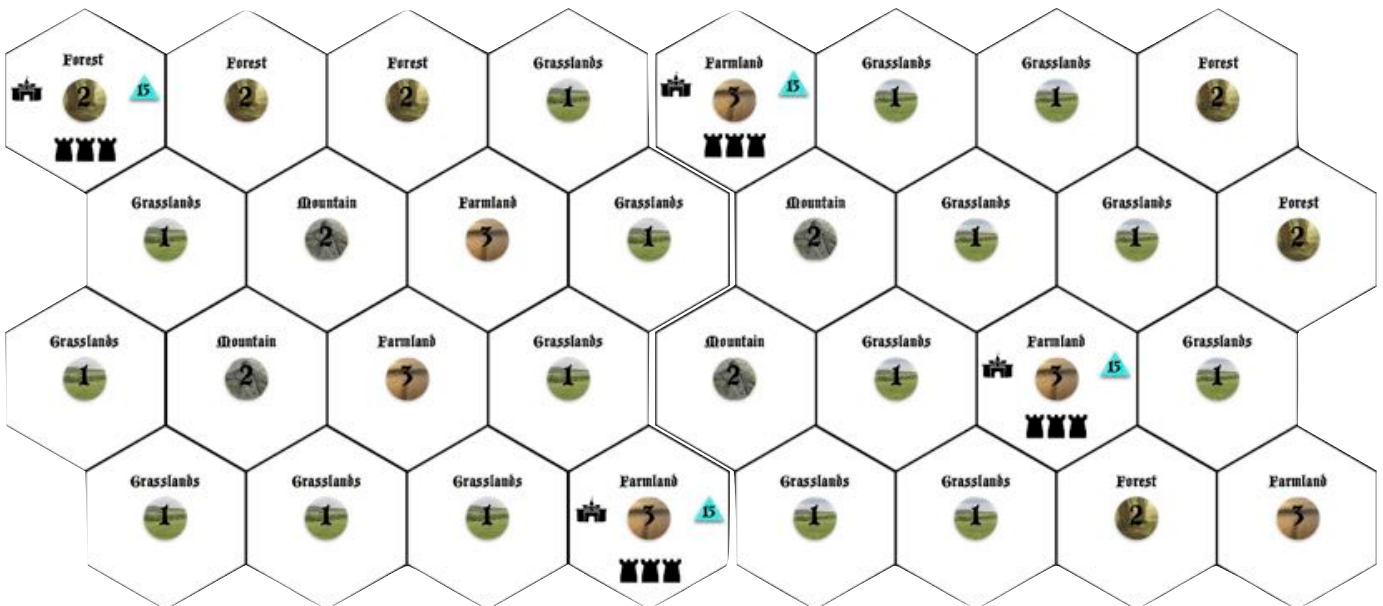
For your first game, play with the front side of the board pieces. Don't flip over the board pieces until you've played the game at least once and have a good grasp of the mechanics. The back sides feature more complex mechanics for more experienced players.

The board piece you chose becomes your starting territory. The sixteen hexagonal spaces on that piece form your empire, the land from which you will wage your war. The spaces with city markers (🏰) are the most important. New units can only be recruited to these spaces, and they begin the game with powerful fortifications that make them difficult to capture. **If at any time a player controls more cities than the number of players, the game ends and that player wins.**

When arranging the board, make sure that no two spaces with cities border each other. If two players have adjacent cities, they swap board pieces.

The number in the center of each space is that space's income value. Capturing an opponent's space will cause your income to increase by that much and your opponent's to decrease by the same amount. To start the game, take one of your control markers and place it on the number on the income track equal to the total combined income value of all your spaces. A crueler game designer would make you add up the value of all 16 numbers, but since I want you to get to the business of waging war as quickly as possible, I've made it easy on you by giving the front side of every board piece the same total income: 27. Why 27? Because it's a magical number, that's why.

After all players have a control marker on square 27 of the income track, it's time for the starting build phase. This is your chance to arrange your troops for the start of the war. The player with the most combat experience goes first[1]. Give him the first player card.

To complete your starting build phase, recruit any number of units whose total combined cost is less than or equal to your income (the cost of each unit is in the golden circle in the lower right corner of the unit card). When you recruit a unit, take a unit token from your 'reserves' bag and put it on any space you control. The unit token is in your color and shows that the unit belongs to you. Also, take a unit marker in the color of the unit you just recruited and put it on top of the unit token. The unit marker shows which type of unit it is. **In the starting build phase, you may recruit units to any space you control. However, in all other build phases, you must recruit them to a space you control with a city marker.**

If you recruit multiple units of the same type to the same space, stack the unit tokens on top of each other, with one unit marker on top, in order to fit them all.

Once the first player has completed his starting build phase, the player to his left does the same. After the last player positions his starting army, the first player card passes to the left, and the real war begins.

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[1] If it's a tie, punch your opponent. There. Now you have more combat experience than he does.

Gameplay

Each turn is divided into three phases: move, combat and build. All players complete a phase before moving onto the next phase. The player with the first player card goes first, and then play proceeds to the left.

Move phase:

The move phase is when you move your units (that was redundant). Each unit has movement value (recorded on its unit card) which determines how many spaces it can move. For example, a Militia unit can move two spaces, and a Knight can move four.
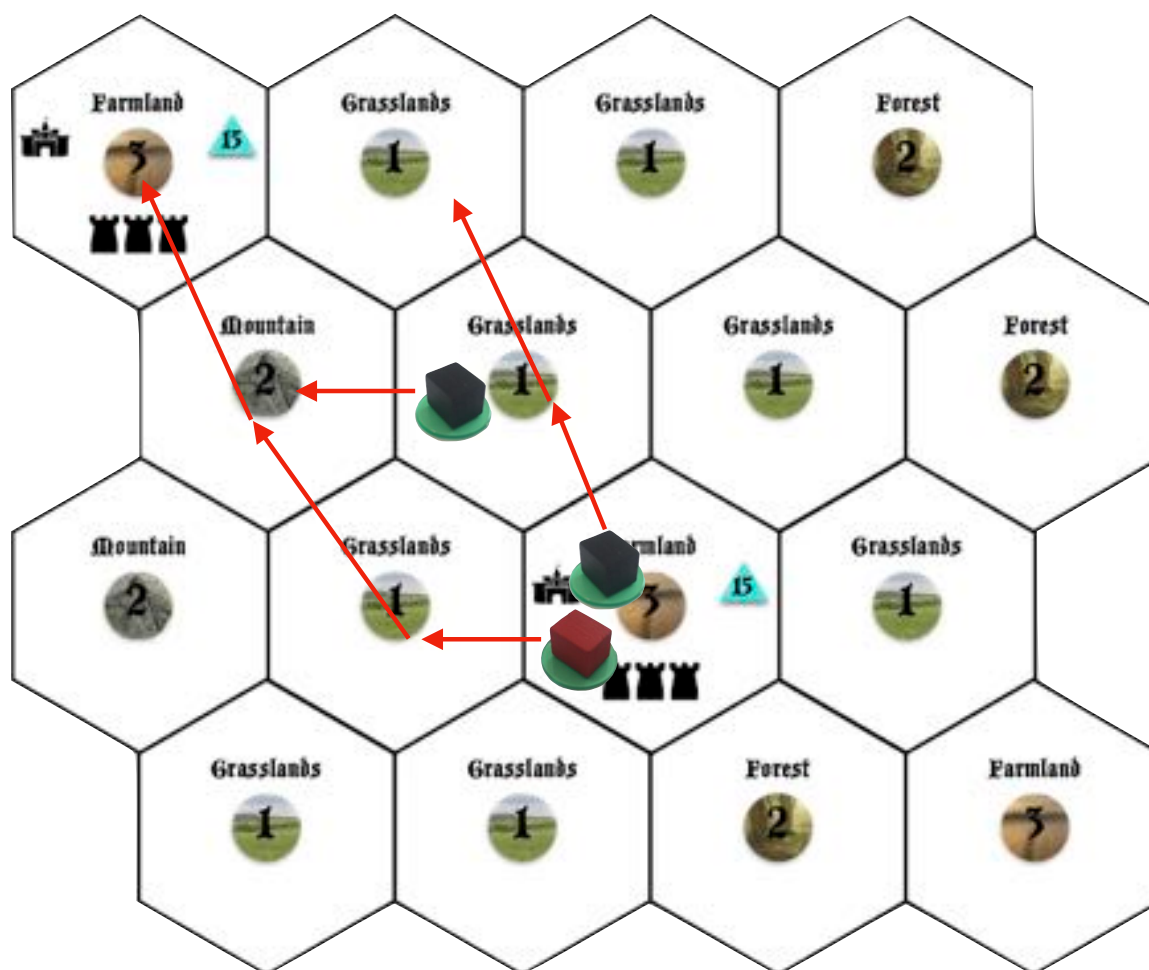
The green militia unit may move from a farmland, into a grasslands space, and then into another grasslands space. The militia on the grasslands may move into the mountain. Its movement then ends, because it spent both its movement points moving into the mountain. The knight, however, has four movement points, and may move into the grasslands (1 movement), into the mountain (2 movement), and into the farmland (1 movement).

However, **mountains and forests are 'slow terrain' and cost two movement points to move into.** A Militia unit may only move one space if it moves into a mountain or forest. It may not move into one space, and then use its second movement point to move into slow terrain.

Aerial units are an exception to the slow terrain rule. Because they can fly, the terrain doesn't affect them, so they can move into a mountain or forest for only 1 movement point.
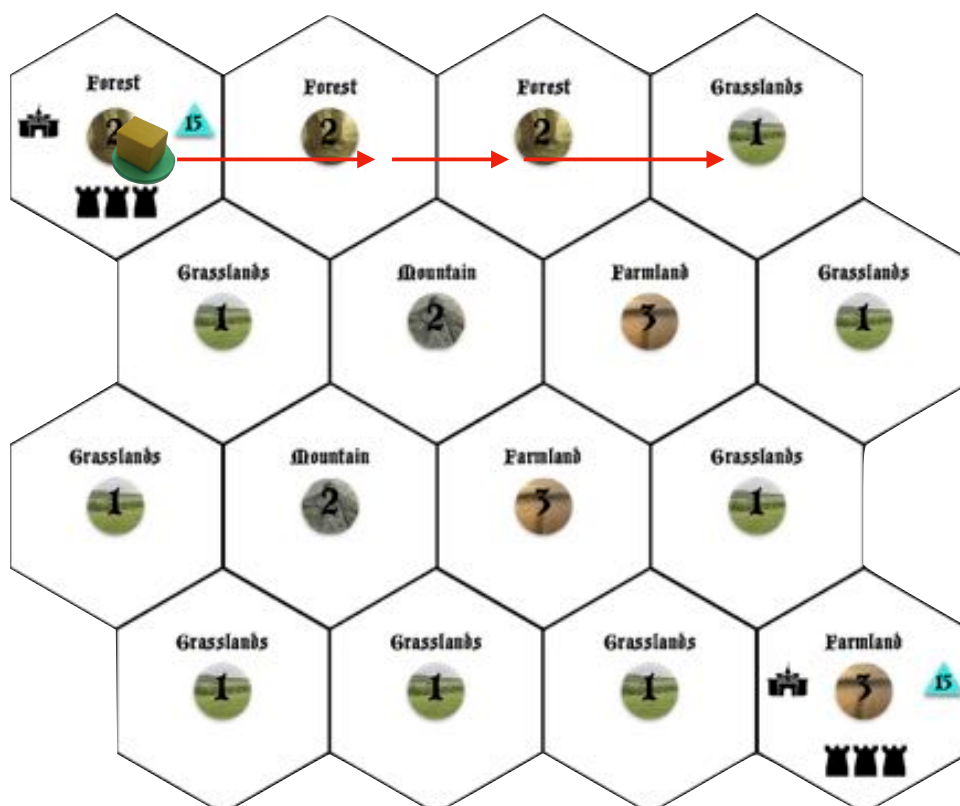
The griffin may use its 3 movement points to move into the forest, into another forest, and into a grasslands.

A unit must immediately stop moving if it moves into enemy-controlled territory. The people of opposing empires aren't going to let your army march all over them. Your troops must stop as soon as they enter enemy-controlled territory, even if there are no enemy units in that territory, in order to establish control over that space, convince the locals that they should pay taxes to you now, and all the other things that go into taking over the world.

Once again, aerial units are the exception. They can simply fly over the locals and land deeper in enemy territory. An aerial unit does not have to stop moving if it moves into an enemy-controlled space. (This does not mean that an aerial unit may conquer multiple enemy spaces in one turn. An enemy space will only come under your control if one of your units occupies it at the end of the combat, and there are no enemy units in that space.)

A unit may not move from a space with enemy units in it into a space controlled by an opponent. If part of your army is in a space with enemy units in it, those units are locked in combat. They may retreat into a space you control, but your opponent's forces aren't about to let you advance deeper into their territory.

When you are done moving your units, the player to your left completes his movement phase, and so on. When all players have finished, proceed to the most exciting part: combat.

Combat phase:

During the move phase, units controlled by one player probably moved into a space controlled by another player. If no enemy units are in an enemy-controlled space with one of your units in it, that space falls under your control. Your income goes up by that space's income value, and the income of the foe you stole it from goes down by the same amount. Place one of your control markers on that space to show your dominance. (If you reclaim a space that belonged to you at the beginning of the game, simply remove your enemy's control marker. There is no need to put down one of your own.)

However, if units under control of different players are in the same place, a battle ensues!

Each battle consists of two combat rounds (a combat round consists simply of rolling one combat die for each of your units in the battle, then choosing a number of units to lose equal to the number of hits your opponent scored). For each of your units in that battle, roll a combat dice. If the result is equal to or less than that unit's combat value (the number in the triangle in the middle of the unit card), you score a hit and your opponent must choose a unit to lose. For example, Militia have a combat value of four— a 20% chance of hitting. If I have five militia in a battle, I roll five dice, and for each result of one, two, three or four, my opponent must choose one of his units in that battle to lose.

Roll for all of your units in that combat round, even ones that were hit. In a real war, the soldiers would be trying to kill each other simultaneously, but in order to avoid confusion as to which type of unit you're rolling for, only roll for a single type of unit at at time.

Make sure you declare which of your units you're rolling for before you roll the dice. The order in which you roll doesn't matter, although I always roll from lowest combat value to highest so I don't lose track of which units I've already rolled for.

Once every unit has been rolled for, the first combat round is over. Remove all hit units from the game and put the unit tokens representing them in your 'dead' bag. If units from two different sides remain, repeat the same process for the second combat round. You will probably roll less dice this time, as some of your units likely died in the first combat round.

After the second combat round, the battle ends for that turn, even if units from two different sides remain in the same space. It will resume next combat round, although before that both players will have the option of retreating their units, or of bringing in reinforcements, in their move phase.

Once all battles have ended and income adjustments have been made for conquered territory, the final phase of the turn begins: build.

Build phase:

Your build phase is exactly the same as your starting build phase, with one exception: newly recruited units must be placed on a space you control with a city marker, not on just any space. After the last player completes his build phase, the player with the first player card passes it to the player on his left, who then begins his move phase.

Example: The green player will roll five dice, one for each of his five militia in the first combat round. The red player will roll two dice for his militia and one die for his knight.

You may spend money equal to your income in each build phase. Any leftover money vanishes into thin air. You may not save it for future build phases.

Winning the Game:

If at any time a player controls more cities than the number of players, the game ends immediately and that player wins.

If, at the end of any build phase, a player has no more unit tokens in his 'reserves' bag, the war has dragged on long enough. Your people are exhausted and about to rise up against you and force you to sign a peace treaty. The game continues for one more turn, with each player completing a move phase, then resolving all battles in the combat phase (technically, there's a build phase too, but it's completely irrelevant as the game will end before anyone can use any units they build).

If, at the end of any build phase, any player controls no cities or has less than 5 income, the game also continues for one more turn and then ends.

When the final turn ends, each player counts their morale. Your morale is equal to your income, plus 20 for each city you control, minus the number of units in your 'dead' bag.
The player with the highest morale wins.

City fortifications:

Each space with a city on it also comes with fortifications, powerful units that can't move. In combat, each fortification hits on a 15 or less and takes three hits to defeat. At the start of the game, put three fortification tokens on each city space you control. In a battle for one of your city spaces, only roll one die per combat round for your fortifications, regardless of how many fortification tokens remain (as long as that number is more than zero). You may choose to take a hit fortification token, just as if it were another unit. When all your fortification tokens are gone, your fortifications are destroyed and you do not roll for them.

Fortifications cannot be rebuilt. If you capture an enemy city, you may recruit new units to that space. Since a city's fortifications must always be destroyed before you can capture it, you will have to rely on those units to defend your new prize.

Alliances:

You are free to make and break informal alliances at will. However, your troops are extremely xenophobic, and will fight with soldiers from other empires regardless of any deals their leaders may have made. If units under the control of different players are in the same space during the combat phase, there will always be a battle between them. Likewise, if your units are alone in a space belonging to another player at any point during the combat phase, that space will come under your control even if that player is your ally at that moment.

No alliance can change the fact that your troops must end their movement immediately upon moving into a space controlled by an opponent.

Congratulations! You're now ready to play your first game of Epic Domination. Once you think you've mastered the basic strategy of the game and are ready to spice things up, flip the board pieces over and read the second part of this rulebook.
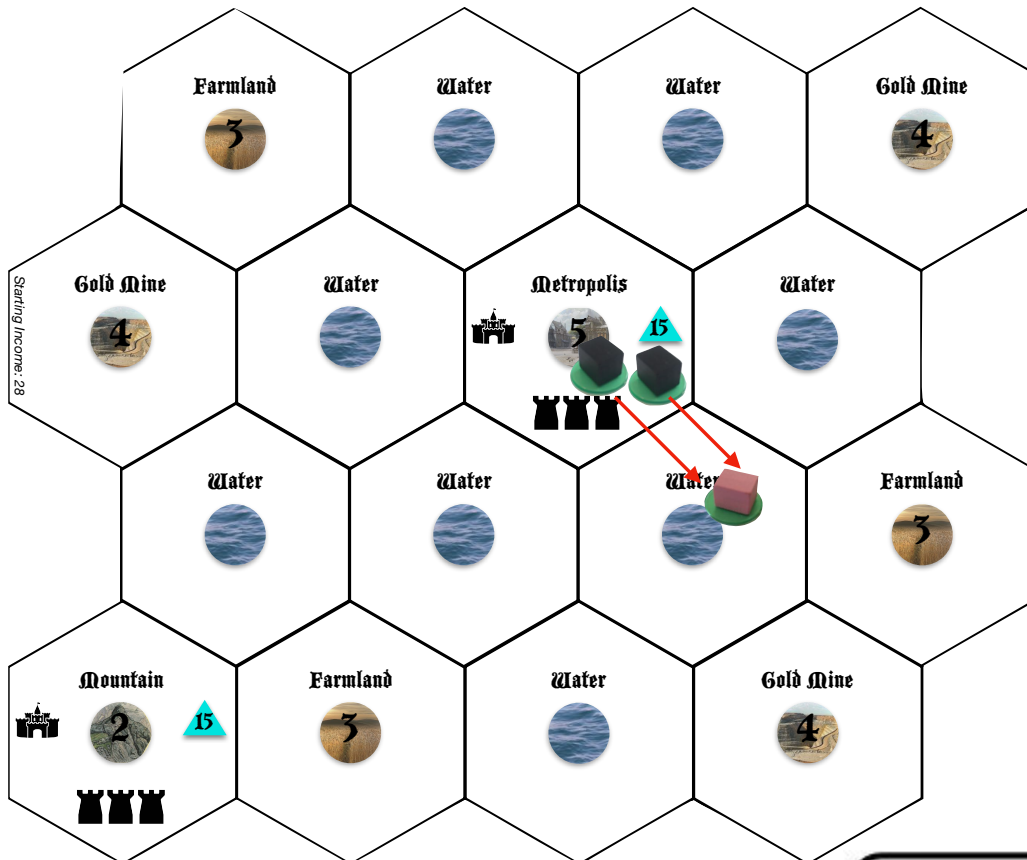
Part 2: Raising the Stakes

War at Sea:

When you flip the board pieces over, you'll notice that some of them have water spaces that lack an income value. These spaces are never under the control of any player, and water units may move into them for 1 movement point.

When playing with water, your empire is now surrounded by ocean. Add the sea-frame pieces to the edges of the board. This ensures that all players have access to water.
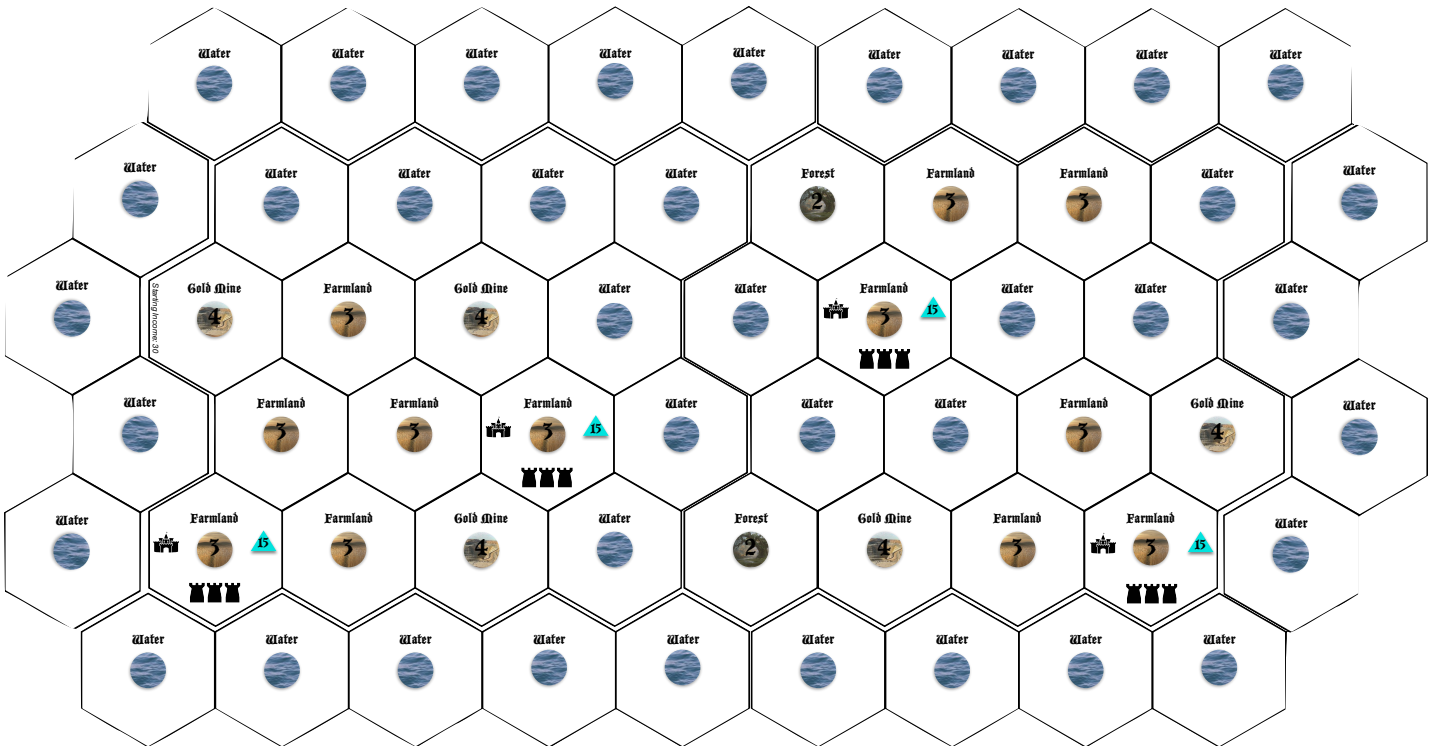
Always play with the Transport Ship unit when playing with water spaces. You may build water unit on any water space that is adjacent to a city you control, even if that space contains enemy units.

Land units may move into a water space if you have a Transport Ship there to carry them. Each Transport Ship may carry up to two units. Moving a unit onto or off of a Transport Ship costs 1 movement of that unit **and** of the Transport Ship.

Farmland 3	Water	Water	Gold Mine 4
Gold Mine 4	Water	Metropolis 5 · 15	Water
Water	Water	Water	Farmland 3
Mountain 2 · 15	Farmland 3	Water	Gold Mine 4

The two militia units move onto the Transport Ship. Now the Transport Ship has 4 movement points remaining, and each Militia has 1 movement point.

Transport Ship

0

Movement: 6
Transport: 2

8

Water Unit
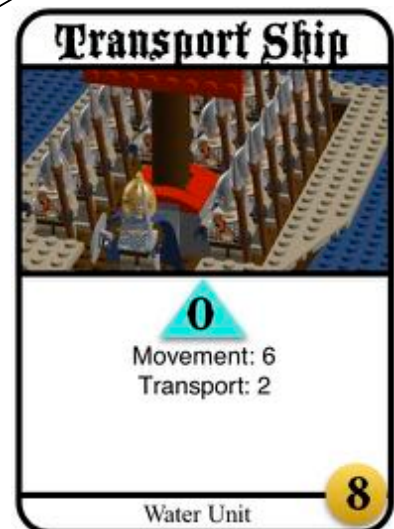
If a Transport Ship moves while carrying units, only the ship's movement points are spent. Thus, you may load two units onto a Transport Ship, move that ships two water spaces, then unload those units onto a non-slow terrain space, all in one move phase.

Since water spaces are never under the control of any player, a water unit that moves into a water space on a board piece that comprises an opponent's starting territory does not have to end its movement.

However, a water unit's movement ends immediately if it moves into a water space with enemy units in it.

A water unit may not move from a space with enemy units in it into another space with enemy units in it.

An aerial unit may fly over water spaces, moving into them for one movement point. However, they cannot hover. At the end of the movement phase, if an aerial unit is on a water space and not on a Transport Ship, it will drown and die immediately.

If two Transport Ships are in the space, don't worry about keeping track of which units are on which ship. You may transfer units between ships on the same space instantly, at any time, for no cost. Note that as a result of this rule, you may move an aerial unit into a water space, then have it land on a ship in that space without spending any of that ship's movement points.
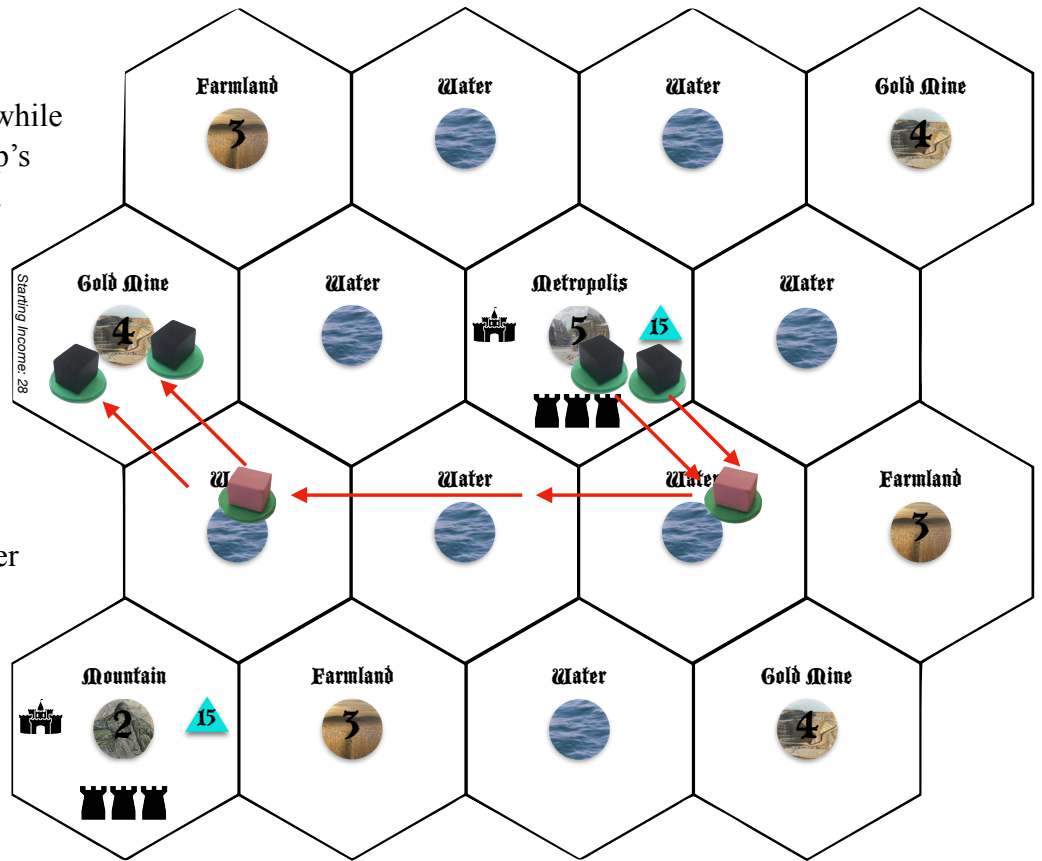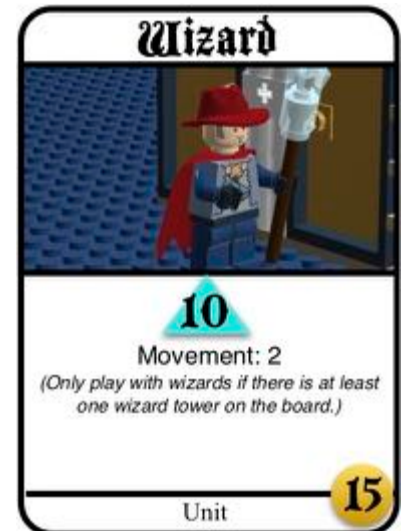
Magic:

If you choose a board piece with a wizard tower on it, you'll have an opportunity to ambush your opponent with a variety of magic spells. When playing with wizards and wizard towers, shuffle the magic spell cards and place them in a face-down pile by the board.

At the beginning of each turn, if you control and have a wizard on a wizard tower, draw a magic spell card. You may play magic spells cards during your move phase or in between the move and combat phases. When you play a magic spell card, carry out its instructions immediately, then keep it face-up in front of you until the end of your build phase. Magic isn't free! These spells have costs, represented by the number in the lower right corner. During your build phase, subtract the cost of all magic spells you cast from your income for that turn, then discard all those cards to a face-up pile next to the magic spell card deck.

You may not play a magic spell card if it would cause the total cost of all magic spell cards you've played this turn to exceed your income. If your income goes down during the combat phase and causes you to have less income that the total cost of all spells you've cast, that's fine. You simply will be unable to build anything this build phase.

When playing with magic spell cards, there is an additional phase between the move and combat phases: the magic phase. During this phase, each player, starting with whoever has the first player card proceeding to the left, may play magic spell cards. After the last player has played his cards or declined to do so, proceed to the combat phase as usual. You may also play magic spell cards at any time during your move phase.

| Forest 2 | Forest 2 | Forest 2 | Grasslands 1 |

Forest 2

Grasslands 1

Mountain 2

Mountain 2 15

Grasslands 1

Wizard Tower 0

Wizard: Draw a magic spell card

Grasslands 1

Grasslands 1

Farmland 3 15

Farmland 3

Grasslands 1

Grassland 1

Example: At the end of the move phase, things look bleak for the red player's wizard on that grasslands space. However, during the magic phase, the red player casts the 'Reinforcements' spell, turning the tide by bringing three new militia units to his wizard's aid.

Reinforcements

Recruit three militia units for free and put them on a space with one of your wizards on it.
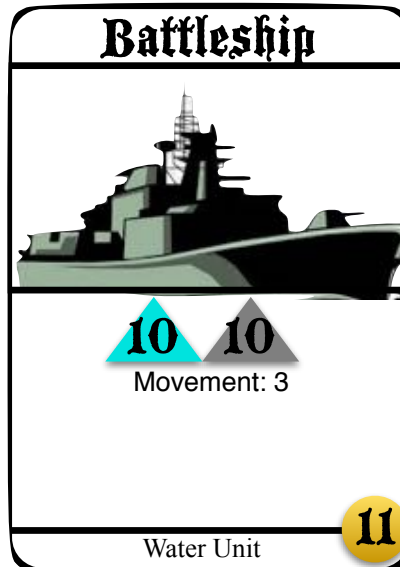
Magic Spell   7

Armor:

Two units have an additional number alongside the number representing their combat value. This number represents the strength of that unit's armor. Whenever a unit with armor is hit, roll one combat die. If the result is equal to or less than that of the unit's armor value, the hit is blocked, and that unit doesn't die.

Note that while you may have your Battleships take hits in order to protect the rest of your fleet, Dragons are selfish and prideful creatures who refuse to risk their own lives for common rank-and-file soldiers. A Dragon, therefore, can only be hit if you have no non-Dragon units in the same space.

Battleship

10 10
Movement: 3

Water Unit   11

Dragon

15 15
Movement: 4
You can't have a dragon take a hit as long as another unit could take that hit instead.

Aerial Unit   20

"We know this land" variant[2]:

When playing with this variation on the base game, the people of your empire are intimately acquainted with their land and know secret passages through the forests and mountains. Your troops are unaffected by the 'slow terrain' rules as long as they're on your starting territory. You may move any unit into a forest or mountain that you controlled at the beginning of the game for one movement point, even that space has since fallen under enemy control (your units still have to stop moving immediately if this is the case).

Forests and mountains that are not part of the board piece you began the game with still cost two movement points to move into.

Specialized Armies variant:

Choose 2-5 unit cards to play with that are accessible to all players, then give each player a private unit card. Keep your private card in front of you. Only you may build units of that type. Players may use the same color of unit marker to represent their different private units, but that color will represent different things for each player.

Militia and Transport Ships may never be private units.

Mini Domination variant:

Play with one less board piece than the number of players. Before the starting build phase, players take turns placing their control markers on one space at a time to claim their starting territory. Once all the spaces have been claimed, play proceeds normally, with one exception: the game ends as soon as one player controls a number of cities equal to (instead of greater than) the number of players in the game.

Double Domination variant:

Each player chooses two board pieces instead of one to form their starting territory. Play proceeds normally, with one exception: the game does not end as soon as a player controls more cities than the number of players unless that player controls at least *four* more cities than the number of players.

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[2] Thanks to Noah Smith and Timothy Morago for coming up with this idea