

Dark Ages

A game of development and domination in medieval Europe.

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Introduction

Become a ruler of a medieval barony and take the first steps on your way into medieval chronicles. Build cities, raise famous landmarks, develop technologies and raise armies. Draw minor lords to your banner, as you grow in power. Conquer new lands, secure victory by strength of arms - or by technological and cultural development. Your history begins now.

Component Overview

Your copy of *Dark Ages* should come with the following components:

Main Board



This double-sided board depicts a part of medieval Europe, divided into Provinces. Each Province includes the following elements:



1. Name: historical name of the Province.
2. Resource icon: denotes the type of resource the Province may produce (wood, stone, leather, iron).
3. Farm spaces: this is where up to 2 farms may be built.
4. Background colour: Provinces with the same background colour create larger Regions, which share basic culture (important for settling the Province).

Culture Board

The Culture Board is used to perform Actions, track Victory Points, and hold churches and cities to be built by players.



1. Action spaces: Noble discs are stacked here to perform Actions outlined above each space.
2. Reaction spaces: Reactions connected to particular Action available to players are printed here.
3. City pool: holds all city tokens for the current game.
4. Church track: holds all churches and tracks the number of Churches available for different numbers of players.
5. Expanded Nobles area: Nobles used to resolve a Reaction are held here.
6. Culture Card deck.
7. Culture Card discard pile.
8. Culture Track (divided into player marker spaces over 5 face-up card areas).
9. Culture Card offer.

Player Board

All players start the game with identical player boards:



1. Common Technology slots: this is where up to 4 Common Technologies are played and upgraded to higher levels.
2. Settling track: holds player's Farms and establishes player army limit.
3. City and structure area: serves as a reminder of prices and abilities of structures and cities.

- Trade track (referred to as Trade Track in the game): tracks how many resources can be traded and kept when passing.
- Starting Military Technologies: establish the characteristics of player units, also serve as Military Technology slots.
- Barbarian Trophy track: tracks extra strength of Barbarian tokens, as well as extra rewards for defeating them.

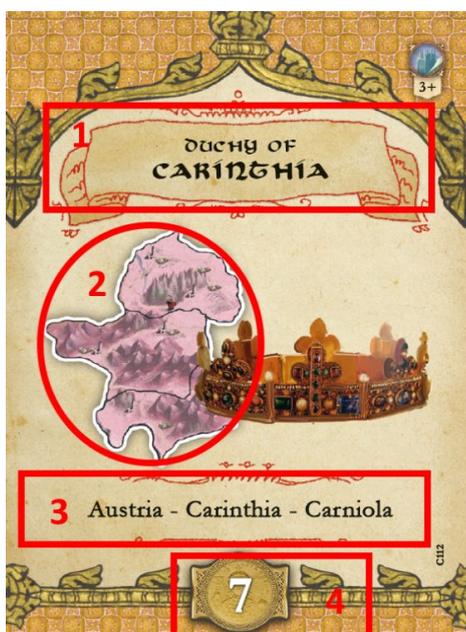
Action Cards



Each Action Card includes:

- Action name
- Action description.

Title Cards



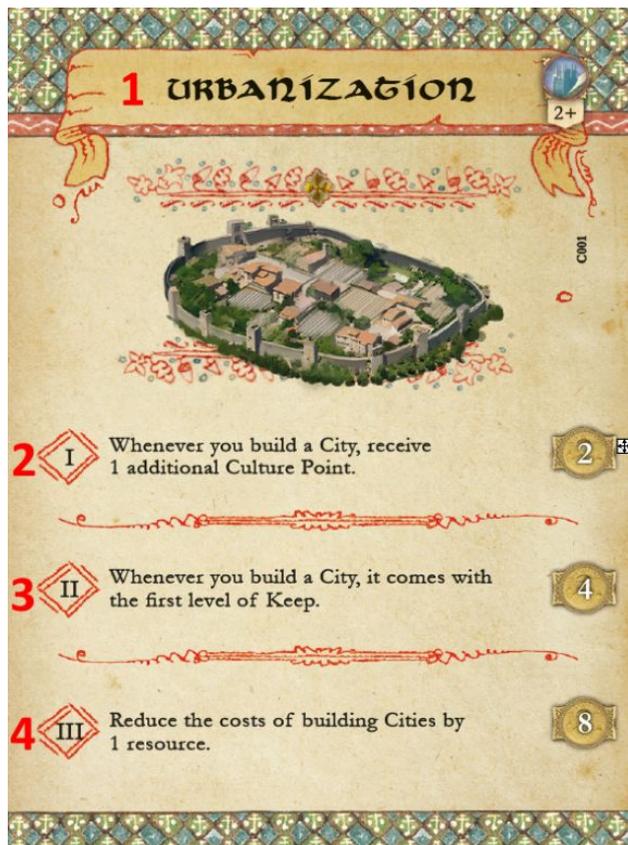
Each Title Card includes:

1. Title name.
2. Outline of the Region the Title card is connected with.
3. List of Provinces of the Region required to claim the card.
4. Victory Point Value

Culture Cards

There are 5 types of Culture Cards:

Common Technology



1. Card name..
2. Level 1 effect and Victory Point value.
3. Level 2 effect and Victory Point value.
4. Level 3 effect and Victory Point value.

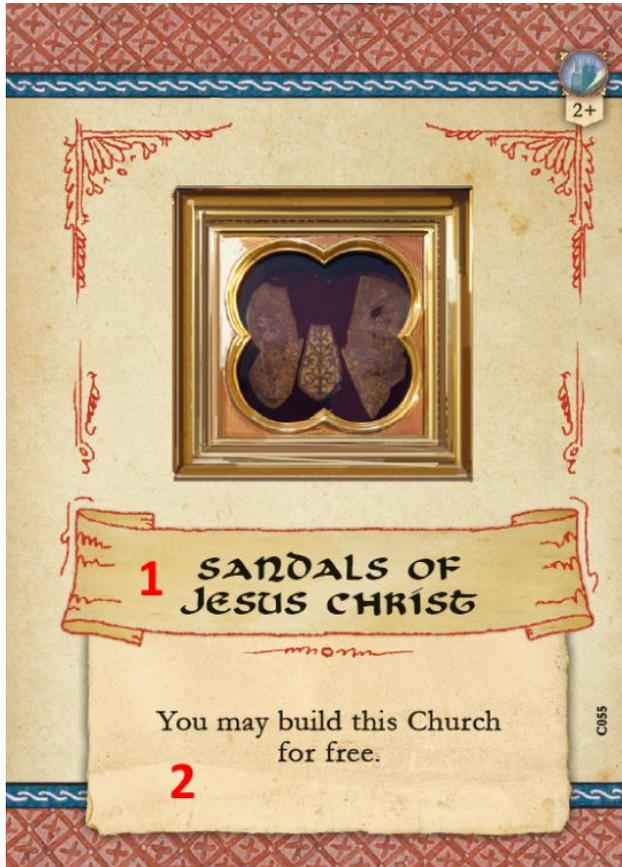
Military Technology



1. Unit names.
2. Card colour (denoting type: green infantry, red cavalry, blue archers).
3. Unit recruitment costs.
4. Ranged Combat Rating.
5. Charge Combat Rating.
6. Melee Combat Rating.
7. Hit Points.
8. Unit Levels

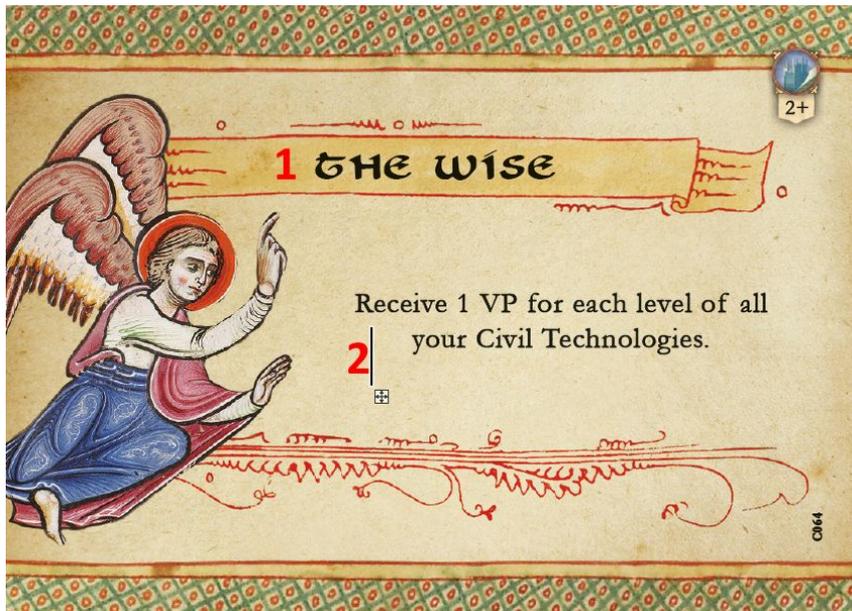
Please note that each Military Technology card depicts two Unit types. When playing the card you will select only one of those types, by rotating the card in the desired direction.

Relic Cards



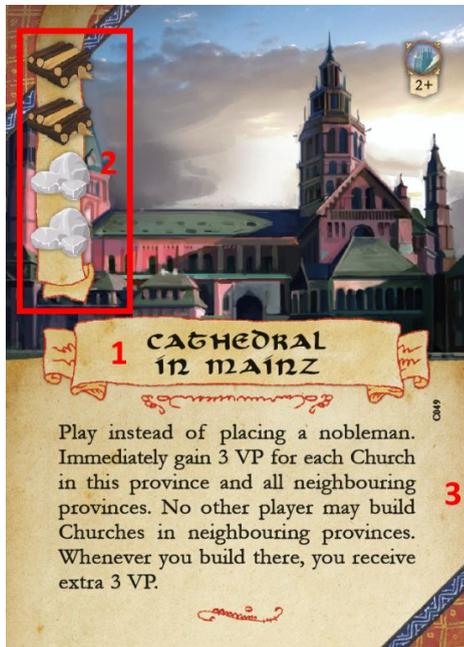
1. Relic name.
2. Card effect.

Cognomen Cards



1. Cognomen name.
2. Ability provided by the card.

Special Building Cards



1. Landmark name.
2. Resource cost.
3. Card (and building) effect.

Note: these cards are introduced by the Special Buildings Module. However, if you wish to play with Marozia as a ruler, these cards need to be included in the game.

Ruler Cards



Each player will start their game with 1 Ruler Card:

1. Name
2. Starting Province
3. Settling costs

Each Ruler also comes with 2 unique Culture cards the player will receive at the start of the game.

Barbarian Tokens

Barbarian Tokens are double-sided:

1. One side lists barbarian units.



2. The flipside lists rewards received for winning a battle against this Barbarian Token.



Plastic Buildings

1. Farms
2. Production Buildings (in four different colours, one for each resource)
3. Churches
4. Keeps
5. Cities

Workshops and Marketplaces use the same building miniature because - once they are built - they serve the same purpose. There are different costs and conditions to building them, as explained on the Player Board, but once a Workshop or Marketplace is built, it is simply considered to be a Production Building.

Wooden Discs

1. Noble discs.
2. Tracking discs.

Combat Dice

1. 5 green dice (Infantry)

2. 5 blue dice (Archers)
3. 5 red dice (Cavalry)

Military Units

1. 20 cavalry miniatures (5 in each player colour)
2. 24 archer miniatures (6 in each player colour)
3. 28 infantry miniatures (7 in each player colour)

Resources

1. 20 wood
2. 20 leather
3. 20 stone
4. 20 iron
5. 20 gold

Game Rules

The booklet you are reading now.

Game Setup

Before your first game carefully punch out all cardboard components, open all card decks and separate them into different types. Separate the Military Units, discs and Farm buildings by colour of each player.

Player Counts

Many of the game components come with symbols like these:



Whenever you set up the game, remove any components with numbers higher than the current number of players.

Preliminary Setup

1. Remove from the game all components with the player number higher than the current player count.
2. Place all Ruler Cards appropriate for the number of players face up on the table.

3. Choose a starting player using any method you prefer.
4. Starting from the last player and going counter-clockwise around the table, each player chooses 1 Ruler card (remove any leftover Ruler cards from the game after all players have chosen their Rulers).
5. Give each player their unique Culture Cards corresponding to their Ruler Card.
6. Each player should take all Military Units, discs and Farm buildings in their chosen colour.

Whenever these rules ask you to **remove** a component (a card, a token, a wooden building, etc.) from the game, place the component in the game box, and do not use it in the current game.

Main Board Setup

1. Place the main board in the middle of the table.
2. Prepare 11/13/15 Cities (for 2/3/4 players), place them in the City Holding Area on the Culture Board and remove any extra cities from the game.
3. Each player should place 2 Infantry units in the starting Province printed on their Ruler Card.
4. Place 1 City (from the prepared pool) in each currently occupied Province (player starting Provinces known as Capitals).
5. Place 1 Production Building on each City (it should share its type with the resource provided by the Province), and add it to the City (by placing it next to its wall).
6. Shuffle all Barbarian tokens and place 1 (random side up) on each unoccupied Province in play for the current player count.
7. Place 1 Production Building in each Province with a Barbarian token (it should share its type with the resource provided by the Province).
8. Remove any unused Barbarian tokens from the game.

A Province is **occupied** when there are any Military Units or Barbarian tokens present. A Province with a City and/or any buildings (including Farms) but with **no Military Units** and **no Barbarians** is **unoccupied**. A player may own a Province if they occupy it and/or if they have a farm in that Province. Cities do not by default belong to any player (excluding Capitals).

Culture Board Setup

1. Place the Culture Board next to the Main Board.
2. Shuffle all Action Cards and place 1 in each of the Action Card spaces.
3. Place 1 Church on each space of the Church track, excluding spaces with player number higher than the current player count and any spaces beyond that number.
4. Stack 1 disc belonging to each player on the first space of the Victory Point Track.
5. Shuffle all Culture Cards together and form a face-down deck.
6. Place the Culture Card deck in the spaces provided on the Board.

7. Draw cards from the Culture Card deck and place 1 face up in each Culture Card space on the Board.
8. Stack 1 disc belonging to each player on the first space of the Culture Track.

Player Setup

1. Place 1 Player Board in front of each player.
2. Each player should place all their Farms on the Settling Track.
3. Each player should now take the leftmost Farm from their Settling Track and place it in one of the two Farm spaces in their starting Province.
4. Each player receives 1 Gold and 1 of each of the basic resources (1 wood, 1 leather, 1 stone, 1 iron).
5. Each player places a number of Noble discs appropriate for the number of players (6/5/4 for a 2/3/4 player game) next to their board (and removes any leftover Nobles from the game).
6. Each player places a marker disc on the leftmost space of the Trade Track.

Finishing Touches

1. If playing with two or three players, the starting player must exhaust one Noble (by placing the disc next to their board).
2. If playing with four players, the starting player and the player to their left must both exhaust one Noble each (by placing the disc next to their board).
3. You are now ready to play *Dark Ages*.

Game Overview

A game of *Dark Ages* is played in player turns. During a player turn the Active Player resolves an Action or passes. If an Action is resolved, there is a possibility of a Reaction. If the Active Player passes, no Actions or Reactions are resolved. Next, the Active Player should check for the End Game triggers. Finally, the player to the current Active Player's left becomes the new Active Player.

Remember, when it is your turn you are the **Active Player**. Whether you decide to resolve an Action or Pass, you remain the Active Player until you finish your turn, and until play passes to the player on your left. Only the Active Player may resolve an Action. Reactions are a different matter which we will deal with a little later.

Action and Reaction

To resolve an Action (and possibly trigger a Reaction) as the Active Player does the following in order:

1. Move one of your ready Nobles to one of the Action spaces on the Culture Board.
2. If the space is unoccupied, place your Noble disc in the space.
3. If the space is occupied, place your Noble disc on top of any discs already there.

4. If the stack of Nobles consists of 3 discs, remove the bottom Noble, and place it between the two arrows under the Action Space.
5. Resolve the Action from the Action card directly above the Action Space you have chosen to place your Noble disc in.
6. After that, if there is a Noble disc between any two arrows, the owner of the disc chooses one of the Reactions the arrows point to and resolves it now.
7. After a Reaction was resolved (or the player passed on reacting), move the Reacting Noble disc to the Expended Nobles area on the Culture Board.
8. Before or after the Action you may resolve a Free Action (further described later in the rules).

Any Reactions are always resolved **after** the Action was fully resolved. Even if your Action allows you to resolve the Reaction, you are not allowed to change the “Action first, Reaction second” order. This means that you will **not** be able to fuel your Action with any Reaction benefits (i.e. using resources gained via a Reaction in a preceding Action is not allowed - those resources are simply not yet there).

Passing

Instead of resolving an Action, a player may pass on their turn. If the Active Player starts their turn with no ready Nobles, they must pass. An Active Player may pass even if they would have been able to resolve an Action. When passing, the Active Player performs the following steps in order:

1. Discard the leftmost card from the Culture Offer, slide all the cards left and refill the empty space.
2. Check for Title eligibility (see below). If you are eligible for one or more Titles, claim a maximum of **1** now.
3. Remove all your Noble discs from the Culture Board (Action Spaces and Expended Nobles Area), and place them next to your Player Board. When you remove your Noble discs from Action Spaces do not change the order of other Noble discs in the stacks - they should stay in the same order they were in before removing your Noble discs.
4. Check the number of resources you are allowed to sell on your Warehouse Track - this is the maximum number of resources you are allowed to sell.
5. For each resource sold, receive Culture Points equal to the resource value (1 Culture Point for Wood and Leather, 2 for Stone and 3 for Iron).
6. For each Culture Point received, immediately move up once on the Culture Track. If you are **the first player** to enter a red space on the Culture Track, receive 1 Gold.
7. Check your number of resources you are allowed to keep on your Trade Track - this is the maximum number of resources you are allowed to keep.
8. Discard any resources in excess of your Warehousing capacity, excluding Gold - players may always keep as much Gold as they like.
9. Receive 1 Gold.
10. All of your production buildings produce resources (see the Player Board for details).
11. Refresh all your Title Cards by returning them to the upright position.

A Noble Disc placed next to your Player Board is considered to be Ready. A Noble anywhere else (on the Culture Board) is considered Expended.

Claiming a Title

If you meet all the requirements of a Title Card, you may place it next to your Player Board. If the Title is claimed for the first time (it has not been claimed from another player), immediately receive its Victory Point reward.

In order to claim a Title from the Main Board or from another player, you must control at least half of the Provinces listed on that Title card (rounded up - so for a 5 Province region you must control 3 Provinces). For any Province listed on the Title Card that you do not control, you must expend a ready Noble disc on your Player Board.

Note that Titles can be claimed when you control the most of a Region: a group of Provinces sharing the same colour (in game terminology) or culture (speaking thematically).

Checking for Endgame

There are multiple Endgame triggers in *Dark Ages* (described in detail later). After the Active Player resolves an Action (and a possible Reaction is also fully resolved) or passes, always check for any Endgame triggers. Only after checking for Endgame triggers does the play pass to the next player.

Regular Actions

There are 5 different regular Actions to choose from.

Building

Caution! The Building action can never be used to place a Farm in a Province that does not already contain a Farm. Placing the first Farm in a Province is **only allowed** via the Settling action explained further in these rules.

The Building Action allows you to:

- build 1 Farm in a Province where **you already have** 1 Farm,
- build 1 City in a Province you control,
- build 1 Building in a City you control.
- Advance on your Trade Track by moving 1 space to the right on the Trade Track on your player board.

Abilities and prices of Buildings are printed on your Player Board. In order to Build you need to pay the Building (or City) price in full. If you build a new City, immediately add to it a Production Building present in that Province.

You **control** a Province if it is your home Province (always), or if it is occupied by your Military Units and/or it you have at least 1 Farm in the Province.

City Buildings and Province Capacity

Whenever a new City is built in a Province, immediately move the Production Building in that Province so that it touches one of the three walls of the City. This building is now considered to be in the City. Building a new Production Building or a Church is only allowed if you can afterwards place it next to a City wall.

A City has a capacity of 3 Buildings: this can be any combination of Production Buildings and a maximum of 1 Church. You may destroy a Production Building (by returning its miniature to the stock) to place a different Building in its place, but you may **never destroy a Church**.

A Province can hold a maximum of:

- 1 City
- 1 Church (in a City)
- 1 Special Building
- 2 Farms
- 3 levels of a Keep (in a City)
- 3 Production Buildings (note: one of those 3 spaces may be taken up by a Church).

Development of Culture

This Action allows you to take 1 face-up Culture Card from the Culture Card offer. You are allowed to choose any 1 card that is in or in any position to the left of the area your marker disc has reached. After you choose the card:

1. Slide Culture Cards to the left to fill the empty space on the track.
2. Check your hand size - if you have more than 10 Culture Cards, discard down to 10.

The red flower spaces on the Culture Track indicate which cards you have access to. Upon reaching the first red space, the second card of the Culture Card offer becomes available. The second red flower unlocks the third card, and so on. With your disc on the fifth red flower space and beyond, you have access to all Culture Cards in the offer.

Research

Researching allows you to add a new Technology Card to your Player Board or to upgrade one of your existing Technologies.

Researching and Upgrading Common Technologies

- In order to Research a new Common Technology, simply play it from your hand to any empty Common Technology slot. Tuck the card under your Player Board so that only the top text space (level 1) is visible.
- In order to Upgrade a Common Technology spend 1 Gold to upgrade from the current level to the next level. When you upgrade a Common Technology, slide it out from under your Player Board to show the current level.

Upgrading Military Technologies

Military Technologies are special: each card consists of two different unit upgrades. When playing the card, you must choose which short edge of the card will be pointing up. This is what the card will be treated as from this point on. Any symbols, values and text upside down is henceforth treated as if it did not exist on the card.

- In order to upgrade a Military Technology, place a card of matching type (Infantry, Cavalry or Archers) on a card already on your Player Board (printed or placed).
- You may place only cards of the same level as, or cards exactly one level higher than the card you cover.
- If the card you place is of equal level to the card you cover, you do not pay any resources.
- If the card you place is 1 level higher, spend 1 Gold.

Common Technology Cards - when upgraded - show more than one ability. Unless specifically stated on the card, all visible abilities are

Recruit

When resolving a Recruit Action, place 1 new Military Unit (Infantry, Cavalry or Archer) in any 1 Province Under your control with a City. Abilities and prices of Military Units are printed on your Player Board/Military Technologies cards you've played.

Manoeuvre

This Action allows you to move your Military Units between Provinces. It is also the only Action that allows you to enter a Province occupied by Barbarians or Military Units under another player's control. When resolving the Manoeuvre Action, perform the following in order:

1. Army Upkeep: check the army supply limit on your player board (highest revealed number on the Settlers Track). For each Unit above the army supply limit you must either pay 1 Gold or eliminate a Unit.
2. Choose 1 Province occupied by your Military Units and move any number of those Units into a single, adjacent Province.
3. Resolving this Action may lead to a battle: if the Province you enter is controlled by another player or has a Barbarians token. The rules for battles are covered later.

Be careful when recruiting large armies. You may end up in a situation in which the Manoeuvre Action will decimate your forces - but the Manoeuvre Action is also the only one you can take if you want to invade a new Province and gain some space for Farms.

Free Actions

The Active Player is allowed to do more than just resolve an Action (and a possible Reaction). Whenever you are the Active Player, you may also - before or after your Regular Action make use of one of the two Free Actions:

Settle

Settling **is the only way that** allows you to build the first Farm on a Province you control (but have no Farms there). In order to Settle, you must expend some of your Military Units.

Depending on where you settle, you must:

- pay the leftmost value found on your Ruler Card if you are settling a Province that is belongs to the same Region as your starting Province (so, the settled Province shares its colour with the starting Province). - same colour
- pay the middle value if the Province you are trying to settle and your starting Province is adjacent to your Starting Province **or** belongs to the same Region (but **not both**). - neighbour of your capital
- pay the rightmost value if you want to Settle a land that is none of the two types above (does not share a border or background colour with your Starting Province). - everything else

To pay for Settling:

- Start removing your Military Units from the Province you want to settle.
- When the total number of Hit Points of the removed Units becomes equal or higher than Settling cost, you may immediately place a Farm (at no extra cost) in one of the Farm slots in the Province.

The Settling Free Action allows you to build **only the first Farm in the region**. Any further Farms in a Province with a Farm **must** be built using the Build Action (note that without a special ability or Technology you may have up to 2 Farms in a Province). In short: first Farm must be settled, second Farm (and possibly further ones) must be built.

Doubling an Action

A player with any Title Cards may use those titles to perform a double action. Immediately after choosing a Main Action, you may exhaust (tilt 90 degrees) one - and only one - of your Title Cards to perform this action again. This is done before any reactions are resolved - the affected action is performed **twice**. This means that each time the first action must be resolved fully before the second action is resolved.

All Titles are refreshed when their holder decides to pass. If a title is taken from a player exhausted, it is automatically refreshed.

Reactions

A Reaction occurs whenever the stack of Nobles in one Action Space is consists of 3 discs. When that happens, the bottom disc is moved out from under the stack, and the owner of the disc is allowed to resolve a Reaction (but only after the Regular Action is completely resolved).

It is entirely possible for the Active Player to perform both the Regular Action and the Reaction. In fact, it is probably a great idea to plan at least some of your turns in such a way that you are able to benefit not only of Reactions created by other players, but also by yourself.

Recruit Reaction

This Reaction works the same way as its Regular Action counterpart.

Sell Goods / Exchange Iron for Gold

When using this Reaction as Sell Goods, you are allowed to trade resources the same way as when you pass (with the same restrictions). Alternatively, you may trade in exactly 1 Iron to receive 1 Gold.

Cultural Exchange

This Reaction allows you to pay 1 Gold in order to draft any 1 Culture Card from the Culture Board (regardless of the position of your marker on the Culture Track) or to discard 1 Culture Card to receive any 1 Gold.

Regroup

This Reaction works the same way as Manoeuvre with two exceptions:

- You may move activated units up to 1 Province.
- You may not enter Provinces occupied by Barbarians or Military Units under the control of other players.

Unlike the Manoeuvre Action, Regroup allows you to essentially move your Units between Provinces you control (via a Farm or occupation), or into uncontrolled units. Also, you **do not** check army supply when performing this Reaction - unlike when you Manoeuvre your Units.

Receive Resource

There are 2 Reaction spaces that offer 1 Resource each (and each chosen from 2 different resources). Simply choose one of the possible resources and add it to your stocks.

Endgame and Scoring

A game of *Dark Ages* continues until one of multiple Endgame conditions is triggered:

- 11/13/15 Cities are built in a 3/4/5 player game (including starting Cities) - the moment the last City is placed on the Main Board, the Endgame is triggered.
- 7/8/9 Churches are built in a 3/4/5 player game - the moment the last Church is placed on the Main Board, the Endgame is triggered.
- Any player reaches the end of the Culture Track.
- Any player upgrades 4 Technologies (any mix of Common and/or Military) to level 3.

After any of the Endgame conditions is triggered, each player immediately passes. A player who has just passed last turn, receives 1 extra Gold. After this play continues from the next player (the one sitting to the immediate left to the player who has triggered the end of the game) until all players pass. After all players have passed, the game ends and points are scored.

All players who have all Nobles active (all discs are on their Player Board) will still get to play until they pass. This also includes the player who triggers the Endgame with a Pass action - they will still be able to play until they pass again.

Scoring Points

Each player scores:

- Victory Points for each of their Common Technologies - each scores a number of Victory Points printed on its current level (but not lower levels).
- 3/7 Victory Points for each of their level 2/3 Military Technologies.
- 2/4/7 Victory Points for each City with 1/2/3 Buildings.
- Each level of Keep scores 1 Victory Point per neighbouring Province controlled by the Keep's owner.
- A number of Victory Points equal to the value printed on the space their marker disc occupies on the Culture Track.
- A number of Victory Points equal to the value printed on the space their marker disc occupies on the Settling Track.
- A number of Victory Points equal to the value printed on the space their marker disc occupies on Trade (Warehouse) Track.
- Victory Points from all Title Cards held at the end of the game.
- 1 Victory Point for each Gold token.

In case of a tie, the tied players have to face off against each other in a trial by combat. Preferably using heavy maces, and preferably to the death - unless they can accept a shared victory, and resign from hiring town criers to tell everyone how playing a game without a proper tiebreaker has killed their joy of gaming.

Miscellaneous Rules

This section details different important rules required to play *Dark Ages*.

Gold

Gold is a special resource that works differently than regular resources (wood, leather, stone and iron):

- Gold is used to upgrade your technologies - to upgrade a technology to level 2 or 3 you must pay exactly 1 Gold (unless a technology, ability or a Culture Card specifically says otherwise).
- Gold can be used as a wild resource (you can pay any cost with Gold instead of any other resource), but no other resource can be used instead of Gold.
- Gold does **not** count against your resource limit when you Pass.
- Gold may **not** be traded when passing.
- Each unspent Gold is worth 1 Victory Point at the end of the game.

Unless you have a technology or special ability that says otherwise, you receive Gold in three ways:

- 1 Gold when you pass,
- 1 Gold if you are the first to land on or pass a marked space on the Culture Track,
- 1 Gold if you exchange 1 Iron for 1 Gold using the proper reaction,
- 1 Gold for exchanging Culture Card when you use Cultural Exchange Reaction.

It is especially important to remember that you receive 1 Gold when you pass **no matter what**. Since Gold is a wild resource, it is crucially important to quick and steady development of your lands.

Battles

A Battle occurs whenever Military Units belonging to one player share a Province controlled by another player or with a Barbarian Token. Whenever this happens, a Battle is resolved as part of the Manoeuvre Action that has led to its initiation.

Attacker vs Defender

The player who has initiated the Battle with their Action (the Active player) is considered the attacker. The player who was so attacked is the Defender.

Mustering Units

Before combat starts, if the Defender has any Farms or Cities in the contested Province:

- Add 1 Transient Infantry Unit to the defending army for every Farm in that Province.
- Add 1 Transient Archer Unit to the defending army if the defender controls a City.

Combat Phases

A Battle is played in 3 phases:

1. **Volley:** both opponents roll 1 die for each Unit with a Ranged Combat Rating in their army. Any possible rerolls are applied, with attacker rerolling first. Each die that comes up with a score equal to or higher than the Ranged Combat Rating scores a hit. All hits are assigned immediately.
2. **Charge:** both opponents roll 1 die for each Unit with a Charge Combat Rating in their army. Any possible rerolls are applied, with attacker rerolling first. Each die that comes up with a score equal to or higher than the Charge Combat Rating scores a hit. All hits are assigned immediately.
3. **Melee:** both opponents roll 1 die for each Unit with a Melee Combat Rating in their army. Any possible rerolls are applied, with attacker rerolling first. Each die that comes up with a score equal to or higher than the Melee Combat Rating scores a hit. All hits are assigned immediately.

Dark Ages comes with dice in 3 different colours. Whenever you have units of different effectiveness in the same combat phase (like having Infantry and Archers in the melee step), you can roll all dice together, provided that you use different colours for different types of Units.

Assigning Hits

After each phase of combat each player (starting with the Attacker) assigns all the hits generated to opponent's Units. A Unit that has suffered damage equal to its Hit Points is immediately eliminated. Any hits assigned are retained throughout the whole Battle. Then players proceed to the next phase.

It is often a good idea to eliminate enemy heavy hitters as fast as possible. If you bring some archers to the fight, eliminating cavalry whenever possible is always a great idea - especially that taking out a knight before its charge means that he will not be able to perform any of his attacks. And yes, both archers and cavalry can potentially attack twice in each combat.

End of Combat and Battle Result

After resolving all 3 phases, players must calculate and compare their Battle Results. Total the number of Unit Levels remaining in each army. The total is your Battle Result. The army with the higher Battle Result wins the armed combat (with ties going to the defender). The winner takes (or retains in case of the defender) control of the Province, while the loser must retreat their units:

- Attacker must retreat into the Province they have attacked from.

- Defender must retreat into any adjacent Province that is either controlled (by Units or a Farm) by the Defender.
- All Transient Units are disbanded - return their miniatures to the common pool.

If no legal retreat is possible, all losing Military Units are destroyed. Any hits that did not eliminate a Unit are ignored - consider all units fully healed at this time.

Fighting Barbarians

If your army enters a Province occupied by a Barbarian token, you immediately initiate a Battle against the Barbarians. When engaging in a Battle with Barbarians, follow these steps:

1. Flip the Barbarian token to the Unit side if it was on Reward side. If it was on the Unit side do not flip it until you win the fight.
2. Place the Barbarian token in the leftmost empty space of the Barbarian Track on your Player Board.
3. If all spaces of the track are filled with one or more Barbarian Token, place the Barbarian token in the rightmost track space.
4. Choose a player to your left or right to lead the Barbarians - they will roll dice and assign hits.
5. The Military Units printed on the Barbarian token (plus any extra Units printed above the space the Barbarian token is on the track now) will make up the Barbarian army.
6. Resolve the 3 phases of Battle and determine the victor normally (Barbarian units always use the base profile printed on Player Boards - they never upgrade).
7. If you won, receive any rewards printed on the flipside of the Barbarian token (and any bonuses from the space the token occupies on the Barbarian track).
8. If you were defeated, follow the retreat rules and return the Barbarian token to its original Province.

Battle Rerolls

Some Technology Cards and Buildings offer rerolls of dice. These reroll are offered for the whole Battle, or just to some phases. Whenever it is pertinent, all rerolls in a given phase must be completed by the Attacker before the Defender decides on the rerolls.

Battle Dice Bonuses

Keeps, some Technology Cards and Special Buildings offer Combat Dice Bonuses. These bonuses can be added to any dice in the Melee Combat Phase. Each bonus (each "+1") can be added to any single die. Multiple bonuses (like three "+1" bonuses from a level 3 Keep) can be added to a single die or spread over multiple dice freely.

Battle Result Bonuses

Keeps in attacked Provinces and some Technology Cards offer Battle Result Bonuses. You should add them after resolving all three phases of Battle to the Battle Result value of your remaining units. Remember that when a Province with a Keep is attacked you use both bonuses of that Keep (it adds some Battle Dice Bonuses as any other neighbouring Keep and it also add 1 for each of its levels to the Battle Result).

Taking Over Player Provinces

If you win a battle in a player-controlled Province that is not their Starting Province, you immediately return all their farms to their player board. The only exception is winning Battle in another player's Capital, as explained below.

If you win a battle in a player Capital, you must retreat your units immediately (following the retreat rules outlined above), but you gain the following:

1. Receive a number of Victory Points equal to the beaten player's maximum upkeep (the highest value visible on the Settling Track).
2. Take 1 resource from the beaten player (any resource - including Gold).

No farms or buildings are destroyed!

Culture Card Properties

Apart from Technology cards, the Culture Card deck includes two other types of cards:

1. Special Buildings which can be built and used according to their descriptions on cards (each Special Building comes with its own unique miniature).
2. Cognomens, which you cannot hold beyond a passed turn - you must play all Action Cards after you perform the pass procedure.

Dark Ages Modules

Dark Ages is a customizable game which you can modify in order to create a more specific experience geared towards the tastes of you and your gaming group. This section outlines the rules for Modules - micro expansions that can be used with the game to alter how it plays. With the exception of the Special Buildings module, it is advised that you play *Dark Ages* without any of the modules at least once, before you start introducing modifications.

Important: If you wish to use **Henry the Fowler** or **Marozia** as available Rulers in your game, you must use the Special Buildings Module. If you do not want to use the Module, remove these Rulers from play before game setup.

General Considerations

Most Modules require you to add some cards to the Culture Deck. When setting up a game with any of these Modules, that - when setting up the Culture Board - it is a good idea to cut the Culture Deck roughly in half after shuffling. This is because most Modules will ask you to add some of their cards to the top half of the culture deck, and others to the bottom half.

Once all modules are set up (and all Module cards are added), place the bottom half of the deck on the Culture Board, and then place the top half on top of it, thus creating a single Culture Deck.

Module Presentation

Each Module's entry is presented using the same general outline:

1. The **Title** tells you the name of the Module.
2. The **Player Count** informs you about the minimum and maximum number of players the Module is designed for.
3. The **Complexity** of a Module (which ranges from 1 to 5) measures how much extra effort is needed to incorporate the Module into your game. See more notes on complexity below.
4. The **Why add this Module?** section explains what you can expect from the Module - how it changes the game and what experience it will bring to the table.
5. The **Components** section lists all components needed for the Module.
6. The **Setup** section provides you with the instructions on how to add the Module into your game.
7. The **Rules** tell you how the Module is actually played.

Module Complexity and Time

Each Module's complexity is rated from 1 (few rules, easy to incorporate) to 5 (either significantly altering the game or rules heavy - or possibly both). While learning and using new rules might make the game longer, most Modules are designed to either complement the game or actually speed it up.

Thus, incorporating Modules (especially ones you have played before) does not mean that the game will last for a longer time. In fact, with experienced players, some Modules might even shorten it considerably.