A SOLITAIRE GAME OF CIVILIZATION

BY GEOFFREY GREER

RULES OF PLAY

PREMISE

You are a deity; a god—one among many, perhaps—looking down upon the earth, upon this curious species called humans, and upon their still more curious behaviors. They're very proud of themselves and their advancements, these humans, and they take themselves very seriously, what with their empire-building and their silly and relentless wars with one another. They have no clue how tiny they seem to you, like clever insects—how thousands of years of their civilization pass for you in a matter of minutes, and how completely subject they are to your whims. But, like them, you're proud, too, ye god, and you do so very much delight when these humans notice you and praise you and create all these wonderful and diverse religions about you. And your very favorite thing of all is when they marshall their greatest talents, and the earth's most precious resources, and they build monuments to you and all your glory. After all, where would they be at all if not for your influence and magnanimity?

OBJECTIVE

The object of the game is to score as many points as possible, at the end of five progressive **game ages** (game phases) by influencing human activities (arranging card tableaus) and encouraging the construction of **monuments** (collecting suited sets).

COMPONENTS

2 technological leap cards

6 age cards
(5 w/values + 1 "atomic age")

4 war cards

3 intervention cards

40 civilization cards

5 nation cards

The technological leap, age, and war cards are all considered **progression** cards.

YOU WILL ALSO NEED TO PROVIDE:

- **10-15 _monuments_ counters** (Anything small will do; centi-cubes, pennies, buttons, etc. There is no upper limit to this pool, but 15 will probably be plenty.)
- **5 _devotions_ counters** (Not absolutely essential, but helpful for keeping count. Again, anything will do, preferably something different from the monuments counters.)
- **card sleeves** with opaque backs (Not absolutely necessary, but recommended.)

SET-UP

Nation cards: Place each of the five **nation cards** backwards in its own sleeve so that the sleeve conceals all but the top row of information (tech level I). (If you are not using sleeves, you will want to cover the nation cards with something else—_Magic_ or _Pokémon_ cards, Post-It notes, or whatever, but you don't want it to easily slip.) Nation cards will be gradually exposed, level by level, as the game progresses. Arrange all five nation cards, with their sleeves, in a
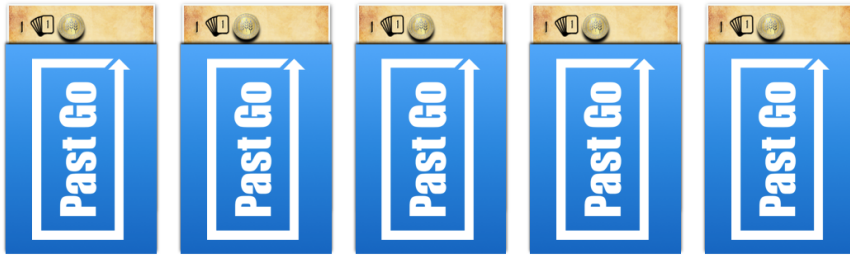
horizontal row with a comfortable space in between for your fingers. (See example shown above.) Each nation will ultimately have cards laid vertically upon it in columns/tableaus.

AGE I (stone)
    war
    tech leap
AGE II (bronze)
    war
AGE III (iron)
    war
    tech leap
AGE IV (powder)
    war
AGE V (steel)
ATOMIC AGE

Progression stack: Locate all twelve **progression cards** and stack them (face up) in the order shown in the box at the left. Stone age (I) should show face up at the top of the stack; the atomic age card will be on the bottom. Set this progression stack within reach to the side of the nations.

Bits: Keep the **intervention cards** and the **monuments** markers handy, perhaps near the progression stack. If you're using them, you will want the five **devotions** markers close to your fingers, as you will be constantly fidgeting with them and counting them throughout the game.

Draw deck: Finally, shuffle the **civilization cards** and deal (face up) 3 cards in a vertical column to each nation, left to right. (In other words, a column of 3 for the left-most nation, then a column of 3 to the next, and so on. See example shown at top right.) Leave the **attributes icons** at the top edges visible. (See sample at top right.) Keep the remaining civilization cards nearby as a draw deck, and leaving some space for an open-faced discard pile. The game is ready to play.

TURN SEQUENCE
Each turn consists of carrying out the following procedures, in this order:

1. Collect **devotions**
2. **Deal** new cards onto nation columns (skipped on first turn)
3. Resolve **technological leaps**, if applicable
4. Resolve **wars**, if applicable.
5. Exert **influence** (spend devotions) and play **interventions**, as desired
6. Resolve suited **sets**, in this order:
    i.   **plagues**
    ii. **monuments**
    iii. **technological advancements**

Each procedure is explained in more detail later in the rules.

UNDERSTANDING AGES & TECH LEVELS
The five nations of the game evolve through progressive **game ages** and through individual **technology levels (tech levels)**. Different ages and tech levels dictate different circumstances and game rules. The five tech levels loosely correspond to the five game ages, but it is important to remember that the tech level of any individual nation might not be the same as the current game age (one or more nations can be "behind the times").

The card that is face up on top of the progression stack shows the current game age. Each nation's individual tech level is shown by the extent to which that nation's card is exposed above its sleeve/covering. The five game ages/tech levels are stone (I), bronze (II), iron (III), powder (IV), and steel (V). The game begins in the stone age (I), with all nations set at tech level I (stone age technology).

Any time a nation's individual tech level advances **beyond** the current game age, it will cause the game age to advance by one increment. Depending on other circumstances, other nations may or may not advance their own tech levels at the same time. When any nation advances beyond the steel age (V) and into the atomic age (the sixth, unmarked age card), the game ends, and you proceed to scoring.

UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE
A **technological advance** is when any nation "promotes" from its current tech level to the next. This occurs for two reasons throughout the game: either (a) through completion and resolution of a **technology set** (see "Resolve Suited Sets"), or (b) appearance of one or both **technological leap cards** during a deal (see "Resolve Technological Leaps").

When a nation experiences technological advance, slide the nation card one increment further out from its sleeve/covering to expose its new current tech level. This tech level determines how many cards the nation receives on its column during a deal, as well as any standing **attributes** the nation may now have (see "Resolve Suited Sets").

Diffusion: If either one of the advancing nation's neighboring nations (the nation to the left or the right) are **backwards** as compared to the advancing nation (at a lower tech level), then one backwards nation also advances by one tech level (even if it is backwards by two or more levels). If both neighboring nations are backwards, you decide which one nation experiences the advance. (The nations at either far end of the playing area only have one neighboring nation each.) In the case of diffusion, the nation which initially caused all advancement to take place is called the "leading nation" or "the nation leading the advancement."

Age Progression: If a leading nation is the first to advance to a tech level beyond the current game age, an **age progression** takes place. Remove the current game age card from the progression stack and lay it on the table above (or stack it underneath) the advancing nation card. It is out of play, but it will be used in end-game scoring, and so it must remain associated with the advancing nation. If multiple nations are simultaneously advancing into a new game age, you choose which nation receives the game age card. If, when the game age card is removed, the atomic age card is revealed, that card must also go to the same nation receiving the steel age (V) card, and the game is ended. Otherwise, you must immediately add the revealed war card (and then the tech leap card, when applicable) to the civilization cards, which are reshuffled together with any discard pile to refresh the draw deck. The new current age card should show face-up on top of the progression stack.
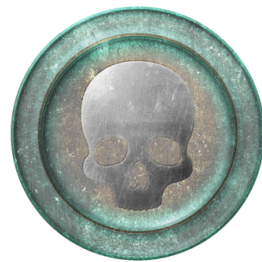
FOOD

POPULATION

TECHNOLOGY

MILITARISM

RESOURCES

DISEASE

Finally, nations that experience technological advance most often (but not always) have columns of cards laid out below them. You need to know that a nation's entire column of cards is discarded only when the tech advance comes from a completed technology set (see "Resolve Suited Sets"); tech advances caused by diffusion or tech leaps do not affect a nation's column of cards.

UNDERSTANDING ATTRIBUTES, CHAINS, & SETS

The civilization cards are vertically symmetrical, so it doesn't matter which short edge is rotated "up." The coins shown along the top edge of each civilization card (and which accumulate on each nation card as it advances through tech levels) represent various attributes of that nation—put simply: these coins abstractly show "the stuff that nation has in it." There are six suits of attributes (shown at the bottom left): **food**, **militarism**, **population**, **resources**, **technology**, and **disease**. It is worth noting that, when/if present, food and militarism icons will always appear in the left corner; population and resources will always appear in the center; technology and disease will always appear in the right corner.

The fundamental functions of the game are based upon the making and breaking of chains and sets of attributes.

The next page shows examples of both chains and sets, but here are some definitions:

A **chain** is defined as any unbroken sequence of cards in a single column that share at least one attribute. For example, 2 cards in-a-row which both have food—regardless of what other attributes they may or may not have—constitute a chain. Similarly, four cards in-a-row which all have population—again regardless of other attributes—are a chain. A single chain might also be made of multiple suits, if the cards at the transition point between single-suit chains have the multiple suits in common.

A suit-set, or simply a **set**, is defined as EITHER 3 matching icons in-a-row, OR 4 matching icons anywhere within a nation and its column of cards. Sets will commonly occur within chains. The attributes of a nation card that come from that nation's current and previous tech levels are added to that nation's total attribute count and can be combined with attributes on civilization cards to form sets. However, the attributes from the nation card itself are never considered "in-a-row," and therefore can only be part of a broken set of 4 matched icons throughout the column. The presence of complete sets within a nation at the end of the turn triggers other events, explained later.

Now that you have an understanding of all these important vocabulary concepts, we may proceed with…

THE TURN SEQUENCE IN GREATER DETAIL
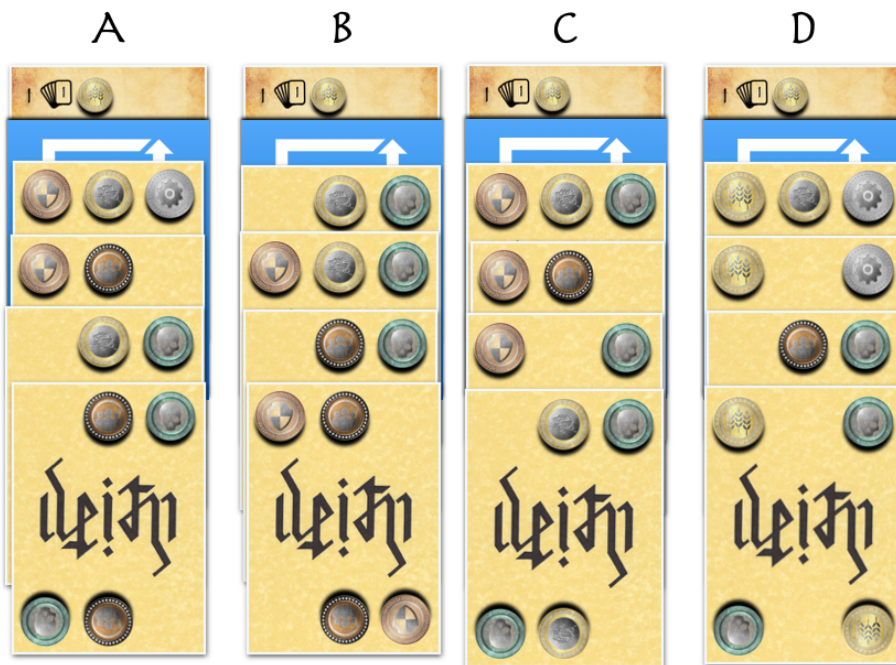
*Nation A has 2 **chains**: one chain of disease (bottom 2 cards) and 1 chain of militarism (top 2 cards, covered by the bottom chain). **Nation B** also has 2 chains: 1 chain of population (bottom 2 cards), and one chain of disease (top 3 cards). However, since the upper-most population card is also the bottom-most disease card, all 4 cards can be treated as 1 continuous chain. This is also true for **Nation C**, which has a disease chain linked with a militarism chain.*

*As for **sets**, **Nation A** has no sets yet. **Nation B** has a set of disease (3 in-a-row), but **Nation C** does NOT have a set of disease, as the 3 icons are interrupted by the second card from the top. Should a fourth disease icon be added anywhere in the column, the disease set would be complete. Meanwhile, **Nation D** DOES have a set of food, owing to the 3 food icons in the column, plus the additional food icon contributed by the nation card itself.*

THE TURN SEQUENCE IN GREATER DETAIL

STEP 1: COLLECT DEVOTIONS

Your **devotions** are simply an "action point allowance" system that limits what you can do on the coming turn. You spend devotions (called "exerting influence") to take certain actions later

in the turn. In the upper right corner of the current age card, **the coin with the sun icon** represents your devotions; the number printed there indicates how many devotions you receive this turn. This is something of which you may simply keep track in your memory, but if you are using devotions counters, simply take this many devotions and push them into a small pile to show that they are "unspent." As you consider choices during your turn, you may find it helpful to push the devotions back and forth into/out of imagined "unspent" and "spent" piles, simply as a means of keeping count.

You will never (and may not ever) have more than five devotions at the start of a turn, and this only happens when you receive 4 new devotions and have carried 1 over from a previous turn. It is also important to remember that <u>receiving devotions takes place before dealing new cards</u>. This matters when the age progresses before you've had a chance to exert influence for the turn (see "Resolve Technological Leaps") and when wars occur (see "Resolve Wars").

STEP 2: DEAL NEW CARDS

<u>This step is skipped on the very first turn, as cards have already been dealt during set-up</u>. From the draw deck, add (face up) to each nation's column of cards the number of cards shown on the "deal" icon (shown at the left) for that nation's <u>current</u> tech level. Nations at different tech levels may receive different numbers of cards. As with the original deal during set-up, passing from left to right, the first nation receives its card(s) first; the second nation receives its card(s) second, and so on through all five. New cards are laid on top of the others in the column, continuing the tableau arrangement. A nation without any cards in its column to begin with still receives its allotment of cards for the deal, and there is no limit to the number of cards that a nation may have in its column, excepting only conditions met by complete sets (explained under *Resolve Suited Sets*).

If, during the deal, a **technological leap** or **war** card is dealt to a nation's column, do not deal any more cards to that individual nation, even if its allotment has not yet been met, but <u>DO</u> proceed to deal to any remaining nations. Tech leaps and/or one or more wars may occur simultaneously in this way.

If the draw deck should ever become depleted during the deal, simply shuffle everything in the discard pile and turn it over to form a new draw deck, resuming the deal where it was interrupted.

STEP 3: RESOLVE TECHNOLOGICAL LEAPS

If either one or both technological leap cards come out on the deal, then <u>the most technologically advanced nation</u> experiences a **technological advance (**see above). It is important to remember that <u>a tech leap always affects **the most technologically advanced nation** in play, regardless of where or on which national column(s) the tech leap cards have physically been dealt</u>. If more than one nation is tied for most advanced status, you choose

which nation leads the advance. <u>Only one nation leads an advance, even if both technological leap cards appear</u>, although advancement by diffusion and/or an age progression may be triggered, per normal rules for technological advancement. After resolving the tech advance and any/all of its ramifications, discard the tech leap card(s) (open face) and proceed through the turn sequence.

STEP 4: RESOLVE WARS

Any nations that receive a war card onto their columns during the deal are on the brink of war with a neighboring nation. First, finish the deal normally. Then, look at each and every nation that received a war card, which for the sake of ease we can call the "attackers." Each attacking nation will go to war with one neighboring nation (the "defender"). If the attacker happens to be at either far end of the playing area, they of course only have one neighboring nation, which by necessity then is the defender. For attackers that have two neighbors, the attacking nation will go to war with whichever of its two neighbors has a lesser militarism count, <u>even if the attacker's militarism count is lesser than the defender's</u>. If the attacker has two neighbors with equal militarism totals, you choose the defending nation.

For every war card assigned in this way, turn the war card sideways and lay it across the two nations' columns to show the paired belligerent nations. (See diagrams explained at the right.) Other things you should know about determining attackers and defenders:

- It is possible and permissible for two neighboring nations to attack each other, assuming they both receive a war card during the deal and they happen to be each other's preferred target. In this case, discard one of the war cards and keep the other in play; the event is treated as a single war.
- It is possible and permissible for a nation to attack its neighbor on one side, while also simultaneously defending against its neighbor on the other side. Such an event is treated as two separate wars, both of which happen to involve the nation in the middle.
- It is possible and permissible for all four war cards to appear on the same deal, which, depending on how the belligerents pair up, could result in as many as four separate wars on the same turn. (This is only possible during the steel age (V).)
- Wars always occur between neighboring nations, not between distant nations, even after shipping becomes available starting in the powder (IV) age.

Once all the belligerent nations have been paired and wars declared, you must now, for each war, choose one of the following actions:

Prevent the war. You may prevent one war by spending <u>ALL</u> devotions you have for the turn. If more than one war occurs, you may only prevent one of them, but you may choose which war to prevent. A prevented war card is discarded and no further resolution is needed. The iconography along the bottom of the war card (shown right) is intended to remind you of this option. Should you

A = 4   B = 4   C = 3   D = 4   E = 4
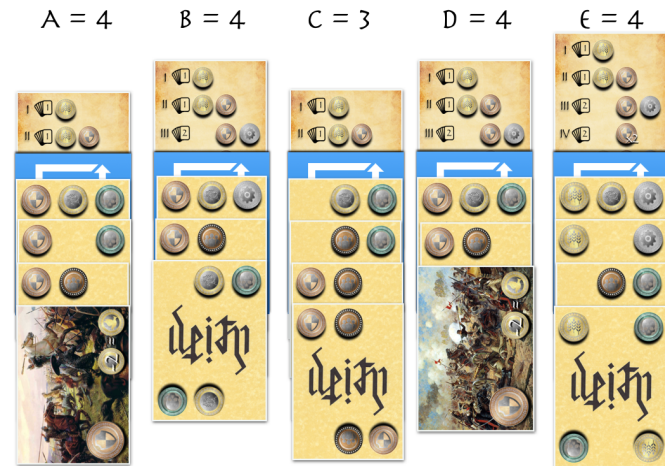
The diagram above shows a position later in the game, with nations labeled A-E, and showing their militarism totals at the top. Always count militarism icons from the civilization cards as well as on the nation card itself. Notice that at tech levels IV and V, as with Nation E, militarism icons on the nation card are worth 2 each.

In this position, war cards have been dealt to Nations A and D. This means that Nation A, being at the edge of the playing field, has no choice but to attack Nation B, and Nation D will attack Nation C, because C's total of 3 is less than E's total of 4. Had C and E been equal, the player would get to choose which direction D attacks.

Once attacks have been determined, the war cards are turned to show the paired off belligerent nations, as shown below.

A = 4   B = 4   C = 3   D = 4   E = 4
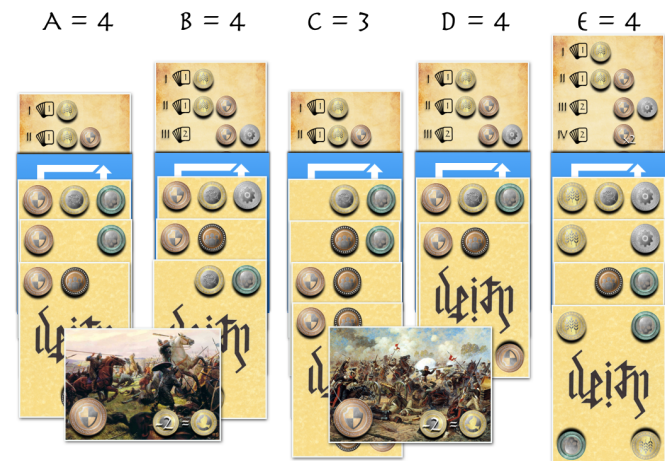
exercise it, you will not have those devotions available to you during the coming influence step of the turn, and you must skip right to the resolution of sets.

Let the humans have their war. If you cannot or choose not to prevent war, then each war plays out in this way: (a) whichever belligerent nation has the smaller militarism count is the loser of the war. If the two nations' militarism count is the same, you choose which nation is the loser. (b) If the loser of a war has any monuments, immediately destroy 1 monument (return the monument counter to the pool). (c) Discard the losing nation's entire column of cards, as well as the war card. The war is now resolved.

In the event of multiple simultaneous wars, you may resolve them in whatever order you wish, such that the results of one war can affect what nation loses another war.

After any/all wars are resolved in one of the two manners described above, proceed through the turn sequence.

## STEP 5: EXERT INFLUENCE (TRADES & RAIDS)

This is the most fundamental step of every turn and is where you will spend most of your time thinking and planning. It is during this step that you engage in the making and breaking of chains and sets, and the moving of cards betwixt and across the nations' columns.

There are two kinds of plays available to you during this step: **trade** and/or **raid**. You must spend 1 devotion to conduct either a trade or a raid.

To trade is to simply move one card or one chain of cards from the bottom of one nation's column to the bottom of another nation's column. It costs 1 devotion to trade. **The most important thing to remember when it comes to trades is that you may not break a chain of technology or disease.** Chains of technology or disease must be traded together, or not at all. Traded cards/chains must come from the bottom-most levels of the "sending" nation's column and may not be pulled from anywhere in the middle of that column. Entire chains may be traded in this way, but the cards in that chain may not be reordered, and all traded cards must be added to the bottom of the "receiving" nation's column. As part of a trade (and for no additional cost in devotions), a card or a chain of cards may be exchanged from the "receiving" nation back to the "sending" nation, at your discretion, but this is not required.

During the stone (I), bronze (II), and iron (III) ages, traded cards can only be moved to an adjacent/neighboring nation's column at the cost of 1 devotion. Trades moving across multiple nations will require more than 1 devotion to be spent, though they may "pick up cards along the way." Starting with the powder (IV) age, and lasting through the rest of the game, trades can be made between any two nations, regardless of whether they are neighboring or not.The shipping icon on the age card (shown at the left) is meant to remind you of this.

A   B   C
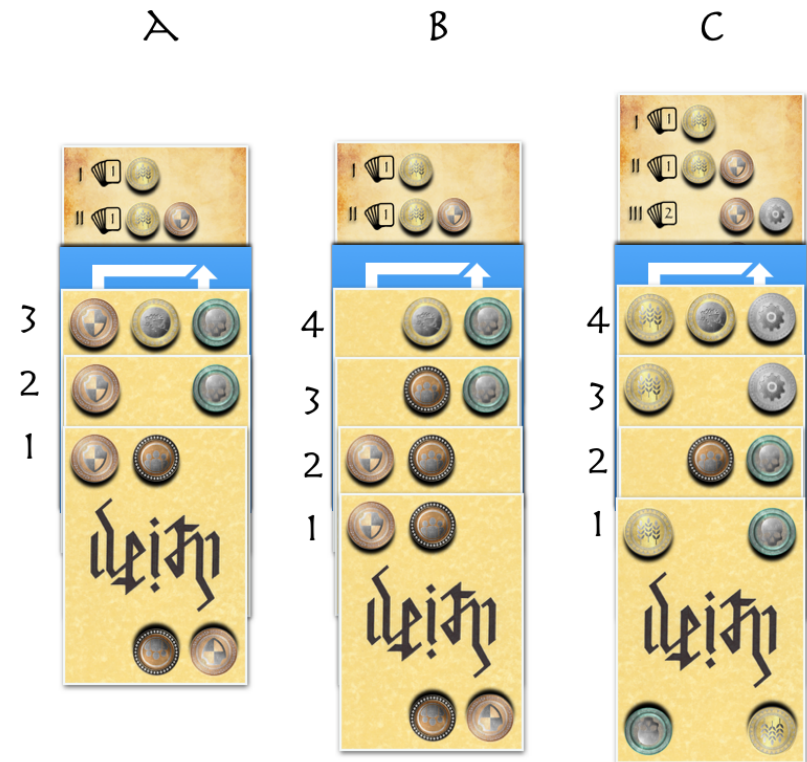
Among these sample nations, Nation B has the most options for trading. Any of the following options would only cost 1 devotion: (a) Card B1 may be traded, simply because it is at the bottom of the column. (b) Cards B1 and B2 may be traded together, as they contain both a militarism chain and a population chain. (c) All Cards B1-B4 may be traded together, as the population chain (B1-B3) and the disease chain (B3-B4) have card B3 in common.

Nation B can simply "give" any of these listed options to either Nation A or Nation C, constituting a single trade action. However, as part of the same trade, for no additional cost in devotions, Nation B could receive one or more cards in exchange for its traded cards. Nation A has the following trades available: A1 by itself, or A1-A3 on account of the militarism chain. Under other circumstances, the militarism chain could be broken between A2 and A3, if not for the disease chain on those same cards. Remember that technology and disease chains may not be broken through trading. Thus, Nation C has only one trade available: C1 and C2, on account of the disease chain.

Similarly, Nation B could not trade the entire population chain B1-B3 without also trading B4, since the disease chain at B3 and B4 cannot be broken.

To raid is to take advantage of imbalances in respective nations' militarism totals to "steal" cards from anywhere in the column, without being limited only to the card(s) at the bottom of the column. For the cost of 1 devotion, one "stronger" nation may steal from another "weaker" nation (a nation with a lesser militarism total) a number of cards equal to the difference between their two militarism totals. The raided cards may come from anywhere within the weaker nation's column and do not have to be adjacent to or layered on top of one another. **It is also permissible to break chains of technology and/or disease by raiding, which is not permissible when simply trading.** Raided cards are always added to the <u>bottom</u> of the raiding nation's column (in an order you choose), and no cards are ever returned or exchanged from the stronger nation back to the weaker nation as part of a raid.

As with trading, during the stone (I), bronze (II), and iron (III) ages, cards can only be raided/stolen from an adjacent/neighboring nation's column. <u>Starting with the powder (IV) age, and lasting through the rest of the game, raids can be made upon any nation with a lesser militarism total, regardless of the weaker nation's "geographic" position.</u> (However, wars are still only declared and resolved between neighboring nations, and never between distant ones.)

You may opt to save 1 devotion (but no more than 1) and let it roll over and be added to your devotions for the next turn. Any other unused devotions beyond this are lost.

INTERVENTIONS

You have three special cards available to you called **intervention cards**. Each one may be played once, at any point in the game during the "exert influence" step of the turn sequence. <u>It does not cost any of your devotions to play an intervention, and you may play more than one on a single turn, if you wish</u>. Once an intervention card is played, its effect is enacted immediately, and the card is removed from play for the remainder of the game. Each intervention card you have not used by the end of the game is worth an additional 2 points towards your total score. These are the intervention cards and their effects:

Leader. When you play this card, you may choose any one nation's column and re-arrange the cards in that column in any order you wish.

Revival. When you play this card, you immediately receive 1 additional devotion for the turn.

Smite. When you play this card, you may immediately discard any one card from any nation, regardless of its position in that nation's column. it is possible and permissible to break chains of technology and/or disease using the smite card.

STEP 6: RESOLVE SUITED SETS

Once you have spent all your devotions for the turn (or have chosen to stop exerting influence), you end the turn by resolving the effects of any completed **sets** within each nation's column of cards. Remember that <u>a set is defined as EITHER 3 matching icons in-a-row, OR 4 matching icons anywhere within a nation and its column of cards</u>. When checking for sets, <u>you count ALL exposed icons on the nation card itself, although none of the icons on the nation card are ever considered "in-a-row."</u> These are the effects of the possible completed sets:

- **Food:** A set of food allows you to double any one population or resources icon (your choice as to which) in that same column. The "doubled" icon IS considered "in-a-row," and this is useful for completing sets towards building monuments.

- **Militarism:** No particular effect. Militarism advantages/imbalances are realized in raids and in wars.

- **Population:** A nation needs a population set AND a resources set in order to build a monument.

- **Resources:** A nation needs a resources set AND a population set in order to build a monument.

- **Technology:** A nation with a technology set at the end of the turn experiences a technological advance.

- **Disease:** A nation with a disease set at the start of this step of the turn sequence is obliterated by plague. This rule is ignored during the steel (V) age, although disease chains may still not be broken through trading.

There is no additional affect for having more than one set of a given suit or for having additional icons of that same suit over and above the set. **Resolve all sets in the following order, in the following way:**

1. **Plagues:** Unless the game age is steel (V), first resolve any and all plagues. For every nation with a disease set, immediately discard its entire column of cards, and destroy one monument (if it has any). A nation struck by plague in this way cannot and will not build a monument or lead a technological advance this turn (but it may still enjoy advancement through diffusion if a neighboring superior nation happens to advance and chooses to spread their knowledge). During the steel (V) age, plagues are eradicated, although disease chains may still not be broken by trades. The icon on the game age card (shown at the right) is meant to remind you of this.

2. **Monuments:** After plagues, any nation with BOTH a population set AND a resources set may build one monument. If more than one nation is building a monument this turn, you may choose the order in which these are built. Place a monument counter above each nation card in question, which will count towards end-game scoring. (There is no limit to the total number of monuments in the game.) Then discard all cards from that nation's column EXCEPT cards with technology icons. These cards are returned to the column in the same relative order they were already in, less any cards that may have been previously in-between them before the monument build. This "collapsing down" of the column may indeed (and frequently does) result in a technological advance.

3. **Technological advancement.** After monuments are built, any nation which now has a technology set experiences a technological advance, as described on pages 2-3. If more than one nation is experiencing a technological advance during this same turn, you may choose the order in which these are resolved, and therefore have some control over any diffusion and/or age progression that takes place as a result.

After any/all suited set effects are resolved, the turn is over, and the game begins again at the top of a new turn, with you receiving devotions according to the current game age.

GAME END & SCORING

The game immediately ends once any one nation technologically advances beyond the steel age (V) and into the atomic age. It is possible for this to happen either (a) as a result of normal technological advance while resolving suited sets, or (b) in the middle of dealing new cards, on the sudden appearance of a technological leap card. In this latter instance, you needn't bother finishing the deal. The moment this card comes out, the game is over. If more than one nation is already at tech level V and capable of advancing to the atomic age, as usual, you choose which single nation receives the final game age cards (the steel age AND the atomic age cards).

When it comes time to score, you may first choose 1 (and only 1) game age card to be removed from the calculation. Remember that by the end of the game, all six game age cards should be associated (stacked/lain) with the nation(s) that led those respective age progressions. Score the game as follows:
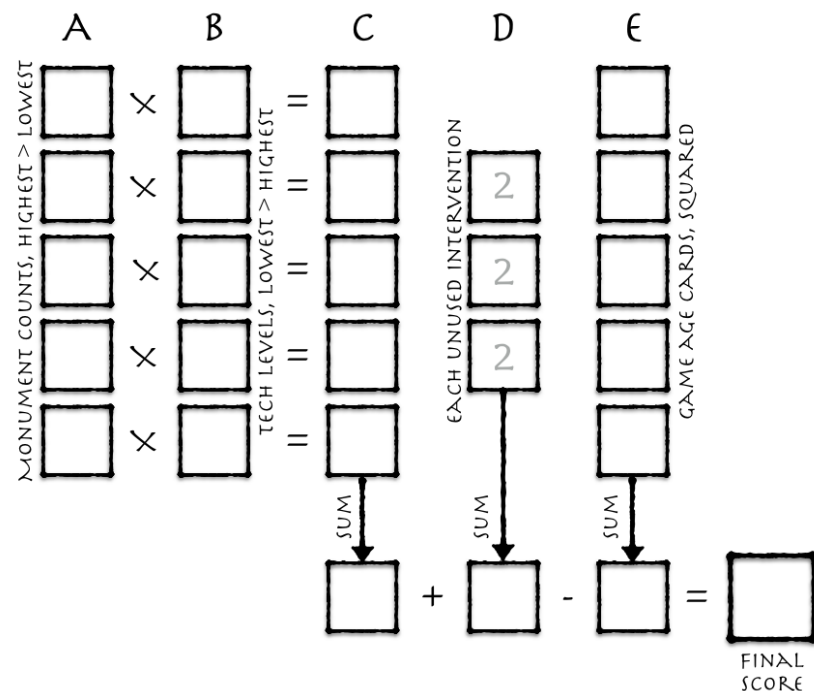
- **Remove 1 game age card** of your choice from the calculation.
- **Column A:** Using one scoring box per nation, fill in the number of monuments each nation has remaining at the end of the game, sequencing these values from highest to lowest. If a nation has no monuments at all, you must fill in a box for it with 0.
- **Column B:** Using one scoring box per nation, fill in the last/highest tech level each nation achieved (transcribe the Roman Numerals into the corresponding value 1-5). Sequence these values from lowest to highest (opposite the sequence of the monument values).
- **Column C:** Fill in the product of each of the paired factors from the monuments and tech levels columns. Add all five of these products together and fill in their sum in the box below.
- **Column D:** For each intervention card you did not use during the game, you may fill in one of the boxes with a value of 2. Add these values together and fill in their sum in the box below (a possible range of 0 - 6).
- **Column E:** Using one scoring box per nation, write the value that is equal to the square of the number of game age cards that nation has. In other words, a nation with 0 game age cards receives 0 ($0^2 = 0$); a nation with 1 game age card receives 1 ($1^2 = 1$); a nation with 2 game age cards receives 4 ($2^2 = 4$), and so on. The sequencing order in this column makes no difference. Add these values together and fill in their sum in the box below.
- **The final game score** is the sum of the three values in the bottom three subtotal boxes. Keep in mind that points from unused intervention cards are added, while points from game age cards are subtracted.

DESIGNER'S NOTE

Thank you for exploring *Deity*. As with most of my designs, I built this one in an attempt to scratch two different itches—a physical/mechanical itch, and a thematic itch. Physically and mechanically, I wanted the kind of rhythm and stacking you get from a simple game of *Klondike*, as well as the relatively short playing time and almost non-existent set-up time. I've come to realize recently that set-up is one of the first things that all too often discourages me from playing a game that I otherwise really enjoy. I have lots of little windows of time throughout the day—spaces people tend to fill up by playing on their phones, but during which time I prefer to not use my phone, since I use it too much already. Of course, there really isn't any kind of "story" to speak of when it comes to *Klondike*, so I wanted something more thematic.

One thing I like about civilization-themed games is that they have a wonderful sense of progression, whether you're playing competitively or not, and that they tend to have relative victory conditions instead of all-or-nothing systems. They can be a kind of meditative exercise, free from the pressure that comes from combat-themed or direct-competition games. Unfortunately, in my search, all the solo-able civilization games I could find could not scratch the itch for one of three reasons. They were either (a) mechanically unlike *Klondike* in any way, (b) mechanically suitable but stuck in one age of human civilization instead of spanning our great developmental arc, or (c) thematically expansive but mechanically way too complex with way too many components for what I was looking for. **I wanted a civ-themed abstract with shades of *Klondike* that told the whole story of human civilization in about 20-30 minutes, with virtually no set-up time required.**

It was a pretty tall order, but I think I accomplished what I set out to do, with one small exception. Despite every revision I made to accelerate playing time, and although most games do seem to wrap up in or around that 30-minute mark, I have still had games every now and then that run as long as an hour. The good news is this: those games that have run long have not been because the game got bogged down in some tedious way, but because I was playing very carefully and thoughtfully. I was fully immersed in the activity, and the time flew by. So in the end I let this stand.

The idea to put the player in the seat of a deity overseeing the world—rather than on the ground level with humanity and/or associated with any particular nation—was the thing that really made it possible to blend all the other design goals together. I had toyed with calling the game "Playing God" for the obvious pun, but ultimately I thought "Deity" was more considerate to potential players' religious views, and besides that, it simply makes for a better-sounding title.

This is the game that I wanted to play. It scratches the two itches I was having. I hope it's something you find enjoyable as well. As always, I encourage you to invent your own house rules, scoring mechanics, and even special powers. All the cards, especially the intervention cards, are universal enough and so free from text that you could employ them in a thousand different ways, suited to your preferences. However you play it, have fun. Be happy.