

POLEIS



Board game for 2-5 players aged 10 and up

Introduction

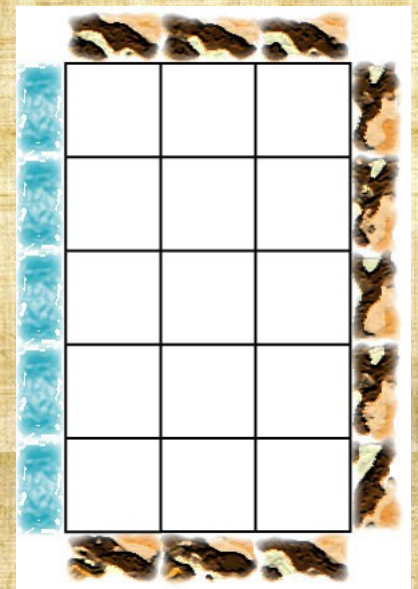
The thrill of exploration, a chance to develop a new civilization and the drama of unknown opportunity. In this board game of ancient colonization for 2-5 players, pilot your ship of colonists to an unknown Mediterranean shore and establish colonies in fortuitous locations. Establish a colony as soon as possible or pursue the ideal location. Establish close to others, or remain remote. Re-invest to grow your colonies or pursue those of others? Send your ship home or use it as a vehicle of influence. Create more colonies or thrive safely behind strong walls. Negotiate speedy growth with the disruption it causes to the citizenry.

Apart from the Adriatic, nearly every vacant Mediterranean coastline in ancient times was colonized by one group of Greeks or another. In the game you may play the tyrannical Corinthians; the belligerent Spartans; the Euboean explorers; or the thrifty Phocaeans, founders of ancient Marseilles and famed as the best seafarers of all the Greeks. Or you may even play the Phoenicians, whose seafaring and trading abilities are still legend to this day.

The setup is always different and each side has different characteristics, making for a novel and refreshing experience every time.

Components

- 15 4"x4" Terrain tiles (7 plains, 5 sea, 2 acropolis, 1 mountain)
- 16 4"x2" Framing tiles (11 mountain, 5 ocean)
- 5 Home Country Cards
- 5 Ships
- 5 sets of 30 player tokens, each (not in the PrintNPplay version)
- 81 cards (68 Achievement, 13 Disaster)
- 1 Start Card
- 10 six-sided dice (not in PnP version)
- Drachma counters (denominated 1, 3, 5, 10) (not in PnP version)



Setup

Setting Up

1. Shuffle the Home Country Cards and deal one randomly to each player.
2. Give each player all of their corresponding player tokens and a Ship.
3. Shuffle 2 sea tiles and 3 random, non-sea tiles and lay them out face down in a column.
4. Repeat, placing the second column to the right of the first.
5. Repeat with the rest of the tiles, forming a third column to the right of the second.
6. Each player places in their ship a token to show ship ownership and a second token to represent a colony.
7. Assign the Start Card according to the instructions on the Home Country cards.
8. Starting with this player, each player in clockwise order places the ship in an vacant ocean space.

Goal of the Game

The game ends at the end of any turn when the first of two conditions come true:

- At least one player has all of their tokens placed on map land tiles.
- All tiles have been revealed and each player has been the start player the same number of times.

At that time each player receives points according to the Victory Points table. The players with the most points wins. Scores which are tied are considered a shared victory for all tied players.

Playing the Game

The game is played according to the following Sequence. When players take actions sequentially, the player holding the Start Card always goes first and play then proceeds clockwise.

1. **Activities.** (each player performs all the steps, then the next player does them, etc., in player order)
 - a) Flip tile.
 - b) Move ship and Disembark/Embark.
 - c) Move armies.
 - d) Combat.
 - e) Convert armies to Colonies.
2. **Mercantile.** (simultaneous)
 - a) Army Maintenance.
 - b) All Colonies receive income.
3. **Investment.** (in player order)
 - a) Colonies invest.
4. **Civilization.** (in player order)
 - a) Acquire Achievement Cards.
5. **Pass the First Player token to the player to the left.**

The phases in detail:

I. **Activities.** (in player order)

a) **Flip tile.**

A player may flip face up one tile if this tile is adjacent, orthogonally or diagonally, to his ship or one of his armies.

In a corner of one of the plains tiles is the **oracle** symbol. The player who reveals this tile orients it in any of the four possible positions. The first player to create a colony on the site closest to the oracle symbol receives the Sibyl of Cumae achievement card. Should the colony change hands, the ownership of the card changes with it.

b) **Move ship and Disembark/Embark.**

The player may move the ship up to 3 interconnected sea spaces. The spaces may be adjacent orthogonally or diagonally. Or, if it makes no other moves (disembarks okay), the ship may be picked up and moved to the player's Home Country Card. If already at the Home Country Card, it may as its entire turn (embarkations okay) be picked up and moved to any face up ocean tile, or to any sea tile which can trace a water path to an ocean tile.

An unlimited number of ships may occupy the same space.

At any time during its movement, a ship may **disembark** its contents to a vacant tile intersection which forms any one of the four corners of its tile, so long as the corner is, or is touching, a land tile (including diagonally). If a colony is disembarked into an unoccupied area, this now becomes one of the player's Settlements. A player may not disembark a colony

onto one of his own colonies.

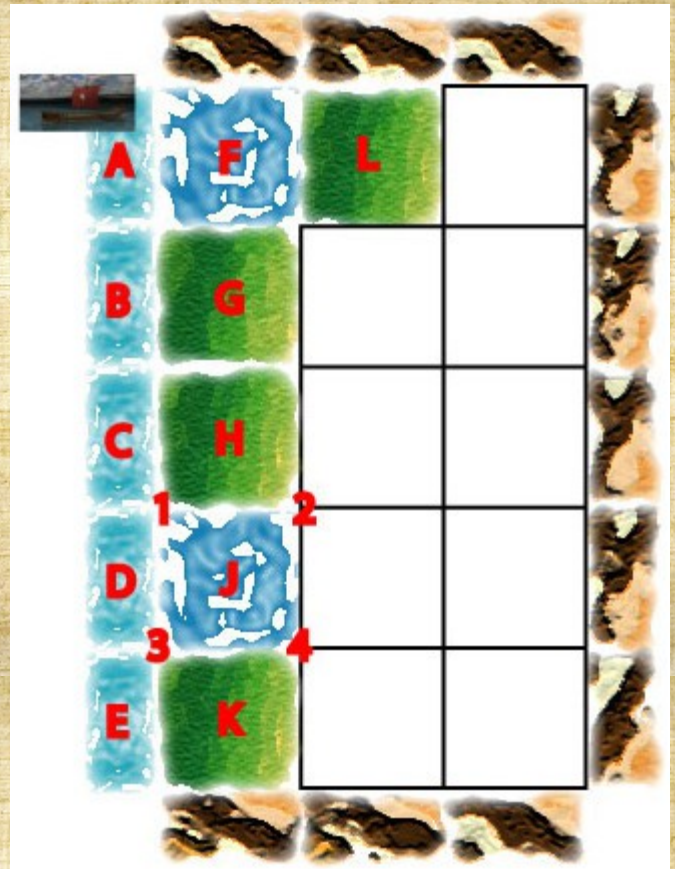
- c) An army which is disembarked must **wait** until the following turn to move.

A ship may disembark armies to a tile intersection where another player's colony is located. This will be a **Combat**.

In addition, if a ship is on a tile with a **friendly** Settlement or armies at one of its corners, the player may embark up to 2 armies from that location.

If a ship is currently on its **Home** Country Card, it may embark either a colony or 2 armies from the player's supply.

- d) **Example 1:** In the example at right, a Ship is located in Ocean A. It could sail as far as ocean tile D. Or it could sail to sea tile J (by sailing diagonally). If it were to go to J, it could disembark a colony at any of the tile intersections numbered 1, 2, 3 or 4.



Ship and Army movement

3. Move armies.

An army may make a total of 3 moves per turn. Armies at a **colony** move from colony to the center of a touching land tile.

Armies at the **center** of a tile move either to the center of an adjacent land tile (it may be merely diagonally adjacent) or to a colony at any one of the four corners of the colony's tile.

A de-barked **army** may move only as far as an adjacent tile center.

Armies may **never** enter the center of a **mountain, sea or ocean** tile or travel off the tiles onto the surrounding board.

Up to 2 Armies which start the turn in a friendly colony may embark onto a friendly Ship in a Sea tile which is adjacent (orthogonally or diagonally) to the colony.

Example 2: Using the same illustration, suppose a colony were located at 2. An army there could reach the center of tile L. Its first move would be to the center of tile H, its second to the center of tile G and its third and last to the center of tile L.

If armies enter **another** player's colony, or a tile center containing armies of another color, those armies or that colony may choose to intercept the moving army. This means that the moving army must stop.

4. Combat.

Combat occurs in the following situations:

- Armies **move into** another player's colony without permission.
- Armies **disembark onto** the colony of another player without permission.
- Armies **end** movement in a tile center containing another player's armies and the current

player wishes to attack.

A Combat is **resolved** by each player adding up his features (see the [Combat Table](#)) and adding to this the roll of 1 die. The Attacker's total is compared to that of the Defender and resolved according to the case which applies. See "Combat Results" on the Information Sheet.

Army Capacity. Each level of colony can only house a number of armies equal to its level . If there are more armies in a colony than permitted, or if armies end the phase in an unfriendly colony, they are instead moved to the center of the tile from which they entered the colony. (Armies which entered a colony from a ship may, as a special exception, retire to an adjoining tile center.) If there is no adjacent land tile center available, the armies are removed to the Home Country instead.

Acropolis: Colonies which are located on more than one acropolis do not receive any extra acropolis bonus. A player is not permitted to flip up unknown tiles before an attack in hopes of finding that his colony is located on an acropolis. Only face up acropolis tiles apply.

5. **Convert armies to colonies.**

If a player has a pair of armies at a vacant tile intersection, he may convert them to a single colony at settlement level. (Physically, **simply** remove one token from the board back to the home country and leave the other to represent the colony). Henceforward, the new settlement is no longer an army, but a normal colony in every way which will collect income in the ensuing phase, may make purchases, etc.

II. **Mercantile.** (*simultaneous, but in player order if any player demands it*)

a) **Army Maintenance.**

Each player pays 1 drachma for each Army it currently has on the board. Payment may come from any of the player's colonies. Any Army not maintained is placed on the home country. This phase may be conducted simultaneously by all players, but if any player wishes, is conducted in normal player order instead.

b) **All Colonies receive income.**

A colony's income is placed in the form of coins on the board for each colony where the four corners of the tiles join.

A colony's income is based on

- its size,
- the colonies which neighbor it, friendly or otherwise, i.e. trade
- taxation

A **neighboring colony** is one which is just one intersection away from the colony, either along a tile edge, or diagonally across a face up tile, even by sea. (Example below.) A colony may thus have at most eight neighbors. The amount of income provided depends on whether the neighboring colony is reachable by sea. A pair of colonies are *reachable by sea* if it is possible to trace a path of connected sea or ocean tiles between them. If this not possible, the colonies are *reachable by land*, except that an adjacent colony which is only reachable by diagonally tracing across a mountain tile is not qualified as a neighbor. If there is the possibility that a colony is reachable by sea, but is otherwise not so because of unknown tiles, the colony is considered to be only reachable by land.

In addition to drachmas generated from trade, rulers may attempt to extract additional taxes from their citizenries. Colonies may be taxed in any order. The player announces which type of taxation is to be exacted for a colony just before rolling any dice.

If the player chooses **Wise Administration**, 1 drachma of tax income is collected.

If **Heavy Taxation** is chosen, the player rolls a single die for the colony and it receives additional income equal to the die roll halved. But on a roll of 6, due to unrest caused by the overzealous activities of the ruler's tax farmers, the colony receives nothing for this taxation (although other taxes at this colony are as normal). In addition, the unrest prevents all investments and card acquisitions from this colony on this turn.

If **Radical Taxation** is chosen, the player rolls two dice for the colony and it receives additional income equal to the sum of the rolls halved. But should the roll total 10 or higher the colony revolts. It receives no taxes from the dice (although other taxes at this colony are as normal), no investments or card acquisitions may be made from this colony on this turn, and the colony immediately loses one item of the player's choice, either a colony level, the colony's walls or an army currently positioned at that colony. Or, the player may choose to remove from the game any of his Achievement cards. Note that revolt can cause a colony which is only at settlement level to go out of existence. In this case, any money remaining at the colony is also removed from the board.

Each colony receives income as described on the Income table. If any half drachmas of income are generated because of an odd number of inland colonies or an odd die roll, save the halves and add them all up, then discard any leftover half.

III. Investment. *(in player order)*

a) **Colonies Invest.** (see the Investments Table)

Colonies must pay their own expenses and may not borrow or receive funds from other colonies.

Certain items require that the colony have already achieved a certain level as detailed in the Notes section of the Costs chart. It is not required that this state exist at the start of the turn.

Example 3: *A Village begins the turn with 17 Drachmas. It spends 12 to upgrade to a Town and then on the same turn may also create an army at a cost of 5 since creation of an army only requires that the colony be a Town.*

New Settlements.

An existing town or city may establish another colony if there is an eligible location available. The prerequisites are

- The new location must not be currently occupied by another colony.
- The location must be adjacent, either orthogonally or diagonally, to the existing colony's location. Intervening sea or mountains do not inhibit eligibility.

A new colony is always established at the settlement level. This is done by simply placing a token at the new location to represent the colony.

Game Credits

Thanks for all the help of the playtesters, especially the many suggestions of Garry Haggerty. Others who helped include (in alphabetical order): Philip Apps, Jack Barnette, Eric Chang, Jeff DiCorpo, Matt Leacock, Philip Vogt, Bernard Yeh

Example 4 – Neighbors:

In the partial board at right, there is a colony at each of the numbered intersections. The colony at 8 would neighbor the colonies in the circled numbers. It neighbors each of 6, 7 and 10 along a tile edge. It neighbors 5 and 9 diagonally. Normally 5 would not count as a neighbor because the border is traced diagonally over a mountain, but here the mountain rule is superseded since both colonies are located on the coast. For taxation purposes, colonies 5, 7, 9 and 10 are reachable by sea while colony 6 is only reachable by land (at least so far).

Example 5 – Taxation:

Suppose the Phoenician player has a City level colony at 3 at that has 5 neighboring colonies at locations 1, 5, 2, 4 and 6 (two by sea, three by land). The City's income would be calculated as follows:

- 4 (base rate for being a City)
- 4 (two sea neighbors @ 1 each)
- 1.5 (three land neighbors at 0.5 each)
- 1 (for being the Phoenicians)
- 0.5-3 (Heavy Taxation: die roll halved)

The City would earn $4 + 4 + 1.5 + 1 = 10.5$ plus the result of the tax die roll ranging from 0.5 to 3 for a total of 11 to 14 drachmas on that turn.

Upgrading a Colony.

When a Settlement is first placed, one of the player's tokens is placed in one of the corners of a tile intersection where the colony is located. If this settlement is upgraded to a Village, this is denoted by placing another token in another one of the corners of the same intersection. This may be on any kind of tile – even sea or ocean.

In the same way, a Town is denoted by placing a token on a third corner. Finally, a City is denoted by the presence of a token on all four corners of the intersection.

Walls for a Village, Town or City are denoted by placing 2 tokens rather than 1. A Village, Town or City must be completely walled or not have any walls at all – partial walls are not permitted.

As soon as the first Town is built, shuffle the Achievement and Disaster Cards (except for the Sibyl of Cumae) to form a deck.

Upgrading a Walled Colony.

If a colony possesses Walls, then any upgrade of the colony's status must also include an upgrade of the colony's walls. If the colony owner cannot or will not upgrade the walls, the colony may be upgraded only if the walls are first removed.

Example 6: A Village purchases Walls, paying 6 Drachmas. On the next turn, the Village wishes to upgrade to a Town. It pays 16 for the upgrade and 8 more to upgrade the Walls, for a total cost of 24. Alternatively, it could have removed the Walls and paid only 16.

Placing Armies.

A colony may create one army per turn.

A colony may only have present a number of armies that is one less than the level of the colony, e.g. a City (level 4) may hold up to 3 armies.



Taxation

Armies are represented by tokens. New armies are placed in only one of the quadrants of the colony, where the player already has tokens, up to the colony's Army Capacity. Any additional armies are placed in the center of one of the land tiles on which the colony rests.

Token Limit.

The number of tokens available to each player for all purposes is strictly limited. Colonies may never be dismantled, but armies may cease to be maintained if the player desires. Players may also claim the token from their ship if they no longer wish to use the ship. The ship remains where it is when the token is removed. If a ship is on the Home Country card, it may later be reclaimed by placing a token on it should one become available.

Example 6 – Colony Sizes and Capacities (see at right)

1. Settlement
2. Village
3. Town at full capacity with 3 armies
4. City
5. Settlement at full capacity with 1 army
6. Walled Village
7. Walled Town
8. Walled City at full capacity with 4 armies

IV. Civilization. (in player order)

- a) **Acquire Achievement Cards.** (starting the first turn a Town is built)

Beginning with the start player, each player receives one opportunity to auction an achievement card. What cards are available depends on whether any cards are currently revealed as follows:

A) If **no cards are showing** at the start of the player's opportunity:

- Player alone examines the top card.
- If the **top card is a Disaster**, the player reveals it, resolving it immediately as described on the Unowned and Effects lines of the card. Then return to (A) above.
- Otherwise, if the **top card is not a Disaster** turn the card face up on the table. Proceed to (B) below.

B) When **cards are showing** at the start of the player's opportunity:

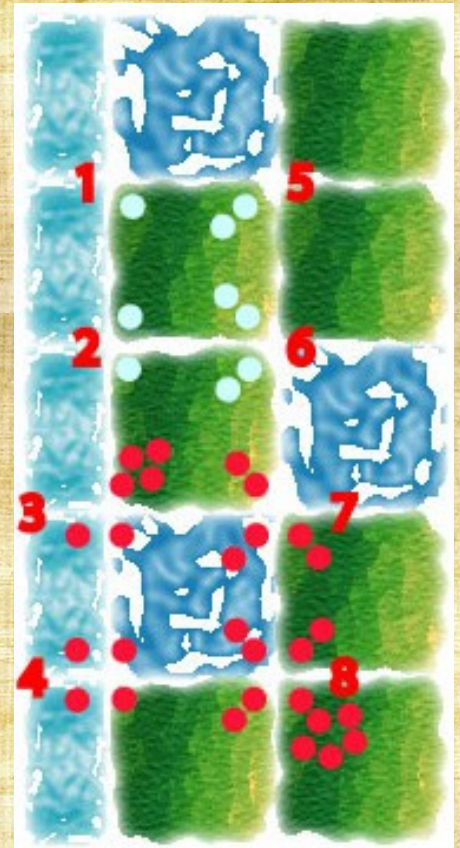
- Player alone examines the top card.
- If the top card is of a **different type** (the three types being Arts, History/Exploration and Science) than the cards already showing, reveal it and return to (B) above.
- If the top card is of the **same type** as one of the cards already showing, stop drawing cards. The player may now either **Pass, Start an Auction** or **Clear the Cards**.
- If the top card is a **Disaster**, stop drawing cards. The player may now either **Pass, Start an Auction** or **Clear the Cards**.

Pass:

If a player does not wish to Start an Auction or Clear the Cards, he simply announces that he is passing and the right to start an auction passes to the next player.

Start an Auction:

The current player names one of the face up cards. Each player either makes just one bid to



Colony sizes and capacities

exceed the previous bid or passes. Bidding occurs in clockwise order starting with the player to current player's left and ending with himself. Each type of card states a minimum bid amount, in drachmas. The first bid must equal or exceed this number of drachmas.

The winning bidder pays the final amount bid, all of the funds coming from just one of his colonies and places the card face up in front of him (accruing to his benefit for the remainder of the game).

If no one has bid by the time the current player's chance comes up, this player must pay at least the minimum bid and take the card.

If the card at the top of the deck is a Disaster, this Disaster is also taken by the purchasing player.

After a card has been auctioned, it becomes the next player's turn to start an auction until each player has had one chance to either Start an Auction or Clear the Cards.

Some cards state "-1 to tax roll in a colony each turn". This means that before making a tax roll in a colony, the player may assign the card to this colony for this turn, giving the right to subtract 1 from the result prior to applying the results. The card permits the player to do this in only one colony per turn. This effect is cumulative with the Corinthian special ability and other cards, except that no more than one "Coin Art" card may be applied to a single colony. (Hint: turn over each card as used to as not to accidentally use more than once. Then turn all face up at the end of the phase.)

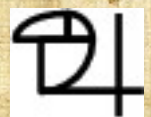
Clear the Cards

The player picks up all of the face up cards and returns them to the bottom of the Achievement deck. It is now the opportunity of the next player to start an auction.

Disaster Cards

A player who has received a Disaster card in auction may play it either immediately, or if not, at any time during any of his own subsequent turns. An owned disaster card is played according to the "Player" section of the card.

Note: Some Disaster cards require determination of the player with the most Piety. This is the player who owns the most cards displaying the gods symbol. If there is a tie for gods cards, the player whose turn was earliest in the round is selected.



gods symbol

V. Pass the First Player token to the player to the left.

This player will be take actions first in the next turn.

Optional Rules

Alliances

Players may permit others player armies to pass through or be housed in their colonies.

Tournament Rules

In a tournament setting, some players may feel that some sides and turn positions are more valuable than others. For this reason, employ the following rules:

1. Turn up the first column of tiles, i.e. the 5 tiles which border Ocean spaces.
2. Instead of assigning the Home Country Cards randomly, shuffle them and turn up a single card. Players then bid victory points in an open auction to take the card. The winner of the card subtracts the number bid from his victory point total at the end of the game. After this, turn up the

next card and conduct a second auction among remaining players who lack cards. Continue this process until there are no unturned cards remaining. Any cards for which there is no bid are put aside until all cards have had a chance at an auction. At this point, the unassigned cards are shuffled and each player who still lacks one takes one at random.

3. In case of a tie, the tied side earlier on this list wins: (1) Corinthians; (2) Phocaeans; (3) Spartans; (4) Phoenicians.

No Long Distance Settlement

The ability to create non-adjacent daughter colonies was created for players who found themselves overly frustrated by tile layout situations that created expansion dead ends (especially in landlocked maps). Players may consider dropping this rule, i.e. eliminate the phase "Convert armies to Colonies", if they prefer a more interesting positional game. In particular, players will more often have a dilemma of whether to load a colony or armies when departing their home country.

Player Notes

Players may be strongly tempted to found their first colony on the edge of the new world -- and return the ship as soon as possible -- but note that such a colony can have at most five neighbors whereas a colony which is one degree into the interior can actually benefit from up to eight neighbors. As for the player advantages, while those of the Spartans may be obvious, note the implications of the others. The Corinthians should try to make liberal use of the more advanced tax policies. The Euboeans are more free to build walls and may be able to avoid creating as many armies. The Phoenicians benefit from founding many smaller colonies rather than just a few large ones. The advantage of the Phocaeans may be a bit trickier than others, but it should make it possible for this player to pick out the best settlement sites in advance.

Background

They went forth, urged by love of adventure, by the passion for discovery, by the desire for a freer life in new countries. Wherever they went, they carried with them the traditions, the habits, the ideals of their Mother Country. Wherever they settled they planted a new homeland. And, though mountains and the waste of seas divided them, they never lost that golden thread of the spirit which drew their thoughts back to the land of their birth. – Stanley Baldwin

This was written of British colonization, but the words could as readily refer to the ancient Greeks who left their cities on the Aegean to found new cities (*poleis*) and farm new lands in Sicily and along the coasts of southern Italy. As with the Phoenician colony of Carthage and the British colonies in America, these new efforts introduced a new human vigor that resulted in great wealth and power, some of the most prized art and architecture, and some of the most famous minds – Pythagoras, Herodotus and Archimedes included.

Bibliography

- *The Landmark Thucydides* edited by Robert B. Strassler provides much of the primary source history.
- *The Greeks in the West* by A.G. Woodhead (1962) covers the basic historical outline and achievements.
- *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC: A Source-Based Approach* by Terry Buckley
- *A History of Greece to 322 B.C.* by Nicholas G. Hammond
- *The Penguin Atlas of Ancient History* by Colin McEvedy proposes the interesting theory of the significance of location and redundant coastline in creation of vibrant ecospheres in

Mediterranean colonization.

- *The Greeks Overseas: The Early Colonies and Trade* by John Boardman influenced the player order, which follows the historical chronological order in which the various peoples undertook colonizations.
- *The Greek World: Art and Civilization in Magna Graecia and Sicily* by Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli (Editor)
- *From Sumer to Rome: The Military Capabilities of Ancient Armies* by Richard A. Gabriel and Karen S. Metz for the various military advances during the period.
- *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* by Victor Davis Hanson is a very well-written study on the nature of the hoplite wars.

Sequence of Play

- 1. Activities.** (each player performs all the steps, then the next player does them, etc., in player order)
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 - c) Move armies.
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- 3. Investment.** (in player order)
 - a) Colonies invest.
- 4. Civilization.** (in player order)
 - a) Acquire Achievement Cards.
- 5. Pass the First Player token to the player to the left.**

Acquire Achievement Cards (starting on first turn a Town is built)

- a) Beginning with the start player, each player receives one opportunity to auction an achievement card. What cards are available depends on whether any cards are currently revealed as follows:

A) If **no cards are showing** at the start of the player's opportunity:

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