BYZANTIO

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2-4

45-60

10+

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INTRODUCTION

Byzantio is a game of medieval intrigue in the near east, where players take the role of the heads of the main Byzantine dynasties of the 11th century A.D., and scheme to choose the successor to the imperial throne.

It is 1025, and the emperor Basileios II has ascended into the heavens without providing for an heir. In Constantinople, representatives from the most important aristocratic families vie to inherit the Emperor's ring and throne. The empire is torn between four dynasties, two of them being provincial, military aristocracies (the houses of Komnenos and Phokas) and the other two being urban, secular gentry (the houses of Doukas and Aggelos).

It is a futile and petty dispute, as each family is loath to surrender the throne to any of the others, and so the race for influence begins. The next emperor will be the one who is supported by the wealthiest cities of the empire. Every would-be successor raises the banner of his dynasty and enters the struggle to win over the cities that will secure him the throne.

May the rightful heir arise!

NEKKEN

Nekken is the fantasy-themed implementation of the game, using the exact same materials as Byzantio. With its map on the reverse side of the board, Nekken gives a different game experience – in essence, it allows the players to have 2 games in 1.

Four tribes lived in peace for over 3000 years despite their ancient hatred of each other. Living together in the capital city Nekken, they slowly forgot their fear of the large volcano that looms over the metropolis... until it erupted. Forced to abandon their homes, the tribes spread throughout the continent, facing danger from many directions while trying to establish new colonies. The ancient hatred has also been awakened and now the tribes must struggle to survive. However, they still need each other, and a new cold war emerges in the shadow of the searing heat of the volcano.

In Nekken, each player takes the role of a tribal leader and attempts to prevail and become the ruler of this new society. The goal is to achieve prestige through the establishment of new and glorious cities, using actions to move their leader on the map, exploring, establishing cities, and betraying friends to achieve their objective. Hopefully no other ruler intends to settle in the same place!

COMPONENTS

1x DOUBLE-SIDED GAME BOARD

The game board is divided into 25 provinces, which contain 34 cities. There are two kinds of cities: the historical provincial capitals (big city icon), and the lesser cities of the Empire (small city icon). There is no functional difference between these during the course of the game. The distinction serves to signify that in games with 2 or 3 players only the historical provincial capitals (big city icon) are in play.

Provinces are divided by the provincial borders and sea lanes connect some provinces across the waters of the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The numbers printed on the provinces are used to determine where events take place.

There is a timeline track which allows the players to keep track of the game round.

The Nekken board is similarly divided in regions, but there are no cities. There are also no seas, and the timeline track is shorter. The region with the volcano does not have any effect on gameplay, except to be the starting location for all tribal leaders.

9x EVENT & NATURAL DISASTER TILES

These tiles are placed on the timeline to mark the first round, the events to take place during the game, and the final round.

1x 8-SIDED DIE

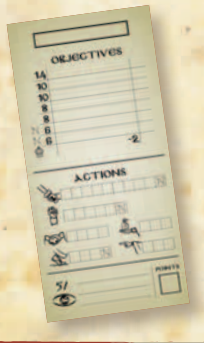
This die is used for the Bribery, Diplomacy, and Exile actions. The player attempting one of these actions rolls the die. A roll of 5-8 is successful, while a roll of 1-4 is unsuccessful. The die is also used for determining turn order and for the annual events.

4x PRETENDER TO THE THRONE TOKENS

Each player's Pretender token may be moved on the map across Provinces separated by a border, or joined via a sea lane. The Pretender is never placed in the cities.

1x NOTEPAD & 4x PENCILS

The notepad and pencils are provided for the players to record their objectives at the start of the game, their actions during the game, and the scores at the end of the game.



40x GARRISON TOKENS

Garrison tokens are placed on cities.

1x TIMELINE TOKEN

The timeline token is used to track rounds of play.

SETUP

1. The players choose their dynasties, and each player takes the following:

- 1 Pretender to the throne token
- 10 garrison tokens
- 1 notepad sheet and 1 pencil

2. Each player notes the names of 7 cities, each from a different province, that the player will seek to control by the end of the game. The numbers on the left represent the importance of that city to each player, with the topmost on the list yielding the most points.

3. Then, the players fold their sheet along the middle in such a way that their opponents can not see their writing, and keep it in front of them.

4. The players take their 10 garrison tokens in front of them as their supply. They then place their Pretender token on their respective home provinces, marked on the map by the presence of their coat of arms:

- The Pretender Aggelos:
- The Pretender Komnenos:
- The Pretender Doukas:
- The Pretender Phokas:

5. Each of the event tiles is placed on the appropriate position on the timeline track (See Events & Natural Disasters).

6. To determine order of play, roll the 8-sided die. The player who rolled the highest number will start.

7. Place the timeline marker on the first space of the timeline track. You are now ready to begin the game.

NEKKEN: SETUP

Each player chooses one of the four tribes (Racan, Hundeer, Anicarn and Heran), taking 9 colonist (Byzantio: garrison) tokens, and one Leader (Byzantio: Pretender) token.

In a game for 2 or 3 players, each player uses the scoresheet to enter only 6 regions that will be their objectives in their quest to survive. In a game for 4 players, each player enters only 5 regions as objectives.

There are only 3 events that will occur during the course of the game (See "Events and Natural disasters" section).

All players place their Leader token in the Nekken region, the region containing the volcano, where they will start the game from. Following their first move away from it, a player may not re-enter the Nekken region. No player may ever place any colonist tokens in the Nekken region.

Round fields

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

There are 30 rounds. The players may only take one action in each round. After taking an action, a player notes the round that the action was taken in, by writing the number of the round in the appropriate box in the notebook.

ACTIONS

There are a limited number of times that a player can take an action, and skilled players will plan ahead to determine what type of actions they would like to take in certain rounds.

The players use the actions to gain support of the Imperial Provinces, by placing loyal troops as garrisons in the cities. They compete to be the ones that exert the most influence and to gain the most allegiance by the end of the game.

No player may have more than 2 garrison tokens in a city, and the maximum total number of tokens in one city is 4.

NEJKEN: COLONIZE (9)

NEJKEN: ESTABLISH (5)

CAMPAIGN (10)

A PROJECTION OF NOBLE POWER

The Campaign action allows a player to move the Pretender, place a garrison, and remove an opponent's garrison.

When Campaigning, the Pretender token must be moved to a neighboring province, either by crossing a provincial border or via a sea lane. The player may then place one garrison token in one city in the province that the Pretender token was moved to.

If a city already contains one of the active player's garrison tokens, the player may not add another garrison token unless at least one opponent's garrison token is also present there.

Then, if the city already contains an opponent's garrison token, it is removed from the board and returned to its owner's supply. If the city contains garrison tokens belonging to multiple opponents, the player chooses which one to remove.

MUSTER (6)

NOBODY CAN ARGUE WITH THE STEEL TIP OF A SPEAR

The Muster action allows a player to place a garrison without moving the Pretender token.

When Mustering, the player's Pretender token is not moved to a neighboring province. The player may place one garrison token in one city in the province that the Pretender token is currently in.

If a city already contains one of the active player's garrison tokens, the player may not add another garrison token unless at least one opponent's garrison token is also present there.

No opponents' garrison tokens are removed during the Muster action.

NEGOTIATE (4)

Diplomacy is just another form of war

The Negotiate action allows a player to exchange garrisons with another player.

When Negotiating, the player chooses one of their own, and one of an opponent's garrison tokens in play. The tokens must be in different cities. The active player then offers to exchange the positions of those tokens.

If the opponent accepts the offer, the exchange happens immediately, and the active player's turn is over.

If the opponent rejects the offer, the active player rolls the 8-sided die. On a roll of 5-8, the exchange proceeds. On a roll of 1-4, the exchange does not proceed.

If the active player's Pretender token is present in the province where the opponent's garrison token is, the player receives a +1 modifier, and a Negotiation roll succeeds on a roll of 4-8. If the opponent's Pretender is there, the player receives a -1 modifier, and a Negotiation roll succeeds on a roll of 6-8. If both Pretenders are there, they cancel out each other's modifiers and a Negotiation roll succeeds on a normal roll of 5-8.

Пример: NEGOTIATE (4)

ADVANCE (4)

Trade winds often bring a lot more than trade

The Advance action allows a player to move the Pretender token. When Advancing, the player moves the Pretender token to any province on the map.

Пример: EXPLORE (3)

BRIBE (3)

Gold can strike harder than steel

The Bribe action allows a player to replace an opponent's garrison with one of the player's own garrisons.

When Bribing, the player chooses one of an opponent's garrison tokens that is present on the map. The active player then rolls the 8-sided die. On a roll of 5-8, the Bribery proceeds. On a roll of 1-4, the Bribery does not proceed.

If the active player's Pretender token is present in the province where the opponent's garrison token is, the player receives a +1 modifier, and a Bribery roll succeeds on a roll of 4-8. If the opponent's Pretender is there, the player receives a -1 modifier, and a Bribery roll succeeds on a roll of 6-8. If both Pretender tokens are present, they cancel out each other's modifiers and a Bribery roll succeeds on a normal roll of 5-8. If successful, the player replaces the opponent's garrison token with one of their own, returning the removed token to its owner's supply. The Bribe action may not be taken by a player who does not have any garrison tokens available in their supply.

Пример: BRIBE (3)

EXPEL (3)

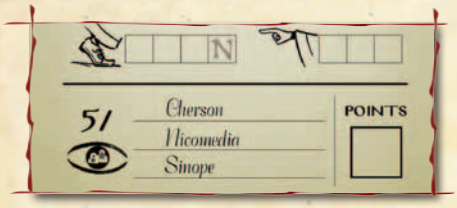
This Empire is too small for all of us

The Expel action allows a player to remove an opponent's garrison from the map.

When Expelling, the player chooses one of an opponent's garrison tokens that is present on the map. The active player then rolls the 8-sided die. On a roll of 5-8, the Expulsion proceeds. On a roll of 1-4, the Expulsion does not proceed.

If the active player's Pretender token is present in the province where the opponent's garrison token is, the player receives a +1 modifier, and an Expulsion roll succeeds on a roll of 4-8. If the opponent's Pretender is there, the player receives a -1 modifier, and an Expulsion roll succeeds on a roll of 6-8. If both Pretender tokens are present, they cancel out each other's modifiers and an Expulsion roll succeeds on a normal roll of 5-8.

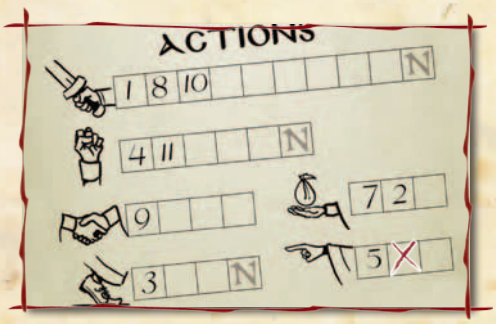
If successful, the player removes the opponent's garrison token from the map and returns it to its owner's supply.



ESPIONAGE

Throughout the game, the players should keep an eye on their opponents' efforts to sit on the throne. Correctly deducting an opponent's top priority has significant strategic advantage, and may determine the heir to the empire. Each player must guess which is the top objective city of each opponent, and note it on the scoresheet at the end of the game.

EVENTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS



Throughout the game a series of events will take place. These reflect the tumultuous history of the Byzantine Empire, which was marked by political, economic, and social turmoil, as well as a number of natural calamities. These events occur at set times, at the round indicated by each event.

During the event/disaster rounds, no regular actions take place – the rounds are only for the resolution of events.

After the resolution of each event, the players must cross out an action of their choice from their notebook sheets. This action is not available for the rest of the game.

ROUND 6
Earthquake

The players roll the die once to determine the provinces where the earthquake strikes.

Any players with garrison tokens in provinces that have a number matching the number on the die must immediately remove all of their tokens from all of the cities in those areas.

ROUND 12
Famine

The players roll the die once to determine the provinces where the Famine occurs.

Any players with garrison tokens in provinces that have a number matching the number on the die must roll the die again to determine if their garrisons survive the famine.

If a province contains garrisons belonging to multiple players, then each player, in turn order, rolls the die separately for each owned garrison.

On a roll of 5-8, the garrisons survive, and the garrison tokens belonging to the player that rolled the die remain on the board.

If a province contains garrisons belonging to multiple players, then each player, in turn order, rolls the die separately for each owned garrison.

On a roll of 1-4, the garrisons perish, and the garrison tokens belonging to the player that rolled the die are removed from the board, and returned to that player's supply.

If the a player's Pretender token is present in the province that the famine affects, then that player receives a +1 modifier, and their garrisons survive on a roll of 4-8.

ROUND 18
Succession of the Patriarch

The momentous occasion of a change in the ecclesiastical status quo allows the players to take advantage of the chaos and confusion to change their objectives.

Players may change one of their 7 objective cities. If they choose to do so, they cross out one of their current objective cities, and choose another one. They write in the name of the new objective city, and assign the same number of points as the abandoned objective city. At the end of the game, this city will contribute 2 points less to their score.
The newly chosen objective city must not be in the same province as any of the other 6.

ROUND 24: PLAGUE

The players roll the die to determine the provinces that are afflicted by the plague.

Any players with Pretender tokens in provinces that have a number matching the number on the die must then have their Pretenders moved to another province. The player sitting to the affected player's left makes the decision and moves the Pretender to any other province on the map.

NEKKEN EVENTS

The Earthquake occurs in Round 6, and has the same effect as the Earthquake in Byzantio.
The land trembles, and the only thing that remains the same is the lava, ever flowing from the broken mountain.

The Plague occurs in Round 13, and has the same effect as the Plague in Byzantio.
Nomads, keeping together for safety, are the best place for a disease to find you, and kill you.

The Prophecy occurs in Round 20, and has the same effect as the Succession of the Patriarch in Byzantio.
The high priests of Nekken would not leave the city, and keep sending messengers, warning the tribes to change their plans to appease the holy – or for others, cursed – mountain.

VARIANT

For a more challenging game, turn the event tiles face down during setup, and place them randomly on round spots 6, 12, 18 and 24, only revealing each event tile when reaching the round that it is in during the course of the game.

GAME END AND SCORING

The game ends at the end of the 30th round. At that point the players unfold their sheets, revealing their objective cities, and their predictions of their opponents' top objective cities.

- As a reward for their skills in espionage, players receive 5 points for each correct guess of an opponent's top objective.

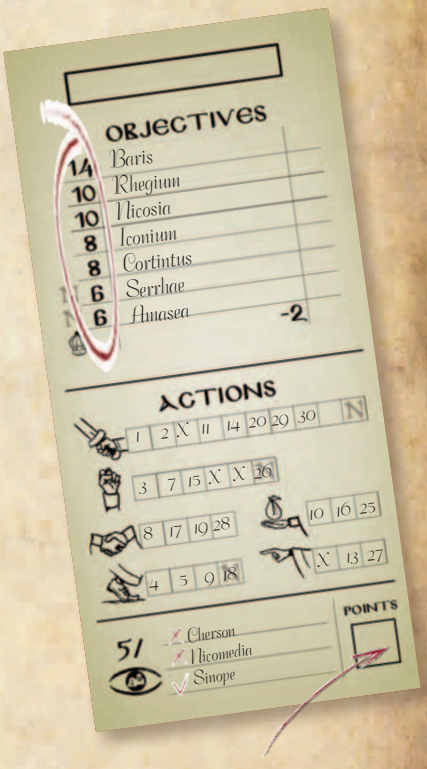
The players then determine who has control of their objective cities, and determine how many points each city has generated, according to how completely they control it.

A player only earns points for the cities that are written in their notepad sheet. A player may thus control a city, but not receive any points for it, if it was not designated as an objective city. However, by controlling that city, the player denies points to any opponents that had that city as an objective.
Each player determines the points earned by each of their objective cities:

- If a player has the most garrison tokens in one objective city, they are in control of that city, and receive the full amount of points that correspond to it.
- If two players tie for control of a city, each receives half of the amount of points that correspond to it.
- If three players tie for control of a city, each receives 2 points for that city.
- If four players tie for control of a city (i.e. each player has one token), then the players receive no points for the city.

The players then calculate their total points, adding their objective city points to their espionage points. The player with the most points is crowned emperor, and the head of a new glorious dynasty that will rule for 1000 years!

In the case of a tie, the player that is ahead in turn order wins the game and the throne.



Total points

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The designers would like to dedicate Byzantio/Nekken to their families, and to everyone around the world who loves board games.

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Special thanks go to Richard Ham, Jeff King, Scott Morris Lance Myxter, Jordan Scott and Ignacy Trzewiczek.

The designers would like to thank Charalambos Alatas, Nikos Chondropoulos, Konstantinos Demertzidis, Giannis Dimitrousis, George Gelastopoulos, Michael Karatsoris, Christos Mallis, Olga Mavrofridi, Stefanos Mikertzis, Kosmas Rokos, Vangelis Simeonidis, Giannis Sofianopoulos, Spyros Stavropoulos, George Tigkas, Konstantinos Toulikaroglou, Sotiris Tsantilas, Dimitris Vasiadis, Manos Velivassakis and Vangelis Velles for playtesting the game and contributing to its development.

The publisher would like to dedicate this game to Anniina, who never ceases to amaze the world with her kindness.