

Mesopotamia

Birth of Civilisation

by

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1 Introduction

The game simulates the ebb and flow of peoples in ancient Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean, from the dawn of civilisation in Sumeria to just before the arrival of the Persians.

The basic system is inherited from that great game, *History of the World* (HOTW).

Text in blue shows changes from the last version.

The game finishes before the arrival of the Persians because they conquered almost every area on the entire map. Not much point in simulating that, eh what?

1.1 Object

Mesopotamia is a game for three to five players, played in five Epochs (or Turns). Each Epoch details one period of ancient history. In each Epoch, players run one People from that time period, *together with their Peoples from previous Epochs*. Each People expands across the map, later falling as new Peoples take their place.

Note this significant change from HOTW.

The object of the game is to conquer the most territory through the course of the game. This is measured by Victory Points (VPs). The Player with the most VPs at the end of the game wins.

1.2 People Cards

Each Epoch, players receive a People card. It has a number, which represents when the People moves within the game. Here the Sumerians are People 1, showing they move first in every Epoch.

The card also shows that the Sumerians receive eight Tribes in their Tribal Pool in Epoch 1. Their Start Area is Uruk. They also get four reinforcements in Epoch 2. They have a special property, Urbanisation.



Some Peoples have two People Numbers. For example, the Egyptians are People 3 and People 12. Their card notes that they move as People 12 in Epoch 3. This means that the Egyptians normally move as the third People in each Epoch. However, in Epoch 3 (only) they will move twelfth in order, not third. This recreates the resurgence of the Egyptians (New Kingdom) late in Epoch 3.

1.3 Tribes

Each counter is a Tribe belonging to a People. Each Player uses Tribes with the same symbol (regardless of the colour or number on the Tribe). The symbols for each Player are:

- ☐ Brooch
- ☐ Head
- ☐ Mask
- ☐ Statue
- ☐ Urn



The colour and number on the Tribe shows which Epoch its People is first used in.

These are the counters that five players would use in Epoch 1. Each symbol is a different player. The colour blue and number 1 indicate that they are used to represent a People first appearing in Epoch 1.

For example, say that the Statue player is the Egyptians in Epoch 1. He or she uses the blue Statue pieces marked '1' in Epoch 1 for the Egyptians. When the Egyptians grow or get reinforcements in later Epochs, the Statue player continues to use the blue '1' pieces for the Egyptians.

If the Statue player drew the Medes in Epoch 5, he or she would use the red '5' Statue pieces in that Epoch to represent the Medes.

1.4 Setting up the Game

- ☐ Each player takes all the Tribes with the same symbol.
- ☐ Separate the People cards into the five Epochs.
- ☐ Randomly assign one People from Epoch 1 to each player.
- ☐ Place the Victory Point markers on the zero places on the Victory Point Track.

2 Outline of the Game

The game is played in five Epochs (or Turns). Each Epoch is divided into two segments:

- ☐ New People Allocation Segment
- ☐ Strategy Segment

2.1 New People Allocation Segment

Skip this segment in Epoch 1, since each Player already has a People.

In this segment, Players receive one People card each.

Shuffle the Peoples due to appear this Epoch and place the pack face down.

Peoples are drawn by players in reverse order of VPs, that is, starting with the player with fewest VPs. If there is a tie, resolve it in favour of the player who had the lower People number last turn.

The first Player to draw takes a card from the deck and looks at it, keeping it concealed.

The drawing player decides whether to retain the card, and play that People in this Epoch, or pass it to another Player. That Player *must* keep the card and play that People in the current Epoch. A player getting a passed card cannot examine it until all the cards have been distributed.

The draw continues until every player has drawn a card. Clearly, a player who has been given a People earlier on cannot retain the People card they draw, and must pass it on.

2.2 Strategy Segment

The strategy segment consists of a set of People Rounds, one Round for each People in play. These Rounds are the core of the game.

Play proceeds People by People (**not** player by player), starting with People 1.

On Epoch 1 each player will play one People, on Epoch 2 each will have two Peoples in play and so on. Each player will therefore usually play several People rounds in an Epoch, one of which will be a new People, and the rest Peoples from previous Epochs.

So in Epoch 1, there will be five People Rounds (if there are five players), in Epoch 2 there will be 10 and so on.

Some Peoples change their People number. See '1.2 People Cards'.

Some Peoples will lose all their counters and become extinct during the game.

Note for *History of the World* players: The fact that Peoples remain active is a fundamental difference to *HOTW*.

3 The People Round

All the action happens in the People Round. In each Round, the People attempts to expand into adjacent Areas.

In each Round, you:

- ☐ First, collect Tribes to form the People's Tribal pool.
- ☐ Then expand your People by placing their Tribes on the map.
- ☐ Finally, count the Victory Points gained by the People, adding them to your existing Victory Points.

3.1 Collecting Tribes

3.1.1 The Tribal Pool for a New People

1. The People card lists the number of tribes available to the People in that Epoch. Take this number of counters: they are your Tribal pool.
2. Place one Tribe in the listed start Area. If there is a Tribe of another People already there, the **old** Tribe **must** move to an adjacent Area that is either (i) empty, or (ii) occupied by a Tribe of its own People. If there is no such Area, the **old** Tribe is removed from the board. **In any case, the new Tribe will occupy the Start Area by itself once placed.**
3. Follow the Expansion rules in the next section.

Example: The Hyksos take 6 tribes, placing the first in Sinai. **If it is already occupied, the predecessor must move or be eliminated.**

Exception

A People starting in the Great Green places its first Tribe in any adjacent Area.

3.1.2 The Tribal Pool for an Existing People

Peoples of previous Epochs can continue to expand, like this:

1. Take the appropriate number of counters for growth and reinforcements, as shown below. They are the People's Tribal pool.
2. Follow the Expansion rules in the next section.

Existing Peoples receive new Tribes in one of two ways:

- ☐ **Growth.** An existing People receives one new Tribe for every three Areas they occupy. Round *down*: a People with one or two Areas would get no Tribes; a People with three, four or five Areas would get one.
- ☐ **Reinforcements.** As well as normal growth, some Peoples receive extra Tribes. These are listed on the People card.

A People with no Tribes on the map cannot grow or receive reinforcements. They have left the stage of history!

You can only expand up to the counter limit.

Slow Growth special ability
These Peoples receive one Tribe only.

Fast Growth special ability
These Peoples receive one Tribe for every three Areas, round *ing up*. A People with one, two or three Areas would get one Tribe; with four, five or six Areas would get two Tribes. Only a few Peoples get reinforcements. They mark late resurgences.

3.2 Expansion in the People Round

Play consists of placing a People's Tribes or counters on the map. A People commences from a Start Area listed on their card, and expands into adjacent Areas. Expansion rules are the same regardless of whether the Tribes are due to growth, reinforcement or the arrival of a new people.

Tribes of different Peoples cannot occupy the same Area at the end of any People round. The rules ensure that this cannot happen.

An Area can hold up to three Tribes.

An Area occupied by a People is said to be *friendly* to that People. Areas occupied by other Peoples are called *hostile*. Empty areas are just called empty.

3.2.1 Placing Tribes

You take Tribes from your Tribal pool, placing them one at a time.

You can place a Tribe in an Area already occupied by the same People (to a total of three), or in an Area adjacent to one occupied by the People (including a hostile Area).

If you place a counter into a hostile Area (one occupied by another People), you immediately conduct combat (that is, before placing another Tribe). See '3.2.5 Combat during Expansion'.

3.2.2 Seas

You cannot place Tribes in a sea Area. There is one sea Area on the map: The Great Green.

Some Peoples begin in the Great Green. They can place their initial Tribes in any areas adjacent to the sea. Note that they cannot finish the round with any Tribes left in the sea area.

The following areas function as normal land areas: Alishiya, Knossos, Khania, Islands.

3.2.3 Uninhabited Areas

You cannot expand into Uninhabited areas.

Important: Once placed, a Tribe never moves, unless eliminated in combat.

You might want to put more than one Tribe in an Area to protect valuable Areas, such as double-value and bonus Areas.

Areas are not adjacent if they only touch at corners.

Example: In Epoch 1, the Sumerians could place a Tribe in Uruk, then Babylon, Akkad, Subbartu, Mitanni and so on until they run out of their Tribal Pool. This happens even if you own both Peoples. Just because you have both doesn't mean they like each other!

Seafaring special ability

If a People with this special ability occupies an area adjacent to the Great Green, it can place a Tribe in any other area adjacent to the Great Green.

For example, if the Minoans have Knossos, they can expand to Canaan.

3.2.4 The Desert: Aramaea and Kaldu

Kaldu and Aramaea are desert Areas that are uncrossable. They are surrounded by a thick boundary. A People with a Tribe in Kaldu or Aramaea can expand *out* of these into adjacent Areas, as usual. However, a People cannot expand across the boundary *into* Kaldu or Aramaea.

The history of Mesopotamia is awash with Semitic invasions launched out of the desert – but no one ever wanted to invade the desert!

3.2.5 Combat during Expansion

Combat occurs when you attempt to expand into a hostile Area. Remember that you expand *from* one Area *to* another. Sometimes the boundary between them will affect your chances of winning (see ‘3.2.6 Difficult Terrain Attacks’).

Place your Tribe in the Area. Combat is resolved like this:

- ☐ You (the Attacker) roll **two** dice. Keep the higher number.
- ☐ The other player (the Defender) rolls **one** dice (regardless of how many tribes they have in the Area).

The player with the higher number wins. The losing Tribe is removed from the map. In the case of a tie, *each* player removes a Tribe.

An attacker can attack as often as they like (but only with one Tribe at a time, of course). Combat ends when there is only one People’s Tribe(s) in the Area, or if the Attacker simply stops attacking.

Military special ability

A People with this ability adds one to each dice roll when attacking.

Urbanisation special ability

A People with this ability wins ties (in attack or defence).

If you lose the attack, you can always take another Tribe from your Tribal Pool and attack again. Or you may want to choose a different Area to expand into.

Note that the system is weighted in favour of the Attacker.

3.2.6 Difficult Terrain Attacks

Some boundaries between Areas are designated as difficult terrain. These are usually mountains. If you expand across such a boundary, the Defender gets to roll **two** dice, keeping the higher number, just like the Attacker.

The difficult terrain symbol must be in the Defender’s area. For example, in an attack from Ashur into Gutium, the Defender in Gutium rolls two dice. But an attack from Gutium into Ashur is just a normal attack.

In some cases, a border has the difficult terrain symbol on both sides. For example, attacks between Kanesh and Kizzuwatna are difficult in both directions.

3.3 Counting Victory Points

At the end of **each** People Round, count the Victory Points (VP) gained by **that** People. Add these to the points already on your Victory Point Track. You get Victory points as follows:

- ☐ Two points for each purple Area (double-points area).
- ☐ One point for each other Area.
- ☐ Double the Areas's points if it listed as a Bonus Area on the People's card (this could be two or four points).

Double-value Areas:
Knossos, Kanesh, Ugarit,
Byblos, Subartu, Memphis,
Thebes, Babylon, Ur

Important: VPs are counted for each People at the end of its own People Round, *not* at the end of the Epoch nor just at the end of the game.

4 Ending the Game

The game ends after the People Round of the Medes at the end of Epoch five. By then everyone will have counted their VPs and a winner will be known.

People			Tribes received in Epoch...				
Name	Start	Order	1	2	3	4	5
Sumerians	Uruk	1	8	4			
Elamites	Elam	2	5				
Egyptians	Avaris	3	4	4	See below		
Akkadians	Akkad	4	12				
Guti	Gutium	5	5				
Amorites	Aramaea	6		8			
Minoans	Knossos	7		6			
Phoenicians	Byblos	8		5			
Kassites	Gutium	9		5	5		
Hittites	Arzawa	10		5	5		
Hyksos	Sinai	11			6		
Egyptians*	-	12			6		
Hurrians	Nisibis	13			7		
Mycenaeans	Thrace	14			9		
Assyrians	Ashur	15			5		See below
Sea Peoples	Great Green	16			6		
Phrygians	Ahhiyawa	17				6	
Lydians	Lukka	18				5	7
Dorians	Thrace	19				6	
Chaldeans	Kaldu	20				7	See below
Aramaeans	Aramaea	21				7	
Philistines	Canaan	22					4
Hebrews	Canaan	23					3
Urtians	Urtu	24					5
Cimmerians	Urtu	25					9
Assyrians*	-	26					12
Chaldeans*	-	27					9
Medes	Media	28					12

Blue indicates the People's original number of Tribes. Yellow indicates reinforcements. An * indicates a People playing out of their normal sequence for *that* Epoch.