

TIME FRAGMENT

LYDIAN GAMBIT

Sardis, 7th century BC.

*The first coin has just been struck —
and empires are clashing over it.*



VERSUS



RULEBOOK



THE MAP

A symmetric hexagonal board of **91 hexes**. A **river** cuts it in two, crossable only at its two **fords**. Each side starts from its **capital** with two **mines** within marching distance. Everything is deterministic : no dice, no randomness — only your decisions.



	TERRAIN	MOVE	EFFECT
	Plain	1	—
	Hill	2	+1 defense · +1 range for ranged units · blocks charges
	River / Ford	2	−1 defense · caravans blocked outside fords · blocks charges
	Mine	1	+2 EL/turn if occupied at the end of your turn · worth 5 points at final scoring
	Capital Lydian · Greek	1	+1 defense · recruiting & promotion grounds · +1 EL/turn while free of enemies

THE TURN

Turns are **strictly alternating**, chess-style. Competitive play runs on a **clock** : 5 minutes + 5 seconds per turn — run out of time and you lose. On your turn you have :

- **2 action points (AP)** — activating a unit costs 1 AP ; it may then *move and attack*. Returning to an already-activated unit is free while it still has movement left.
- **1 recruitment** — a new unit on your capital or an adjacent hex, inactive this turn.
- **1 promotion** — **4 EL** to make a unit within one hex of your capital a **veteran** : +1 attack, +2 max HP. The General cannot be promoted.
- **Supply** — each caravan may, once per turn and for **1 EL**, heal 2 HP on an adjacent unit. A unit receives only one heal per turn.

Why 2 AP ? A single activation would make the economy indefensible ; activating everything would make the first player overwhelming. Two AP create the permanent dilemma — *economy, army, or General* ? That is the heart of the game.

COMBAT

Damage = Attack – Defense (minimum 1).

Attack counts the bonuses — veteran, General's aura, charge, anti-cavalry spears. Defense counts terrain and formations.

- **Riposte** : if the target survives and the attacker is within its range, it strikes back immediately. An archer shooting a spearman from 2 hexes away risks nothing.
- A unit attacks **once per turn** ; after attacking, its movement ends — except the **horse archer**, who may still ride away.
- You pass freely through allies, never through enemies ; you never stop on an occupied hex.
- **Forced march** : entering an over-cost terrain as your first step is allowed, but it spends all movement and forbids attacking.
- Freshly recruited units cannot attack — neither can Lydian mercenaries, even though they can already march.

THE UNITS

	UNIT	COST	HP	ATK	DEF	RNG	MOV	TRAIT
	Spearman	3	10	3	1	1	2	+2 atk against cavalry and horse archers · +1 def next to a friendly spearman
	Archer	4	8	3	0	2	2	shoots from range without melee riposte
	Caravan	5	6	—	0	—	2	+1 EL /turn · heals · capturable in melee (switches sides at 3 HP)
	Cavalry	6	12	4	1	1	4	charge : +2 atk after 2+ hexes in a straight line (not against targets on hills or rivers)
	Horse Archer	6	8	2	0	2	4	the only unit that can shoot and ride away
	Hoplite	8	16	5	2	1	1	phalanx : +1 def per adjacent friendly hoplite (max +2)
	General	—	12	2	2	1	2	aura : +1 atk to adjacent allies · his death loses the game

The **weapons triangle** : spears beat horses, horses outflank archers, archers wear down spears. No unit wins alone — battles are won by combinations.

VETERAN

+1 attack, +2 max HP. Promoted at the capital for **4 EL** — an investment that follows the unit all game and is worth +2 at final scoring.

MERCENARY (LYDIA)

Recruited adjacent to any friendly unit, active immediately (no attacking on its first turn). The farther from the capital, the more expensive.

THE ECONOMY

At the start of each of your turns, your treasury grows by : **2 EL** base · **+1** if your capital is free of enemies · **+2** per controlled mine · **+1** per caravan. The second player starts with **+2 EL**. *Mines are the real engine : holding them doubles your income — losing them gifts it away.*

THE SIX CIVILIZATIONS

LYDIA

Electrum & mercenaries

- **Pactolus** : **+2 EL**/turn
- **Mercenaries** dropped at the front (**+1 EL**, +1 per 4 hexes of distance)
- Upkeep : **1 EL**/turn per unit beyond the 4th
- Fragile General (10 HP)

GREEK POLEIS

Silver & hoplites

- **Elite hoplites** : 18 HP, phalanx up to +3
- **Silver mines** : **3 EL** per mine
- All units cost **+2 EL**
- Limited cavalry (mov. 3)

PERSIA

Cavalry & tribute

- Tribute : **+1 EL** whenever a unit threatens the enemy capital
- Weakened spearmen (8 HP) · no hoplites

BABYLON

Weighed silver & credit

- Debt down to **-12 EL** with interest — 5 turns in debt and revolt breaks out
- Armored caravans (10 HP) · recruits on its capital only

EGYPT

Grain & hired spears

- Granary from turn 5 : heals 3 units near caravans or the capital
- Discounted hoplites from turn 5 · no cavalry

SCYTHIANS

Horse archers & plunder

- Plunder : **+5 EL** per kill — but unrest after 5 turns without blood
- Superior horse archers (4 EL, 11 HP, mov. 5) · no hoplites, no caravans

The current demo ships Lydia and the Greek Poleis ; the other four arrive with their sprites.

THREE ROADS TO VICTORY

REGICIDE

Kill the enemy General. The game ends on the spot.

ECONOMIC

Amass **120 EL** in treasury. Wealth is a weapon.

FINAL SCORING

At turn 40 : treasury + army value
+ 2 per veteran + 5 per mine.

Resignation and a dead clock also end the game — and a perfect tie at scoring is a draw.

Three clocks tick at once : protecting your General, racing for the mines, and keeping enough army for the scoring. Neglect any one of the three and you hand over the game.

FIRST TIPS

- **The fords are the only crossings** — a hoplite planted on a ford seals half the map.
- **An archer on a hill** shoots 3 hexes : it covers a ford without ever exposing itself.
- Play the **weapons triangle** — no unit wins alone.
- An **escorted caravan** pays for its own escort ; a lone caravan ends up captured — serving the enemy.
- The **General's aura** is a free veteran — but every step toward the front is a step toward regicide.



*Keep your eyes open : somewhere on every map, never at the center but always present, an owl statue is watching. It is **the Watcher**. No one knows what it is looking at.*