

WARRING STATES



***A Game of Strategy and Tactics during
the Warring States Period***

for 2-5 players (playing time 45 minutes)

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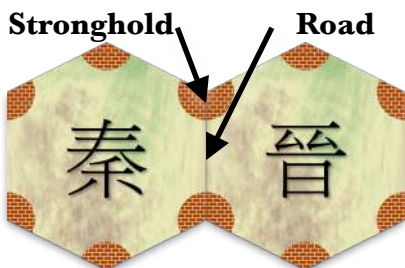
Version 1.0

1. Introduction

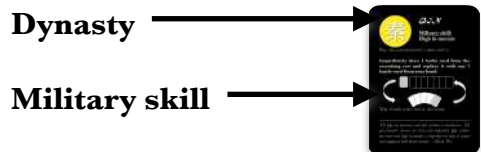
The Ancient China is falling apart as regional rulers start challenging the Zhou royal authority. But from the ashes new states arise, all with the same goal: to unify China and establish a new Dynasty. Their armies campaign swift as the wind, march majestic as the forest, raid ferocious as the fire and stand firm as the mountains. But in the end, there can be only one Emperor.

2. Game Components

12 state mats

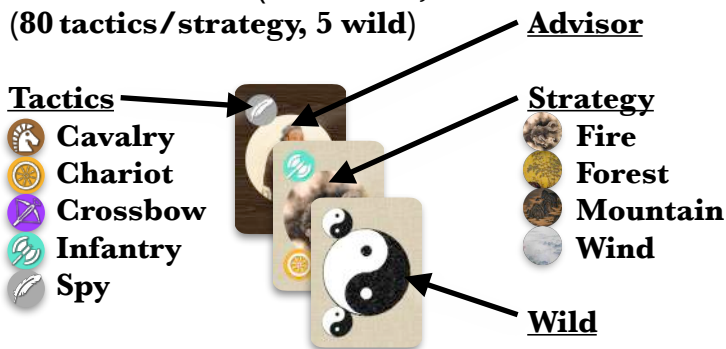


5 dynasty cards



132 armies
(24 per dynasty +
12 neutral black)

112 battle cards (27 advisor,
(80 tactics/strategy, 5 wild)



9 battlefield cards



3. Object

The object of Warring States is to control 3/4/5 states in a 5/4/3 player game. You do this by playing *battle cards* and claiming *tactical* and/or *strategical superiorities*. A tactical superiority lets you place an *army* on a *stronghold* and a strategic superiority lets you manipulate the placed armies. The dynasty with the most strongholds around a state takes control of it.

4. Setup

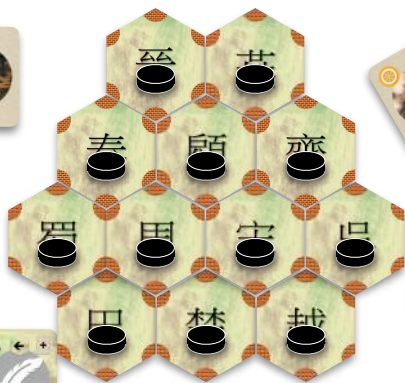
Group the 12 states according to the image below with 1 neutral (black) army on each. Shuffle the 112 battle cards. Deal 8 to each player, of which 6 are kept and 2 are placed face up to form a *recruiting row*. Place the 9 battlefield cards to form a *battlefield row*.

Each player chooses a dynasty and takes its 24 armies. Optionally play with the dynasty card with variable dynasty abilities (see card or back page for details). The player who last ate starts the first round and also chooses the first state to battle in.

Recruiting row
(4 players = 8 cards)



Game board



Start player
(6 cards)



Battlefield row



(24 armies)



5. Battle Round

Battle in 1 state each battle round. In clockwise order, *wage battle* or *fall back*:

- Wage battle** by playing 1 or 2 battle cards in front of you. The 1st card must be a bright tactics/strategy card and the 2nd card (if played) must be a dark advisor card. Each card has tactics and/or strategy symbols.



The bright tactics/strategy card has 2 tactics and 1 strategy symbol. At least 1 must match a symbol on your **previously** played bright battle card.



The dark advisor card has 1 tactics or 1 strategy symbol. It must match a symbol on your **currently** played bright battle card.



The bright wild card has no symbols but can be matched against **any** other symbol.



The dynasty card may be played instead of a dark advisor card. Check the card text for its ability.

- Fall back** and **claim superiority** by taking the battlefield cards for which you have currently played the most tactics and/or strategies (if still available). None of your other played cards count when the other players claim superiorities, nor may you play any more cards this round.

Hint: To keep track of the played tactics and strategies, players may choose to place the corresponding number of armies on the battle cards.



Example: Qin plays Fire/Chariot/Cavalry together with a matching Advisor/Chariot. Yan responds with a Forest/Infantry/Chariot. Qin's next card must have a Fire, a Chariot or a Cavalry (or be a wild card).



Qin may also refrain from playing more cards and claim the Fire and the Cavalry superiority. However, Qin will then give up the Chariot superiority to Yan.

A superiority lets you either draw 1 battle card from the deck **or** place/manipulate armies in any order. There may never be more than two armies stacked on a stronghold or in a state (whether of same or different dynasties).



1. Cavalry/Chariot/Crossbow/Infantry: Place 1 army in any of the 6 strongholds around the **current** state. You must choose an empty stronghold if possible.



2. Spy: Take **any** 1 battle card from the recruiting row. At the end of the round, choose the start player and the state to battle for the next round.



3. Fire: Move all single opponent armies from **any** 1 stronghold. to any adjacent stronghold/s. Armies may not be moved from strongholds with 2 armies of the same opponent.



4. Forest: Place 1 own army beneath a neutral army or an opponent army in **any** state.



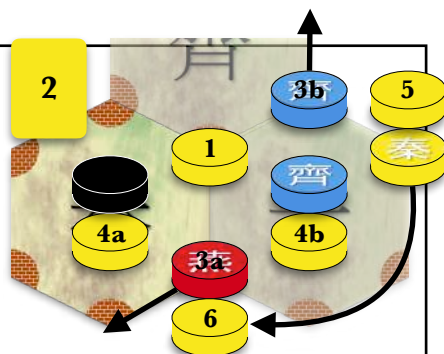
5. Mountain: Place 1 own army on top of an own army in **any** stronghold.



6. Wind: Move 1 own army from **any** stronghold along roads to **any** other stronghold. The army must stop if it enters a stronghold with 1 army.

Example: Qin has a superiority at the left state.

1. *Cavalry etc.:* Place 1 army in stronghold.
2. *Spy:* Take 1 battle card from recruiting row.
3. *Fire:* Move 1 red Yan or 1 blue Qi army.
4. *Forest:* Place 1 army beneath the black neutral or the blue Qi army.
5. *Mountain:* Place 1 army on top of the yellow own army.
6. *Wind:* Move 1 yellow own army and stop at red Yan army.



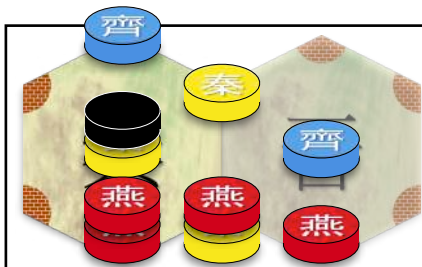
When you fall back, discard your played battle cards but take back your dynasty card if played. Choose 2 new battle cards from the recruiting row. The last player to fall back chooses only 1. If you fall back without playing any cards, draw 1 extra card from the deck.

6. Control Round

When all players have fallen back, simultaneously check all states for *control changes*. There must be **at least 4 armies** in the strongholds around a state before a neutral state can have a control change.

A control changes if a dynasty has more armies in and around the state than any other opponent or neutral dynasty. Count only the top army in the state and only 1 army in a stronghold where a dynasty has 2 armies. Note that 1 stronghold may border many states. The bottom army in the state (if any) breaks a tie.

If a control changes, replace all armies in the state with 1 army of the new controlling dynasty.



Example: After the battle in the left state, Qin (yellow) and Yan (red) have 2 armies each around it. Qin's army beneath the neutral army breaks the tie. The neutral army is removed and Qin takes control. Note that the 2 stacked Yan armies only count as 1.

In the previously battled right state, both Qin and Yan have more armies (2) than Qi (1). However, since Qin and Yan are tied, the control is not changed and Yan keeps the state.

7. End of Round

- Discard any battle cards left in the recruiting row and replenish it from the deck. Shuffle and reuse discarded cards if needed.
- The player who claimed the Spy superiority chooses the start player and the state to battle for the next round. Only neutral states or states with less than 4 armies in the strongholds around them may be chosen.
- If the Spy superiority was not claimed, the last player to fall back is the new start player and chooses the state to battle for the next round.

8. End of Game

The game ends at the end of a round if any player has taken control of at least **3/4/5 states** (5/4/3 players). The game also ends if all **neutral armies** have been removed or if all states already have **8 or more armies** around them. The player controlling the most states unites China, becomes the First Emperor and wins the game.

Tied players play 1 more battle round without placing armies or taking new battle cards, after which the player with the most superiorities wins. If more than one player has the most, they play another battle round and so on. If all run out of battle cards, the player with armies in the most strongholds wins.



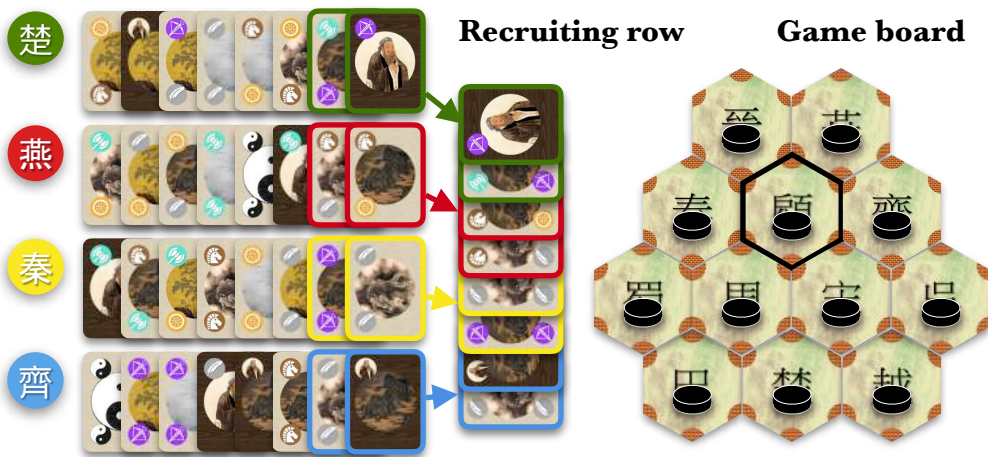
Example: Qin and Yan are tied. Qin plays Forest/Infantry/Cavalry and Yan responds with Fire/Chariot/Crossbow together with Advisor/Crossbow. Qin counters with Forest/Crossbow/Spy, after which Yan cannot play any more cards.



Yan claims superiority in Fire, Crossbow and Chariot (3) and Qin claims superiority in Forest/Infantry, Cavalry and Spy (4). Qin becomes the First Emperor!

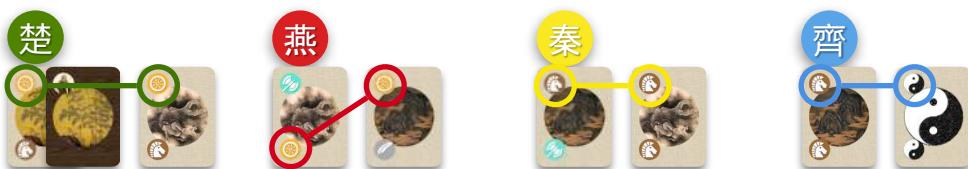
9. Sample Game

A game of Warring States is played between the Chu (green, starting player), the Yan (red), the Qin (yellow) and the Qi (blue). They are dealt 8 cards each and place 2 cards each in the recruiting row.

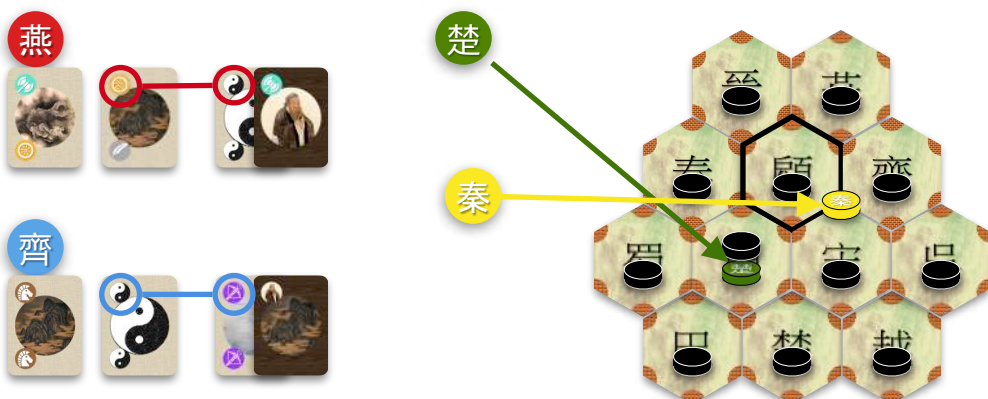


Chu chooses to battle in 顧 and plays 1 bright card and 1 dark card. The other players play 1 bright card each. Chu only has Forest superiority and plays a 2nd bright card matching the chariot of the 1st bright card.

Now Chu has Chariot and Cavalry superiority as well. However, Yan plays a card with a 2nd Chariot and Qin plays a card with a 2nd Cavalry. Qi has no superiority but plays a wild card, hoping that other players will fall back first.

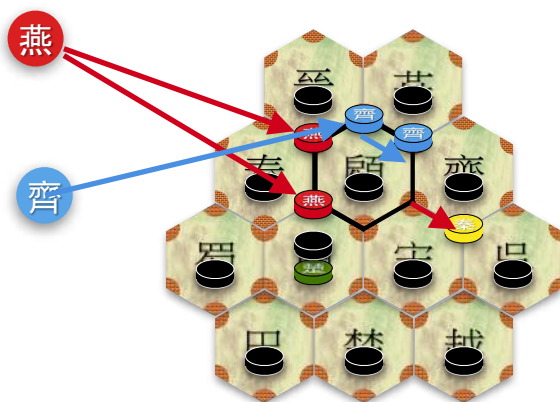


Chu falls back, uses the Forest superiority to place an army beneath a neutral army in 周 and chooses 2 cards from the recruiting row. Yan plays a wild card and a dark card, after which Qin falls back with a Cavalry superiority. Qin uses it to place an army in a 顧 stronghold and chooses 2 cards from the recruiting row. Qi does not give up but plays another bright and dark card.



Yan now has superiorities in Chariot, Infantry, Spy and Fire. Yan falls back and uses them to place 2 armies in 顧 strongholds, choose 1 extra card from the recruiting row (in addition to the normal 2) and move away the Qin army to another stronghold).

Qi falls back with superiorities in Crossbow, Mountain and Wind. (The Cavalry is already claimed.) Qi uses them to place 1 army in a 顧 stronghold, place a 2nd army in the same stronghold and move 1 army to an adjacent stronghold. As the last to fall back, Yan only chooses 1 card from the recruiting row.



The control round starts and only 顧 has the 4+ armies needed for a control change. However, Yan and Qi both have 2 armies each so the state remains neutral. 8 cards are drawn from the deck to form a new recruiting row. Yan (Spy superiority) chooses the next start player and state to battle for and the war continues...

10.2 Player Variant

Play according to the normal rules with the following changes:

1. At the setup and at the end of each round (before choosing start player and state to battle for), draw 1 battle card. If the card is dark (advisor), draw additional cards until 1 bright card is drawn. The battle card or cards represent local resistance at the state.
2. When you fall back, compare your played battle cards not only with your opponent player but also with the local resistance battle cards. The local resistance does not place or manipulate any armies, they merely prevent the human players from claiming superiorities.
3. Unlike the normal game, wild cards count as 1 of each strategy and tactics for the local resistance.
4. The victory condition is 7 states. Break ties as normal.



Example: Yan (blue) has passed, claimed superiority in Infantry and Crossbow, and placed 2 armies. Qin (red) passes with 2 Fire, 2 Cavalry and 2 Chariots. The local resistance has 1 Mountain, 1 Chariot and 2 Cavalry. Qin does not claim superiority in Cavalry, only in Fire and Chariot.



Dynasty Skills



Chu (Well-ordered): Ignore the matching requirement for the accompanying bright card. Following bright cards must match the latest card.



Jin (Experienced): Count it as 1 extra spy to your played battle cards.



Qi (Offensive): Cover 1 tactics of the accompanying bright card. Do not count the covered tactics but count the uncovered one twice.



Qin (High in morale): Immediately draw 1 battle card from the recruiting row and replace it with any 1 battle card from your hand.



Yan (Defensive): Take back 1 previously placed card to your hand (including the card just placed).

Battle Superiorities



Cavalry/Chariot/Crossbow/Infantry: Place 1 own army in a current stronghold (empty if possible).



Spy: Take 1 battle card. Choose next start player and state to battle for.



Fire: Move single opponent armies from any stronghold to any adjacent stronghold/s.



Forest: Place 1 own army beneath a neutral or opponent army in any state.



Mountain Place 1 own army on top of an own army in any stronghold.



Wind: Move 1 own army from any stronghold along roads to any stronghold. (Stop if entering another army.)

Credits

Game design:	Nicholas Hjelmberg
Artwork:	Nicholas Hjelmberg
Production:	The Game Crafter
Game testers:	Stockholm Board Game Design Meetup
Special thanks:	My wife Su-San Oh for having to listen to my endless historical and game-technical considerations
