

7 Ages™: 6000 years of Human History

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PLAYER'S GUIDE

Terms of Play

Active – Units belonging to the empire doing the action.

Africa – Africa is a region.

Age - There are 7 Ages, each of 7 spaces (or progress levels), from 4000 BC/BCE (before Christ, or before current era, whichever you prefer) to the present day.

Americas – The Americas is a region. It includes the sub-regions of North and South America.

Area – The map is divided into areas. Areas are land, sea or ocean.

Asia – Asia is a region. It includes the sub-regions Australasia, China, India, North East Asia and South East Asia.

Australasia – Australasia is a sub-region in Asia.

Barbarian empire – an empire not allowed to build a city in its current age.

Britain – Britain is a sub-region in Europe.

Capital – The first city in a non-barbarian empire. It is treated like any other city for all purposes except where specifically stated in the rules.

Card deck – The card deck contains 110 cards, each showing an empire, an artefact and an event. Each card also has a value (between 0 and 7) in a coloured box, which is used to determine the outcome of events, resolve conflicts, and so on.

During play, the deck is face-down. Discarded cards go into the discard pile, which stays face-up. When there are no more cards left in the deck, shuffle the discard pile and turn it face-down to form the new deck.

If several people want to play cards at the same time, the player with the turn marker gets first chance to play. The player to their left gets the next chance, and so on.

China – China is a sub-region in Asia.

Coastal land area – a land area adjacent to a sea or ocean area.

Control – An empire controls all areas occupied by 1 or more of its units.

Counter – There are 2 sizes of counter – units are 5/8" and leaders and game markers are 1/2". Units come in 15 different colours, one for each possible empire in play at the same time.

Counter mix – The total units available to a particular empire (all with the same colour). Each counter mix is different. Players should choose the most suitable mix for each empire they start.

Dark ages – The darker spaces on the progress track are dark age spaces. Unless they have a scientist,

empires in those spaces do not advance a free progress level at the end of a turn. Instead, they only leave a dark age space through an event or a *trade and progress* action.

Discard pile – The stack of played cards.

Disordered area – Disordered areas are *land* areas containing a disorder marker. Disordered areas usually earn no income and aren't included in any area count for gaining glory. You can't place a disorder marker on an area already disordered or sea or ocean area. Remove a disorder marker as soon as the area it's in is vacant.

Disordered force – A disordered force is one fully committed during *conflict resolution*.

Draw card – pick a card from the deck.

Doubling – see 'modifiers'.

Empire – There are 110 different empires included in the game, one per card. Up to 15 empires can be in play at any one time.

Europe – Europe is a region. It includes the sub-regions Britain and Italy.

Force pool – The units an empire can build. There are usually fewer units in an empire's force pool than in its counter mix because the empire isn't sufficiently advanced to build all unit types.

Glory points – These are a reflection of how well you are doing. You can't have fewer than 0 glory points. The winner of the game is the player with the most glory points at game's end.

An empire gains glory points during *harvesting glory* (see the 'Glory' section of the empire's card). Some empires also earn glory points as soon as they fulfil a particular condition. Such instant glory conditions are in square boxes in the 'Glory' section of the empire's card.

Glory track – This is on the map. It's used to record your current glory total and your empires' saved money.

Government – An empire can create a new government type by playing it as an artefact. Other empires in range can then adopt that type of government during a *civilise* action. The government types are capitalism, democracy, feudalism, and socialism.

Halving – see 'modifiers'.

India – India is a sub-region in Asia.

Invasion – entering a land area directly from an adjacent sea area (e.g. moving into Germany directly from the North sea is invading, moving via the Low countries is not).

Italy – Italy is a sub-region in Europe.

Land units – Infantry, cavalry and missile units.

Leaders – Leaders are either named or unnamed. They have one or more codes on their counter that identify a particular ability.

When a leader dies or is demoted, return an unnamed leader to the leader cup and remove a named leader from the game.

Liberate – Taking control of an area from another empire during conflict resolution.

Modifiers – All modifiers are cumulative. When doing more than one of adding, subtracting, doubling and halving, add, then subtract, then double, then halve. When you halve a number, round it to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounding up) *after all halving*.

Neutral area – an area containing no units.

North America – North America is a sub-region in the Americas.

North East Asia – North East Asia is a sub-region in Asia.

Ocean area – Ocean areas can't be entered by land units (except by naval transport) or by galleys (unless its empire's special rules specifically allow it).

Pass action – Certain events and artefacts convert an action into a *pass* action. The empire does nothing this turn.

Progress level – Each space on the progress track is a progress level. The space an empire occupies determines its progress level.

Progress track – The progress track on the map is used to record the current progress level of each empire in play. The age an empire is in is determined by which row of the progress track its progress marker is on.

Range – An empire is within range of your empire if the smallest number of areas between them (counting their closest area but excluding yours) is less than or equal to your empire's current age. You can't count through ocean areas until your empire is in age 4 or higher. An empire can't count range *through* (you may count into) another empire's area(s) unless it has the benefit of radio or the other empire gives its permission. The other empire can demand cards and/or money from your empire in return for its permission, which you must supply immediately if you accept.

Since empires can be in different ages, it is possible for one empire to be in range of another but not vice versa.

Region – Regions are collections of areas delineated by a thick blue border. They are mostly an entire continent (e.g. Europe). Some regions are subsets of a larger region (e.g. 'Britain' is a sub-region of Europe).

A region includes islands connected by a crossing arrow to the mainland. The region that each other island belongs to (if any) is indicated in brackets after the island's name.

A region includes every sea and ocean area adjacent to a land area in the region. Thus one sea or ocean area can belong to more than one region (e.g. the Eastern Mediterranean belongs to Africa, Asia and Europe).

Religion – An empire can create a new religion by playing it as an artefact. Other empires in range can

then adopt that religion during a *civilise* action. The religions are: Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism and Islam.

Sea area – Sea areas can't be entered by land units (except by naval transport).

South East Asia – South East Asia is a sub-region in Asia.

South America – South America is a sub-region in the Americas.

Sub-region – See 'region'.

Trade number – Each empire has a trade number listed on its card (e.g. Rome's is +1). These can differ from age to age and can be modified by events and artefacts.

Unit – These are the larger, 5/8" counters. They represent an empire's air, naval and land forces.

Vacate – An empire vacates an area when it leaves no units in that area as they move out.

Vote action – Actions are converted into *vote* actions for empires with a religion experiencing heresy (see the description of the heresy artefact).

Leader types

Administrator (Ad) – During *production*, an empire may build any number of units in an administrator's area. It also reduces the cost of all its new units, except infantry, by 1. If the administrator is in its capital, then infantry costs are also reduced by 1.

Artist (Ar) – During *civilise*, artefacts may be built in an area containing an artist even if that area already contains artefacts.

You gain 1 glory every time an artefact is placed within range of any of your artists.

During *harvesting glory*, you count double the number of artefacts in an area containing an artist and an empire with an artist increases the glory it gains from artefacts by one (e.g. the Zimbabweans would gain 1 glory if they have the most artefacts, while the Manchus would gain 3).

Builder (Bu) – An empire with a builder can build or improve an extra city in the builder's area each *civilise* action. This can't be a city that was built or improved in the same action. They can be built or improved 1 age earlier than otherwise allowed (e.g. an area containing a Mongol builder would cease being barbarian and could improve a level 3 city to level 5 in age 3).

Cities in a builder's area never get reduced, either by events or because the builder's army has just captured the city.

Explorer (Ex) – The range of an empire is doubled when counting from an area containing an explorer.

All units that are stacked with an explorer throughout a *manoeuvre* action gain 1 extra movement point. Each *neutral* area entered by units stacked with an explorer costs 1 movement point.

If units are moving with an explorer, you do not need to leave any units behind in the area(s) the explorer moves

through. You must still leave a unit behind in any land area the explorer starts in.

Philosopher (Ph) – If an empire with a philosopher is tied with another empire in a count for purposes of gaining glory points, the empire with the philosopher is treated as being ahead of the other empire (so long as the other empire doesn't also have a philosopher).

Populist (Po) – at the end of *manoeuvre*, an empire with a populist leader can remove disorder in the populist's area.

During *production*, double the value of any city in the area with a populist, and add 1 to the value of every adjacent (undisordered) city controlled by that empire.

Religious (Re) – During *destiny*, an empire with a religious leader puts its discards on the *bottom* of the discard pile and can draw each new card either from the deck, as usual, or from the top of the discard pile.

They can always remove heresy on their empire's religion during any *civilise* action; and their empire is immune to religious strife.

Scientist (Sc) – An empire with a scientist can play 2 cards during any *trade and progress* action it is involved in. After cards are revealed, you decide which to use. Return the other card to your hand.

Dark ages have no effect on a scientist's empire.

Strategist (St) – After an empire has finished moving and resolving all conflicts during a *manoeuvre* action (including after each multiple move allowed by certain special rules, artefacts and events), any units stacked with a strategist may move, and resolve conflict, an extra time. They can only move if they remain stacked with the strategist throughout the move.

Tactician (Ta) – An empire with a tactician can discard the first card it draws when resolving a conflict in the leader's area and draw a replacement card.

If you *commit* a tactician in a round of conflict resolution, the units (and leaders) the empire commits aren't lost if the round is tied.

During conflict resolution if an empire has a tactician present it can retreat if *either* side has acquired a disorder marker.

Artefacts

Buddhism

Ages: 2-7 (but only if India is within the empire's range and the empire has no religion).

Effect: The empire adopts the Buddhist religion. Put a Buddhism artefact on its card.

Power: You place a disorder marker in any area of an empire that takes control of at least one area from your Buddhist empire during a *manoeuvre* action. Before each action it takes, a Buddhist empire can remove a disorder marker from *one* area it controls.

Penalty: None.

Capitalism

Ages: 5-7 (but only on an empire that has no government and has industrial revolution).

Effect: The empire adopts capitalism. Put a capitalism artefact on its card.

Power: Capitalist empires can play 2 cards in their *own trade and progress* actions (not if another empire trades with them). After all cards are revealed, you decide which to use and return the other to your hand. If you also have a scientist, you can play the second card from the deck, and then decide which of those to use and return the other to your hand.

They earn a glory point *immediately* if they win a trade. If the trade was in *their own* trade and progress action, they also gain 1 money for each point they won by. They can either take the money from the empire that lost the trade or from the bank (they cannot take some from each). They double the amount they take from another capitalist empire (not from the bank).

Penalty: None.

Christianity

Ages: 2-7 (but only if Palestine (M5) is within the empire's range and the empire has no religion).

Effect: The empire adopts the Christian religion. Put a disorder marker in its capital and a Christianity artefact on its card.

Power: Immediately before it performs its action in a turn, your Christian empire can 'convert' *one* adjacent neutral land area by moving an adjacent unit into the area (it can't vacate an area it couldn't normally vacate). Alternatively, it can spark religious conflict by placing a disorder marker into an adjacent land area controlled by a non-Christian empire.

Penalty: Place a disorder marker in a Christian empire's capital whenever it loses control of a fertile area. If there's already disorder in the capital, put the marker in any other city area the empire controls.

Colossus

Ages: 1, 2.

Effect: The empire increases its range by +1.

Computing

Ages: 6, 7 (but only if the target empire has radio).

Effect: During *trade and progress*, empires that have computing may choose to pick one card from the deck to trade with instead of from their hand.

Concentrated ownership

Ages: Any.

Effect: Place the concentrated ownership artefact on the target empire's card. An empire with concentrated ownership increases the cost of all units it builds by +1. There is no effect on the cost of fortifications.

Discard the artefact when the revolution artefact is played on the empire or it enters another age (forwards or backwards).

Confucianism

Ages: 2-7 (but only on an empire that controls a Chinese, or SE Asian land area and has no religion).

Effect: The empire adopts the Confucian religion. Put a Confucianism artefact on its card.

Power: A Confucian empire avoids each disorder marker that would otherwise be placed in one of its areas if it draws a card with a value greater than or equal to the empire's current age.

An empire that takes control of a land area from a Confucian empire can convert to Confucianism immediately but, if it doesn't (e.g. because it's already Confucian), put a disorder marker in the area.

Penalty: Reduce a Confucian empire's trade number by 1.

Crusade (see Pope)

Democracy

Ages: 2-7 (but only on an empire that has no government).

Effect: The empire adopts democracy. Put a democracy artefact on its card.

Power: Democratic empires halve the total cost of their units in *production* actions if they lost control of an area to another player's empire in that or the previous turn.

Wild card actions do not stop democratic empires from the free advance at the end of the turn.

Penalty: A democratic empire loses 1 glory point *immediately* each time it takes control of a *land* area from another empire (unless the other empire moved a unit into one of its land or sea areas in the current or the previous turn).

Feudalism

Ages: 3-7 (but only on an empire that has no government and doesn't have renaissance).

Effect: The empire adopts feudalism. Put a feudalism artefact on its card.

Discard a feudalism artefact as soon as the empire has renaissance.

Power: In a *production* action, a feudal empire:

- does not pay maintenance for its units; and
- reduces the cost of *infantry* and *cavalry* units it builds by 1.

Penalty: A feudal empire:

- halves the income it earns in a *production* action (this is *not* cumulative with the effect for being a barbarian empire); and
- reduces by 1 the number of progress levels it advances when it wins a trade.

Forum

Ages: Any.

Effect: An empire with a forum can convert any action into a *pass* action when it turns over its action marker. Put a '+1 go' marker on the empire's card. An empire does nothing in a *pass* action.

An empire can spend a '+1 go' marker to take a second action whenever it takes any action (except a *pass* or *vote* action). The second action must be different from the first but happens right after the first action, even if that is outside the normal action sequence. An empire can only spend one '+1 go' marker a turn.

An empire loses any saved '+1 go' markers if its forum is removed.

Great library

Ages: 2, 3.

Effect: Increase the trade number of an empire with the great library by +1.

Great pyramid

Ages: 1-3.

Effect: You can't place disorder in an area containing the great pyramid or in any adjacent area.

Great wall

Ages: 2-4 (but not on a barbarian empire).

Effect: The area containing the great wall, and all adjacent land areas controlled by that empire are treated as having a fort. Actual forts there provide no extra benefit.

Hanging gardens

Ages: 1, 2.

Effect: An empire with the hanging gardens earns 2 glory points during the *harvesting glory* step at the end of the turn if it has the highest total city value and 1 glory if it has the second highest.

Heresy

Ages: Any (but only on an empire with a religion artefact on its card).

Effect: Put the heresy artefact on the target empire's card. If an empire has a heresy artefact any action taken by *any* empire with that religion is converted into a *vote* action as soon as it turns over its action marker.

In a *vote* action, draw one card. The value on the card is how many progress levels the empires with that religion will lose between them. The empire taking the *vote* action proposes how the losses will be distributed.

Each empire that would lose a progress level gets one vote for each level it would lose. If there are 0 levels to lose, only the active empire votes. If the majority of the votes supports the proposal, the progress levels are lost and the heresy artefact discarded. If the vote fails, the heresy remains.

Hinduism

Ages: Any (but only on an empire that controls an Indian land area and has no religion).

Effect: The empire adopts the Hindu religion. Put a Hindu artefact on its card.

Power: A Hindu empire ignores the adverse effects of all other religions.

If a Hindu empire receives 1 or fewer glory during *harvesting glory*, increase its glory by 1.

Penalty: If a Hindu empire receives 5 or more glory during *harvesting glory*, decrease its glory by 1.

Industrial revolution

Ages: 6, 7 (and 5 if the target empire has printing) and only if the empire has renaissance.

Effect: During *production*, empires that have industrial revolution *double* the income they receive from all cities they control.

Internet

Ages: 7 (but only if the target empire has computing).

Effect: The empire gains 7 glory points. History ends. Game over.

Islam

Ages: 3–7 (but only if Medina (N6) is within the empire's range and the empire has no religion).

Effect: The empire adopts the Islamic religion. Put an Islam artefact on its card. Give that empire an elite marker.

Power: An Islamic empire immediately gains 1 glory each time it takes control of a *land* area from a non-Islamic empire.

Penalty: An Islamic empire immediately loses 1 glory each time it takes control of a *land* area from an Islamic empire.

Jihad

Ages: 1~5 (but only on an Islamic empire).

Effect: Put the jihad artefact in any land area adjacent to the target empire that a non-Islamic empire controls. Remove the artefact *immediately* the area becomes controlled by an Islamic empire.

An Islamic empire without renaissance that performs an action other than *manoeuvre* loses 3 glory points if the jihad artefact is on the map. It does not lose the points if it performs 2 actions and one of them is *manoeuvre*.

If the jihad artefact is on the map, all Islamic units in that and every adjacent area add +1 to their front line and support values.

Just rule

Ages: Any (but only on an empire with a leader).

Effect: When played, remove all disorder markers from areas the empire controls.

These events can't be played on an empire with just rule:

- barracks revolt;
- civil war;
- empire collapses;
- empire fragments;
- new dynasty; and
- rebellion.

Remove the just rule artefact immediately the empire has no leaders on the map.

Moon landing

Ages: 7 (but only if the target empire has satellites and computing).

Effect: An empire with the moon landing gains a glory point each time it takes a *civilise* action. It gains 7 glory points if it ends the game (in addition to the 7 it gets for leaving age 7 or playing the internet).

Oracle

Ages: 1, 2.

Effect: An empire with the oracle can examine *one* other player's cards immediately before it takes its action, if that player has an empire within twice the range of the oracle. If the capital of that empire is disordered, it can keep one of those cards.

Paved roads

Ages: 2-7.

Effect: Empires that have paved roads may enter all level '3', '5' or '7' cities for only 1 movement point each, regardless of terrain.

Peace treaty

Ages: Any.

Effect: Put one peace treaty artefact in any area in the target empire. Put the other on any other empire within range of the first controlled by another player. While both artefacts are on the map, neither empire can move a unit into an area controlled by the other.

Remove both artefacts when either empire leaves its current age (forwards or backwards), or either area is occupied by another empire.

Pharos lighthouse

Ages: 1, 2.

Effect: Put the artefact into a coastal land area of the target empire. Its ships in that, and adjacent, areas add +1 to their front and support values. Increase the empire's trade number by +1.

Pope

Ages: 1~5 (but only on the Papal States if it is in play or, if not, on a Christian empire).

Effect: If played on the Papal States, it immediately adopts Christianity (as in a *civilise* action).

Whenever Christian empires are voting on a proposal to end a heresy, the Pope gets all the votes. Christian empires that would lose a progress level as a result may opt instead to discard their Christianity artefact and place a disorder marker in each of their city areas, in which case, the heresy artefact remains.

In a *civilise*, the Pope can call for a crusade if Palestine is controlled by a non-Christian empire. Put the crusade artefact in Palestine. Remove the crusade artefact *immediately* that:

- Palestine is controlled by a Christian empire; or
- the Pope artefact is discarded.

A Christian empire without renaissance that performs an action other than *manoeuvre* loses 3 glory points if the crusade artefact is on the map. It does not lose the

points if it performs 2 actions and one of them is *manoeuvre*.

If the crusade artefact is in Palestine, all Christian units in that and every adjacent area add +1 to their front line and support values.

Printing

Ages: 4–7 (but only if the target empire has renaissance).

Effect: Empires that have printing gain an extra progress level for each *trade* they win against a more advanced empire if the world war artefact is not in play.

Radio

Ages: 6, 7 (but only if the target empire has industrial revolution).

Effect: Empires that have radio:

- can trace range through other empires; and
- can use tactical leaders' card and retreat benefits when resolving conflicts in areas adjacent to the leader's area (though they must still be in the area to be committed in a round of the conflict).

Railways

Ages: 5–7 (but only if the target empire has industrial revolution).

Effect: Empires that have railways:

- increase their range by +1; and
- in a *manoeuvre* action, can move their units any distance entirely within land areas they control for 1 movement point (in total).

Religious strife

Ages: Any (but only on an empire that has a religion but not a religious leader).

Effect: Place the religious strife artefact on the target empire's card. It cannot exercise its religion's power (it is still subject to its religion's penalties).

Remove the artefact when the revolution artefact is played on the empire, its religion votes in favour of resolving a heresy, or when the empire leaves its current age (forwards or backwards).

Renaissance

Ages: 4–7.

Effect: Empires that have renaissance increase their trade number by +1 and can buy glory during *harvesting glory* for 20 money each.

Revolution

Ages: Any (but only on an empire with a disorder marker in an area it controls).

Effect: Place the revolution artefact on the target empire's card.

Move the target empire's progress marker back 4 progress levels, put a disorder marker in its capital area and remove any religion artefact on its card.

Reduce the cost of the empire's infantry units by 1 and increase the cost of its naval and aircraft units by 1.

Remove the revolution artefact as soon as the empire:

- adopts socialism;
- adopts any religion; or
- leaves its current age (forwards or backwards).

Satellites

Ages: 7 (but only if the target empire has radio).

Effect: An empire that has satellites:

- treats every empire as within range; and
- can, immediately before it takes its action, examine *one* other player's cards at the cost of 1 money per card examined.

Socialism

Ages: 5–7 (but only on an empire that has no government and only if it has industrial revolution).

Effect: The empire adopts socialism. Put a socialism artefact on its card and a disorder marker in each city it controls (unless one is there already).

Power: During *production*, socialist empires reduce the cost of new units by 1.

Socialist empires ignore the effects of any religion they have (except during *harvesting glory*) and ignore the effects of schism, heresy, jihads and crusades.

Penalty: None.

Temple of Diana

Ages: 1, 2.

Effect: An empire with the temple of Diana receives normal income from any disordered areas within range of the temple, and counts those areas when working out how many glory points it gains.

United Nations

Ages: Any (but only if world war is on the progress track).

Effect: Remove the world war marker from the progress track.

Any empire that moves a unit into an area controlled by another empire or plays a new dynasty, revolt, civil war, empire collapses or empire fragments event can be censured immediately by *unanimous* vote of all other players, but only if the UN's controller calls for a vote.

A player can accept a censure, in which case, the moving units end their turn in the area they left and the event cards have no effect (but are still discarded). A player who doesn't accept the censure loses 1 glory point.

Universal suffrage

Ages: 5–7 (but only on a capitalist, democratic or socialist empire that has renaissance).

Effect: All capitalist, democratic and socialist empires that have renaissance increase the income they earn by +1 per area they control.

World war

Ages: 7 (or any if the target empire has industrial revolution) but not if the United Nations is on the map.

Effect: Place the world war artefact in the target empire's current space on the progress track.

If the world war artefact is on the progress track:

- all empires taking a *production* action halve the total cost of new units they build and can place any number of units in any area;
- all empires that take a *manoeuvre* action can move and resolve conflict again after resolving any conflicts from their first move. Units stacked with a strategic leader can move and resolve conflict a third time;
- empires can never advance more than 1 progress level when they win a *trade and progress* action; and
- empires do *not* advance a free progress level at the end of the turn, whether or not they are in a dark age space.

Remove the world war artefact when any empire enters any age higher than the artefact or when United Nations is played.

When the world war artefact is removed, every empire (except an empire that removed the artefact by entering a higher age) gains a glory point for each fertile area it controls.

Players' Notes

By Harry Rowland

Well here you are having just polished off the *7 Ages* rules. Hmmm, you may well be thinking, only 12 pages of rules. Not bad for an ADG game, usually they are only halfway through explaining how to set up the maps by now. Still, you get a lot of bangs for your buck. Behind those 12 pages lies a rich vein of decisions.

Your first decision is what card to play to decide who goes first. To do this, you need to check the age range of all your empire cards. If you don't have a complete coverage from age 1 to 7, it might be critical for you to be the first player, so you can guarantee to play an empire in the starting age of the game.

If you do have a complete age spread, you can be more circumspect. Obviously you don't play a card that will lessen your age range. With that proviso you can afford to play any card.

If you have a good hand you may well consider playing a '7' card to ensure the game starts in an age containing the least number of empires (the first and last) to maximise the other players' discomfiture.

If you decide not to contest being first player, feel free to play your most worthless card.

Next, you must decide which actions to play. In the first turn everyone can only play one action. If you are the first player that should always be a start empire action.

You should also play a start empire if you have a complete spread of age ranges. If not, you might prefer to play the wild card so that you can choose a destiny instead if the first empire is in an age you don't have.

Every turn is critical. If you can't start an empire, consider throwing all your cards out in your destiny action. At most keep one card. As an example, the chances of you not having an age 1 (or conditional age 1) empire in your starting 7 cards is only 11.7%. If you chuck out all your cards it goes down to only 2.54% chance of not having one.

Once you get your empires started you want to increase to your maximum as soon as possible. Every empire gives you one more action you can do each turn which brings a huge early advantage in the game. Also the earlier you lay down your dedicated empires, the earlier you can start choosing the free empires (particularly the black empire, the elite of the elites).

As to which empire to start, you want to choose the ones with the greatest chance of procuring the most glory each turn. This is often the empire with the highest maximum glory harvest, but not always. Often it is better to choose an empire with a lower maximum but in an out of the way location, with little competition.

This works well for most actions, except trade and progress where the more neighbours you have the better. This can be particularly important for those empires that need to trade with other empires before they can build ships or breed horsies.

It is also a good idea to have empires within supporting range of each other. That way one can be liberating territory belonging to a hostile neighbour while the other is producing and then they reverse roles thus not allowing your adversary a moment's rest.

The trick though is to pick empires with mutually exclusive objectives. If all your empires gain glory by being the most advanced or having the most artefacts they will all be stopping each other from harvesting their maximum glory.

These competing priorities make every game different, and advice difficult. Sometimes it is even better to hold off starting a new empire until the smoke clears and its starting area is free (or at least not densely populated).

Once started, empires have a rhythm all their own and you want to tap into that rhythm as soon as possible. The game actually gives you a head start in this direction as your empires are all sequenced as they come into the game.

Thus you should be manoeuvring with one empire while trading with a second, civilising a third and so on. You don't want to be in the position of using your wild card to do the same action in the one turn. Not only does it cost you glory, but it also leaves you in the situation of wanting to do the same action again in the next (e.g. two manoeuvres followed by two productions).

However sometimes you need to do the same action in the one turn, particularly if two of your empires are in a dark age, and in those cases you just have to bite the bullet. Put the actual action (e.g. trade and progress in this case) on the empire you know wants to do that action and the wild card on the other. That way you get the greatest flexibility in what you actually do with that empire.

Of course if your empire is in a dark age, playing the wild card might be the perfect option. Provided you don't convert it into a successful trade and progress, and don't pick the same action as one of your other empires, it will give you the flexibility and won't end up costing you at all.

As to which action to choose for each situation, that is where the game gets very interesting. As mentioned before, every turn is critical. Each action must be chosen to either maximise your glory this turn, minimise the leading players' or, that nirvana of gaming, an action that does both.

Again having empires with differing glory objectives makes such choices easy, choosing production actions for those empires that need to be rich, civilise actions for those that need to have many glittering cities or beautiful artefacts, trade and progress for those needing to be the most advanced and manoeuvre for those needing the most areas.

Of course, this must be tempered by the situation. If your empire is sparsely populated, you might need to do a production. Alternatively, if densely populated, you might need to manoeuvre instead.

When one of your nascent empires is experiencing a difficult birth against powerful opponents, it may well be just the time to try to enlist some as allies against those trying to suppress your rightful days in the sun. The most powerful opponent is going to find it difficult to cope with players on all sides vying for their freedom.

As to hints on the play of actions, most of this is fairly straightforward. When trading you want to pick someone with a lower trade number than you but who is higher on the progress track. These tend to be rare birds and often you must choose between picking someone higher on the track and someone with a lower trade number. Usually you want to choose the latter on the assumption that a more certain 2 progress is better than a dicey 3.

Psychologically, players with a higher trade number expect to win and tend to trade high cards to ensure it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Similarly, people with lower trade numbers expect to lose and play low cards. You can use this psychology to pick an empire with a lower trade number and play low. But don't be predictable. If they know you always play low, they will raise their play accordingly.

Another possibility is to pick the player within range with only 1 or 2 cards. Usually those last cards will be high value but you minimise their flexibility and even if they win the trade, you could end up with a very valuable card.

During civilise actions, you want to build as many cities as possible but cities in the fertile areas are more prone to the jealous eyes of your opponents whereas cities built in the mountains tend to be left alone so again you must balance potential income versus your own security.

When manoeuvring, be careful where you manoeuvre to. Most empires must leave a unit behind in each area they move to. These units are stuck there like flies in flypaper and will not be able to help you when

someone else encroaches on your empire's boundaries. At the very least you want to keep at least one stack of units ready as a contingency for any situation that arises.

During conflict resolution, you have an entirely new set of decisions to make. Should you commit a few or a lot of units each round? Again it depends on the situation. If you can guarantee success or have a tactician, you might want to commit a lot of units. If the conflict is fairly evenly matched it might be best to adopt a wait and see approach and just commit a couple of scouts. What you don't want is for your forces to be disordered while your opponent has a lot of fresh units to commit.

As soon as you are allowed to retreat, you must weigh up the benefits of staying as opposed to the benefits of running, particularly if you have a valuable leader you don't want to lose.

When one of your empires starts garnering fewer than 3 glory per turn you might consider folding it. This might be delayed if it has long term prospects or is helping another of your empires to achieve its glory, but one of the most common mistakes in *7 Ages* is to hang on too long before folding your dud empires.

The game has been designed so that later empires tend to gain more glory than earlier empires. As an example, even if your Shang are achieving everything they set out to achieve they are still only getting 3 glory per turn.

Of course they might be stopping your opponent's empires from achieving their maximum glory and you need to weigh up the down time you will suffer by having to start a new empire (folding and starting a new empire is like taking a pit stop in racing or tacking in yachting), but generally speaking the sooner you dump the duds, the sooner your new improved empire can start earning some serious glory.

When you are trying to bring a leader back to the pack, it is often best to target all their empires rather than just one. If you make one empire unviable quickly, that will just minimise their pit stop to change empires. If you reduce all their empires equally it maximises the cost of them changing horses and might tempt them to hang on with their marginal empires rather than just cutting their losses and starting anew.

Finally, which optional rules you play can dramatically affect the play of the game. The options we play all the time are Technology and Redemption, while the other 5 options we add to taste. Redemption minimises your chances of not having an empire for every age, and technology makes it important which empire takes your destiny actions.

With a game as rich as *7 Ages*, these few hints only scratch the surface of the myriad possibilities available. However they should give you some idea of the scope of decisions and the optimal paths through the dense thicket of history on your way to ultimate triumph.

Good luck and good gaming. Long may your empires reign glorious.

Designer's Notes

By Harry Rowland

Never, at least in my experience, has a game been so easy to design, so hard to develop, yet the changes when finally made, so obvious in hindsight.

When I came home from a game of hockey 7 years ago I didn't have an inkling the game would become my magnum opus and take an aeon to finish. We won 4-1 against ANU (the auld enemy) and we all played well so I was feeling pretty chuffed when I sat down and brushed the broad strokes of *7 Ages* on the back of a credit card form, in under an hour.

I still have that credit card form today and the general outline of the game is clearly visible; multitudinous empires 1 per card, each empire with special abilities, a progress track regulating advancement, a menu of actions rather than a sequence of play and so on.

Well that was then, and the devil, as they say, is in the detail. In this case the detail had some pretty heavy devils to banish and the most critical of these was the down time between turns.

The heart of the game is the menu of actions. You don't follow a sequence of play with your empires, instead you choose one action for each. This deconstruction of the sequence of play provides players with far greater flexibility allowing multiples manoeuvres, productions or civilises as desired. It also makes each turn very quick as you are only doing one action per empire.

However, the game as originally envisaged was player based. You do actions with your 3 empires, then I do my 3, then the next player does their 3 and so on. The problem with this was the perception that everyone else is really slow while you are the only quick player in the game.

Furthermore in a 7 player game you had to wait for 6 other players to have a turn before it was your go again. Thus the game appeared to drag while you waited forever for your turn.

The solution was obvious but took 6 years to discover. Rather than designing a player-based game (you go, I go), geometrically speaking you rotate the game 90 degrees on its axis and make it action-based instead.

So rather than getting 1 turn in 7, we now get 3 actions in 7 meaning we are spending at least half the game doing things (leaving the remaining time for diplomacy, back stabbing, or a cup of tea, as desired). As an added bonus, many of the actions can be done simultaneously. So instead of you doing your builds, then our opponents doing theirs and then me doing mine, all of us having to wait for each other, we can now all do our builds together, speeding up the game by 100 to 200% in the process.

From this, everything else tumbled into place. An action-based system led to the use of action markers. Although not strictly necessary, action markers add an element of advance planning as the actions you choose for your empires might no longer be relevant when they finally attempt to carry them out.

Action markers led to the cadenced progress markers as a new subsystem of trying to outwit your opponents in their attempt to advance, while including each empire's attitude to progress in that chance of advancement.

An action-based system also forced the menu of actions to be sequenced precisely. In a player-based system it doesn't make any difference what action is in what order as you choose whatever you like when it is your go.

Now it is key that the different actions are sequenced so that the effects give a better feel to the game. Thus destiny happens before civilising, allowing you to fill your hand prior to playing your cards but potentially leaving you short handed next turn until the next destiny.

Similarly they both happen after manoeuvre to ensure that the luck of the event cards does not interfere with an empire's ability to expand. Production happens before any of them so that an empire has a chance to recover its strength before the next onslaught of your opponent's manoeuvre and event cards.

Other dramatic changes included the incorporation of the wild card and the movement of harvesting glory out of the main sequence of play.

Initially harvesting glory was one of the 7 actions you could pick. This led to several problems. No one knew when to pick it because no one knew who was ahead at any one time. As it cost an action to play, this added to players' reluctance to choose it.

When it was eventually played, it was only done because one player wanted "to see what happens". What would happen is that that player would be hopelessly beaten by a couple of other players who would then immediately choose it in their turn, and thus one or two players would race ahead before everyone had even had a go.

The worst problem was that since it was hardly ever chosen, the game was directionless. Players would manoeuvre, build cities, adopt religions and governments, entire empires would rise and fall, and yet everyone was still on 0 glory.

The interim solution was that harvesting glory was automatically played after every 3 complete rounds, if not chosen in the meantime, but this was arbitrary, difficult to memorise, and meant it was always happening after the same player's turn.

The change to an action based system allowed us to move harvesting glory out of the menu of actions and make it happen at the end of every turn (after everyone has had a go).

Now there is immediate feedback as to how you are going every turn, and you know from the get go who's in front, why they are in front and how to stop them staying in front.

This provided the focus and sense of immediacy the game desperately needed. Now every action is crucial. Every turn you should be looking at how to maximise your glory that turn and minimise your opponents'. If not this turn, then you should be setting up for the next.

Moving the harvesting glory out of the menu of actions led to a hole in the actions (can't have a game called 7

ages with only 6 actions after all). This was admirably filled with the inclusion of the destiny action.

Initially, destiny was part of the civilise action but you were limited to playing, discarding and picking up a total maximum of only 3 cards. This had the unfortunate side effect of making it difficult to rebuild your hand when it stunk like 3 week old fish, and it might take you several turns to replace your entire hand.

Separating the playing from the discarding and drawing of cards, but allowing an unlimited number of each, makes both actions even more attractive than civilise alone was before. It has the added bonus of speeding up the play (destiny being the quickest action in the game) and allows you to ditch your entire hand in one turn if you want to.

The wild card was the response to another tricky issue, that of the perceived lack of manoeuvre by some players (mostly the historical gamers).

In most games, every unit can move every turn. But in *7 Ages* only 1 empire can move each turn (every one of your empires must take a separate action).

This lack of manoeuvre was noticed early by several gamers but I didn't perceive it as a problem for quite some time. *7 Ages* is a historical game and manoeuvre is just one element of this, and not necessarily as important as civilise or trade and progress to name just two.

However when you get enough feedback from enough players then something has to be done. I thought perhaps a second manoeuvre might be the go, but Greg came up with the (in hindsight) obvious solution, the wild card. Now you can do two of any action you like (including manoeuvre) but at a cost (progress and glory). It also gives you the flexibility to delay picking an action for one of your empires until that action, but again at a cost (progress).

Finally you can play a wild card if you are not sure that you will be able to start an empire or not this turn. If the player going first picks an age you can play an empire in, it becomes a start empire action, if not you play it as a destiny to dump your hand fast to try to find a good starting empire. Thus you don't waste a turn.

However, this added flexibility has led to a curious result. All the players are now happy that they have it, but they hardly ever use it (perhaps as little as a few times a game) due to its cost. The wild card is like a security blanket. We don't need it, just as long as we know it's there.

Other elements of the game were similarly obvious in hindsight. Initially there were separate empire cards, event cards and artefact cards meaning hardly anyone ever had anything useful at any particular point in time. Now each card is 3 in 1 meaning that every card is useful all the time.

Another issue was starting areas. We were all a little hazy about where such august provinces as Alamut, Pallava and Sanga are located, and we typed them in! Short of having a PhD in historical geography, what hope did everyone else have?

We thought of placing a little map on each card, but not only would that have taken forever but the cards are

already pretty chockers and it would not necessarily be clear enough to locate the starting area in any event.

The solution suggested by Ken, was to put letters and numbers on the map and then type in the cross indexed location of each start area on the card. With just two characters (and a couple of brackets) every area can be found in a trice.

Finally, no discussion on the design features of the game would be complete without a few words on the "great (wo)man" versus the "forces of history" argument that has raged unabated for the last few decades.

Like most things it is a bit of each and both sides have a plausible argument. It does seem clear that issues like tolerance, justice and equality are inevitable forces that can be delayed but not stopped. But just as equally, individuals like Genghis Khan, Cleopatra, Alexander, Sun Tzu, Queen Elizabeth, Mohammed, Buddha, Napoleon, Confucious and Jesus amongst many others, have an enduring impact that is still with us today.

To cite just one of these, you can trace Russia's historical fear of invasion, the west's fear of the "asian horde" and much of the entire east/west divide because Genghis woke up one day and decided to ride west rather than east.

So any game purporting to model history needs to take account of both these conflicting points of view. Thus all the major leaders through history have been included for their potentially decisive impact on the world. But at the same time, the artefacts change over time from physical structures (e.g. hanging gardens, great wall, great library etc.) to more abstract ones (e.g. universal suffrage, world war and internet) as the thinking of people themselves evolve.

I have tried to make this game a non-sexist, non-racist treatment of world history (at least insofar as this is possible for an aging Caucasian male living in an, at least in material terms, affluent western society). But no game is value free, and it would be foolish for me to pretend otherwise. I have my own values and my own beliefs and consciously or unconsciously, some of these have no doubt slipped into the game.

However I consider *7 Ages* merely a framework, and you are welcome to change, delete and/or add to the game as you feel fit, to make the game more fun and/or more historically accurate as you like it.

During development, many playtesters came up with a myriad of optional rules, nearly all of which were novel and fun. In the spirit of the game though we have only included seven and leave it to you to decide which others (if any) you would like to see in your next recreation of world history.

Before signing off, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this project. The full list of everyone who can claim stewardship of this design is mentioned in the credits but I would particularly like to thank Greg for all his help on the design and development and his map perspective (a birds-eye view through a fish-eye lens); Mike for his fine short history of everything; Rob, Beth, Viv and Nadina for all the hard slog in finding the graphics for the counters, cards and leaders; Susie and the rest of my long suffering family for

tolerating my foibles; and all the playtesters, particularly the Monday-nighters, for their patience and persistence in working with versions of the game that were only partially complete and full of holes.

Due to their prodigious efforts, *7 Ages* has gone from being OK 7 years ago to being my favourite game today. I hope in playing, you share our enjoyment in *7 Ages*' genesis.

A brief history of everything

By Michael Fisher

In the dim shadows of prehistory ten thousand human generations groped towards a planetary revolution. Wild animals were tamed, tools invented, plants painstakingly gathered and cultivated. After aeons, the farmed produce of a few rich floodplains allowed villages, towns and then cities to flower. Craftsmen, scribes, soldiers and kings burgeoned into existence, riding on the back of a labouring peasant multitude.

<insert image of Sargon>

Priest kings of Sumer irrigated the land, God kings of Egypt called forth vast monuments, the lords of Harap constructed luxurious palace cities. On the fertile river plains of northern China the Yellow Emperor raised the dragon banner for the first time. All around gasped with envy. But amid the leafy gardens and glittering temples, a terrible ambition burned in the breasts of the new kings – to be the only one under the wide blue sky and all the Gods to say, I am the sole and only King of Kings! And so it is written that Sargon, the Great, upstart King of Akkad and Sumer, was the first to thrust his rule beyond his own people and press his boot upon the throats of the foreigners.

Yet even as the sons of kings lay dreaming among sighing palms and graceful women, their soldiers reduced by pleasure and politics, lawless folk of mountain and waste watched bitterly and multiplied. In a pattern many times repeated, should the imperial city lie divided or dissolute, lean and hungry folk would grasp their chance. With fire and ram the great walls would collapse and the tessellated paving of the sacred halls run with blood. So perished Sumer and Akkad, Harap, the monumental Old Kingdom of Egypt.

This wave of newcomers, Indo-Europeans from the north, came by chariot and ship. Their dynasties conquered the old lands and opened trade routes to their cousins in the new. The Mitanni, the Medes, the Hittites, the Minoans, the Greeks plundered the mysteries of writing and forging bright metals. Like great bulls, Egypt and Babylon rose again, tossing off the shackles of the chariot raiders and subjugating their neighbours. The last Mesopotamian empire, the Assyrians, fought back with a cruelty and absolutism that laid their enemies waste, inviting the same terrible humiliations when they too stumbled and fell. In India, Indo-European kingdoms rose on the ashes of the Harappan cities, forging a still vibrant religious culture.

<insert image of Confucious>

In China the western Zhou restored the empire but some centuries later were crushed by western barbarians and forced eastwards, lingering on in the Spring and Autumn period. Lao-Zi and Confucius laid down many of the defining philosophies of Chinese law and culture at this time. A time of warring states and vast armies finally ended with the triumph of the Chin emperor, Shihuangdi, at the end of the third century before Christ. Under the Chin the empire was restored and the Great Wall constructed.

Back at the juncture of the three continents, the old kingdoms of the middle east were finally crushed by Cyrus the Great and his Persian archers. The Persian empire brought long awaited unity and prosperity to the Middle East, Persia and parts of the subcontinent. But even at its zenith, Xerxes failed to conquer the troublesome Greeks to his West. Unvanquished, a Greek subgroup, the Macedonians, produced the nemesis of the Persian Empire. In a startling series of victories Alexander the Great toppled the vast Persian empire, only to perish of fever at the height of his fame. By the third century before Christ a stable constellation of Greek kingdoms ruled the Middle East, even as far as India. Greek architecture and culture permeated the known world.

<insert image of Alexander>

As Alexander's heirs quibbled lazily over world domination, two Graecified nations vied for control of the western margins of the Greek world: Carthage and Rome. The Carthaginians dominated the seas, Rome the land. War fed upon terrible war until finally the Romans as exhorted by their elders, destroyed utterly the empire and city of Carthage. Rome's Senate found itself supreme master of the West, having married the rationalism and science of the Greeks to an efficient state machine. The lavishly equipped Roman legions and their talented engineers proved unstoppable. By the time of Christ, Roman armies had inexorably driven imperial frontiers forward to the Irish Sea, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates and the Sahara. Ominously, only the Germans proved capable of resisting the onslaught.

<insert image of Christ>

In the two centuries after Christ the blessings of the Pax Romana provided unparalleled tranquillity and prosperity. But after the towering philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius a series of weak and pitiful rulers encouraged Rome's German and Parthian enemies to think the unthinkable. In the third century, a massive combined attack by the Germans in Europe and the Parthians in Asia smashed the imperial frontiers and drove deep into the interior. Gothic fleets raided into the Aegean. Queen Zenobia of Palmyra grabbed the east and usurpers squabbled over the ruined provinces.

In the midst of this desperate military emergency the Illyrian generals of the great Danubian armies grasped control of the state, displacing the Latin aristocracy of Rome itself. After bitter warfare the frontiers were restored by the hard fighting Illyrians – but the price of stability under Diocletian's tetrarchy ('rule by four')

was military dictatorship and suffocating taxation and regulation. The spread of servitude was leavened only by the adoption of Christianity under Constantine.

In the east, the Han laid the foundations of modern China, inventing an efficient bureaucracy emulated by its successors. By the third century, the warring Three Kingdoms and competition between Buddhism and Confucianism reinforced the need in the minds of many for one emperor, "like one sun in the sky". The empire was restored in the sixth century under the Sui and Tang emperors. The many warring city states of northern India were united under the Gupta dynasty, a golden age in which Hindu culture and political administration reached new heights.

<insert Mayan temple, the main image on Mayan card (card no. 58), Rob to supply>

At this time too, the classical Mayan civilisation of central America flowered, influenced heavily by the previous Teotihuacan civilisation of the valley of Mexico. Centuries later, the Mayans would fall into a dark age as the Toltec city states capitalised on their decline.

In the west, the Germans had tasted the fruits of Rome and hankered ever for more. After the death of the last strong Illyrian emperor in the west, Valentinian, increasing numbers of Germans and even whole German armies entered Roman service to help defend Rome from the . . . Germans. German cloaks, trousers, jewellery and haircuts became very popular fashions in the Empire and Germans especially liked being given Roman titles, commands, villas, precious artworks and vast tracts of land, which sometimes made it very difficult to tell who exactly was a German and who was a Roman. The Roman machinery of government continued to operate but the last Western emperors deferred to their German overlords. Eventually the German kings decided that there had actually been no Roman empire for some time and it really was time to come clean about the situation.

New peoples sprang into existence as German ruled successor states to the Western Empire – Franks in France, Angles and Saxons in England, Goths in Italy and Spain and Vandals in North Africa. In the north, the Slavic peoples expanded into the lands vacated by the Goths as they moved into the Roman Empire. In the east, the surviving Eastern Roman (or Byzantine) Empire became more Greek than Roman, but not before it had grievously damaged Ostrogothic Italy in an ill-judged reconquista, leaving both countries weak. The timing was poor, for in the East a new Prophet arose to lead the Arabs to glory.

Mohammed's armies burst from Arabia just after the Byzantine empire and the Persian Sassanid empire had exhausted themselves in another gruelling series of wars. A grand Caliphate was established with its capital at Baghdad and a devouring frontier that moved inexorably east and west. Saracen armies took Egypt, leapfrogged along the north African coast and then invaded Spain and the Mediterranean islands. Persia, Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Indus valley fell to Islam. Baghdad became the largest, most beautiful and

wealthiest capital in the world, a centre for progressive scholarship and culture.

Western Europe found itself crushed between mortal enemies and its Latin Christian civilisation close to extinction. All along the Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic coasts, successive waves of heathen Northmen devastated the coastlands and raided far up the rivers, while to the south the Saracens conquered Iberia and established themselves in fortresses along the Gallic and Italian coasts. Urban civilisation almost disappeared. A few hundred terrified peasants tilled fields within Rome's city walls. A few monasteries, often Irish, struggled to preserve the Latin heritage, scattered across a darkening and violent west.

<insert image of Charlemagne>

Slowly, the English, the French and the Germans heaved themselves out of the abyss. Charlemagne was the first for centuries to transcend the miserable raids and massacres of the Dark Age, fashioning a great empire that united Franks, Germans, Spaniards and Italians. He defeated the Northmen and the Muslims even as they thrust at the Gallic heart of Christendom. In Rome, the Pope unexpectedly and thankfully crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor during Mass, an act proclaiming the gift of imperial rule to be a Papal prerogative.

Papal prestige grew further as Charlemagne's successors split his empire into a Frankish kingdom and a Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The spiritual authority of the Roman pontiff was never greater when, in the East, the army of the Byzantine empire was destroyed at Manzikert and the armies of Islam swept a thousand miles to ancient, triple-walled Constantinople itself.

In 1097 Pope Urban II successfully exhorted Christendom to ride to the aid of the Greeks and recover the holy places. A great crusade, the first offensive action by the west for centuries, caught the Muslim east disunited and off guard. Against the odds, and deftly assisted by a suspicious Greek emperor, a motley collection of mainly French and Flemish knights struck through Asia Minor into the Levant, taking Palestine and declaring the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem and the principalities of Antioch and Edessa.

While the new Crusader states clung to a precarious existence on the shores of the Levant, a new economic paradigm bloomed. Suddenly the West's trade routes to the Orient, to Constantinople and Alexandria, and indirectly to distant India and China, were in the hands of the Italian trading fleets. Spices, silks, fine porcelain and treasures poured into Venice, Genoa and Pisa and were sold on to merchants from France, Germany and England. Italian cities, trading companies and banks boomed. Italian interest in the classical heritage held by Greeks and Saracens grew.

New crusading military orders, the Hospitallers, Templars and Teutons also got in on the act, becoming rich and powerful as kings. Many new crusades were announced, often in convenient locations such as Spain, the Baltic or southern France. Westerners grew arrogant and lustful. Their crusaders plundered Christian cities,

even taking mighty Constantinople by deceit. The popes luxuriated in the wealth pouring into Italy. On the streets the barefoot followers of a humble monk, Francis of Assisi, preached poverty, humility and love for all God's creatures.

<insert image of Saladin>

In the middle east, the Muslims worked doggedly to overcome their weaknesses. Slowly their sultans gave way before the best of their number, Saladin. He unified the Arabs of Egypt and Syria and finally made his move against the Kingdom of Jerusalem annihilating the squabbling crusader army at the Horns of Hattin. Islam was back and it was exceedingly angry and determined. Over the next decades and centuries Muslim armies lead by a Turkish military class liquidated the crusader remnants and renewed the assault into Asia Minor. More and more Turks joined them from their homeland in Central Asia. Almost destroyed by the treacherous Fourth Crusade, the remnant Byzantines could offer little resistance and Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the thousand year old Theodosian walls breached by massed Turkish artillery. A new Islamic superpower took shape on the Aegean.

In India, Muslim armies pressed further onto the subcontinent, Islamic egalitarianism appealing to many lower caste Hindus, establishing the Delhi sultanates. Further to the east, the Sung emperors presided over remarkable prosperity in China as new strains of rice fed a booming population and printing presses churned out books. From this time Chinese society remained stable and prosperous until the twentieth century, although a political cataclysm occurred in the thirteenth century when Ghengis Khan's Mongols took over the country. The Mongols also established the Moghul empire in northern India, which competed with the Chola and Vijayanagar empires of the south.

<insert image of Cheng Ho>

As the maritime trade route to the eastern Mediterranean and beyond was closed off, Portugese mariners began to pick their way around the African coast, seeking another way to the fabled orient and its spices, silks and porcelains. At this time too, the Ming Chinese under admiral Cheng Ho sailed a fleet of huge ships around the Indian ocean, and maybe the Atlantic and Pacific oceans too, collecting tribute and curiosities for the recently built Forbidden City. In the Americas the Aztec and Inca civilisations flowered, rapidly expanding to encompass large areas of central and south America.

<insert image of Renaissance artefact>

In Spain, the capture of Arab Toledo by the Christian King Alfonso VI in 1085 had unearthed enormous libraries of ancient knowledge lost to the west since the fall of Rome. In the following centuries, this classical heritage permeated Italy and beyond. Art, architecture, science and literature departed from the Gothic forms that had encased them for centuries and breathed new life into the ruins that graced Europe's hillsides. This classicist rebirth was called the Renaissance. Ancient ideas of a world globe, based on the thinking of Aristotle, Eratosthenes and Strabo, were used by

Christopher Columbus to convince Spain's Queen Isabel that the wealth of India and China could be found by sailing not around Africa, but to the west. The energy of the recently victorious Spanish reconquista could be channelled overseas. In 1492 with a Spanish commission Columbus sailed on a journey to discover new worlds.

<insert image of Columbus>

Beyond the western ocean the Spanish found tropical islands, thought to be the outlying archipelagos of China, and sugar and slaves. They built forts and harbours and farms and pressed on, spreading across the islands and onto the American mainland. Tiny Spanish forces with iron armour and horses and guns easily penetrated the vast Aztec and Inca empires, whose obsidian blades and cotton armour were useless against the invaders. Clean, meticulously planned cities larger than those in Europe were destroyed by conquest and disease. The stone of Aztec pyramids and Inca cities were reworked into baroque cathedrals and star forts. Gold, silver and precious gems in vast quantities were carted off from Veracruz and Panama in the creaking holds of Spanish galleons.

Pirate ships and privateers from other western countries slipped onto the Spanish Main, greedy and eager to find secret Caribbean ports from which to harass and plunder the great treasure fleets of Spain. The revenues of the Americas poured into the echoing vaults of Charles V of Habsburg, Emperor and King, heir to Castile and Aragon, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and by papal fiat, the western hemisphere. A river of sparkling bullion financed naval campaigns and crusades against the Turks, who now threatened Germany and Italy, and wars against the French, who feared encirclement and annihilation and took every opportunity to assist the Emperor's enemies.

<insert image of Luther>

As Pope and Emperor bickered over the exact architecture of their imminent universal rule, northern Europe produced a monk who went further than St Francis: Martin Luther was profoundly disillusioned by the hedonism and rapaciousness of absentee aristocratic abbots and bishops while the faithful were crushed by tithes for a vast cathedral in Rome. Luther's message of Biblical authority and freedom from Roman and monastic levies struck a chord with princes and laymen across northern Europe. For some decades Catholic and Protestant debated whether the church was indeed irrevocably split until in the second half of the sixteenth century northern Europe went its own way for good. Southern Europe stayed with Rome while France was plunged into civil strife.

<insert image of Elizabeth>

Superpower monarchs Phillip I and II of Spain and their Habsburg cousins of Austria pursued with renewed vigour their predecessors' vision of Catholic and Habsburg supremacy in Europe, salvation of heathen souls in the New World and triumph over the Turks in the East, all funded by gold and silver from abroad. But even as the feared tercios trod the Spanish Road and the doomed Armada was launched against Elizabeth's England, as the Duke of Parma rescued

Paris and Rouen from Henry of Navarre, as Don John of Austria led galleys by the thousand against the Turk, as the Counterreformation orders of Jesuits, Capuchins and Ursulines wrestled with the Lutherans and Calvinists, the fundamentals of Spanish ascendancy were eaten out by endless warfare, inflation and depopulation at home.

A century after Luther, the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs, provoked in 1618 by the defenestration of their chaps in Prague, finally became entangled with the Protestant champions of northern Europe in a vast sectarian showdown over the fate of Germany and Christendom. The Thirty Years War, driven by absolutist religious convictions and characterised by utmost barbarity on both sides devastated Germany and Bohemia, killing one third of the population and impoverishing the survivors, leaving whole provinces depopulated and desolate. Plague, famine, war and death commanded nations. Both sides threw away victory for greed. Generations after cast down their eyes at the merest reference to the Thirty Years War.

The treaty of Westphalia ended the conflict and mandated the establishment – by exhausted men who had seen the most terrible things imaginable – of a farsighted system of international relations and national sovereignty that persists even to the present day. After Westphalia, the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was, according to the wags, neither holy, nor roman, nor an empire. Every German prince was confirmed as a sovereign able to determine the religion of his subjects. The emperor was merely first among equals.

The Spanish Habsburgs were demoralised and their treasure exhausted. The Austrian Habsburgs saw the need to look beyond Germany for their power base. In the decades after the Thirty Years War Austria made steady gains against the Turks in Hungary and the Balkans.

Overseas, British and French colonies in the Americas took root. The highly profitable Portugese trading empire developing in Africa, India and South East Asia began to be challenged by Dutch and English sailors creeping along the hitherto secret sea routes. A period of relative peace and aversion to war saw prosperity spread to more Europeans than ever before. Military conflict became somewhat ritualised as pundits propounded theories of limited war between small professional armies. Science and political philosophy flourished. Royal government became more centralised and powerful as the influence of the feudal aristocracy waned and the bureaucracy and merchant classes grew.

In England, the harbingers of a new age sounded when parliament led by Oliver Cromwell overthrew and killed a king, Charles I. Reluctant to install another king the victor was unable to translate this opportunity into a new form of parliamentary government. The troubles in England encouraged many Puritans and others to immigrate to north America in the hope of a new way of life, untroubled by sectarian persecution and civil strife. Back home, the Lord Protector's absolutist pretensions, sour Puritanism and taste for ermine convinced the majority that monarchy was

inevitable and natural. After Cromwell's death, Charles II returned triumphantly from France on a political platform offering feasting, drinking, beauty spots, gluttony, actresses, dancing, bad make up, beer tankards, rowdy singing, snuff stained shirtfronts, theatre, silly wigs, cleavage and general bawdiness all round (oh, and constitutional monarchy), a basis for guaranteed popularity that has, sadly, eluded every other politician in history.

In the early 1700s the War of the Spanish Succession and the Great Northern War shook out the cast destined to dominate the world stage for the next two hundred years. In the north, Sweden and Poland were eclipsed by Russia. Spain, wracked by civil war and a shadow of its former self, slipped from Habsburg control to the Bourbons of France. The Austrian Habsburgs consolidated their grip upon Belgium, northern Italy and Hungary. Overseas the British for the first time achieved complete naval dominance at sea, the key naval base of Gibraltar and colonial pre-eminence in north America and India. This power dispensation was confirmed in various wars over the following century. The exception was Prussia which rose to great power status after Frederick the Great seized the wealthy province of Silesia from Austrian empress Maria Theresa.

<insert the Taj Mahal, the main image of Mughal Card (card no. 48) Rob to supply>

In India two great powers laid claim to one great land. The Mughals had a long and glorious history that was reaching its twilight. They could have crushed the newer Maratha empire but for the great Persian leader Nadir Shah who in 1739 sacked Delhi, the Mughal capital. This emboldened the Marathas to attempt the control of all India. This contest was not only for the land and its bounty, but for the very souls of the people themselves, as the Hindu Marathas gradually came to dominate the Islamic Mughals.

However, by this time the technological and industrial advantage of Europe indisputably exceeded all possible rivals. Even as late as the previous century, the Japanese would easily have trounced any European army in numbers, discipline and technology. But by the eighteenth century the Japanese shogunate had turned away from the outside world and outlawed gunpowder weapons. Conversely, in western Europe technological, economic and social reform became the driving engine of society initiating the persistent struggle between progressive and conservative, left and right. The growing acceptance of rationalist social and scientific progress was called the Enlightenment. By the end of the century, steamships, railways and powered factory machinery were in existence. As European feudalism and serfdom declined, new populations of urban bourgeoisie and industrial workers came into existence.

Political developments placed European monarchical ideals on the defensive. British north American colonies rebelled when London required them to contribute to the costs of their own defence. The rebels, inspired by liberal ideals of democracy and popular sovereignty, established a representative federal

republic, the United States of America. Royal French forces assisted the Americans to victory and returned afterwards to Europe conveying these new ideas. In England the loss of the American colonies completely discredited the king and the royalist ministry that had prosecuted the war, resulting in the permanent retreat of the monarch from parliamentary and executive politics.

<insert image of Marianne, main image on Free State card (card no. 99) Rob to supply>

In France the spread of liberalism combined with famine and financial crisis to trigger a popular revolution in 1789 culminating in the trial and execution of Louis XVI in 1792. A radical Committee for Public Safety initiated a Terror in which the more egregious sort of aristocrat was hunted down and killed. The Terror terrified aristocratic Europe and led the monarchies to declare war on France and revolution. To survive, the revolutionary authorities invoked principles of total warfare dormant since the Thirty Years War and called all able bodied men to arms. Large armies, promotion on merit and continual warfare against Austria, Prussia and Britain honed a talented new revolutionary officer class.

<insert image of Napoleon>

The most talented of all, Napoleon Bonaparte, defeated the British, Egyptians and Austrians and took over the government. He defeated the Austrians again. He launched a program of liberal economic and legal reform, crowned himself emperor of the French in 1804 and defeated the Austrians and Russians and then the Prussians and Russians. He reorganised Germany and Poland and invaded Spain, but had to return to central Europe to defeat the Austrians. The British were blockading his ports, so he organised a counter-blockade. The Russians didn't like this so he invaded them but was defeated with great loss of life. He was defeated by the Austrians, Prussians, Russians, British, Swedes, Spanish and Portuguese in Germany, Spain and France. He was exiled to Elba but escaped and chased poor Louis XVIII out of Paris but was defeated by the British and Prussians at Waterloo. The Austrians and Russians also wanted to defeat him again but never got the chance. This time he was sent to the far wastes of the south Atlantic and most likely poisoned. Meanwhile, Louis XVIII scuttled back into the Louvre.

By the end of the Napoleonic wars Britain was the dominant power in the world in wealth, technology, trade and warships. India was now the jewel in the British crown and new colonies in New Zealand and Australia replaced the lost American ones. Tsarist Russia expanded to the east, becoming the largest power on the Eurasian landmass. Railways snaked across continents and steamships chugged across oceans. The United States expanded rapidly across north America, well supplied with British capital. In Europe liberal nationalist causes attracted great support in Germany and Italy. These fragmented nations felt left behind in the dash for national glory. But liberal revolutions in 1848 were brutally suppressed, leaving nationalist leadership in the hands of conservative establishments. A series of nineteenth century wars against Austria by France, Prussia, and Piedmont saw

Italy and Germany proclaimed as monarchical national states. Imperial Germany rapidly industrialised and colonised the few remaining unclaimed parts of Africa and the Pacific. Japan re-entered the global arena, also rapidly industrialising.

<insert image of Industrial Revolution artefact>

Industrialisation involved serious social dislocation especially in Europe. Harsh conditions of industrial employment bred a growing body of critical theory and associated revolutionary movements. Karl Marx argued for the overthrow of the aristocratic and capitalist classes and communal ownership of resources by the proletariat. Recognising a threat, most countries conceded liberal and social reforms that eased the worst aspects of industrial exploitation and gave political rights to the middle and lower classes. In the United States, northern agitation against the southern practice of slavery led to secession by the southern states and civil war. The industrialised north defeated the agricultural south.

By the twentieth century, more people lived better lives than ever before. Populations boomed as better healthcare and cleaner living conditions extended lifespans. Revolutionary new machines like aeroplanes and dirigibles and motorcars appeared, although only dukes and millionaires could afford them. Old monarchies and wealthy aristocrats still dominated politics. But the stability and sophistication of imperial Europe was a fragile illusion.

In 1914 the murder of the Habsburg heir led to an Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on Serbia. Alliance commitments were triggered and mobilisation procedures delivered millions of young men to the main fronts within weeks. The German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires engaged the British, French and Russian empires along hundreds of miles of front. Defensive technology – machine guns and entrenchments – rendered offence hazardous in the extreme. Massive indirect artillery bombardments sought to overcome defenders with limited effectiveness. Casualties were horrendous.

British blockade of enemy ports provoked the Germans into declaring unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic, leading to the United States joining the allies. Starvation spread on the continent. London was bombed by German dirigibles. Tsarist Russia, unable to sustain the military-industrial contest, shuddered slowly into starvation, defeat, revolution and civil war. The Tsar and his family were caught and shot by hardline marxist revolutionaries. Even with all the troops released from the east, Germany and Austria-Hungary were unable to prevail on the western front and similarly succumbed to starvation, defeat and revolution. The allies gained a bitter, pyrrhic victory.

<insert image of Socialism artefact>

A shell shocked world entered the twenties. The emperors had passed and the world had changed. The United States, Britain and France became pacifist and inward looking. The treaty of Versailles humiliated an already aggrieved Germany. Italy and Japan were disappointed and angry with their spoils. Marxist-Leninists won the Russian civil war and declared the

Soviet Union, an experiment in proletarian dictatorship. In central Europe and the Balkans a rash of vulnerable small states replaced Austria-Hungary. Colonised populations understood that Europe had been diminished. A half-hearted attempt at an international peacekeeper, the League of Nations, proved useless.

After a period of post-war economic growth, world markets, trade and production crashed in 1929. Millions were impoverished. Capitalism and democracy appeared to have failed. Communists and fascists argued that they would do better. Fascist or authoritarian dictatorships took power in many countries including Italy and Spain. The Soviet Union supported revolutionary communist cells across Europe.

In Germany, rightwing Nazis and Soviet backed communists co-operated to destabilise a demoralised Weimar republic. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler outplayed his democratic and communist enemies and gained power legally. He incarcerated his political enemies and won popularity with cunning economic and foreign policies. He used the Versailles principle of self determination to embarrass and bluff the democracies into permitting the Germans of the Rhineland, Austria and the Czech Sudetenland to join his Reich. After he occupied Prague, Britain and France drew the line. With Soviet dictator Stalin's assistance, Hitler attacked Poland in September 1939 and Europe was again plunged into war.

<insert image of World War artefact>

Hitler unleashed a revolutionary *Blitzkrieg* strategy of mechanised warfare to conquer Poland. In 1940 he defeated Denmark and occupied Norway under the nose of the British navy, then overran Dutch, Belgian, British and French forces to occupy the low countries and France. The Italians invaded Egypt but were defeated by British Commonwealth forces. The Royal Air Force defeated the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. Hitler sent German troops to Africa and ordered unrestricted submarine warfare against Britain to cut its food supply.

In 1941 Hitler occupied Yugoslavia and Greece and invaded the Soviet Union. German forces took most of western Russia but failed to take the key cities of Moscow and Leningrad. The Japanese, already at war with China, attacked the United States, Britain and the Netherlands. Hitler declared war on the United States too. The Japanese sank the US Pacific fleet in Hawaii and in 1942 occupied the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya, Burma, northern New Guinea and south Pacific islands. The main Japanese aircraft carrier fleets were decisively beaten at Midway by the United States Navy. Japanese invasions were turned back in the Solomons and New Guinea.

In Europe Hitler failed to take Stalingrad and the Caucasus oilfields, taking heavy losses. Allied bombing of Germany increased. The Nazis decided to kill all Jews - who they regarded as racial enemies - in their occupied territories using large scale industrial methods, an unprecedented crime.

In 1943 United States forces invaded Morocco and Tunisia, and with British coming from Libya defeated

the Germans and Italians in Africa. The Allies occupied Sicily and invaded Italy. Soviet forces defeated the Germans in central Russia. Allied bombing of Germany increased. United States, Canadian and British forces won the battle of the Atlantic, inflicting heavy losses on the German submarine fleet. Japan lost central and south Pacific islands and New Guinea to United States and Australian forces. The United States began large scale bombing of Japanese cities.

By the end of 1944 a series of Soviet offensives brought the eastern front onto German soil. The Western Allies invaded and occupied France, bringing the western front onto German soil. The Italian fascist government collapsed, and the Germans were driven back to the Apennines. Massive Allied bombing raids destroyed German cities one by one. Fanatical Japanese resistance failed to stop United States forces recapturing the Pacific islands and the Philippines. Massive United States bombing raids destroyed Japanese cities one by one.

1945 saw the end of the fascist powers. The final offensive into Germany by the Allies led to the collapse of the German armed forces. Former Italian dictator Mussolini was hanged caught fleeing Italy towards Germany. A final assault into Berlin by the Soviets triggered the suicide of Adolf Hitler. In the Pacific the Soviets declared war on Japan, and blitzed through Manchuria towards Korea. Two days later, the United States dropped the newly developed nuclear bomb on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. These blows - along with an agreement to spare the Japanese emperor from any war crime trial - led to the surrender of the Japanese emperor and his armed forces soon after. War crimes trials brought selected losers to book for selected aggression, and the attempted extermination of the Jews, and in so doing established the possibility that there may be something called international law.

<insert image of United Nations>

For a brief period of optimism it appeared that the wartime United Nations alliance would guarantee world peace and that United States Marshall Plan subsidies would rebuild the world. The United States was by far the largest and most profitable economy in the world in 1945. Economies boomed to meet the enormous demand of reconstruction.

But in the late stages of the war Stalin's Soviet Union occupied eastern Europe either directly or by puppet proxies to ensure no European power could invade the Motherland ever again. Hostility between East and West grew into a Cold War with an Iron Curtain. Both sides pursued confrontation in Berlin, North Korea and Palestine, nearly leading to a third world war in the late forties and early fifties. As part of the struggle, both sides started funding revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements around the world, a move that would haunt them later.

The Chinese civil war, temporarily halted by World War II, re-ignited after Japan's defeat. Chinese communists won an overwhelming victory and drove their nationalist enemies to Taiwan. The Soviet Union and China rushed to develop nuclear weapons and

intercontinental ballistic rockets, the nuclear delivery system of choice.

Many Jewish refugees and survivors from Europe joined their compatriots in Palestine, where after a gap of almost 2000 years they re-declared the state of Israel in 1948. Conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, and more broadly, between Jews and Arabs, became a feature of international politics.

The United States erected a series of regional alliances in Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia to contain communism. It vigorously pursued improved nuclear armaments in line with a policy of deterrence labelled 'MAD' or mutually assured destruction. European imperial powers began decolonising under a UN sponsored process, a voluntary retreat from empire unprecedented in history resulting in numerous new and vulnerable nation states coming into existence across Africa and Asia over succeeding decades. Brush wars broke out in these newly decolonised countries as communist supported insurgents battled western supported governments and vice versa. When communist North Korea invaded capitalist South Korea in the fifties, both the United States and China intervened for a net draw.

To avoid the terrible wars of the past, non-communist Europe began an experiment in supranational economic and political integration called variously the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Community and later the European Union. Dark clouds of atomic war again threatened in 1962, only clearing when the Soviet Union withdrew its nuclear missiles from communist Cuba and the US withdrew theirs from non-communist Turkey. This lethal game of nuclear chicken soon became irrelevant when both sides deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles that could reach each other's shores from their own homelands.

In 1965 the United States, mistaking a national war of liberation for a Cold War proxy, entered a long running war in South Vietnam to protect a pro-western dictatorship from communist insurgents, led by popular North Vietnamese nationalist Ho Chi Minh. The war escalated sharply with great loss of life and materiel for both sides until the United States withdrew in 1972. The communists took Saigon and established a single Vietnamese state in 1975. In a hint of the future, a pro-United States government was overthrown by a radical Islamic revolution in Iran in the late seventies. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to install a communist government but the war became a bleeding wound as the United States supported the Afghani resistance.

But the Soviet Union was on its last legs. Despite the success of the command economy in the thirties and forties when it prevailed over the German military-industrial complex, by the eighties the weight of its internal contradictions and inefficiencies meant it could no longer meet the needs of its people. Conversely capitalism, despite ingrained inequity with occasional shocks and instability, proved the more reliable economic engine. Communist China, sniffing the wind, had already started moving towards a more market based economy.

But it was too late for the Soviet bloc. When the first ever Soviet liberaliser, Gorbachev, became leader his reforms merely hastened the end. His removal of support for the eastern European satellite states led to anti-communist revolutions across the former Soviet bloc and the collapse of successive communist governments. Too much for some ageing Stalinists, a coup against Gorbachev in 1991 led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and its replacement by a bevy of independent post-communist states, including Russia.

<insert image of Jihad artefact>

Many argued culture and religion would assert themselves as the dominant fault line after the collapse of the communist-capitalist confrontation. Their views were vindicated when in 2002, three hijacked airliners full of people slammed into the two World Trade towers in New York, the Pentagon and, although heading for the White House, a field in Pennsylvania. A worldwide organisation of Islamic terrorists had declared war on the infidels, provoked in part by the never ending Palestinian crisis. The United States invaded and conquered Islamicist Afghanistan and secular Baathist Iraq in response, installing governments more amenable to the American worldview. Even so, at the time of writing the war of Terror persists.

Postscript by *Harry Rowland*

Which brings us to today. The world has seen many changes over time with a wave-like history of triumph and tragedy. Bounty has been defeated by famine and famine by bounty. Great philosophies and theorems have been propounded, discussed, lost and found again. Science and religion have brought great gains and comfort. They have also wreaked indescribable suffering and terror.

A few things however have been more or less constant over time, the use of our natural resources at an ever increasing rate, the side effects of this use and the ever greater destructive capability of our favourite weapons of choice.

<insert image of Einstein>

For all humans' enormous advancement and achievement over these last 6000 years, the challenges of today in many ways dwarf those of the past. In 1945, after hearing of the atom bomb being dropped, Albert Einstein, the world's greatest living physicist said "it is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man". While aiming for the stars and befouling our environment we are yet to see whether Einstein's skepticism is misplaced, or not.

<Insert main image of Zimbabwean card (card no. 42), Rob to supply>

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Website (www.a-d-g.com.au): Ace-Hosting, Canberra

Paper Soldiers

a father's poem to his son



Aggression finds its own release
and hands set them up in martial ranks
angry murmuring lines of blood crazed cardboard men
Earlier all lying together
in a box of peace and unity.

Now bravely staring down the onslaught
(a marble tossed carelessly into their midst)
To yield turn or run is not in them
stand and fall and die
like their human counterparts.

Made by man, in man's resemblance
Vain glorious foolish soldiers
Beguiled by lies
"To die for King and Country is a hero's death"
Crapspouters spurred by greed and power love.

Will he understand the awful waste
the stupid devastation
People neighbours friends lovers me
men idly killed by a marble
lying & mouldering silently on the carpet
or will he feel immortal like his soldiers
But he can gently pile them all together
in the box of peace and unity
Resurrection happens daily.

- Dr. Peter Rowland, 1967

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