

LEO COLOVINI

# ALEXANDROS

WHO CAN CONQUER THE RICHEST PROVINCES?

for 2-4 players aged 12 and up

## Overview

Alexander moves with army his back and forth across the Persian Empire, conquering the land as he passes. To bring peace to these newly conquered lands and to reward his generals, he gives them control of the new lands. The generals establish administration over the lands and levy taxes on the people living there.

Naturally, each general tries to acquire the most productive lands for himself. With more productive lands, the general can levy higher taxes, show his worth to Alexander, and win the game!

## Contents

1 Alexander figure



16 guard figures, the troops of Alexander's army, in 4 different colors



4 scoring discs in the 4 player colors



1 game board, separated in triangular spaces, most in open (light brown) with no symbols, the rest in 5 different colors with 5 different symbols.

55 cards, 11 each with the 5 symbols and colors used on the board: temple - administration, amphora - nourishment, horse - transport, lyre - culture, soldier - security



65 black boundary walls and 10 red boundary walls



Card supply and discard stack



2 face-up cards

Scoring track

## Preparation

Each player chooses a color and takes the 4 guards and scoring disc in that color. Each places his scoring disc at the beginning of the scoring track.

Place the Alexander figure on the starting space in the upper left of the board.

Separate the black and red boundary walls and place them next to the board.

Shuffle the cards and deal one face down to each player. Place two cards face-up next to the bottom of the board. Place the remaining cards face down next to the board as a card supply.

The players choose a starting player using any method they prefer.

# Playing the game

The players take turns in clockwise order, starting with the starting player. On his turn, a player must first move Alexander and then takes 2 further actions.

The move of Alexander is the basis for a player's success or failure in this game. Thus, it is critical that the players understand fully all the possibilities of Alexander's move.

## 1. Moving Alexander

On a player's turn, he first chooses 1 of the 2 face-up cards (which could be identical) and moves Alexander to the closest empty triangular space with a symbol matching that of the card chosen. This means:

- **closest:** the shortest distance between the point of the triangle where Alexander now stands to the closest point of the triangular space where Alexander could be moved.

- **empty:** empty: a space is empty when it has no boundary walls on any of its sides, no guard standing in it, nor Alexander standing on one of its points. A point of an empty space can be touching a boundary wall.

When moving Alexander, a player tries to reach different goals considering the situation at that very moment; many times he simply moves Alexander in the direction he prefers, but sometimes he encloses a productive province that he can occupy (now or later) or he reduces the size of an opponent's province.

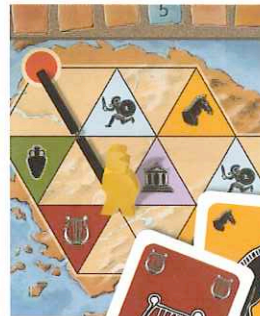
**Figure 1:** Alexander stands on the starting space and the 2 face-up cards show a horse and a lyre. Thus, the player can move Alexander to the closest empty space showing a lyre or a horse. The red-bordered spaces are the 2 spaces where the player may move Alexander, depending on which card he chooses. The player may not (if the player chose the horse card) move Alexander to the lower right horse space as it is further (3 triangle sides vs. 2 triangle sides) from Alexander's current position.



If there are several empty spaces showing the symbol matching that of the card chosen that are the same distance from Alexander, the player may choose which among them to move

Alexander to. Then the player moves Alexander to any one of the three points of the triangular space he chose. The player need not choose a point closest to Alexander, but may choose any of the three points of the chosen triangle.

Next, the player places black boundary walls on the triangle sides between Alexander's previous position and his new position. The shortest path must be followed. If there are several shortest paths, the player may choose freely among them.



**Figure 2:** the player chose the lyre card, added it to his hand, and drew another card to replace it. Then, he must move Alexander to any point of the empty lyre space shown. Let's say he chooses the eastern-most point in that space; next he places 2 boundary walls between Alexander's previous position and his new one: it's the only way to do that, because any other path would require 3 steps instead of 2.

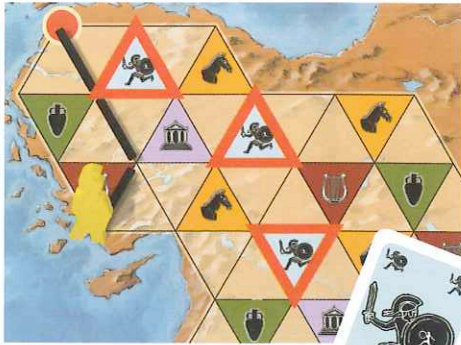


**Figure 3:** the situation is the same as in the previous example, but the player moves Alexander to the southern-most point in that space. Next, he places 3 black boundary walls between Alexander's previous position and his new one. Note, that in this case a small province has been

formed with 4 spaces, 2 with and 2 without symbols. This is not the only shortest way to make the connection. It is also possible, for example, to follow the coastline.



Provided the shortest path rule is respected, a player may choose any kind of path, even a path along the coast (or the edge of the playing area where there is no coast) or a path that already includes boundary walls. If he does, he places boundary walls also along the edges, but he does not place a second boundary wall in a space where one already exists.



**Figure 4:** The player takes the soldier card. He can choose between 9 different points because there are three soldier spaces at the same distance away: that is two edges to the nearest points.

He decides to move to the point indicated as shown in **figure 5**. He now has 3 different ways to place the boundary walls; he decides, as shown in

the figure, to cut the biggest possible province. The alternative paths are shown with the dotted lines. Note that both paths would have passed over a previous placed boundary wall. In this case only the remaining two boundary walls would have been placed.



Players may place boundary walls that cross each other and also inside closed provinces. As you will see, that's a very important point, because you may decide to divide an opponent's province.

The **figure 6** shows another possible movement. Here, the player has decided to go to another of the 9 possible points (fig.4). In this particular case, the player simply moves Alexander following the existing path and, therefore without placing new boundary walls. The dotted line shows the only other alternative path (as you can see, it runs inside the closed province).



Players only place black boundary walls during normal turns. The red boundary walls are used for Alexander's last move in the game (see game end below).

### Alexander's special move

It can happen that neither face-up card offers a symbol that will give the player a good Alexander move or that the moves offered gives the player's opponents better opportunities than they give the player. It can often happen that the player sees a good Alexander move, but the required symbol is not on one of the face-up cards. In such a case, the player may play a card from his hand and move Alexander to the next empty space showing that symbol. By doing this, the player loses 2 cards: the one he plays and the one face-up card he does not take. Due to this cost, a player cannot afford to do this often.

## 2. Further actions

After moving Alexander, a player may take 2 further actions in any combination or order. These can be any 2 of the following 4 actions. Also, a player may choose to do the same action twice, except for levy taxes, which a player may only do once in a turn.

- take a card
- occupy an empty province or take over an opponent's province
- levy taxes
- take back a guard

### - Take a card

This is the simplest and most common action. The player takes the top-most card from the card supply or one of the two face-up cards. He adds it to his hand, which he keeps secret from the other players. If the player chooses to take a card as his first action and wants to take another card as his second action, he may only choose between the card supply and the remaining face-up card(s). He does not draw a second face-up card to replace one he took until the end of his turn. Then he replaces any face-up cards he took. When the card supply is exhausted, shuffle the discard stack and place it face down as the new card supply.

### - Occupy province

A province is a connected group of triangular spaces (with or without symbols) that are enclosed by boundary walls and the coast (or the

edge of the playing area where there is no coast). Provinces may be of any size, large or small. A newly created province need not be immediately (or ever) occupied and could be later occupied by any player during his own turn.

A province should have (but need not) at least one symbol space. Otherwise, it is worthless, as it cannot be occupied. It is possible to create a province that is just a single symbol space. For such a province, the tax levy will be zero and it is unlikely that such a province will be useful.

**Profit:** the **value** of a province is determined by the number of open (non-symbol) spaces in the province. Each is worth 1 point when levying taxes. A large province is, naturally, worth more, but is also harder to occupy because more symbol it has more cards and pieces are necessary.

When a player moves Alexander, he should do so to try to create provinces with high open to symbol space ratios, so he can then occupy them. The more open spaces, the more valuable a province is and the fewer symbol spaces, the less it costs to occupy. Of course, more valuable provinces will be ripe for takeovers from avaricious opponents.

### Occupy an empty province:

The players try to occupy provinces so they can use them to levy taxes and earn the points needed to win the game.

To occupy an unoccupied province (one not occupied by any player), a player must place at least one of his guards on any one of the symbol spaces in the province. For each other symbol space in the province, the player must pay (place face-up on the discard stack) a card from his hand matching the symbol on the space.

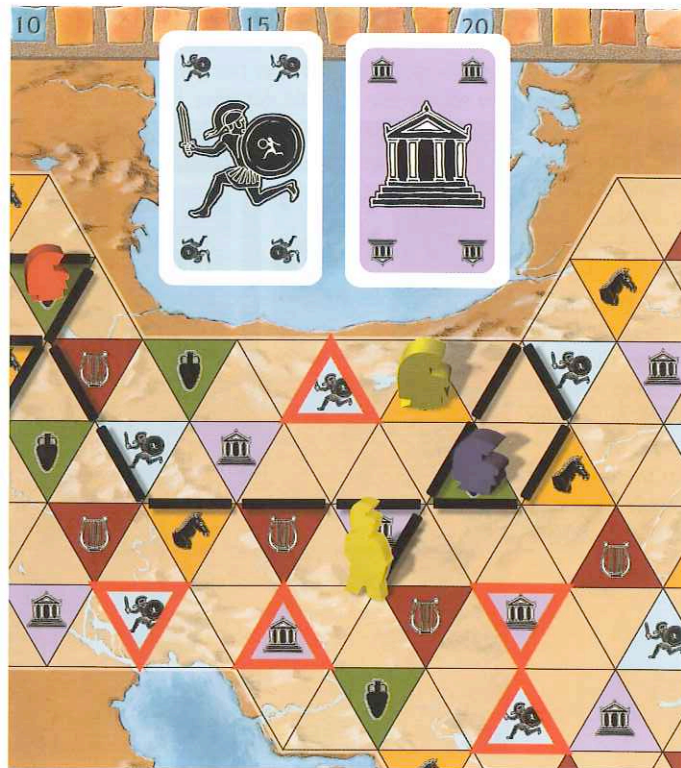
If a player does not have the cards required to occupy a province (or does not want to use the cards he has), he may use additional guards in place of the missing cards. In fact, he may use as many of his guards as he wants (and has left) to occupy a province. He places each guard on a symbol space in the province and then pays cards (as above) for any remaining symbol spaces (if any) in the province. Such a move should be reserved for special cases, as when a player has a chance to occupy a very valuable province, but is missing a required card. Without guards, a player will be unable to occupy further provinces. Also, a player cannot levy taxes or score points for a province with more than one guard.



**Figure 7:** red occupies a large province with 6 symbol spaces and 10 open spaces by placing two guards in the province (on a temple space and a horse space) and playing 4 cards matching the other symbol spaces in the province: amphora, lyre, temple, and soldier. If he had a horse card or another temple card, he could have used one of these cards instead of the extra guard.

A province may be divided when moving Alexander.

*In figure 8, yellow has just conquered a huge province, worth 11 points, hoping to keep it until next turn when he plans to levy taxes, but the other players may try to divide this province by moving Alexander inside it. For example, on red's turn, the player may decide to move Alexander toward one of the 5 red-bordered spaces in figure 10 (that means 14 different points).*

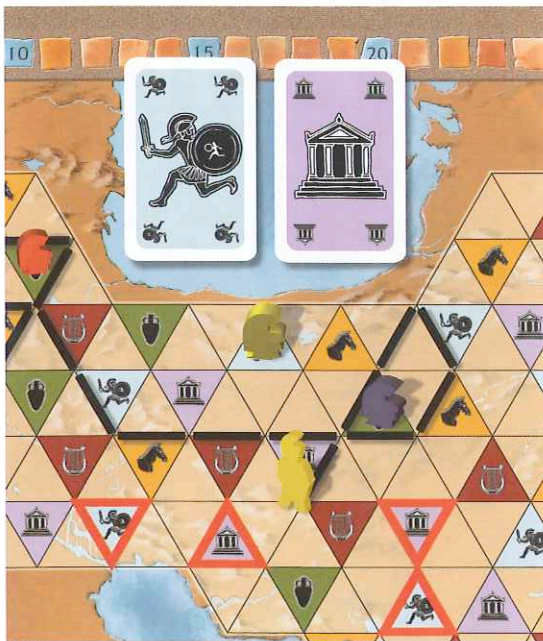




He decides to annoy yellow and moves to the soldier in the north, on the most northern point (figure 9).

In this way, the large yellow province is divided into 2 smaller provinces: the eastern one is still dominated by yellow, but it's only worth 3 points, and the other is free (the player may conquer it in the further actions of his turn).

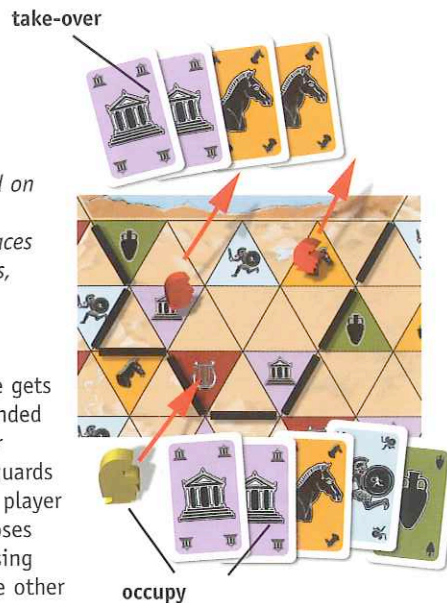
Considering one of the face-up cards shows a soldier, yellow could put his guard over the soldier space instead over the horse (figure 10). In this case, in fact, the soldier space would not have been free and Alexander could not have been moved inside the province. Red could have only divided the province with the Alexander special move: that is, playing a horse card, but in this case, the effect of the division would be much less damaging.



## Take over an occupied province:

When a player takes over an occupied province, he not only increases his points, but reduces those of an opponent. Thus, it is more difficult to take over a province than to simply occupy an unoccupied one. To take over a province a player must first remove all guards in the occupied province. He does this by playing 2 cards to remove each guard. Both cards must match the symbol of the space where the guard stands. After the player removes all the guards in the province (returning them to his opponent), he then plays his own guard(s) and cards as described above for occupying an empty province. Both the removing of guards and the occupying of the now-unoccupied province must be done in the same turn. Otherwise, the player may not take over an occupied province. **This counts as one action.**

**Figure 11:** yellow takes-over this province from red. He plays 2 temple cards and 2 horse cards to remove the 2 red guards in the province. Then, he places 1 yellow guard on a lyre space and plays cards matching the other symbol spaces in the province: 2 temple cards, horse card, soldier card, and amphora card.



The player losing the province gets his guards back and half (rounded up) of the cards the take-over player played to remove the guards and occupy the province. The player taking-over the province chooses which cards to give to the losing player. The player discards the other cards used in the take-over.

**Exception:** when playing with two, the player losing the province only gets his guards back; all the used cards are discarded.

## - Levy taxes

To levy taxes, a player must play 1 card matching the symbol on the space on which his guard stands in one of the provinces he occupies. A player may only count taxes in a province he occupies and only if he has just 1 guard in the province. A player may not count taxes in a province with 2 or more guards. After the player plays (discards) the necessary card, he counts the open spaces in all his provinces with only 1 guard. He scores the total of these open spaces and records this by moving his scoring disc forward on the scoring track.

**Important:** the levy of taxes affects all players. Thus, after the player who chose to levy taxes as an action scores his points, each other player, in clockwise order, scores his tax points by counting the number of open spaces in all his provinces with only 1 guard and moving his scoring disc accordingly. These other players do not play cards to score their tax points. Levy taxes is not always a wise action: it costs the player a card, an action, and his opponents score points. Only when the player will score more points than his opponents does levy taxes make sense. **A player may only levy taxes once in his turn.**

**Figure 12:** red chooses to levy taxes and plays 1 soldier card as he has a guard in a province he occupies standing on a space with a soldier symbol (province 3). Red earns 8 points for the province in Egypt (1) and 4 points for the province in Syria (2), a total of 12 points. Red's province in the north (3) with 8 points does not score as red has 2 guards there. Similarly, yellow scores 4 points for his province (4), blue scores 9 points (for 6), and green scores 6 points (for 5).



## Game end and the winner

The game ends

- when a player, after moving Alexander, finds there are not enough black boundary walls to place to mark the path – he uses red boundary walls to complete the move, or
- when one or more players have earned 100 points or more.

In the first case, the player finishes his two actions and the game ends. In the second case the game ends immediately. In both cases, the player with the most points is the winner.

### Special situations

It can happen that there are no empty spaces with a symbol that matches one (or both) face-up cards. In this case, the player may take the card and use it as a joker, moving Alexander to the space with the symbol of his choice.

However, a player may not make an Alexander special move using a card from his hand if there are no empty spaces with that symbol. If there are not enough red boundary walls to complete the last move, the player must find another move, which uses fewer boundary walls.

### - Take back a guard

A player may remove one of his guards from a province he occupies at any time. He may want to do so because he has more than 1 guard in a province or he has no more guards in his supply. To remove a guard from a province, the player simply removes the guard. He need not play any card to do so.

**author** Leo Colovini

**grafic** Studio Krüger, Düsseldorf + s mondini, Venice

Licensed from Venice Connection, Venice, Italy

© 2003 Rio Grande Games - all rights reserved

**Rio Grande Games**

PO Box 45715

Rio Rancho, NM 87174

riogames@aol.com

www.riograndegames.com

