



Game rules

Introduction and overview

'Ships' is a board game that brings to life the history of shipping, from the age of the ancient Phoenicians to modern times.

During the course of the game you will be engaged in building ships, placing merchants and taking control of cities. The development of new types of ships is represented by the track around the central map. Your merchants are represented by cubes, which you will place on the board to gain goods. Goods can then be sold to gain money. Taking control of cities will increase your warehouse and banking capacity.

The central map shows Europe, with other locations around the world placed around it. At the beginning of the game you will be placing pieces in the Eastern Mediterranean. Later, as new territories are discovered, you will gradually spread around the world.

Each player has their own display, on which they will keep goods, gold and merchant cubes. The display shows you the various actions available to you. The number of actions you have depends on the era.

Your merchant cubes are your lifeblood, and will cycle during the game. If you run low on these cubes then your options will be restricted.

The game is divided into three eras, the Galley era, the Sailing Ship era and the Steamship era. Certain cards will be available depending on which era it is. When a new era starts more cards will be made available. These cards offer additional actions and benefits.

Your objective is to score more victory points than your competitors. Timing is important as the rewards for having merchants on the board increase as the game progresses.

'Ships' is not a simple game and will take a few plays to master. It is very important that you understand the rules governing the placement of ships on the outer track and how that relates to the placement of merchant cubes and city discs.

The game is for two to four players and will play in around two hours.

If you enjoy the more complex, economic type of game, you will find much to like here.

Components

PLAYER PIECES

Four sets of player pieces, each consisting of:



Six galley counters



Six sailing ships counters



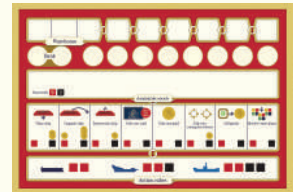
Six steamship counters



Seventeen city discs



Twenty merchant cubes



One player display

OTHER CARDS AND COMPONENTS



Fifty-five game cards



Twenty-five free action cubes



Fifty-six gold coins



Twenty navigation counters



Thirteen industry counters



Fourteen food counters



Eight oil counters



Eight metal counters



Ten wine counters



Twenty cloth counters

Victory point track

Ship age track

Era



Goods information table

Spice box

Location

and one game board

Starting the game

Place the game board in the center of the table.

Place all of the goods counters close to the side of the board. It helps if they are arranged in piles of the same type of good.



Place the gold, navigation counters, industry counters, and free action cubes close to the side of the board.



The area containing all of the above pieces will be referred to as the 'pool.'

Each player selects one set of pieces and matching player display.

You place your player display in front of you.

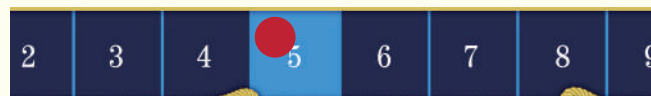
You take nine of your merchant cubes and place them in the box marked 'Available Stock' on your display. Your remaining merchant cubes should be placed by the side of the game board, in the pool.

You take two free action cubes from the pool and place them in your available stock.



You place one of your city discs each space except for the first three Warehouse spaces and the first two Bank spaces. Separate your ship counters into piles of the same type. Place these below your player display.

Place one of your city discs on the '5' space of the Victory Point track.



Separate the Game cards into three stacks, which are; Galley, Sailing Ship and Steamship.



Galley symbol

Sailing ship symbol

Steamship symbol

Shuffle each deck. Place the Sailing Ship and Steamship decks to one side, they will only be required later in the game.

Draw twelve cards from the Galley deck and place face-up on display close to the side of the game board. The remaining Galley cards will not be required, so can be placed back in the game box.

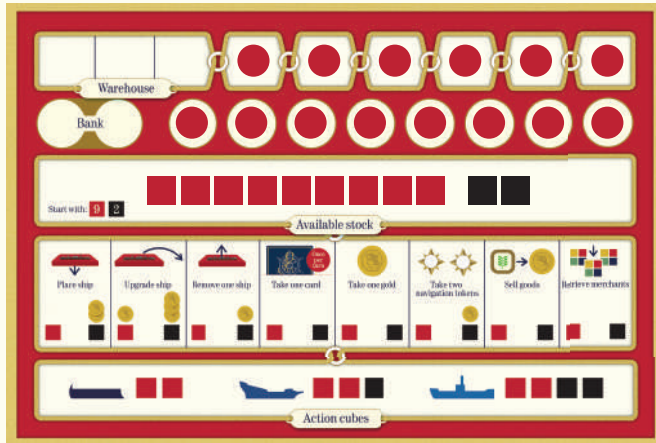
Randomly determine the first player in any manner you see fit.

If there are three or four players then the players going third and fourth start the game with one food counter, which should be placed in their warehouse.

Some useful information to help you understand the game

To aid you in the understanding of the rules that follow it will help to explain some of the elements within the game.

THE PLAYER DISPLAY



Each player has one player display in their color. The warehouse is used to store goods in. The bank is used to hold gold coins. When you place city discs on the board you choose whether to take them from your warehouse or bank. In doing so, you increase the storage capacity of that section.

The 'Available Stock' space is used to hold available merchant cubes, free action cubes, navigation and industry counters.

There are eight Action boxes. On the left side of each box is the cost for initiating the action with one of your merchant cubes. On the right side is the cost for initiating the action with a free action cube.

The 'Action cubes' section is where you place cubes at the start of your turn. Please note that merchant cubes have multiple uses. They act as 'action' cubes while in this part of your display, but are also used to place on the board as merchants.

THE GAME BOARD

The game board is made up of a variety of elements, some of which will be explained here, others when necessary during the rules.

The 'Ship Age Track' is one of two main parts of the game board, the other being the 'areas'. During the course of the game players will place their ship counters on this track, which in turn will allow them to place cubes and discs on the board.



The track is divided into eleven ages, numbered from one to eleven. Each age contains a merchant ship and a warship. When you place a ship you must choose which box you wish to place in, which then determines whether you place a merchant cube into a trade box or a city disc into a city space. The ship ages are also grouped into three eras, the Galley era, the Sailing Ship era, and the Steamship era. The era is indicated by the symbol to the bottom left-hand corner of each box.



The navigation symbol lying on the boundary of each age indicates the cost of advancing to the next age, which is paid with navigation counters. The title box for each age also indicates the victory points gained and lost when the first ship counter is placed there.

The first time a ship is placed in a box marked with the sailing ship symbol marks the beginning of the Sailing Ship era. Similarly, the first time a ship is placed in a box marked with the steamship symbol marks the beginning of the Steamship era.

The main part of the game board shows a map of Europe. Around this are locations relating to other parts of the globe.



There are six areas in all, three in Europe and three around the edge of the map. These areas are numbered from two to seven. Each area contains a number of locations. Each location has a name, one or two city spaces and a number of trade boxes. Players can advance from one area to the next by paying the required number of navigation counters.

CARDS

The game is divided into three eras.



Galley era card

Sailing ship era card

Steamship era card

At the start of the game there will be twelve Galley era cards on display. The 'Take one card' action allows you to take a card from this display. All cards are actioned as soon as you take them, so it is better to regard them as additional actions that are available to you. All cards are discarded after their effect has been resolved. Some of the cards will replicate the actions available on your display, in which case the only difference is in the cost of taking the action (taking a card only requires the expenditure of a merchant or free action cube).

Most cards have text explaining their effect. However, some cards only have symbols, which are explained below:



Take the indicated number of gold coins and place in your bank.



Take the indicated number of merchant cubes from the pool and place in your Available stock (which in this case would be one cube).



Take the indicated number of navigation counters from the pool and place in your Available stock.



Take the indicated number of industry counters from the pool and place in your Available stock.



There may be an additional gold coin cost to taking a card, which will be indicated as shown here.

VICTORY POINTS

The aim of the game is to end with the most victory points. Victory points are recorded on the Victory Point track, which is marked around the edge of the game board.

During the course of the game you will adjust your victory point total for the following:

- Gain victory points for being the first to place a ship in a new age level.
- Lose victory points for ships that are lagging behind on the Ship Age track.
- Gain victory points for cubes and discs in an area when a new area is first entered.
- Placing a cube in the Spice box.
- Placing a city disc in a city that grants victory points.
- Taking a card that grants victory points.
- Every two gold you return to the pool gains one victory point.

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT GOLD

Whenever you gain gold and do not have the room to store it in your bank you immediately convert this surplus gold into victory points, one point for every two such gold you have. You then return the gold to the pool. This rule covers ALL situations where you gain gold. You do not gain anything for the odd gold piece returned to the pool.

Playing the game

The first player, logically has his or her turn first. Once they have completed their turn the next player, going clockwise around the table, performs their turn. Play continues in this manner until the game end condition is met.

The game will end when there are five or more ship counters in the level eleven boxes on the Ship Age Track, i.e. the end of the track, AND all players have had an equal number of turns. Consequently, the player to the right of the first player will have the last turn in the game.

When it is your turn you carry out the following three phases, in order:

1. AVAILABLE ACTION - Place merchant and free action cubes in the 'Action cubes' section of your display, as indicated.

2. PERFORM ACTIONS - Use cubes from your 'Action cubes' section to perform actions.

3. TIDY UP - Move any free action cubes from your 'Action boxes' and return them to the pool. Move any unused free action cubes to your available stock.

When you have completed all three phases your turn comes to an end and the next player, going clockwise, starts their turn.

These steps will now be explained in more detail.

Phase one: AVAILABLE ACTIONS

The number of cubes that you place in your 'Action cubes' section depends on which era is currently in play.

During the Galley era you take two merchant cubes from your available stock and place them in your 'Action cubes' section, on the spaces indicated.



During the Sailing Ship era you take two merchant cubes from your available stock box and one free action cube from the pool and place them in your 'Action cubes' section.

During the Steamship era you take two merchant cubes and two free action cubes and place them in your 'Action cubes' section.

Under all circumstances, if you do not have enough merchant cubes in your available stock then you take what you can. You do not make up the shortfall later in the turn, thus your number of actions will be reduced by the number of merchant cubes that you were not able to place in your 'Action cubes' section.

If at the start of your turn you are unable to take any cubes then you take one free action cube from the pool. Thus, you will always be able to perform one action.

Phase two: PERFORM ACTIONS

During this phase you will expend merchant and free action cubes from your 'Action cubes' section to perform actions.

The actions which you can perform are marked on your player display. These actions are:

- Place ship
- Upgrade ship
- Remove one ship
- Take one card (can only be selected once per turn)
- Take one gold
- Take two Navigation counters
- Sell goods
- Retrieve Merchant cubes

Each 'Action' box on your player display has two activation costs indicated in it. On the left-hand side of each box you will see a cube image in your color and possibly a gold coin symbol. This indicates that you must expend one of your merchant cubes and the amount of gold shown to perform the action. On the right-hand side of each box you will see a free action cube image and possibly some gold coin symbols. This indicates that you must expend one free action cube and an amount of gold shown to perform the action. It is up to you whether you wish to carry out the action with one of your merchant cubes or one of your free action cubes.



When you expend a merchant cube to perform an action you move it from your 'Action cubes' section and place it in the 'Action' box corresponding to the action you wish to perform. If there is an associated cost in gold coins then you must pay that amount from your bank.

When you expend a free action cube to perform an action you move the cube either from your 'Action cubes' section OR from your available stock and place it in the 'Action' box corresponding to the action you wish to perform. If there is an associated cost in gold coins then you must pay the amount indicated with coins from your bank.

Example: You would have to expend one merchant cube from your 'Action cubes' section and one gold to perform the 'Upgrade ship' action. If you used a free action cube to perform this action you would have to spend three gold instead.

With the exception of the 'Take one card' action each action can be performed more than once during your turn. The 'Take one card' action can only be performed once during your turn.

Please note that merchant cubes remain in the 'Action' boxes you have placed them in until you decide to retrieve them with the 'Retrieve' action. Free action cubes are removed and returned to the pool at the end of your turn. The fact that an 'Action' box already contains cubes does not stop you from selecting that action again.

A full explanation of each action now follows:

ACTION: PLACE SHIP

The 'Place Ship' action is by far the most involved of all the actions available. There are a number of choices to be made within this action, which make it hard to explain in a clear manner.

The scoring of victory points for an area may also be triggered during this action. Do not be discouraged if some of what follows does not make sense. To fully understand this action you need to have a clear idea of all of the 'moving parts' within it.



When you select this action you take one of your ship counters that matches the present era from the stack in front of you. If you do not have any such counters left then you cannot perform this action.

DECIDING WHETHER TO PLACE IN THE PRESENT SHIP AGE OR THE NEXT ONE UP.

The first decision you need to make is whether you place your ship counter in the highest ship age presently occupied or in the next one up. For the moment we will assume that you have decided to place in the present ship age and leave an explanation of what happens when you place in the next level up for later on.

The very first person who chooses this action must place his ship in ship age one. Once there is at least one ship in a ship age level then players have the option to place in the highest available level or the next level up.

You can never place your ship in a lower ship age level than the highest one presently occupied.

You must place a ship counter that matches the present era. Thus the first ship counter to be placed will be a galley. When the Sailing Ship era is reached then players must use their sailing ship counters. Likewise, during the Steamship era only steamship counters can be placed.

DECIDING WHETHER TO PLACE IN THE MERCHANT BOX OR THE WARSHIP BOX.

The next decision you need to make is whether you will place your ship counter in the Merchant or Warship box.



Each ship age is made up of two ship types. One of these is always a merchant vessel, while the other is always a warship. The warship is always the second of the two ship types, and has a food symbol in it. You have to expend one food counter from your warehouse if you wish to place your ship in the Warship box.

If you decide to place your ship in the Merchant box then the next section covers what happens next. If you decide to place your ship in the Warship box then you will need to look at the section after that.

CONSEQUENCES OF PLACING YOUR SHIP IN THE MERCHANT BOX.

If you decide to place your ship counter in the Merchant ship box then you take one of your merchant cubes from your Available Merchant cubes box and place it in one empty trade box.



You are now faced with another choice. You can place your cube in the present area or in the next one in the progression.

For the moment we will assume you have placed in the present area. Placing your merchant cube in the next area up will be explained later.

Each area is made up of a number of locations. Each location is made up of a number of trade boxes and one or two city spaces. You must choose one empty trade box in the present area to place your merchant cube in. You then take the goods indicated in that trade box.

EXAMPLE: The red player chooses to place his ship counter in the Merchant box. He then takes one of his merchant cubes from his available stock and places it in the trade box in Miletus, as shown here. He takes an oil counter and places it in his warehouse.



With the exception of food, each trade box will gain you one goods counter. You take a goods counter matching the symbol inside the trade box and place it in your warehouse. In the case of food you will take two counters.

Goods counters must be placed in empty spaces in your warehouse. If you do not have sufficient space then you must remove good counters to make space for the newly acquired goods. The removed goods counters should be placed back to the pool of goods counters.



SPICE - There is no counter for spice. If you place your merchant cube in a trade box containing the spice symbol then you take one of your merchant cubes from your available stock and place it in the Spice Box. You then score seven victory points and take one gold from the pool and place it in your bank. Once a merchant cube is placed in the Spice Box it cannot be retrieved, it is stuck here until the end of the game. You cannot use an industry counter in conjunction with spice.

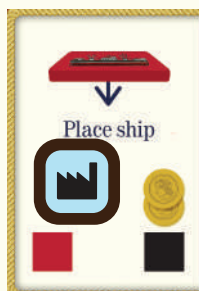
EXAMPLE: The yellow player places his merchant cube in the trade box shown here. He then takes one of his merchant cubes from his available stock and places it in the Spice Box and scores seven victory points and takes one gold.



There is one trade box which is an exception to the norm, which is the one in South America which contains two gold coin symbols. When you place a cube here you take two gold coins from the pool and place them in your bank. All the normal rules for acquiring gold apply here. You cannot increase this amount with an industry counter.



INDUSTRY COUNTERS When you take goods you can expend ONE industry counter from your available stock and take one additional goods counter. You place the industry counter in the action box that allowed you to perform this action. Industry counters cycle in the same manner as merchant cubes.



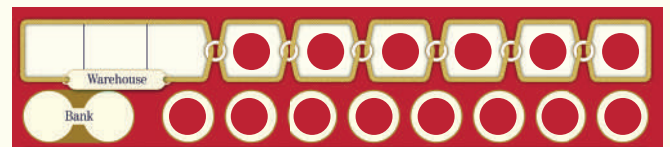
YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED YOUR ACTION.

CONSEQUENCES OF PLACING YOUR SHIP IN THE WARSHIP BOX



You can only place your ship counter in the Warship box if you also expend one food counter from your warehouse, returning it to the goods pool. The Warship box has a food symbol in it to remind you of this requirement.

You then take one of your city discs from your display. You must choose whether you take it from your warehouse or your bank. You always take the disc that is furthest to the left. By removing a disc from your display you are increasing the capacity of your warehouse/bank to store goods/gold.



As with placing a merchant cube, you have to decide whether to place your disc in the present area or the next area along. For the moment we will assume you are placing it in the present area.

Each location will have one or two city spaces. You choose one empty city space to place your city disc in.

Each city space will have symbols indicating a benefit which you gain as soon as you place your disc in the space. These are:



Take the number of indicated merchant cubes from the pool and place them in your available stock.



Take the number of indicated free action cubes from the pool and place them in your available stock.



Take the amount of gold indicated from the pool and place in your bank



Take two navigation counters and place them in your available stock.

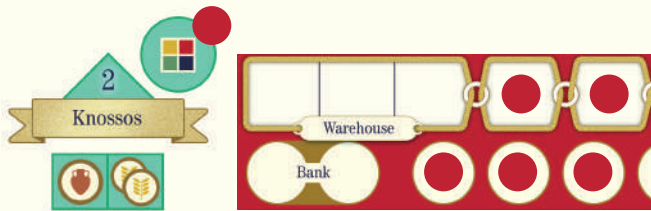


Take one industry counter and place it in your available stock.



Immediately score the number of victory points indicated.

EXAMPLE: The red player expends one food to allow him to place a ship in the Warship box. He chooses to take one of his city counters from his warehouse, and then places it in the city space in Knossos. The benefit indicated means that he takes one of his merchant cubes from the pool and adds them to his available stock.



Industry counters CANNOT be played to increase the benefit.

YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED YOUR ACTION.

PLACING YOUR SHIP IN THE NEXT AGE LEVEL ALONG THE SHIP AGE TRACK

As long as there are one or more ship counters in the present age you have the option to place your ship counter in the next age along the track. There will be a navigation symbol lying on the border between the two ages which indicates the number of navigation counters you must expend to be able to place there. This requirement is reduced by one for each ship, no matter who owns it, in the present age level (but not levels below the present age level). It may be that the discount equals the number of required counters, in which case you can place your ship in the next level for no cost. However, if for some bizarre reason, the discount is greater than the cost you do not gain navigation counters in return.

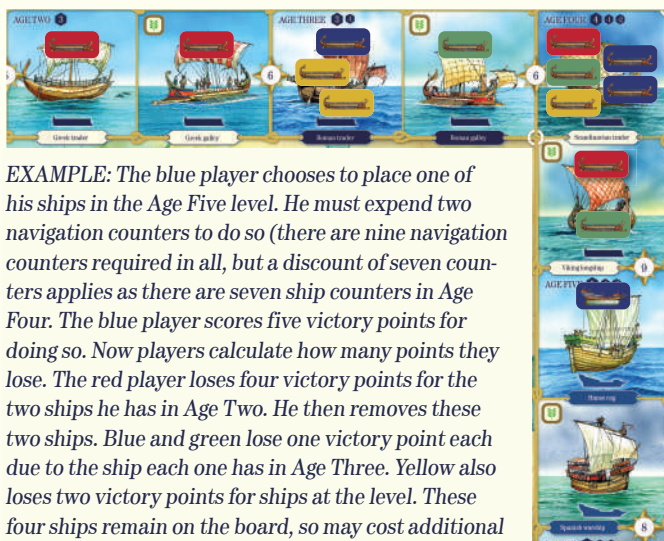


Any navigation counters that you are required to expend must be taken from your available stock.

The first player to place a ship in a new age level earns victory points, which will be indicated in the ship age level. It does not matter whether you have placed your ship in the Merchant or Warship box, only the first ship in this age receives these points. All players must now check to see if they lose any victory points, as follows:

All ship counters in the age level two levels below the one just placed in lose their owners one victory point each.

All ship counters in the age level three levels below the one just placed in lose their owners two victory points each. These ships are then removed and returned to their owning players. Thus, a ship counter will only ever cost you a maximum of three victory points in total before being removed from play.



EXAMPLE: The blue player chooses to place one of his ships in the Age Five level. He must expend two navigation counters to do so (there are nine navigation counters required in all, but a discount of seven counters applies as there are seven ship counters in Age Four. The blue player scores five victory points for doing so. Now players calculate how many points they lose. The red player loses four victory points for the two ships he has in Age Two. He then removes these two ships. Blue and green lose one victory point each due to the ship each one has in Age Three. Yellow also loses two victory points for ships at the level. These four ships remain on the board, so may cost additional points in a later turn. Note that the blue player has used a sailing ship counter as the age level he has placed in marks a new era.

Once a ship has been placed in a ship age level then no ships can be placed in a lower level using the Place Ship action (the Upgrade Ship action works slightly differently). Only the first ship placed in a new ship age level pays any associated cost.

When a player places his ship counter in an age that marks a new era, either the Sailing Ship or Steamship eras, then that era comes into effect immediately. Each Ship box has an era symbol in it, indicating to which era it belongs. Remove all of the game cards from the display for the old era. Any cards in front of players with the old era symbol on should now be discarded.

The deck of cards for the new era should be shuffled and twelve cards drawn and placed on display.

These cards are available to taken immediately.

The change in the number of action cubes does not kick in until the start of the next player's turn.

PLACING YOUR MERCHANT CUBE OR CITY DISC IN THE NEXT AREA IN THE PROGRESSION

There are six areas on the board, numbered from two to seven.



The first player to place a cube or disc on the board must place it in Area Two. Once there are one or more cubes/discs in an area then it becomes possible for a player to place in the next area along in the progression. Thus, the next area to be populated by cubes and discs will be Area Three, then Area Four and so on. It may help to think of the cubes and discs as being a wave which will gradually sweep around the world.

There is a box at the border between each area which indicates the number of navigation counters required to place in that area. Each city disc, of any color, in the current area reduces this requirement by one. It is possible that this discount will equal the counter requirement, in which case you can place in the new area for no cost.



You must expend navigation counters from your available stock.

You can now place your merchant cube or city disc in the new area. You complete this action, i.e. taking goods or benefits. However, you must now suspend play to score victory points for the area you just moved from.

SCORING VICTORY POINTS

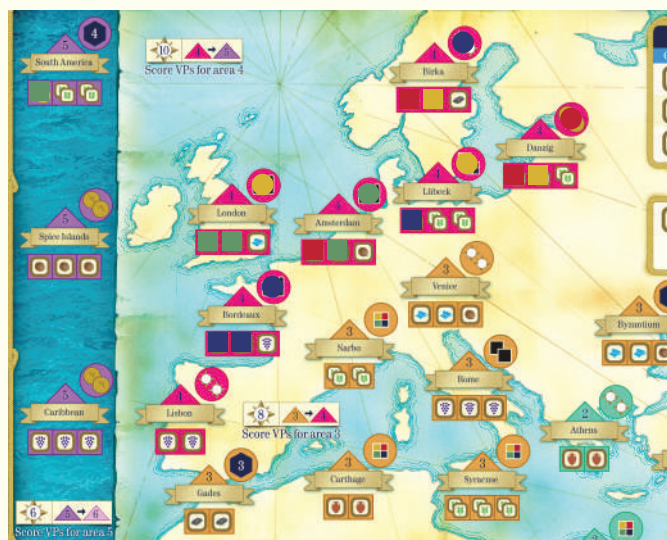
All players score victory points for cubes and discs that they have in the area just moved from. Points are scored as follows:

Each merchant cube is worth victory points equal to the number of the area.

Each city disc is worth victory points equal to the number of the area PLUS one for each cube of the same color in the location. If there are two City spaces in the location and you have discs in both of them then you will gain this one point bonus for each city disc, so in effect cubes gain you double victory points.

Play now returns to the point where it was suspended.

EXAMPLE: Green decides to his merchant cube in Area Five rather than Area Four. He must expend four navigation counters to do so (the requirement is ten counters but there is a discount of six as there are six city discs in place in Area Four. As Green played in the box that gives him two gold he completes his action by taking these. Play is now suspended while ALL players scores victory points.



Green scores seventeen points (eight from London and nine from Amsterdam). Red scores thirteen points (nine from Danzig and four from Amsterdam). Blue scores eighteen points (fourteen from Bordeaux and four from Lübeck). Yellow scores sixteen points (four from London, four from Lübeck, four from Danzig and four from Birka).

Play continues now from the point where Green finished his action.

AREA SEVEN - There is one area which is an exception to the rules. Area Seven is the highest numbered area you can place in in the game. This area consists of two

large boxes, one marked 'Merchant' and other 'Warship'. If you place a cube in this area then it goes in the box marked 'Merchant'.

You then take ONE of the goods marked (so you would only get one food counter from placing here). You choose which type of good you would like to take. If you place a disc then you place it in the side marked 'Warship'. You immediately score six victory points. Note that you cannot gain oil from this box.



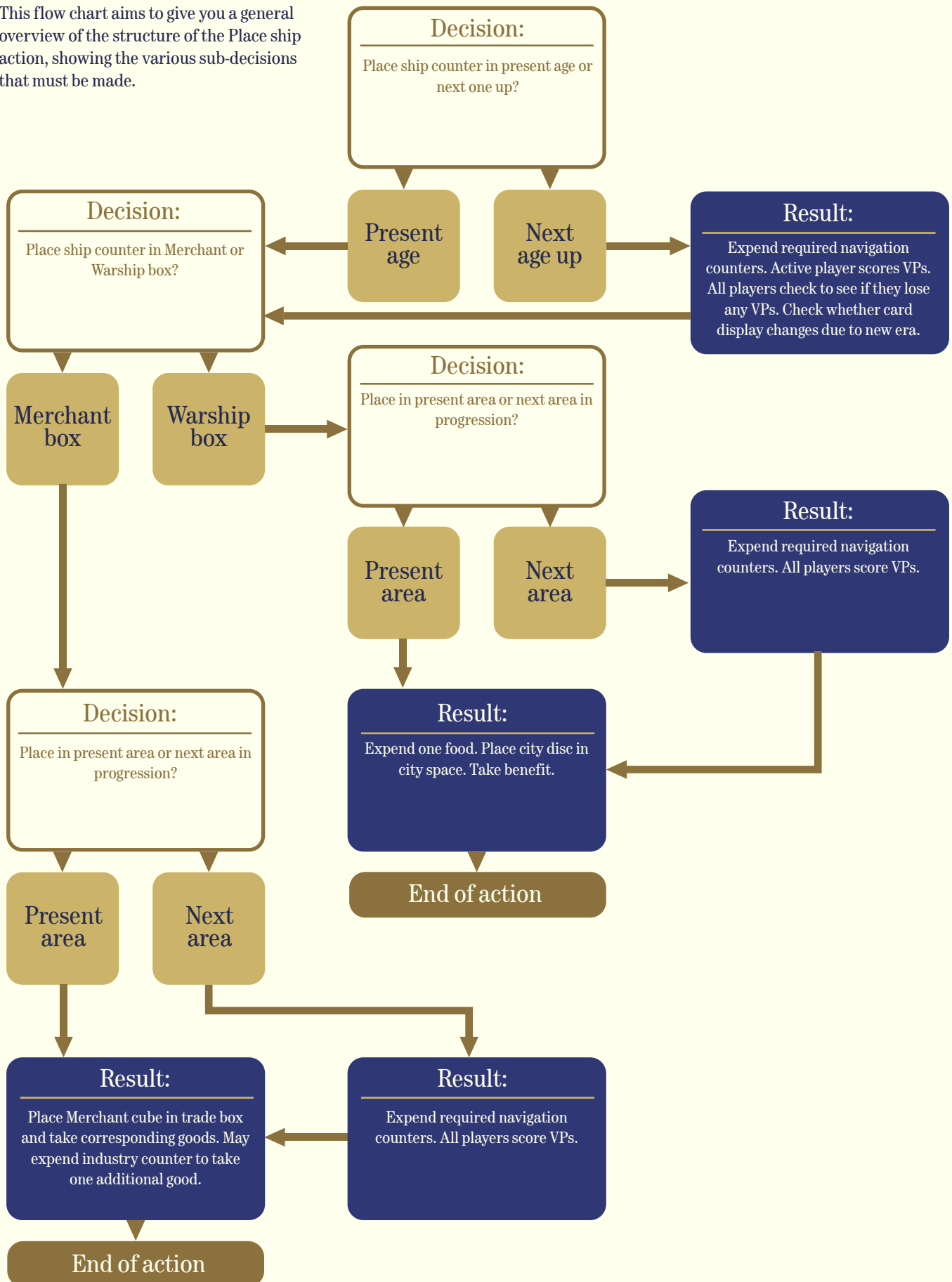
There is no upper limit to the number of cubes and discs which can be placed in these boxes. Consequently, it is impossible for a player to be blocked from placing a cube or disc.

Note that each disc you have in the Warship side will earn you an extra one victory point for each Merchant cube you have in the Merchant side.

Here ends the full and detailed explanation of the 'Place ship' action. Please be assured that the remaining actions are far less involved. Having said that, it would be understandable if you now had a brief lie down before continuing with these rules.

Place ship action flow chart

This flow chart aims to give you a general overview of the structure of the Place ship action, showing the various sub-decisions that must be made.



ACTION: UPGRADE SHIP

This action allows you to move one of your ship counters ONE age up the Ship Age track. You then perform an action as if you had placed this ship counter in that age. The box the ship counter comes from does not have to match the box you place it in in the next level. In effect you are combining the 'Remove ship' and 'Place ship' actions into one, single action.



Note that this is the only time that you can place a ship counter in an age which is lower than the highest one presently occupied.

You can advance to an unoccupied level if you wish, see the rules in the 'Place ship' action for details. For the purposes of working out your discount for navigation counters you count the ship counter you are moving towards this discount, i.e. the discount is calculated before you move your ship.

If you advance your ship counter from one era to the next era then you remove the counter from play and replace it with one of the correct type from your stock. If you do not have one to replace the original ship with then you still carry out the remaining part of the action as if you had placed a ship counter in that age.

ACTION: REMOVE ONE SHIP

This action allows you to remove one of your ship counters from the board. You can choose any of your counters to remove. The counter is returned to your available stock.



ACTION: TAKE ONE CARD

You select one card from the display. Some cards will have gold coin symbols marked on them, which indicates that you also have to pay this amount of gold as well.



In most cases the card will be actioned immediately and then discarded. Please see the section on card effects later in these rules. You can only select this action once during your turn. No replacement card is drawn when a card is taken, so the number on display is a limit to the number that can be taken during the present era.

To help remind you that you have performed this action place your cube on the card icon in the action box. During the Tidy Up phase shift this cube down.

ACTION: TAKE ONE GOLD

You take one gold from the available stock and place it in your bank. You must have space in your bank to be able to perform this action.



ACTION: TAKE TWO NAVIGATION COUNTERS

Take two navigation counters from the available stock and place them in your available stock.



ACTION: SELL GOODS

This action allows you to sell some or all of your goods counters from your warehouse. Each good has a selling price, which you gain when you sell it, as follows:

- Food - one gold
- Oil - two gold
- Metal - three gold
- Wine - three gold
- Cloth - four gold



You decide how many of your goods counters you wish to sell, removing them from your warehouse and returning them to the pool. You then calculate how much gold you have gained. You take this amount from the pool and place in your bank, one coin per empty space (a space with a city disc in it is not empty). Surplus gold is converted to victory points at a rate of two gold per VP.

EXAMPLE: Red decides to sell some of his goods. He chooses to sell two cloth and one wine. He gains eleven gold from this sale. He can retain three of these gold in his bank, as one space is already occupied. He must hand back eight gold, which earns him four victory points.



ACTION: RETRIEVE MERCHANT CUBES

At some point in the game you will find yourself running low on merchant cubes in your available stock. As an action you can retrieve some or all of your cubes EITHER from your Action boxes or ONE area on the board. You take these cubes and place them in your available stock.



If you retrieved cubes from your Action boxes then you also retrieve any industry counters there and place them back in your available stock. Also, if you used a merchant cube rather than a free action cube to perform this action, then you also retrieve that cube. Thus, your Action boxes will be completely clear of cubes of your own colour.

Please take care to remember if you have taken a card this turn, as even though there may not be any cubes in that action box, you are still not permitted to perform it more than once per turn.

Phase three: TIDY UP

The final part of your turn involves some minor cleaning up. Any free action cubes in 'Action boxes' should be removed and placed back in the pool. As mentioned before, merchant cubes remain in your 'Action boxes'.

If you have one of your merchant cubes on the card icon in the 'Take one card' box then move it down now. It stays in the box, but the empty icon will help remind you that you can perform this action again next turn.

Any free action cubes that are still in your 'Action cubes' section, i.e. cubes you have not played, are moved to your available stock. Free action cubes are different from your merchant cubes in that you can retain un-played ones for use in later turns.

Any merchant cubes in your 'Action cubes' section are returned to your available cubes. Having said that, I can think of no circumstances where you would not play all of your merchant cubes from this section.

FREE EXCHANGE OF GOODS

Some goods can be exchanged during your turn. This does not count as an action. You can exchange as many goods as you wish during your turn BUT only if you immediately use the asset you exchanged them into. E.g. if you exchanged an oil good for a free action cube you would have to use the cube immediately, you can never store the asset you exchanged for in your available stock.



OIL - One oil counter can be exchanged for a free action cube.

Historical note - The 'nature' of oil changes through the course of the game. At the start of the game oil would be derived from olives and used for cooking and lighting. Later in the game oil represents the stuff we are more familiar with, i.e. the black liquid that you drill for.



METAL - Metal can be exchanged for one navigation counter and scores you two victory points in the process.

Historical note - Throughout most of the period covered in this game wood would be the most common material used to construct ships and boats, which raises the question, why is metal so important? Ship development depended on better construction techniques, which in turn depended on improve-

ments in metallurgy. You need metal for nails, screws, fastenings and tools. Although metal might comprise one or two percent of the material in a ship, it was the crucial component.



WINE - Wine can be exchanged for one gold.

Historical note - The term 'wine' has been used to represent a range of consumables. Wine would have been an important trade good in ancient and medieval times. From the 18th century onwards it would be tea and coffee which would be the high value consumable trade goods. It can easily be converted to gold as it is a 'liquid' asset.

Ending and winning the game

The game ends when there are five or more ship counters in Age Eleven, in either box AND each player has had an equal number of turns.

The present area is scored, according to the rules described earlier. Note that if you are scoring area seven then each disc in the warship side will gain you one extra VP for each cube you have in the merchant side. The best way to calculate these additional points is to multiply the number of discs by the number of cubes you have in the area.

Players now sell all of their remaining goods, taking the gold they make and adding it to any gold they have in their bank. This gold is then converted to victory points at an exchange rate of two gold for one victory point. You do not gain anything for single gold coins.

The player with the highest final victory point total is the winner.

There are no tie breakers, so if one or more players are tied for a position they share the honors.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE CARDS

There are three sets of cards in the game, one for each era. At the start of the game you should shuffle the Galley era cards and lay out twelve on display. As soon as a player places a ship in the Sailing Ship era any cards left on display are removed. The Sailing Ship era cards should then be shuffled and twelve drawn to place on display. Finally, as soon as a player places a ship in the Steamship era any cards left on display are removed. The Steamship era cards should then be shuffled and twelve drawn to place on display. When you take a card you resolve the action immediately. You then discard the card.

Some cards will cost you additional gold to take, which will be indicated on the card.

Here is a full explanation of each card.

GALLEY ERA CARDS



CURRENCY - Take two gold coins from the pool and place in your bank. All standard rules apply.



DOCKS - Sell some or all of your goods. You earn one extra gold and score one victory point per good sold.



GREEK EMPIRE - Take two gold from the pool and score two victory points for each merchant cube you have in a trade box containing an oil symbol.



LATEEN SAIL - Perform 'Upgrade ship' action.

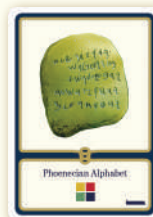


LIGHTHOUSE - Remove some or all of your ships from one age level and return to your stock.



NAVIGATION DEVICE - Take three navigation counters from the pool and place in your available stock.

***HISTORICAL NOTE** - The image on the card is based on the Antikythera device, an ancient Greek analog computer used to calculate the position of the moon and planets. This would make it very useful to those sailing out on the open sea.*



PHOENICIAN ALPHABET - Take one of your merchant cubes from the pool and place it in your available stock.

***HISTORICAL NOTE** - The Phoenicians were a major trading power in early ancient times. To help communicate with different peoples around the Mediterranean they developed a means of representing sounds with letters, a phonetic alphabet, which is the ancestor of the one we use today.*



RAM - 'Perform 'place ship' action. You must place your ship in the Warship box of the level you place in. You do NOT expend a food counter when you do this. All other rules concerning this action apply.



ROMAN EMPIRE - 'Take two gold from the pool and score two victory points for each merchant cube you have in a trade box that contains food symbols.



VIKINGS! - 'Take one gold and one navigation counter from the pool for each ship you have in the Longships box, which is on the Ship Age track.'



WAREHOUSE - 'Take one goods counter of your choice from the pool and place in your warehouse.'

SAILING SHIP ERA CARDS



COMPASS - Take three navigation counters from the pool and place in your available stock.



CANNONS - 'Perform 'place ship' action. You must place your ship in the Warship box of the level you place in. You do NOT expend a food counter when you do this. All other rules concerning this action apply.



COPPER BOTTOMS - Perform 'Upgrade ship' action

HISTORICAL NOTE - Copper bottoms allowed ships to stay at sea longer, as they were resistant to the build-up of barnacles.



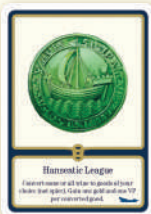
DOUBLE-ENTRY BOOK KEEPING - Sell some or all of your goods. You earn one extra gold and score one victory point per good sold.

HISTORICAL NOTE - the significance of accountancy techniques in the history of civilization is generally underestimated.



FACTORIES - Retrieve some or all of your merchant cubes from your Action display AND any areas on the board..

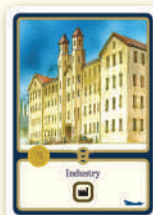
HISTORICAL NOTE - The term 'factory' has changed over time. In this case it represents a permanent settlement of merchants in a location, who would arrange the selling and storage of goods, thus increasing the volume of trade.



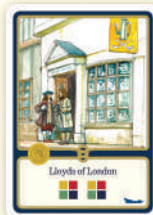
HANSEATIC LEAGUE - Convert some or all of your wine counters in your warehouse to goods counters of your choice (but not spice or wine). For each good you change in this manner you gain one gold and one victory point.



HENRY THE NAVIGATOR - Take three navigation counters from the pool and place in your available stock.



INDUSTRY - Take one industry counter from the pool and place in your available stock.

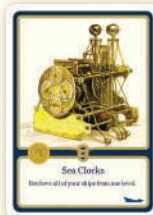


LLOYDS OF LONDON - Take two of your merchant cubes from the pool and place them in your available stock.

HISTORICAL NOTE - Cheap insurance allowed merchants to take greater risks, thus increasing trade.

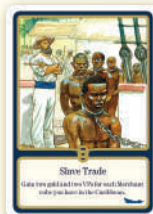


PIRATES - All players except for you must select one goods counter from their warehouse and return it to the pool. You then score three victory points.



SEA CLOCKS - Remove some or all of your ships from one age level and return to your stock.

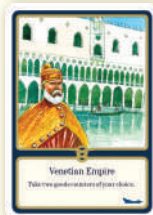
HISTORICAL NOTE - Keeping an accurate time was crucial to navigation. It was the only way of measuring longitude.



SLAVE TRADE - Take two gold from the pool and score two victory points for each merchant cube you have in the Caribbean location (any trade box).



SPANISH EMPIRE - Take two gold from the pool and score two victory points for each merchant cube you have in the South America location (any trade box).



VENETIAN EMPIRE - Take two goods counter of your choice from the pool and place in your warehouse.



V.O.C. - Take one of your merchant cubes, two gold and two navigation counters from the pool.

***HISTORICAL NOTE** - V.O.C. stands for Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, which roughly translates to the Dutch East Indies Company. This was one of the first joint-stock companies. By pooling financial resources and sharing risk, the Dutch were able to field a larger merchant fleet.*

STEAMSHIP ERA CARDS



BLUE RIBAND - Gain 4VPs for each ship you have in the Lusitania box.



BRITISH EMPIRE - Take two gold from the pool and score one victory points for each merchant cube you have in a trade box with a cloth symbol in it. It does not matter whether the cubes are in areas that have already been scored for. You do not count cubes you have in The Rest of the World box.



EMIGRANTS - Gain 4VPs for each ship you have in the 'Great Western' merchant ship box, which is on the Ship Age track.



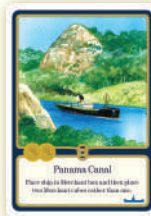
GUNSHIP DIPLOMACY - 'Perform 'place ship' action. You must place your ship in the Warship box of the level you place in. You do NOT expend a food counter when you do this. All other rules concerning this action apply.



INDUSTRY - Take two industry counters from the pool and place in your available stock.



NAUTICAL MAPS - Take three navigation counters from the pool and place in your available stock.



PANAMA CANAL - Perform the 'Place ship' action. The ship counter must be placed in the Merchant box. Then, instead of placing one merchant cube you place two. All standard rules apply.



REFRIGERATION - Score three victory points for each ship you have in the Tramp Steamer box, which is on the Ship Age track.



SCREW PROPULSION - 'Perform 'Upgrade ship' action.



SHIP YARDS - Take two of your merchant cubes from the pool and place them in your available stock.



STEAM-POWERED CRANES - 'Sell some or all of your goods. You gain an extra two gold and one victory point for each good you sell.



SUEZ CANAL - Perform the 'Place ship' action. The ship counter must be placed in the Merchant box. Then, instead of placing one merchant cube you place two. All standard rules apply.

Ships designer notes and more historical bits.

'Ships' is possibly the last in a series of games that started accidentally, which all have transport themes. The first was 'Steam', which in itself was a revised version of 'Age of Steam'. This was followed by Automobile, then Aeroplanes. I've now run out of forms of transport that I'm interested in – canal boats, tractors, and light railway systems can be dealt with by other individuals.

Automobile onwards were inspired by my desire to cram as much pretty artwork into a game as possible. I think Peter Dennis has done a wonderful job of bringing to life the various ships that graced the seas over the millennia. 'Ships' also marks the return to my older style of games, with a bit more depth and complexity.

Hopefully one of the lessons you will draw from the game is how the development of shipping is closely tied in with the development of Western civilization. It amuses me that many civilization games focus on the land, when actually it was the sea that was crucial to the growth of trade, culture and technology.

It occurred to me that although there is the odd historical note strewn through the rules there is nothing to explain the choice of ships on the board. What follows is what I can remember from my research, done many years ago. I've not covered every ship, as some speak for themselves.

The Phoenicians – How could you not have a game about the history of shipping without the Phoenicians. A Semitic race based around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, they were not the first sea traders, but they were the most energetic and enterprising, sailing as far as Cornwall in search of tin.

The Greeks – They were a major trading empire in ancient times and even today they are a significant player in modern shipping..

The Romans – Rome depended on grain, much of which came from Egypt. This necessitated the development of massive grain cargo ships, the ancient equivalent of the modern container ship. The Roman empire was able to expand once it had gained control of 'Mare Nostrum', (our sea).

The Vikings – The Vikings developed shipbuilding techniques that allowed for stronger, more flexible hulls, that could stand the pounding of the Atlantic seas. There is no doubt that the Vikings were the first to reach North America.

The Hanse – A group of North German cities grouped together for mutual protection in the early medieval period. The 'Cog', or 'Kogge', was their standard merchant ship.

Spanish warship – the Portuguese and Spanish formed the first wave of explorers reaching out along the edges of Africa and then across the Atlantic. Spain's discover of America made her one of the richest empires of the time.

The Fluyt – The Dutch were excellent sailors and shipbuilders. The Fluyt was designed with simpler rigging, which meant you could sail her with fewer seamen.

East Indiaman – Trade with the East Indies (India, the Spice Islands and China), was extremely lucrative in the 17th and 18th centuries. Special ships were built that could stand the rigours of a journey half way around the world, and that could fight off the attentions of any pirates on the way.

Ship of the Line – Naval tactics changed in the 17th century, where it became standard practice for ships to line up, sail past the opposing line and blast the hell out of each other. Only ships above a certain size were allowed to be part of the line, hence the term.

Steel merchant ship – The development of ships is very much tied up with that of metallurgy. The development of steel production allowed the building of steel hulled ships, which were stronger and had greater storage capacity.

The Constitution – For a period of time in the 18th and 19th century some of the finest shipbuilders were based in North America. The United States navy had the most powerful frigates of the age, due mainly to them being larger than those of other nations. Once the age of wood gave way to that of steam and steel America lost her lead.

Great Western – The creation of one of the most gifted engineers of the 19th century, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the Great Western was not the first steam ship to sail across the Atlantic, but she was the first to do so regularly, thus cutting sailing times and ending the reliance on wind.

The Gloire – This French warship was the world's first 'ironclad'.

Lusitania – This is representative of the golden period of passenger ships that plied their way across the Atlantic and other seas.

Dreadnought – The British Empire was based on seapower, so it was imperative to stay ahead of competing nations in ship technology. The Dreadnought combined armour, deadly firepower, and steam turbines, making her one of the fastest ships of the time.

The Tramp Steamer – Not the most glamorous of ships, but critical to the development of global trade.

Lexington – The age of the battleship has now given way to that of the carrier, the most powerful weapon systems (excluding nuclear) devised by mankind.

I hope you enjoy this small contribution to the world of board games.

Martin Wallace

CREDITS

Designed by Martin Wallace
Artwork by Peter Dennis
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Thanks to Julia Wallace and Kirstin Donaldson.

Playtested by Kirstin Donaldson, Nikolaj Wendt, Toby Falconer, Nathan Grange, Katherine Boag, Rachel Giesbers, Christopher Dearlove, Gordon Lewis, Brad Thompson, Max Allen, John Malacek, Lee Griffiths, Kim Artus, Russell Woodland, Larry Whalen and many kind folks at Boardgames by the Bay and Manorcon.