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Ages 13+

Note:

I have chosen to use “they” and “their” as singular pronouns as well as plural and am proud to be in the company of authors such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Austen, and Wilde to do so.

## Items Included in the Game

Game Board Regions - 9

Dice – 4

Pawns – 8 per player

Capital Walls – 4 per player

Armory Tiles and Armory bag

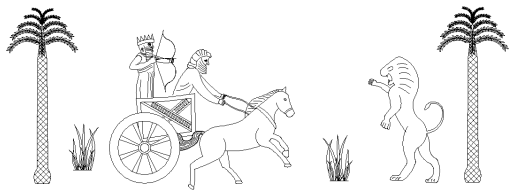
Spoils Coins and Spoils bag

Conquest Cards

Destiny Cards

## Introduction

Since the days of Nimrod the Mighty Hunter mankind has attempted to conquer and dominate those around them. Some like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Darius of the Persians and



Alexander the Great of Macedonia have succeeded. Some like Napoleon have tried and failed. The question is ... will you succeed?

The word “Sabatu” is from the ancient Akkadian language used by the Babylonians at the time of Hammurabi around 4000 years ago. It means to seize, overcome or subdue as in conquering a fortified city or capital. Sometimes the only way to overcome and conquer an enemy that is entrenched in a fortified position is to lay siege to it. This is not to say that a strategy of speed and surprise doesn’t have its merits. You must decide how you will play the game. It is different every time.

## Object of the Game

There are two ways to win a game of Sabatu. You can employ a strategy of speed and be the first player to seize any 3 capitals (see “Capitals”) and to occupy all 3 of them at the same time. Or you can be a builder and be the first player to build four walls around one capital. The first player to successfully implement either one of these strategies and is able to hold it until the beginning of their next turn is declared Conqueror of the Known World or as Sargon King of Akkad called himself *Sarru-kinu*, “The Rightful King”.



Games generally last anywhere from 1 to 2 hours, depending on the strategies used by the players, good and bad fortune, and as always...the roll of the dice.

## Game Set-up

Determine the number of game board regions desired for the number of players (see “Game Board Regions”). Arrange the regions to your liking so that the paths from each region connect. Each player chooses a home region and places one army of the color of their choice at “Home”.

Shuffle the decks of “Conquest” and “Destiny” cards and place them somewhere on the board where everyone can reach them.

The players must now decide who goes first. Traditionally, players roll dice to see who goes first. The player to the left goes next and so on, clockwise around the board. If you are playing in the southern hemisphere you may want to go counter-clockwise around the board, but that’s up to you.

## **Sequence of Play**

The sequence of play is fairly simple, although, rolling three dice, collecting Spoils coins and Armory tiles, landing on destiny spaces and following the instructions, battling one or more armies all in one turn, can become confusing if you aren't careful.

- 1) Players begin their turn by drawing one Conquest card and immediately following the instructions on the card.
- 2) Players then roll the required number of dice or use Spoils coins to move around the board toward their objectives.
- 3) When landing on designated spaces such as "Spoils" or "Armory" draw one tile from the appropriate bag. If landing on a "Destiny" space draw one Destiny card and immediately follow the instructions.
- 4) Position troops, buy walls, trade, do battle or build up forces and supplies.
- 5) When done pass the dice to the next player, signaling the end of the turn.

## **Moving Around the Board**

In order to conquer and occupy Capitals you have to move your armies around the board. The following are just a few notes about moving around the board:

The standard roll is 2 dice (3 if using all 9 regions), unless otherwise directed by a Conquest or Destiny card. One die determines the number of spaces one army can move. A player may move 1 army the number of spaces indicated by all of the dice or split the dice up between 2 or more armies.

Stopping to land on desired spaces at the end of each die used or changing direction at the end of each die used is often beneficial. If you roll 3 dice you may divide those up between 3 armies or use them on 1 or 2 armies. The exact roll of the die/dice or Spoils coins must be used. The exceptions would be when entering a Capital (see “Capitals”), Home (see “Home”), Port (see “Ports and Ships) or when meeting another player to fight a battle (see “Fighting Battles”). If a player can’t move the number of spaces indicated by one or more dice or as indicated on a “Destiny” card, that die or card is forfeited. If you roll doubles do not roll again.

Two armies cannot occupy the same space at the same time (it’s against the laws of physics). A player may not jump over or pass another army, friend or foe. If you attempt to occupy the same space already held by another player’s army you must do battle with that player (see “Fighting Battles”).



## **Game Board Regions**

There are a total of 9 different game board regions – 4 corner regions, 4 edge regions and one center region. Each corner and edge region has a Home, a Capital and spaces along which the players move. The center region is open territory and has no Home or Capital. Generally the 4 corner regions are used for 2 to 4 players. Two edge regions can be added for a 5 to 6 player game and all 9 regions are used for up to 8 players.

## **Conquest Cards**

Conquest cards depict both favorable and undesirable events that affect armies in search of conquest. These cards generally affect your campaign as a whole. It is the best way to increase your forces, although there are times when your forces may be diminished as a result. Armies may march towards their objective aided by good fortune or hindered in their efforts by unforeseen circumstances. Great military leaders must be bold and daring, risking danger, advancing with confidence, ready to adapt to all conditions.

A player draws one Conquest Card at the beginning of their turn. The instructions on the Conquest Card must be followed immediately and the card returned to the bottom of the deck or to a discard pile if you prefer. If a player has all 8 armies on the board and the card instructs the player to add an army, the card is ignored. (see “Armies”)

If a player draws the plague card and has an odd number of armies they should round down to the next even number before dividing that number in half. If they have 3 armies then they should remove 1 army, if they have 5 armies they should remove 2 armies. The “Plague” card does affect all of a player’s armies on the game board including those in capitals and at home.

## **Destiny Cards**

Destiny cards depict both good and bad circumstances that happen to troops on the move. These cards generally affect individual armies. Destiny cards can put you at the doorstep of an enemy’s capital, aid or hinder your progress or destroy an army with one stroke of bad fortune. What’s your destiny?

A player draws one Destiny Card when they land on a “Destiny” space by exact count of the die/dice or by using a Spoils Coin. The instructions on the Destiny Card must be followed immediately and the card returned to the bottom of the deck or to a discard pile if you prefer.

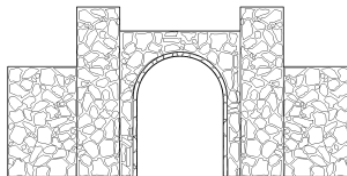
## Home

Each player begins at “Home”. This is where troops are trained and armies are raised to aid in your attempt to conquer the regions around you. Whenever a new army is added to your forces they start out from Home. It is not necessarily a place of safety. Violence is everywhere and home is no exception. There is strong resolve there and when all of a player’s non-garrisoned armies have been wiped out they are not out of the game. There is always someone at home to take up the battle. If all of a player’s non-garrisoned armies have been eliminated the player starts over, at the beginning of their next turn, with 1 army at home and resumes the quest for land and glory. Home is not a “space” and, therefore, cannot be occupied by an enemy army.

## Capitals

Capitals are the center of wealth and power. If you control the capital you control the region. The more capitals you control the more regions you have dominion over.

Unclaimed capitals may be claimed by landing inside the square and occupying it with an army. An exact roll is not needed to enter a capital. The first army to occupy a capital becomes a garrison and is



immediately replaced with a fresh army at Home. A Garrison can not be forced to leave a capital unless defeated in battle. (see “Fighting Battles”) Capitals already occupied must be won from the defender(s) in battle

A capital is not a “space” and, in addition to the occupying garrison, may be occupied and defended by as many armies as you feel you may spare from your other military campaigns.

Walls (see “Capital Walls”) that are built to fortify a capital remain unless destroyed by Conquest card or if a Capital is captured by defeating all of the defending armies inside the walls the victor takes possession of the capital after removing one wall, if any exist.



## Armies

One set of 8 pawns comes with each game board region (8 different colors for the eight different regions). Each pawn represents an army of your region. A player is never out of the game and always has a chance (sometimes slim) of coming back. When all of the non-garrisoned armies of a region are eliminated a player starts over with one army at home at the beginning of their next turn before drawing a Conquest card. This is true even if a player has capitals with garrisons but no armies to move around the board.

If a player has all 8 armies on the board and they draw a Conquest card that instructs them to add an army, that card is ignored and placed on the bottom of the deck or in the



discard pile. The player then continues their turn by rolling the dice or using Spoils coins to move their armies.

## Armory Tiles

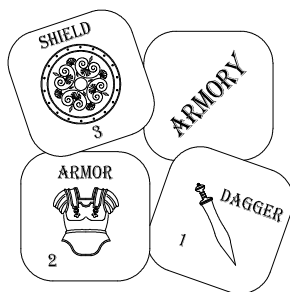
To be successful in battle every army needs weapons and armor to attack the enemy and to defend itself from attack.

Armory tiles depict weapons and armor typically used by armies from the Babylonian Empire to the Roman Empire.

Each type of armor is rated as to its effectiveness in battle.

One tile (if you have any) may be used during battle to improve your chances of survival. The tile's value is added to the roll of one die.

How and when you use these tiles can be an important part of your strategy so fight wisely.



When fighting battles players must lay down their Armory tiles before the roll of the dice. Each player may use one tile for each battle. At the end of each battle the tiles used in battle by both players must be returned to the Armory Bag.

A player's Armory tiles must be kept on the table, face down, in front of the player so that other players can make strategic decisions and battle plans.

Armory tiles are acquired in a number of different ways. A player receives one Armory tile by landing on an "Armory" space by exact count of the die/dice. Armory tiles can also be awarded by Conquest or Destiny cards. Or a player may use a Spoils coin with a value of one to purchase one Armory tile, randomly drawn from the bag, at any time during their turn. (Change may be obtained from the Spoils bag.)

## Fighting Battles

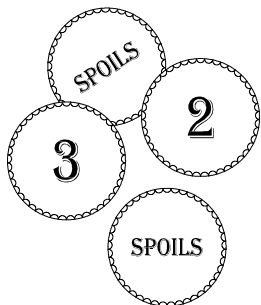
When attempting to occupy the same space already held by another player on the board (exact roll not necessary) the 2 armies must fight a battle. After each player decides which armor or weapon to use, if any, against their opponent they lay them down on the playing surface at the same time. (see “Armory Tiles”) Each player, then, rolls one die and the numbers on the Armory tiles are added to the roll of the die. The army with the highest total amount is victorious. In the event of a tie, the attacker has the option of continuing the attack or retreat. If discretion is the better part of valor and retreat is the desired course of action then the attacker rolls 1 die and moves away from the defender the number of spaces indicated by the die. At the end of each battle used Armory tiles are returned to the bag.



As long as a Capital has one or more walls any army within the walls has a 1 point advantage when fighting a battle, in addition to any Armory tile the defender may wish to play. Once an attack has begun on a capital the aggressor may continue the attack, defeating as many occupying armies as possible, until the capital is taken. That is assuming that the attacking army stays alive. If the attacking army is defeated and the aggressor wishes to continue the attack on the capital they must use the roll of a die (if they have any left in their turn) to move another army into attack position. Once a Capital is conquered one wall (if any exist) is removed before the victor takes possession in triumph.

Don't forget to haul away your Spoils. (see “Spoils Coins”)

## Spoils Coins



“To the victor go the Spoils.” Spoils have long been the reward of conquering other armies, cities and peoples. They are then used to finance wars, build city walls or as wages for soldiers or for hiring mercenaries and ships.

Spoils Coins may be used at any time to replace the roll of the dice to move around the board. One coin may be substituted for the roll of one die or two coins may be substituted for the roll of two dice and so on. This enables a player to land on desired spaces without risking the random roll of the dice. The decision to substitute Spoils for dice roll must be made before any dice are rolled. Once a Spoils Coin is used it must be returned to the Spoils Bag.

Spoils are won during battle. One Spoils coin is drawn from the defeated player by the victor when a player has defeated their opponent in battle. If the defeated player has no Spoils coins the victor may choose an Armory tile instead. Spoils Coins are not awarded for occupying an unoccupied capital. You can also get Spoils Coins by landing on a “Spoils” space by exact count of the die/dice or by using a Spoils Coin if you wish. Spoils Coins can also be awarded by Conquest and Destiny cards.

Spoils Coins may not be used during battle with another player. However, a player may use Spoils coin(s) to make the following purchases at any time during their turn. (Change may be obtained from the Spoils bag.)

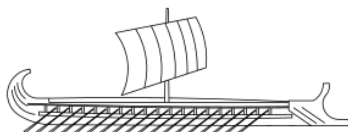
- 1 Spoils point – draw random Armory from bag
- 2 Spoils points – new army to place at home
- 3 Spoils points – hire a ship

5 Spoils points – capital wall

## Capital Walls

A completely walled capital is a strength to behold. Until walls are built it is vulnerable to attack. As long as a Capital has one or more walls the garrison as well as any army within the walls has a 1 point advantage when fighting a battle, in addition to any Armory Tile the defender may wish to play. Walls for your occupied capital can be purchased by Spoils coin(s) with a total value of five. (Change may be obtained from the Spoils bag.) If a capital is captured, one wall (if any exist) is removed before the victor takes possession.

## Ports and Ships



Ships can be the fastest way to cover great distances.

During their turn a player may hire a ship to transport one army from one port to another. To hire a ship a player must enter a port (exact roll not necessary) and pay the fee to enter a ship (5 Spoils points). One die (any value) must then be expended to sail to the new port of choice. Another die would then be used to leave the ship and continue the player's conquest in the new region. The laws of physics still apply and if the destination port is occupied by an enemy, the player must fight their way to solid ground.

## Trade

At any time during their turn a player may trade with other players to acquire needed resources. Assuming an equitable agreement can be reached, you may execute one-for-one trades. They can consist of one Spoils coin for one Spoils

coin, one Armory tile for one Armory tile or one Spoils coin for one Armory tile, the value of each to be determined by the players involved in the trade.

Now, on to victory!!!

## **Variations**

Variant #1 - Since a wise military leader would set up armories in the capitals they control one variation is that at the beginning of their turn any player controlling one capital or more will select one Armory tile from the bag. When doing battle a player may use up to two tiles to add to the roll of their die. A player may only use a combination of one shield tile, one helmet tile or wrist band tile and one weapon tile (sword, ax etc.) if available in their Armory. (One defensive and one offensive per player)

Variant #2 - During their turn a player may hire another player's army for one turn to fight for them, price to be negotiated between the two players.

Variant #3 - It is possible to add more edge and center regions and make the game board as long as you wish.

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