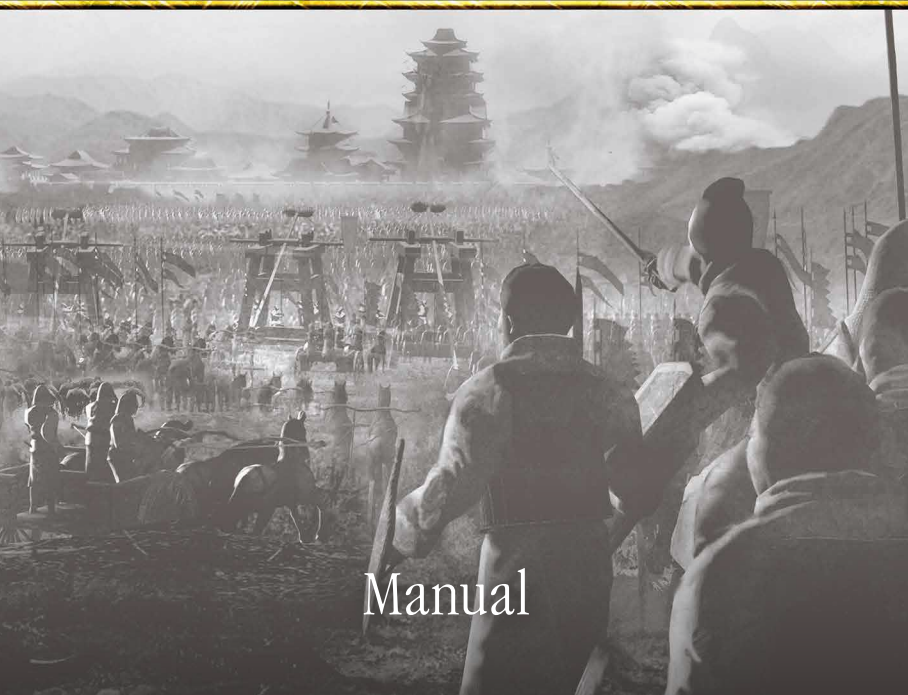




# ORIENTAL EMPIRES



Manual



## Epilepsy warning

### **Please read this caution before you or your child play a videogame:**

Certain people are susceptible to epileptic seizures or lose consciousness after exposure to flashing lights or light patterns in our daily environment. Such people may have a seizure while watching particular televised images or when they play some videogames. This phenomenon may appear even if the subject has no history of previous difficulties. If you or a member of your family has ever had symptoms related to epilepsy (seizures or loss of awareness) when exposed to flashing lights, please consult your doctor prior to use. We advise that parents supervise the use of videogames by their children. If you or your child experiences any of the following symptoms while playing a videogame: dizziness, blurred vision, eye or muscle twitches, loss of awareness, disorientation, any involuntary movement or convulsion, **IMMEDIATELY** discontinue use and consult your doctor.

### **Standard Precautions When Playing Videogames:**

- Do not stand or sit too close to the screen. Position yourself as far away from the screen as the length of cable allows.
- Play video games on a small screen (preferably).
- Avoid playing if you are tired.
- Make sure that the room in which you are playing is well lit.
- Rest for a period of 10 to 15 minutes for every hour you play a videogame.



## General troubleshooting

If you're experiencing any problems with the game (distorted graphics, cut-off sound, game crashing on start-up etc.) make sure your video drivers and DirectX are up-to-date.

Download your video drivers only from official manufacturer website or another trusted website.

Download the latest DirectX version from official Microsoft website.

If the above steps did not help, you can always contact our customer service either through the contact form on our official game website or by directly sending an E-mail to [support@iceberg-games.com](mailto:support@iceberg-games.com). We'll answer every E-mail as soon as possible.

When contacting us by E-mail, please include the following:

- A short description of the problem
- Game log generated on game crash
- DxDiag report file

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Oriental Empires manual. It is divided into two main parts, a “Quickstart guide” to get you into the game quickly, and a “Player’s Guide” that covers some of the more involved aspects of the game in detail. There are also some notes on multiplayer, and some thoughts from the designer.

## For More Help

The game has an extensive built in help system, that provides more detailed instructions on how to take various actions, and will be kept up to date as the game develops. Access it by pressing the “i” button in the top right of the screen, or by pressing the F1 key. This will open on the relevant help page for the screen you are on. Use the “Manual” button in the help screen’s top left to access the full list of contents. You can drag the help screen around with you mouse, so that it doesn’t obscure other UI elements.

You are also encouraged to visit the Steam forum for the game, where you read the experiences of other players, and ask questions of the community or developers.

[steamcommunity.com/app/357310/discussions](http://steamcommunity.com/app/357310/discussions)

## Quickstart Guide

### Welcome

Welcome to this Oriental Empires Quickstart Guide. In this guide we will cover some of the most important mechanics and features of the game. A lot of things however, will not be covered here, but you can always find more information on specific parts of the game by using the in-game encyclopedia. In-game there is also a very good explanation of HOW to do things, so in this guide, we will be focusing on the WHY.

Oriental Empires is a turn based 4X strategy game that lets you take control of one of several key factions/clans of ancient China. You will lead your selected clan over the course of 3000 years of history, founding new cities, developing new technologies and waging war with your rivals.

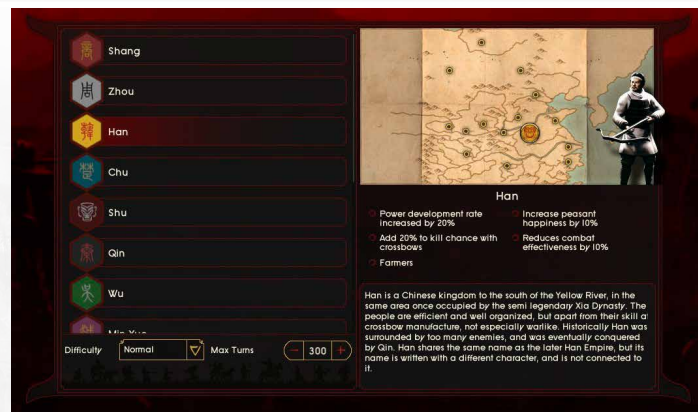
## Starting a game

### Setting up a game

When starting a new game, you first have to choose between the Grand Campaign and a custom game. The grand campaign is the more historical variant and takes place on an accurate map of ancient China. All factions will also have fixed starting positions, based on their geographical historical location. When selecting a custom map, you will be able to generate a map based on your own preferences.

For first time players, it is advised to start with the Grand Campaign, as this will ensure a more balanced start and often a bit more time to familiarize yourself with the mechanics before you encounter other factions.

Next, you will need to select the faction you will be playing. Each faction has their own bonuses and penalties, so try and find one that matches your preferred playing style. Initially you can only select the factions with the most favorable starting locations, but later you will be able to unlock the others for further challenges.



**Both the Shang and the Han are solid starter factions.**

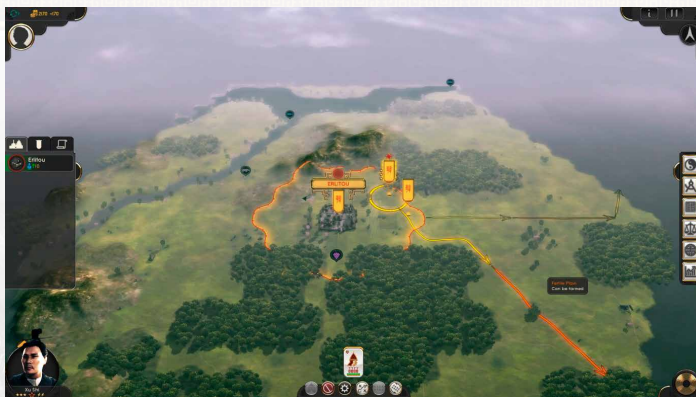
## Opening moves

Now that you have selected your faction, the game begins. You will start your game with one town (your capital), one unit of heavy infantry (your faction leader) and one unit of settlers. Settlers are used to found new settlements, and will be consumed in the progress.

On your first play through, advice will popup suggesting good locations for your next settlement. Generally speaking, it is a good either to either find large open areas with fertile grounds, or areas that are close to a lot of natural resources (rhinos, copper, fish, etc.).

You can select a unit stack by left clicking on the banner and you can order a move order by right clicking on the desired destination. Note that the stack will not move yet, instead an arrow will indicate the move order being received. The stack will only move once you hit end turn and all orders will be processed in real time.

Start by sending out your settlers to find new fertile land, and by ordering your faction leader to scout the surroundings.



*It is a good idea to start exploring early on in order to find the best locations for your towns.*

## Growing your empire

### Economics

In order to become the biggest, strongest, most recognized and/or most cultured faction, it helps a great deal to have a solid economy. Armies and public works both require a lot of money to raise and maintain.

**Pro tip:** Take a good look at the building upkeep costs before clicking that build button!



*Especially in early game, an upkeep of 60 gold per turn is not insignificant.*

In Oriental Empires, there are a number of sources of income. You will gain money from taxes, trade, diplomacy, loot and by exploiting natural resources. Taxes will generally be the most important part and are an easy way of increasing your income. Of course the amount of taxes you will receive depend on your total population size, so you should always aim to grow your population (see section 3.2).

This Turn	Last Turn	Whole Game
<b>Income</b>		
		 2542
Tax		1030
Trade		560
Resources		120
Mining		0
Tribute and Diplomacy		0
Loot		0
Royal Estate		0
Other		0
<b>Expenses</b>		
		 2195
Projected Income		347
Projected Treasury		509

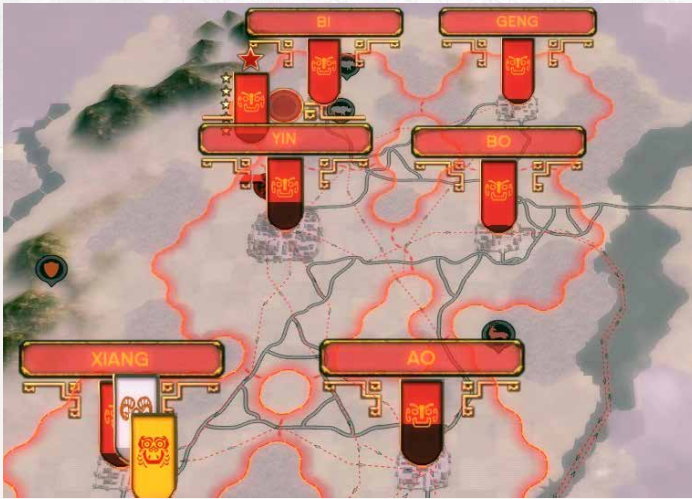
***It is advised to keep a close eye on your income and expenses.***

Exploiting natural resources is another great way to grow your economy. This is done by creating mines and other buildings on resource tiles. For some resources, like rhinos, founding a city in close proximity will already do the trick. If you are unsure of how to exploit a resource, however your mouse over the resource indicator until the tooltip pops up.



***Settling on land near rhinos gives you a great little boost to your economy.***

Another good way to boost your empire's finances is to setup a trade network. In order for trade to work, you need to build a market in cities that have resources to export (silk, pottery, copper etc.) and you need other settlements in close enough proximity to sell the products to. Always remember that the size and value of the trade is not only dependent on the type of resources, but on the population size as well. A larger population will want to buy more resources, thereby increasing the trade value. Trade is indicated by dashed lines between settlements.



*The lines between cities represent trade routes.*

## City management

As you can read above, having a large population is important. Increasing your population size is done by founding new settlements, but doing this too much might cause rebellions (see section 3.3). The other way to grow your settlement, is through proper city management.

The amount of people that can live in a city is limited by the volume of food the city and the surrounding lands produce. You can increase the food production by first clearing land for farming and then letting your people actually farm the cleared land.

**Important:** Whenever your order you people to construct new public works or to create new land improvements, your people will start doing that instead of farming the land, so less food will be produced. It is often a good idea to have starting colonies grow a bit first before ordering such projects to be build.



*It is a good idea to increase your population size by letting your farm their land.*

In the city management screen, you can toggle between 4 different types of land improvements to select the type you want. Next you can select the icons to queue them. Land improvements do not cost money, but they do require labour that could otherwise be spend elsewhere. The buttons left and right of the settlement name are used for construction and recruitment respectively.

## Unrest!

The history of ancient China is one of rebellions and revolts and this is reflected in the game. In Oriental Empires, the population is divided into two classes, Peasants and Nobles and both of these can revolt given certain conditions are met. Peasant unrest can have many causes. By clicking on the icon in the city management panel, you can see a breakdown of these causes. As a player, you should be aware that ordering your peasants to construct too many public works etc. will make them upset, since you are basically making use of forced labour. Therefore, it is generally advised to give your peasants a break after a long series of productions. Other ways to lower the unrest levels are to increase your empires Culture rating and by sending in a garrison of nobles.

Nobles have their own reasons to be upset with you. Most often this is related to your Authority level. Authority is a rating that dictates the amount of control you have over your nobles. It will increase with technologies and by winning battles, but losing battles or having your faction leader die will lower it significantly. In addition, having more settlements than authority will also increase your noble unrest.

Considering all of the above, it is a good idea to keep a close eye on your unrest levels to minimize the chance of revolts. But even if you organize your empire perfectly, a leader dying or a natural disaster can always spark a revolt.



*While there are many things you can and should do to avoid unrest, sometimes, it is just beyond your control.*

## Closing Remarks

We hope this guide gave you some more insight in the principles underlying the Oriental Empires design. Of course Oriental Empires is a vast game and there is much more to learn. Just remember you can always hit the “i” button in the top right corner to get more information and be sure to carefully read the advice presented to you ingame. For any further questions, or feedback, we encourage you to visit our forums

## Players Guide

The following section contains some expanded explanations of the some of the game’s more difficult or unusual systems.

### Building Your Economy

Doing well in the game requires having a strong economy, and an ample supply of money. In the very early stages of the game, the main way to boost your income is by founding settlements close to resources that provide income. However, as you empire grows, taxes from population will become the main source of income; therefore you want to build as many farms as you can to maximize your population. You should also issue the “Well Field System” edict as soon as possible to further tax agricultural production.

Mines can be constructed on copper, gold and jade resources. Mines are expensive to build, but over the long term, provide a good return.

### Trade

As your population rises you will want to develop a trade network between your cities. The income derived from trade depends, on your population, the items available for trade, and your trading infrastructure.

Items for trade are either produced by certain types of buildings in a settlement, or come from resources on the map controlled by the settlement. A certain amount of income is gained from selling these trade items within the settlement where they’re produced, but much more is gained from exporting them to other settlements. An export can only occur if the importing settlement does not produce that trade item itself.







## Authority

Authority is the measure of the size of state that a ruler is able to effectively govern. If a faction controls more settlements than its authority rating, then noble unrest will increase greatly as they sense that the state has become unwieldy. Authority is mainly increased by advances in the thought branch of the technology and culture screen, but can also be affected by events and edicts. A certain amount of authority resides in the faction leader, and can be changed by winning or losing battles, or by encounters. Any authority due to the faction leader is lost when he dies.

The death of the faction leader is a time of great danger for the state, and represented by a temporary authority penalty for the new leader. If there was no clear heir, then the penalty is greater and greatest of all if the faction had no other characters to take control.

## Peasants

The peasants formed the backbone of society, providing all the agricultural labor. It was necessary to keep them firmly in their place, although too much oppression could damage the economy, and often the central power would try to protect the peasants from particularly rapacious lords, much to the latter's annoyance. However, large scale peasant revolts were common, and local lords would often sense which way the wind was blowing, and join the rebels.

Peasant unrest is increased by using them to construct buildings and land improvements, as a result of overcrowding, by food shortages, and by certain random events and disasters. It is more or less inevitable that peasant unrest will increase as you develop a settlement, and you should counter this with edicts and buildings. Unrest due to overcrowding can be reduced by upgrading the settlement to a larger size.

When peasant unrest is high, tax income will be reduced, and it may not be possible to raise peasant militia units. Also bandits will start to appear around the settlement. These will raid the farms, potentially causing food shortages and further unrest. If unrest becomes high enough then they may rebel.

In most respects, peasant revolts are similar to noble revolts. They will raise armies and attack you, other settlements may join them if unrest is high, and unit stacks of half or more peasant units may also join them. THERE IS ONE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE though; peasant rebels hate

all members of the noble classes, and are automatically at war with all other factions. Thus, even if a revolt starts in a neighboring state, your own peasants may still join the rebellion.

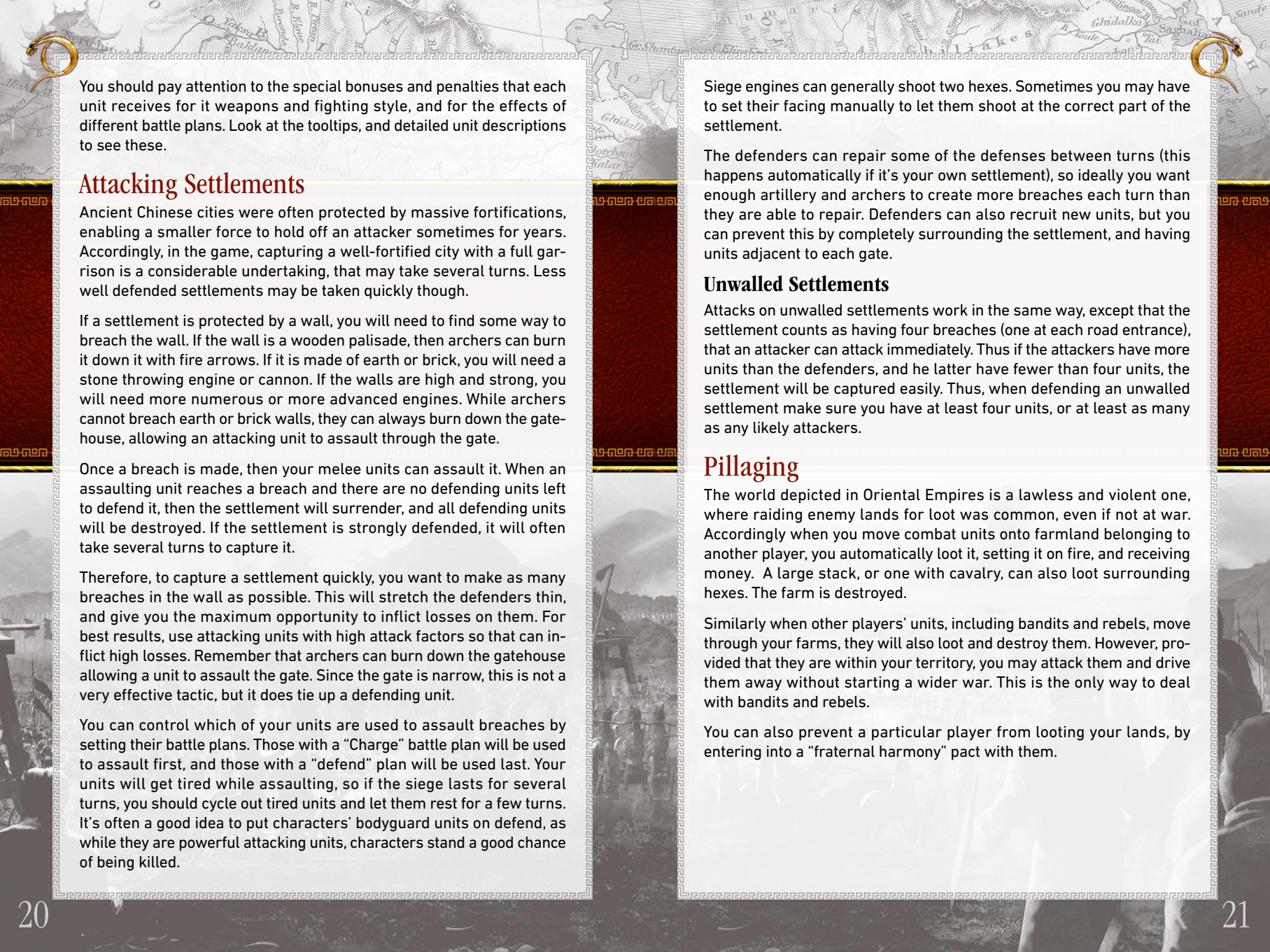
## Battles

Warfare was a major factor in the history of almost all nations, and China was no exception. Oriental Empires attempts to bring you the spectacle of big battles, without bogging down the game play. You will notice that when order your armies, they do not move immediately, but wait until you press the end turn button, whereupon they all move simultaneously. This system preserves the elements of uncertainty and surprise that were such important features of ancient warfare, and allows players to closely observe important battles, while not being burdened with the details of minor skirmishes. If nothing interesting is happening, you can hit the fast forward button to speed through this stage. The game reverts to normal speed if a new battle begins. The game also speeds up as you zoom out with the camera.

Battles occur when an army begins to moves into a hex next to an enemy army, unless this is already moving away. The battle takes place on the hexes occupied by the two protagonists, and the hexes in between. Any nearby stacks will also be included in the battle, and other stacks moving up join in.

Battles are resolved completely under computer control, but you can affect the outcome by setting formations and battle plans for units beforehand. A battle will last until either one side runs away, or until a time limit is reached. An army that has been totally defeated will retreat a little way from the battlefield and then stop moving, while other may continue moving, and may even become involved in further battles that turn.

Whether you chose to watch the battle or not, the outcome will be the same. Battles are resolved as you see them unfold, with each blow struck, and each missile fired being individually resolved. Many factors are taken into account in the simulation, including the skill and weapon type of the attacker, the skill, weapons and armor of the defender, the terrain, and whether the attack is in the flank or rear. As events unfold, units' morale will drop, and eventually some will break and run. A unit with a slowly flashing banner is close to breaking, and one with a quickly flashing banner is already running away.



You should pay attention to the special bonuses and penalties that each unit receives for its weapons and fighting style, and for the effects of different battle plans. Look at the tooltips, and detailed unit descriptions to see these.

## Attacking Settlements

Ancient Chinese cities were often protected by massive fortifications, enabling a smaller force to hold off an attacker sometimes for years. Accordingly, in the game, capturing a well-fortified city with a full garrison is a considerable undertaking, that may take several turns. Less well defended settlements may be taken quickly though.

If a settlement is protected by a wall, you will need to find some way to breach the wall. If the wall is a wooden palisade, then archers can burn it down with fire arrows. If it is made of earth or brick, you will need a stone throwing engine or cannon. If the walls are high and strong, you will need more numerous or more advanced engines. While archers cannot breach earth or brick walls, they can always burn down the gatehouse, allowing an attacking unit to assault through the gate.

Once a breach is made, then your melee units can assault it. When an assaulting unit reaches a breach and there are no defending units left to defend it, then the settlement will surrender, and all defending units will be destroyed. If the settlement is strongly defended, it will often take several turns to capture it.

Therefore, to capture a settlement quickly, you want to make as many breaches in the wall as possible. This will stretch the defenders thin, and give you the maximum opportunity to inflict losses on them. For best results, use attacking units with high attack factors so that can inflict high losses. Remember that archers can burn down the gatehouse allowing a unit to assault the gate. Since the gate is narrow, this is not a very effective tactic, but it does tie up a defending unit.

You can control which of your units are used to assault breaches by setting their battle plans. Those with a “Charge” battle plan will be used to assault first, and those with a “defend” plan will be used last. Your units will get tired while assaulting, so if the siege lasts for several turns, you should cycle out tired units and let them rest for a few turns. It’s often a good idea to put characters’ bodyguard units on defend, as while they are powerful attacking units, characters stand a good chance of being killed.

Siege engines can generally shoot two hexes. Sometimes you may have to set their facing manually to let them shoot at the correct part of the settlement.

The defenders can repair some of the defenses between turns (this happens automatically if it’s your own settlement), so ideally you want enough artillery and archers to create more breaches each turn than they are able to repair. Defenders can also recruit new units, but you can prevent this by completely surrounding the settlement, and having units adjacent to each gate.

## Unwalled Settlements

Attacks on unwalled settlements work in the same way, except that the settlement counts as having four breaches (one at each road entrance), that an attacker can attack immediately. Thus if the attackers have more units than the defenders, and the latter have fewer than four units, the settlement will be captured easily. Thus, when defending an unwalled settlement make sure you have at least four units, or at least as many as any likely attackers.

## Pillaging

The world depicted in *Oriental Empires* is a lawless and violent one, where raiding enemy lands for loot was common, even if not at war. Accordingly when you move combat units onto farmland belonging to another player, you automatically loot it, setting it on fire, and receiving money. A large stack, or one with cavalry, can also loot surrounding hexes. The farm is destroyed.

Similarly when other players’ units, including bandits and rebels, move through your farms, they will also loot and destroy them. However, provided that they are within your territory, you may attack them and drive them away without starting a wider war. This is the only way to deal with bandits and rebels.

You can also prevent a particular player from looting your lands, by entering into a “fraternal harmony” pact with them.

## Diplomacy

The diplomacy screen shows you the other players in the game, and shows your relationship to them, and their relations to each other. From here, you can enter into detailed negotiations with other players, and make declarations of war or embargo trade.

### Negotiations

When you begin a negotiation with another player, you will see two lists of items and agreements to trade, and a central area showing the deal currently on the table. Add offers to the deal, by selecting items from the list on the left, and demand things from them using the list on the right. When you have assembled a deal, click the "Propose" button to see if the other player accept or declines. They may also make a counter offer.

The beads at the bottom of the screen give an idea of the balance of the offer, as judged by a neutral party. The more beads that are on the right, the more the deal favors the other party, and the more on the left, the more it favors you. If equal numbers are on each side, the deal benefits both sides equally. Note, though that even if all the beads are on the right, they do not guarantee that the other party will accept the offer. To give an analogy, if someone offered you twice the market value of your favorite pet, that would seem like a generous offer to a third party, but you likely wouldn't accept it. Agreeing to deals that favor the other player will increase your diplomatic standing with them.

There are a various types of deals and diplomatic arrangements that may be made. Consult the in game help for more details, but below are the most important ones.

### FRATERNAL HARMONY PACT

This is a treaty of recognition, and non-aggression. You agree not to declare war on each other, not to loot each other's farms, and not to block each other's trade routes. Breaking the agreement will result in a loss of trust from both the other player, and all other players, making it harder to make agreements in future.

### PEACE TREATY AND TRUCE

These can only be used to end a war. They function in the same way as a fraternal harmony pact for the duration of the agreement. When the agreed period has passed, the war does not automatically resume, but either side may attack the other without diplomatic penalty.

### DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE

This functions the same way as a fraternal harmony pact, but if either player is attacked, the other must immediately declare war on their attacker. Failure to do so will end the pact, and reduce the player's diplomatic standing. If one of the players declares war themselves, the other does not have to join them.

### BECOME A VASSAL

When a player becomes a vassal, they accept another player as their overlord, and accept certain restrictions in return for protection. A vassal continues to play as normal, but suffers a penalty to their authority rating and must follow their overlord in diplomatic matters, declaring war when their overlord declares war, making peace when their overlord makes peace, and respecting fraternal harmony pacts made by their overlord. They may not make such agreements themselves.

An overlord may not attack their vassal, and automatically has a defensive alliance with them. All population controlled by a vassal, counts as controlled by the overlord for victory purposes, but their settlements do not count against the overlord's authority limit. Generally a computer controlled player will only agree to become a vassal if the player presents a serious military threat to them.

While generally players will not want to become vassals of computer players, in some difficult situations it may be necessary to do so. A vassal can rebel by declaring war on their overlord. The only way to win the game as a vassal, is by a "Cultural Victory".

### RECOGNIZE EMPEROR

This is something of a diplomatic nicety, and has only one effect, that the population of the player recognizing the emperor, counts towards that player's total for purposes of attaining the "Son of Heaven" victory. A player that recognizes another as emperor may not win via "Son of Heaven". Once recognition is granted, it may not be withdrawn, but may be transferred to another player. A vassal always recognizes their emperor as overlord.

A detailed map of the Eastern Hemisphere, showing various regions like Yakus, Ghalak, and others. The map is framed by a decorative border.

## How to Win

There are four ways to win at Oriental Empires. The “Victory” tab on the player status screen shows the exact conditions for each one, and your rate of progress. Be sure to keep an eye on the progress of other players, to make sure they don’t achieve some other type of victory before you achieve yours. Below are some notes on how to achieve each type of victory.

### Conquest

To win a conquest victory you need to control most of the population on the map, either directly, or indirectly via your vassals. If you are playing the grand campaign, or on a large custom map, then your authority rating will limit the number of settlements you can control, making it difficult to gain the required population directly. However, population controlled by your vassals also counts, so rather than conquering all the other factions outright, convert some of them to vassals. Convincing another faction to become your vassal, requires that you present a significant and immediate threat to their main cities, but sometimes you may be able to subdue smaller factions just by placing large enough armies on their borders.

An alternative, for those who like to see the world burn, is to focus on capturing large enemy cities, and destroying them.

### Son of Heaven

To win this type of victory requires convincing most of the population in the game to recognize you as the rightful emperor. Convincing other powers to recognize you will require a mixture of military intimidation and bribery. Your vassals are locking into recognizing you, and cannot change the emperor they recognize without rebelling.

### Cultural Victory

Winning this type of victory requires you to build palaces, temples and shrines. These types of buildings are expensive, so you will need to concentrate on developing a healthy economy. You will probably need six to eight cities to achieve this victory. Your culture score is counted towards your victory, so prioritizing technologies and edicts that improve this is also worthwhile.

## Points Victory

If no player has won by the set turn limit, then the winner will be the most developed player. Points depend, on your population, that of your vassals, and those recognize you as emperor, you cultural victory points, authority rating, and the number of buildings in your settlements. The winner is likely to be the player with best combination of empire size and development. Reducing the turn limit is good for players who prefer shorter games.

## Multiplayer

For the ultimate Oriental Empires challenge, you can play against other human opponents over the internet using Steam.

When you select *Multiplayer* from the main menu, you will go to a screen showing a list of games available to join. Double click a game to join it, and see details of the game settings and other players. Before the game can begin, you will need to select a faction to play. The host will begin the game when enough players have joined.

Alternatively, you can create a new game yourself. The player creating the game is known as the host. When you create a game, you must select what type of game to play, set map parameters for a custom game, and select which faction to control. You then go to a lobby screen where you wait for other players to join. When you’re satisfied with the number of players, you may begin the game.

The host may also load a previously saved game. Players will still need to select their faction to play. This allows players who are doing badly to change faction, or for new players to join and take over from players who are unavailable.

Although it is possible to play The Grand Campaign multiplayer, it is recommended that players begin by using small random maps, and few if any computer controlled players. The objective after all, is to interact with the other humans.

## Designer's Notes

As you may guess from the name, the original idea for Oriental Empires was to create a wide ranging game about the empires of East Asia, but once I began researching, it became clear that the history of China was so vast and fascinating, that it deserved to be covered in more depth than a more wider ranging game would allow. Bringing Chinese history to a Western audience thus became an important pillar of the design.

Oriental Empires is a civilization building game, rather than a historical recreation though, and rather than portraying particular people or events, it aims to cover the grand sweep of Chinese history from the earliest recorded times, until the advent of gunpowder, and the time when China started to be eclipsed by Europe. The game rules are designed to show the great historical trends, the farmers vs the nomads, the peasants vs the nobles, the variety of philosophical thought, and the shift in power from the North to the South.

Another important pillar of the design was a beautiful map. Partly this is because I'm a sucker for pretty maps, but I also wanted to be able to capture the vast variety of landscapes in China, and the way that they've shaped its history. As we progressed we added the ability to zoom right in close, tilt the camera to the horizon, and really step into your game world. Although adds nothing to gameplay as such, it adds a huge degree of immersion to the game.

The final pillar of the design, was to make the military aspect more interesting than is usual for these types of game, without going down the road of having a separate battle map. Thus was born the idea of presenting the spectacle of a large battle right on the strategy map, but having it resolved under computer control so that battles could resolved in a couple of minutes of real time, or a few seconds if players fast forward. In many ways this puts the player more realistically in the shoes of an ancient general, who could arrange when and where a battle occurred, what forces would be involved, and what the battle plan would be, but who in reality had little control over events once battle was joined. From a player's perspective, it makes the game move faster, and removes the need to choose between the vagaries of auto-resolve, or spending ten plus minutes fighting a tedious battle. It has the added bonus of making the game very suitable for multiplayer.

Technology and Edicts are two vehicles used to introduce more abstract elements of culture into the game. The technology system is a bit unusual, both in having four separate branches, but also in that everybody advances at more or less at the same rate. This is to reflect historically reality, and to avoid the anachronistic idea of having research labs or similar. The four branches avoid the problem of massive imbalances in development between kingdoms that would historically have been sharing developments, and also makes it easy to incorporate cultural and philosophical ideas into the game.

Edicts are another system to introduce flavor into the game. They generally have both costs and benefits, with the costs often limited to the short term. This makes timing an interesting decision for the player, particularly for those edicts that cause short term unrest. Of course all the edicts are based on actual historical edicts and laws.

At first sight Oriental Empires looks quite similar to other games of its ilk, there are hexes, resources, and farms to settle, but the focus on a particular civilization, and rules that tend more towards realism than gaminess, give it its own feel, and we hope that players will find it a unique gaming experience.

# Credits

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# Notes

