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# CLASH OF THE ANCIENTS

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAY

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### TO BEGIN...

Everyone playing (and don't let anyone sit around watching and not playing) makes up a civilization he or she will represent.

Do not select a real civilization exactly but feel free to use well known ones as points of reference. Say something that makes your civilization noteworthy, as if it were being written about with a very broad brush, possibly by an ill-informed antiquarian: "Mine is like the Roman republic in its beginnings. Everyone herds goats, but also keeps a big knife under his pillow." Name your civilization without regard to linguistic plausibility: "It's called the Whugett Kingdom." Stick to pre-modern sorts of civilizations. If one person takes too long to think up a civilization, or begins to pontificate about it, jeer at him and, if necessary, assign him the default "Stunted Pygmies of Isolated Isle."

Now you are ready to play. There will be five great epochs—a kind of "round"—and in each, the civilizations will compete and interact in several domains, which are handled in sequence.

### I. ECONOMY AND TRADE

Describe some great boon your civilization has in this area. Perhaps it exports a lot of olives and herbs, or offers caravan services and low duties. Now, each player states how much money he is willing to pay for his civilization to win out at trade in this epoch—whether it has a surfeit of coin or beggars. Begin with the tallest player and make bids. When no one is willing to go higher, you have a winner, who must say a little about how his land prospers, and also choose one other player whose land he describes as faltering pathetically. Mark down this economic victory in the appropriate column in your victory grid. The money stays in the kitty.

### II. AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

You may guess that this domain works similarly to the previous, which is basically true, but there are two versions. If you are able, you must go outside; otherwise you must have access to a kitchen or larder.

Outdoor version. Each player has ten minutes to gather as much edible material as he is able. Each collection is then weighed on a bathroom or postal scale, and is consumed by its collector; any items judged poisonous and not consumed are subtracted from the total weight. Whoever then

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consumes the greatest mass of food wins. Those who vomit or go to the emergency room forfeit the phase.

Indoor version. The players have ten minutes to each prepare as disgusting a dish as possible. Everyone is challenged to eat a (normalized) portion from every dish. Whoever eats the most portions wins. Vomiting is disqualifying. The winner can then eat and drink whatsoever he likes, while the losers may only take water. If it so happens that your dishes are too appetizing, and everyone can eat them equally, all the civilizations lose this round.

The winner states how his country's agricultural output is good, and chooses one other player, whose country's fields he describes as going to salt or otherwise failing.

### III. ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Take ten minutes for each person to draft a poem or story, song, or painting. Then take turns presenting these to one another. Each player casts a secret ballot for whichever he considers to be of greatest artistic merit—he may attempt to “penalize” those players who are unfairly advantaged by having art degrees, and he may or may not allow unconscious strategizing to influence his view of the artworks. But he may not vote for himself.

Whoever has the most votes wins; in the case of a tie, there is a run-off vote. The winner jingiosically disparages one other piece of artwork, while his is added to a “trove” of treasures that will survive and be discovered by archaeologists.

### IV. WAR

All bellicose societies must make a statement of aggression and stand tall; pacifists must lie down. The war-mongers then arrange a tiered championship scheme, whereby players are paired and the immediate victor goes on to the next tier. Players in each pair take turns pummeling one another.

The barbarity may be determined by your group beforehand, with the face, torso, or shoulder being valid targets. A player who cries out, or grunts, loses his match. When a final victor is decided, he may kick all the pacifists and declare how he pillages their countries.

### TO CONCLUDE...

When you have proceeded through all the domains, take a short break and then reconvene to do them again in the next epoch.

When you have done all five epochs, tally the domain victories, finding how many each player has won in total. Then sit in a circle and go around it, starting with the shortest player: on your turn look to the player on your left and find the domain he did worst in (fewest wins) and describe how this failure leads to the eventual ruin of his civilization. Be dramatic but fairly brief—players who are not brief should be booed. The only exception is the overall winner: the player next to him describes his civilization's greatness and triumph.

The winner claims whatever money is in the kitty, spreads out the “trove” of art and claims any he likes. He boasts once more of the unwavering glory of his civilization—and then adjourns the game by thanking his fellow historians for coming.

Victory Table

Epoch	Economy	Agriculture	Arts	War
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				