Stone-Weapons-Scroll

Players: 2 – 4
Age: 10 and up
Playing time: 45 minutes

People living in border region had never had an easy life. At times when, by chance, they were not afflicted by raids of their enemies, people suffered from fights among princes who tried to enforce their own laws. However, the times are changing. The new king succeeds to the throne and decides to get rid of both problems at once. The nobleman that will be the first to build a firm castle in the border region will be entrusted with the whole area and life-long protection against the enemies. You can become one of the noblemen and build faster than the others. You can start immediately to build, strengthen your economy or build your army. You just choose the way of stone, scroll or weapons.

Game components

4 castle ground-plan cards
52 wooden castle parts (24 towers, 20 ramparts, 8 gates)
179 cardboard resource tokens
48 offer cards (20 building parts, 16 armed actions, 12 development cards)
22 action cards (8 offensive cards, 8 retaliation cards, 6 defense cards)
24 combat cards
1 starting player card
1 mood card
1 rule book

Game Set up

Before starting playing for the first time, carefully punch out the resources and ground plans of castles from the cardboard frame.



offer cards *action cards* *combat cards*

In the middle of the table make a pile of resources and a pile of castle parts. OFFER, ACTION and COMBAT cards shuffle separately and place in piles so that everybody can reach them. Combat cards are placed red side up at the beginning of the game.

Place the MOOD CARD nearby, orange side up. At this moment you follow the symbols on the orange side of combat cards.


card mood

Each player takes a CASTLE GROUND-PLAN CARD and places it in front of him/herself.


castle ground-plan card



The oldest player takes the STARTING PLAYER CARD and puts it near his/her castle. The player owning this card starts the given round and after finishing it hands it over to the player in clockwise direction.

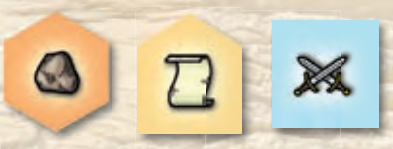
Game Objective

Your goal is to build your castle faster than your opponents.

How to Play

The game is divided into rounds. Each round consists of several phases:

1. resource gathering
2. offer cards turning
3. combat
4. purchase
5. end of the round



1. Resources

At the beginning of each round all players take **3 pieces** of each resource (stone, scroll and weapons) and place them so that everybody can see them. The resources are a subject of combat and at the end of the round they are used to buy cards.

2. Offer cards

The FIRST PLAYER turns the top OFFER CARDS, always two more than the number of players in the game (in 2 players 4 cards, in 3 players 5 cards, in 4 players 6 cards). Then the cards are placed in a row in the middle of the table. These cards are OFFER CARDS for the given round and they can contain BUILDING PARTS, ARMED ACTIONS and DEVELOPMENT CARDS. At the end of the round the players can buy these cards but for the time being they just take a look at the offer.

Example: *Game in the first round for three players. Each player has taken 3 pieces of each resource and at the same time the STARTING PLAYER has put on the table five offer cards.*



3. Combat

Each player has 2 neighbors he/she fights with each round. You wage attacks against your left-hand neighbor and your right-hand neighbor in turn wages attacks against you. The combat goes on clockwise.

Curse of combat



The STARTING PLAYER takes one COMBAT CARD and places it orange side up between him/herself and his/her neighbor on the left side. This means the opponent is challenged to fight. The COMBAT CARD contains a certain number of symbols of stone, scroll and weapons (eg. two weapons, one stone and one scroll). The players take a brief look at the card and then the fight ensues. The fight is similar to that of the well-known "STONE, SCISSORS, SCROLL" game. Both players clench their fist and stretch their arm in front of themselves. Then they make three short moves and count aloud one, two, three. When saying three, both players choose one of three symbols: clenched fist for stone, open palm for scroll or two stretched fingers for weapons. The stone beats the weapons, weapons beat the scroll and scroll beats the stone.

Note: *You can see the individual symbols as three possible strategies. The stone means firm defensive position, weapons represent fast attack and scroll stands for negotiation. Strong defense can stop the attack, fast attack leaves no space to negotiation and skillful diplomacy can get through any defense.*

Unlike the ordinary game it is not just about who wins but what they win. The COMBAT CARD enters the game here. The winner gets resources corresponding to the symbol he/she beat the opponent with, the amount is the same as indicated on the card. In case of the above mentioned card the winner receives two weapons if he/she won thanks to weapons, one scroll if he/she won thanks to scroll and one stone if stone was used. Here you have big space for strategy. You must take into consideration how much of each resource your opponent can win, what resources in the particular round they need but above all you must guess the way your opponents think. However, **you must think fast**! You should not think over one card longer than a few seconds.

Example: *What symbol were you to choose in case of the above mentioned COMBAT CARD? Weapons are at hand (you can win two). You can also take a stone and stop all opponent's weapons. The stone is always at hand and even a small booty is better than a loss. What if the enemy thinks in the same way? Then scroll would come as a surprise but what if he/she really goes for weapons?*

In case you use the same symbol the combat starts again immediately. If it is not resolved the third time, it is over, there is no winner and no booty.

Booty (combat prize)
The winner immediately claims his/her booty. You take the resources corresponding to the symbol you used to win the combat, in the quantity indicated on the COMBAT CARD and place it in front of yourself. If the opponent is short of resources, you get just what he/she has.

Example: *During the combat for the card above both players think along the same lines. They don´t want to take a risk that the opponent will go for weapons so both of them choose a stone. There is no winner in this case and the combat restarts. Since both players think the same and use scroll this time, they start the third attempt. If there is no winner even this time, there is a draw. The first player insists on scroll and the other one chooses weapons this time. Good choice. He/she is declared winner and gets two weapons from the first player (there are 2 weapons symbols on the COMBAT CARD). The first player, however, owns just one card so the winner gets only one remaining weapon.*

The Combat continues
Now the game goes on with another fight, in clockwise direction. The player who has just been attacked attacks his/her neighbor on the left side in the same way. Then this player attack the next one and finally the circle is closed when the last player attacks the STARTING PLAYER. Each player in the given round fights two times – once he/she attacks and then is attacked. When playing in two first the STARTING PLAYER attacks the other one and then the other way round. After the combat it is time for purchase.

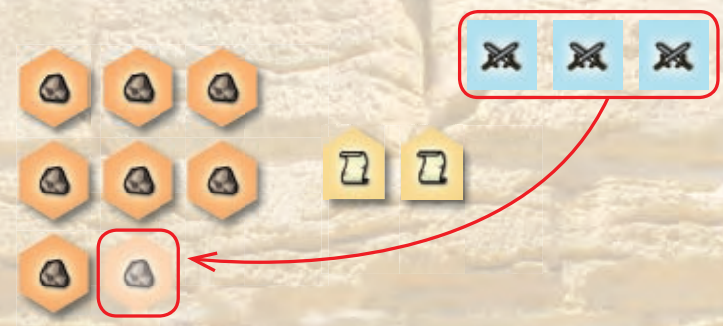
4. Purchase
Now you can bid for OFFER CARDS placed on the table. Each card shows its minimal price. Building parts are paid in stones, DEVELOPMENT CARDS with scroll and ARMED ACTIONS are paid with weapons. The STARTING PLAYER can now choose one or two cards that will be auctioned.

A simplified case: The STARTING PLAYER takes just one card and announces which one it is and for what price he/she wishes to buy. The price must be adequate to the type of resource and cannot be lower than indicated on the card.

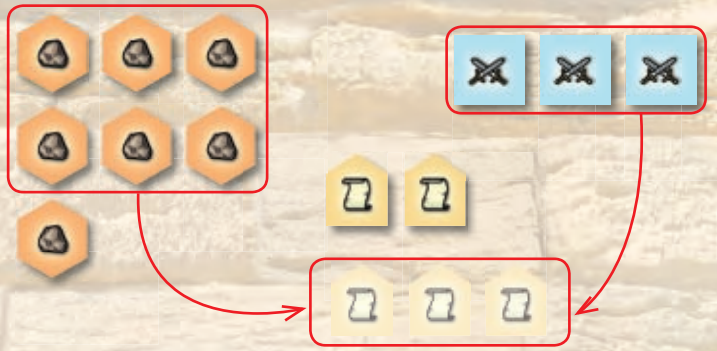
Other players in clockwise direction can either bid higher price or pass. The player who chose the card has an advantage during bidding. At the moment it´s his/her turn so it is not necessary to outbid but only to offer the same price as the highest bid. Then the auction goes on until everybody except for one pass. This one has to pay the price he/she offered. If he/she does not have enough resources for that, he/she must pay the rest with other resources. However, for each missing resource, it is necessary to pay **three resources of a kind**. It is not allowed to bid higher than one can afford.

Example: *You own 7 stones, 2 scrolls and 3 weapons.*

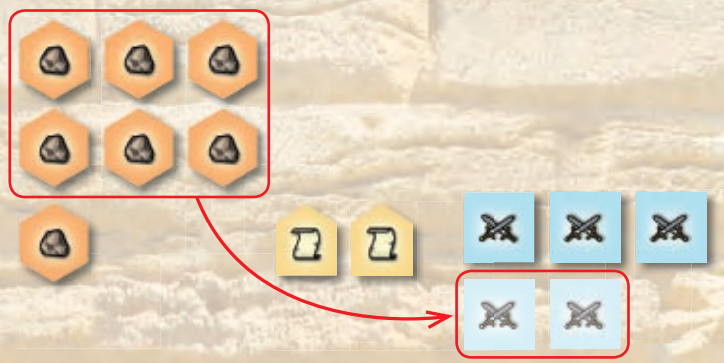
When buying BUILDING PARTS you can pay up to 8 stones (using 3 weapons instead of the missing stone).



When buying DEVELOPMENT CARDS you can pay maximum 5 scrolls (you pay 3 weapons instead of the missing three scrolls)



If you are interested in ARMED ACTIONS, you can use maximum 5 weapons (you pay 6 stones instead of the missing 2 weapons). The remaining stone and 2 scrolls are not usable at this point.



You can also choose two cards for the auction. If they are of the same type, the situation is the same as if only one card is auctioned. Only the minimal bid is an addition of prices of both cards.

If you choose cards of different types, you must offer a combined price. For example for a BUILDING PART and a DEVELOPMENT CARD you must offer stones at least worth the BUILDING PART and scroll at least worth the DEVELOPMENT CARD.
If another player wants to bid, it is necessary to respect both prices and increase at least one of them. So it is not important how many stones this player is willing to pay more if he/she fails to pay the required sum of scroll. So it is recommended that during more complicated auctions the players should separate the offered price from their resources so that it is clear how much is offered and how much one can still afford to pay.

Example: *You have 6 stones, 8 scrolls and 9 weapons. A BUILDING PART for 7 stones is on offer and you are pretty much interested. However, other players have more stones and you are afraid somebody might outbid you. So you decide to auction ARMED ACTIONS together with this card. You offer 7 stones and 10 weapons, separate corresponding resources in order for the others to see what amount is paid. In this case you use three scrolls instead of one stone and three scrolls instead of one weapon. So you used all except two scrolls which you cannot even use in this auction. Other players have to offer at least 8 stones and 10 weapons or 7 stones and 11 weapons if they want to outbid you. Nobody has enough weapons so you have won. If, however, you start with the minimal price and offer 7 stones and 5 weapons, another player could increase the offer, for example to 10 stones and 5 weapons, which would be the price you would not be able to offset.*



You **immediately use** the cards you bought (see below) and the auction goes on. The next player in clockwise direction has the option to choose one or two cards and start the bidding. You can also pass – it may happen that either you do not want to participate or you have no resources for the card. **It is not possible to choose a card for the auction you are not able to offer the minimal price.**

The auction comes to an end when there are no more cards left or when all players have had the possibility to choose cards to the auction. The rest of the cards are put aside on the discard pile, which is reshuffled when OFFER CARDS are depleted.

AUCTION CARDS USE

Development cards



You pay with scroll for DEVELOPMENT CARDS and these cards represent various areas of economy.

- Some cards **enable** you to **obtain more resources** during the gathering phase (eg. when obtaining *Mining*, you get 5 stones instead of three)
- Some cards **give you a discount during purchase** (eg. when obtaining *Building*, you pay for BUILDING PARTS two resources less than you offered in the auction so you can always bid two more than you can afford to really pay). During one auction it is possible to use just **one** card. If you auction two BUILDING PARTS, you get the discount from Building only once. If you auction a BUILDING PART and a DEVELOPMENT CARD, you cannot use *Building and Science* at the same time. If you own both of these cards, you must make a choice, which discount to use.
- Some cards enable resource **exchange** at a better rate.

If you buy a DEVELOPMENT CARD, put it in front of yourself and from now on you can use its benefits. You can use the discounts and better exchange rate in the next auction in the same round (but never to pay the purchase price of this card).

Armed action



ARMED ACTION is paid with weapons and it offers you one to four ACTION CARDS. The OFFER CARD is discarded right away on the discard pile and you can take an adequate number of ACTION CARDS. You keep these ACTION CARDS in hand without showing them to the others and you can use them in combat phases in the following rounds.

Types of ACTION CARDS:



- **OFFENSIVE ACTION** can be used when attacking. So if you challenge a player on your left-hand side by turning the combat card. What is important is the arrow on top of the card, which points to the left, to the left neighbor. So you cannot use this card against your right neighbor who is challenging you. The card always indicates when it is to be used and what is the effect. Some cards are used even before the attack (after turning the combat card but before choosing the symbols), some are used after victorious or lost attack.



- **RETALIATION ACTION** can be used against your opponent on the right after being attacked by this player (regardless of the outcome of the combat). The arrow pointing to the right, to the right neighbor is what matters here. So it is not possible to use this card against your left neighbor. Retaliation actions are used right after the combat (after the winner gets the reward) and the effect is always indicated on the card.



- **DEFENSE CARD** serves as defense against either OFFENSIVE or RETALIATION ACTION.

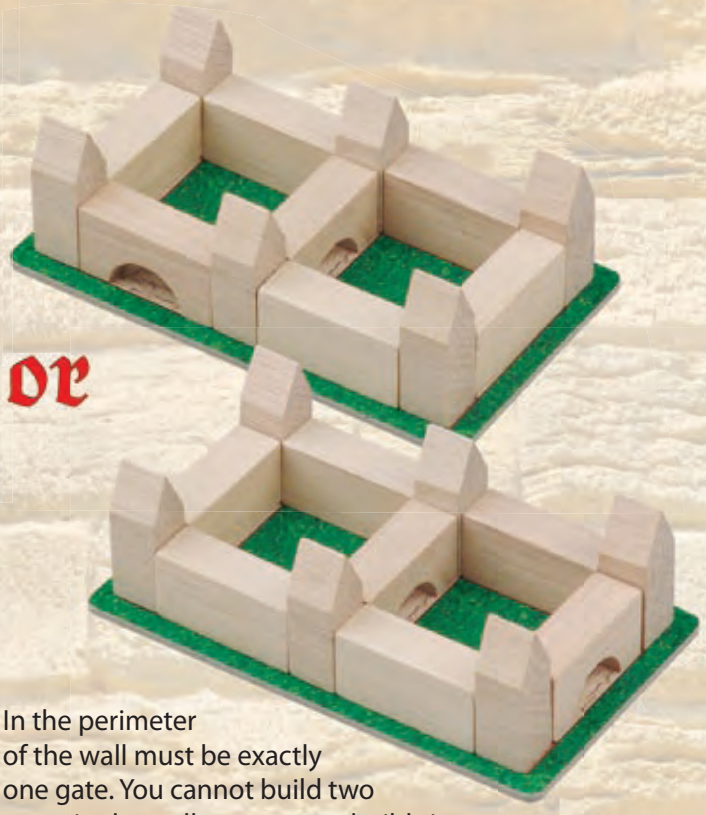
In each round you can use only **one** OFFENSIVE ACTION and one RETALIATION ACTION. Only if the victim uses successfully the DEFENCE action can you use another card of the same type. The action cards that have been used are discarded on another pile, which is reshuffled after the cards are depleted. In case you run out of cards and your are to draw a card, you randomly take these cards from your opponent that has the highest number of cards in hand. If it is you who has the highest number, bad luck, you do not get any more cards.

Example: *You attack and turn the combat card. You see a lot of resources on the picture. You decide to use an offensive action before the combat – "Trap" – to win without a fight. However, your enemy plays the card "Defense". Both cards are discarded without any effect. At this moment you could play another card of similar type (even "Trap" again) but since you have none, the combat starts.*
Your enemy wins the combat. You can, however, play an offensive action "Truce", which is used after the lost fight. Since your enemy does not have any other "defense" card, so "Truce" holds and the combat ends in a draw. At this moment your enemy replies with a Retaliation action "Raid" and wants to rob you of two pieces of resources. You could play "Defense" but you have only one so you prefer not to use it and let your enemy realize "Raid". If you played "Defense", your opponent could try another "Retaliation Action". But in this way the combat is definitively over.

Building Parts



BUILDING PARTS are paid with stones and they enable you to build a castle to win. The card shows either a tower, wall or gate or a more complex construction consisting of more parts. Once you have bought the card, you **must immediately** build a piece of the castle on your ground plan, exactly following the shape. Then you discard the card on a discarding pile. A complete castle consists of six towers connected with ramparts with one gate. Another gate separates the two courtyards of the castle. The castle may look like this:



In the perimeter of the wall must be exactly one gate. You cannot build two gates in the wall nor can you build six ramparts. Should you build a second gate in the perimeter wall, instead of it build an ordinary wall. There is no other way to do this. You cannot build a gate if the card tells you to build a wall.

You must build the part of the castle exactly in the shape the card tells you. It is not possible to change the shape or to leave out some parts. You can, however, pull down some of the parts that have been built before and **for each part that has been pulled down you will pay one stone more**. If you cannot or do not want to build the castle part pictured on the card, you can discard it without any effect

Example: *You can finish the castle with any of the following parts. When using the part A you build an ordinary wall instead of the gate. When using the part B, first you must pull down one wall, and pay one stone more.*



A B



Example: *It is not possible to finish the castle using these parts. The part C does not have the right shape. In order for you to use it you must pull down one corner tower or the gate in the middle, depending where you want to place it. Part D has the right shape but you cannot complete the perimeter wall without a gate so even before building this part you must pull down any of the already built walls.*



C D



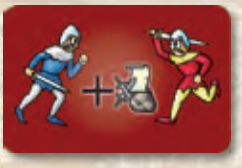
5. End of the Round

The card STARTING PLAYER is handed over to the player on the left and he/she starts another round – resource gathering.



Note: *In an advanced phase of the game during gathering it can happen that there is not enough resources for everybody. At this moment you have the right to exchange them as during purchase – for three scarce resources get one other (or if you own development cards, the exchange rate may be even better). In this way the resources gat back to the bank. If nobody is willing to exchange the resources and there is not enough of them, this type of resource is confiscated and all players must give all their stock back to the bank. Then you can take only the ones that are gathered in this given round.*

Combat mood



When the COMBAT CARD pile is depleted, it is reshuffled and placed the orange side up. Also it means that the game is in an advanced phase and the fights are going to be more intense. Turn the MOOD card so the red side is up. From now on the following rules apply:

- You follow the red side of COMBAT CARDS.
- After successfully playing RETALIATION ACTION you take one more resource of your choice from your enemy (eg. if you use "Sabotage", you destroy half of your opponent´s stones and then you take one stone more).

End of the Game

The game ends when one of you completes the castle. This player becomes the winner. You do not finish the round. When playing in four there is also a second winner, it is the player sitting opposite the winner. This one never had to fight the winner so it is this player who has the best relations with the new Lord of the bordering region.

Advanced rules

If you are familiar with the basic rules and you know how the **OFFENSIVE** and **RETALIATION ACTIONS** work, this is the time for trying out the following variant.

The STARTING PLAYER can decide before his/her attack if the neighbor on the left or on the right will be the target. You decide before the start of the fight and then you draw the COMBAT CARD which is place between you and your enemy. Now the combat follows. The attacked player attacks his/her next neighbor in the same direction etc.. The STARTING PLAYER decided whether the whole round is in the clockwise or counterclockwise direction.

As in the basic variant each player fights with both enemies. The given direction determines the way you can use the ACTION CARDS. Still it holds that the OFFENSIVE CARDS can be played by the attacker, RETALIATION CARS by the attacked player. It is not necessarily always in the same direction. Now you do not care about the arrows on the top of the card. So advanced players can better use the tactics of directing their attacks.

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Authors´s games have been being published for more than 10 years in our country as well as abroad. In 2007 his game was awarded internationally Best strategic game of the year.



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