

The Rise and Fall of Galactic Empires

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Card Manifest

A game for two to four immortals, plays in about 500 millenia (an hour).

Introduction

And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

— *Percy Bysshe Shelley. Ozymandias*

Rise is a 2- to 4-player board game depicting the life cycle of space-faring civilizations over millennia. Each player takes the role of a powerful immortal seeking to have the most influence over humanity, whether benevolent investment or malevolent destruction.

Components

A complete set of *Rise* includes:

- 22 hexagonal sector tiles.
- A deck of 52 cards, in four different colors.
- 24 black, blue, red, and white wooden disks.
- Influence gems in white (1s) and red (5s).
- This rule book.

The Galaxy

Sector tiles depict an enormous expanse of space. This expanse is reduced down to a natural resource value of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. A sector's value may be further augmented by influence gems placed on the tile.

IMPORTANT

The **value** of a sector is always the sum of the natural resources and the invested influence.

Sectors are kept face-down, and drawn when a player explores a new region of space. The location of a sector is always chosen before that sector is revealed.

NOTE

Face-up sectors are **explored**. **Unexplored** sectors are any sectors that (1) don't yet have a tile and (2) are adjacent to explored sectors.

Civilizations

The wooden disks represent the various archetypical civilizations (civs). At the beginning of the game, these have yet to rise to any real place in the galaxy, and all sit in a pool at the side of the table. Players will place them on sector tiles to expand their influence, and they might collapse into obscurity whenever a player harvests a card of their color.

Each sector tile holds a single civ stack. Only the top civ is active, benefiting from the value of the sector. The stack serves as a historical record of expansion in the sector. A sector with no civs is **empty**.

When a civilization disk is destroyed, it goes to the active player. At the end of the game, these count for influence equal to the harvest value of their color. Some card effects also spend these dead disks, returning them to the common pool.

A game of *Rise* lasts only as long as there are civs in the common pool. At the end of the turn where the last civ is placed, the game ends.

Cards

The deck of cards represents archetypical historical events, the kind that get referenced in speech enough to become a stand-in for anything similar. Each card has a color of civilization that it influences, a title, and some rules text.

There are four major types of cards:

NOTE

These should be given more evocative names.

- **Actions** happen when the card is played or revealed for exploration.
- **Triggered effects** happen when the specified trigger occurs.
- **Timed effects** happen each turn, as long as the card is active.

- **Static effects** continuously apply as long the card is active.

NOTE

Static and timed effects will potentially be laid out landscape, while actions and triggered effects will be laid out in portrait.

At the beginning of the game, each player has three cards in their hand and the market has three cards face-up on the side of the playing area.

Players will place cards on their own discard piles, recovering their discard in its entirety when their hand is empty. The top card of each player's discard pile is considered "active".

TIP

If you're going to spend several turns auctioning or harvesting, get a useful active effect out first.

Players will place cards in the market up for auction to expand the range of powers their immortal avatars wield. Purchased cards will be placed in the high-bidder's hand. When harvested, cards will be buried on the bottom of the deck.

Set Up

1. Shuffle the sector tiles and draw one to place in the middle of the playing area to make the initial explored sector.
2. Shuffle the deck and place three face-up cards to the side of the playing area to make the initial market.
3. Deal three more cards to each player to make their initial hands. Players may look at their hands. One time only, players may bury any number of cards and draw replacements from the deck. If any player chooses this option, the deck should be reshuffled.
4. Give nine influence to each player (four white gems and one red gem) to make their initial banks. Place the rest near the market.
5. Place the disks in a common pool reachable by all players.

Sequence of Play

A turn in *Rise* consists of a single action:

- Play a card from your hand to **expand**.
- Play a card from your hand for its **event**.
- **Auction** a market card or any player's active card.
- **Harvest** a card from your hand for its influence value.

Cards that trigger "at start/end of turn" happen before/after your action, respectively. If you have no cards in your hand and want to do anything but auction, pick up your discard pile after triggering any "at start of turn" active effect.

After "at end of turn" actions trigger:

- If no civs are left in the pool, end the game.
- If the market has less than three cards, add enough cards from the deck to refill it.

Expand

Expansion adds civs to the galaxy and gives you influence to spend. If you expand into a new sector, you also take an exploration effect.

1. Play a card. This card determines what color you expand with. This card isn't placed on your discard pile until the end of the action.
2. Place a disk of that color.
 - If that color is currently active in the galaxy, you may place in any sector adjacent to where it's active.
 - Otherwise, you may place in any empty or unexplored sector.
3. If you placed in an unexplored sector, explore.
 - a. Draw a new sector and place it under the disk.
 - b. Reveal the top card of the deck and—if it has an action—execute it.
4. Gain influence gems equal to the sector's value.
5. Discard your played card. It is now active.

NOTE

If no disks of your card's color remain, you may expand without placing a disk. However, you don't gain influence nor explore. This is generally done only when the event has no action or you don't want the event's action.

Event

Events provide powerful and widely-varied effects, but seldom any income. Use them wisely.

1. Play a card with an action. This card isn't placed on your discard pile until the end of the action.
2. Read that action and do what it says.
3. Discard your played card. It is now active.

NOTE

The current card layout places action rules text above a horizontal line, and triggered rules text below a horizontal line. As a general rule, if a card sounds like an action, it probably is.

Auction

Auctions are the primary way of getting new cards into players' hands. If you auction from the market, you'll either get the card or some influence. Auctioning someone's active card is sometimes the only way to deal with a powerful effect.

1. Choose a card to auction, placing it in front of you, facing out.
2. Hide your influence gems and take zero or more into your hand as your bid.
3. When you've chosen your bid, hold your fist over the playing area.
4. Once all players have chosen, reveal your bids by opening your fists.
5. The high-bidder wins the card, which goes into their hand.
 - It goes into their hand even if it was formerly their active card.
 - The active player breaks ties.
6. The high-bidder pays their bid as follows, everyone else keeps their bid.
 - A market card: pay the active player; the active player pays the bank.
 - An active card: pay the former owner; the former owner pays the active player.

Harvest

When a civilization has reached its peak, harvesting that color of cards is the best way to lock in the influence it provides. A harvest also forces players to pay influence to support the color, should they care about its value.

1. Choose a card to harvest, placing it in front of you, turned sideways. This card determines what color you get value from.
2. Sum up the value of each sector where that color is active.
3. Gain that much influence from the bank.
4. **Preservation**
 - a. Hide your influence gems and take zero or more into your hand as your bid.
 - b. When you've chosen your bid, hold your fist over the playing area.
 - c. Once all players have chosen, reveal your bids by opening your fists.
 - d. Sum the total influence bid. Each influence preserves one sector controlled by the harvested color, starting with the highest value sector and continuing down.
 - If there is not enough influence to preserve all that color's sectors, pay all the influence to the bank and destroy that color's active civ in sectors not preserved. The active player breaks ties. Give these destroyed disks to the active player.
 - If there is more than enough, pay the influence used to preserve to the bank and place the rest in any one sector controlled by the harvested color. (The active player chooses.)
5. Trigger any "when harvested" effects.
6. Bury the harvested card on the bottom of the deck.

Scoring and Victory

The object of the game is to hold influence. Influence gems are easier to spend and more stable, but cannot grow in value by themselves. Cards provide effects and opportunities to expand, but are volatile and difficult to spend.

At the end of the game, each player scores influence in three ways:

1. Influence gems are worth their value.
2. Cards are worth their color's harvested value.

3. Dead civs are worth their color's harvested value.

NOTE

A scoring sheet with a column for each player and rows for each color (as well as gems) is recommended for play-testing.

The player with the highest total wins. In the case of a tie, the player with the most influence gems wins. If still tied, the player who would next have taken their turn wins.

Tournament Play

NOTE

These rules are optional, and are not required for 'friendly' play. They are simply offered as guidelines on conducting *Rise* as a competitive game.

1. Play with each player's bank of influence gems kept public (except for right before a bid).
2. After the exploration effect is taken, keep that card revealed on top of the deck instead of turning it back over.
3. Consider using a chess clock or some other timer to restrict calculation during play.

The Empty Hand Variant

Start the game with 0 cards and 18 gems, instead of 3 cards and 9 gems.

This eliminates hidden information in the early game, and makes card evaluation much more important.

Frequently-Asked Questions

In what order does Banii's Ritual execute market events?

The active player chooses the order of event execution.

Does this card provide income when placing disks?

No. Events never provide expansion bonuses when placing disks.

FAQ: Playtesting

How do I build this thing?

Right now? Manually. Working on creating files to make it simpler, but for now, these parts should suffice:

- <http://www.printplaygames.com/product/die-cut-pieces-tiles-and-counters>
 - 22x 2.2" hex tiles for sectors (two sheets from the above link).
- <http://www.printplaygames.com/product/acrylic-gem-10mm>
 - Acrylic gems to represent liquid currency.
 - 40x red \$5s and 60x white \$1s should be enough.
 - The important thing is to have liquidity—poker chips would also work fine.
- <https://www.printplaygames.com/product/25mm-x-7mm-wood-discs>
 - Six disks each in black, blue, white, and red.
- <http://www.printplaygames.com/product/blank-cards>
 - 52 poker-sized cards for constructing your deck.
 - I've been using sharpies to write card text with colored dots down the side.

[X] is broken!

Remember that you can auction cards from the top of anyone's discard pile. Cards are not meant to be equally-powerful, and some are extremely situational. Proper card evaluation is the cornerstone of good play.

FAQ: Design Decisions

Why is the starting player arbitrary?

We've not found any advantage nor disadvantage to being the starting player. This is also why players start the same, aside from the cards dealt.

Why start with nine gems?

Fewer gems makes early-game auctions and preservations much more risky, while more gems makes them much more swingy. This number is still being tuned.

Why start with three cards?

Primarily to give a new player something to latch onto. An official variant is to start with more money (probably somewhere around 16 gems) and no cards, forcing the first move to be an auction. This causes the game to slow down a bit, but also makes it more strategic.

Why is the market three cards?

Arbitrary. It must be more than one, to provide a choice. Some cards count things in the market, so it can't be more than four or five, to restrict the high-end of those.

Why use simultaneous auctions?

For game speed. The high-bidder pays for simplicity, and to keep the game's economy running. Alternate auctions have been suggested, but they either lengthen the game, reduce the expected bidding amounts, or reduce the expected profit for the active player.

Why can't you encourage collapse?

Joshua O'M. suggested a way to modify preservation bids such that you can count your bid against preservation, instead of for it. I don't think this is worth the complexity, but perhaps could be exposed by a card.

Why do you recover your discard at the start of your turn?

To ensure the other players have a chance to auction off your last card played.

How do I survive preservation bids until I can sell my cards?

Joe suggests a "commission" rules change: All players may sell a card when one person sells.

When the active player sells a card all other players have an opportunity to also sell a card of the same color. The active player takes a 1 gem commission from each opponent that sells this way. (Alternatively take 1 gem from the bank)

Why does the game end with the last disk placement?

Primarily to allow players to control the speed of the game. Several other endgames have been suggested, but Sage says it best:

“*I think the temptation is to make endgame 'The End of History' where this empire is different than all those that came before it, and the end board state is the end of the story.*

But this is The Rise and Fall of Galactic Empires. There is no end to the 'story' of it, there will always be another empire. So ending at some arbitrary point is the only ending, really. — Sage LaTorra

Card Manifest

Table 1. Manifest

color	name	text
black	The Altemian Purge	Harvest a card from the market.
black	The Awakening	Add a disk and an influence gem to any empty sector.
black	Beta Theory	When harvested: gain a card from the market.
black	Black Stars	At end of turn: add an influence gem to this card. When inactive: move all gems from this card to one sector.
black	Dark Ages	Discard your hand.
black	Drakon's Escape	Move a stack to an adjacent sector.
black	Eldritch Theft	Destroy a disk in the pool.
black	From the Dark	Harvest one of your dead disks. Return it to the pool.
black	The One True Path	At start of turn: recover a card from your discard.
black	Remembrance	Reveal and auction the bottom card of the deck.
black	Spycraft	Execute one opponent's active card.
black	Stasis Pods	Skip preservation.

black	Vote of Confidence	When won: add influence gems equal to your bid to one sector.
blue	Banii Ritual	When harvested: execute all events in the market.
blue	Galactic Union	When won: gain a gem for each occupied sector.
blue	Garthu Spaceport	Draw the top three sectors and replace them in any order.
blue	Jordani Current	Shuffle the deck.
blue	The Living Ocean	Add five gems to one empty sector.
blue	The New Economy	Auction two market cards as one lot. The winner gains four gems.
blue	Permaculture	During Preservation: Before you choose your bid, reveal the top sector tile and add its value to your bid.
blue	Quiet Prosperity	Pay up to three gems into different sectors with exactly one disk.
blue	Ruins of Loni City	Take a gem from each empty sector.
blue	Sustainable Farming	At start of turn: gain two gems.
blue	Treaty of Cheng-Huang	Draw a card for each player. Look at them and choose one to give to each player (including yourself).
blue	Xin Shield Formula	Players may not place disks on occupied sectors.
blue	Zele Research Labs	Gain cards harvested by your opponents.
red	Berserkers of Grotl	Gain a gem for each destroyed red disk.

red	Crusade of the Sun	At end of turn: add a gem to this card. When inactive: choose a color. Place a disk of that color for each gem on this card.
red	Cyri's Treachery	Take a card at random from an opponents hand and put it on your discard. Place Cyri's Treachery in their hand.
red	Fall of Gethi E'Feri	When harvested: destroy all red disks.
red	Fires at Night	Pay a dead disk (to the pool): destroy up to three active disks.
red	March of Ashes	Destroy all non-red market cards.
red	Rites of Memory	Place a discarded card back into its controller's hand.
red	The Ru-Shou Dam	Perform Preservation for all colors at once.
red	Thani Tribes	When won: gain gems equal to the value of all empty sectors.
red	The Titan Blockade	At start of turn: bury a market card.
red	Treasure Vaults	Take all gems from a non-red sector.
red	Wormhole Deception	Place a disk. Move all gems from one adjacent sector into that disk's sector.
red	Wreckage of the Xyri	Stacks cost two gems to preserve.
white	Abdication of the Six Popes	Choose a color. Execute all market cards of that color, then bury them.
white	Ancient Secrets	When won: place on any player's discard pile. When harvested: gain twice as much influence.
white		

	The Catharsis Simulation	Choose a color. Reveal cards from the deck until you find a card of that color. Auction that card and bury the rest.
white	Chera's Tithe	Choose a color. Harvest all cards of that color from your hand. (Preservation happens only once.)
white	Civil Reprogramming	Draw the top three cards of the deck and replace them in any order. When won: execute this card.
white	Cocoon	When harvested: place on any player's discard pile.
white	Dead Tree Distraction	After preservation: recover a card from your discard matching the color of any disk preserved.
white	Genesis Device	Add gems to the lowest-value sector until it equals the highest-value sector's value.
white	Library of Dithia	At start of turn: gain a white card from the market.
white	Monoculture	Choose a color. Choose a player to reveal their hand and discard all cards of that color, in any order.
white	Nyri Artifacts	Choose a color. Auction all cards of that color from the market as one lot.
white	Open-Palm Uprising	Choose a color. Move all disks of that color to the top of their respective stacks.
white	Thorwed's Gambit	At start of turn: swap your hand with the market.

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