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Credits

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Suggested Further Reading: Empires of the Sea by Roger Crowley, The Great Siege by Ernle Bradford, Suleiman the Magnificent: Scourge of Heaven by Anthony Cyrpian Bridge, The 1565 Ottoman Malta Campaign Register by Arnold Cassola, The Knights of Malta by Joseph Attard, Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire by Caroline Finkel.

Component Checklist:

- ◊ 166 cards (+3 bonus promo cards for Shadows of Kilforth!)
- ◊ 40 red wooden teardrop tokens
- ◊ 40 green wooden teardrop tokens
- ◊ 22 cardboard attribute modifier tokens
- ◊ 1 first player token
- ◊ 2 rulebooks (one for solo play, and this one!)
- ◊ 1 solo play resource dial

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HISTORIC EPIC BATTLE SYSTEM

The Great Siege of Malta

1565

St. Elmo's Pay

TRISTAN HALL

Rules

Suleiman the Magnificent's 30,000 strong armada descends on the 500 beleaguered Knights of St John and the defending people of Malta, with the express purpose of wiping them from existence, and changing the course of European history forever...

Game Objective

1565, St. Elmo's Pay retells the story of the Greatest Siege in History: The Great Siege of Malta. The winner will be the first player to:

- ✧ Destroy two Frontiers of enemy troops at The Great Siege of Malta, or
- ✧ Destroy their opponent's Leader, or
- ✧ Have their opponent run out of cards in their card deck.

Components

Objective Decks

Each player has their own Objective deck, which is placed in the same set order each game. The players race to defeat each of the Objectives in their deck, in alphabetical order, to reach their final Objective card - The Great Siege of Malta. Once that's revealed, they can begin dealing damage to Frontiers of enemy troops (represented by Frontier cards) to try and win the game.

Advanced Objective Variant: Players may wish to shuffle their Objective decks to mix things up, but they must keep Objective G as their last Objective.



Card Decks

Each player has their own unique card deck that reflects the forces under their control and the tactics they'll employ to win The Great Siege of Malta. A player's deck contains army cards which may be played to the battlefield. Army cards consist of Units, Characters, and a Leader.



Units represent bands of fighting men and may be one of five types: Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry, Navy, or Ranged.



Characters represent the individuals who command the army.



Leaders are Characters in all respects, with one exception: if a player's Leader is destroyed, they lose the game.

A player's deck also contains the following strategic and tactical elements.



Events represent unexpected twists. An event is a one-use effect which, after being paid for and resolved, is placed on the player's discard pile.



Tactics represent battle capabilities. A tactics card is placed in the player's reserve area.



Attachments represent enhanced capabilities. An attachment specifies what it can be attached to, and usually alters the attached card's capabilities.

Advanced Deck Variant: Players may agree to customise their faction decks before play by removing cards as they wish, in which case both players must have a minimum deck size of 50 cards.



Card Attributes

- Name** name of this card.
- Traits** attributes that may be referenced by card effects.
- Type** defines the rules associated with this card.
- Cost (red wax seal)** the resource cost to play this card.
- Zeal (cross)** this card's Zeal Battle Value.
- Might (cannon)** this card's Might Battle Value.
- Health (teardrop)** the amount of damage required to destroy this card.
- Resources (green wax seal)** the number of resources this card can generate.
- Abilities** this card's special capabilities.
- Flavour** historical quote or background; no game effect.
- Card number** identifies this card.



Combining Games

To combine 1565, *St. Elmo's Pay* with another Historic Epic Battle System game such as 1066, *Tears to Many Mothers* players simply choose any faction's card and Objective deck to play with, e.g. Normans Vs. Ottomans. The game terms 'Frontier' and 'Wedge' are interchangeable.

Gameplay

1565, St. Elmo's Pay is played over a number of rounds. Each round, players will take turns to play cards to the battlefield, play tactics cards to their reserve area, and execute card abilities in an attempt to meet their Objectives as quickly as possible and then deal damage to Frontiers to win the game.

Each round consists of the following four phases:

1. Preparation
2. Deployment
3. Frontier
4. Objective

1. Preparation Phase

The following steps are performed in order.

Step 1: Victory Check

If neither player has cards in their card deck, the game immediately ends in a tie. If one player has no cards in their draw deck, their opponent immediately wins the game.

Step 2: Draw Cards

Each player with more than 6 cards in hand must choose and discard cards from their hand until they have 6 cards in hand.

Each player then simultaneously draws 2 cards. If a player only has 1 card remaining in their card deck, they draw that 1 card instead. (In the first round, this means that each player will now have 6 cards.)

Advanced Drafting Variant: Each player draws 3 cards - or as many as are left in their draw deck if there are fewer than 3 remaining - then discards 1 card from their hand; not being limited to those just drawn. Or alternatively, players can draw 4 cards and discard 2 using these same rules. Both players should be aware that they will go through their decks much more quickly with this variant.

Step 3: Ready Cards

Ready all cards in play.

Readying and Tiring Cards
Cards enter play in a Ready (upright) state. Some uses of cards require that a player Tires the card (rotate it 90 degrees to the horizontal position). This is only allowed if the card is in-play and in a Ready state. To Ready a card means returning it to its Ready state.



2. Deployment Phase

Starting with the player who has the first player marker, players alternate taking deployment turns. On a deployment turn, the player chooses one of the following:

- ❑ Play a card
- ❑ Execute an Action
- ❑ Sacrifice a card
- ❑ Pass

The first player to pass in this phase immediately takes the first player marker.

When a player passes, they can take no more deployment turns this phase. Their opponent may continue to take deployment turns until also deciding to pass. When both players have passed, the deployment phase is complete.

Playing A Card

The player plays a card from their hand, first paying its cost using resources, and then placing the card into play under that player's control.

Generating Resources

A player can generate resources in any combination of the following two methods, and each method can be used multiple times until the required resources are generated:

- ❑ Discard 1 card from their hand to generate 1 resource.
- ❑ Tire a Ready card they control to generate resources equal to its Resource attribute.

Exception: a card with "Relentless" can be played from the top of a discard pile *before* cards discarded to pay for it would be discarded on top of it.

Any excess resources cannot be saved. Resource generation can be performed anytime it's required, even on another player's turn.

Units and Characters: an army card must be placed in a Frontier, and must be on the player's side of the battlefield. A Frontier that already contains 3 army cards on the player's side of the battlefield cannot be chosen. Once chosen, the card must be placed in the lowest numbered Row available in that Frontier (i.e. the empty spot closest to the Frontier card in the middle of the table).

This lowest numbered Row rule must also be followed each time a Unit or Character is moved for any reason. Frontiers do not count as a Row, so there is no 'Row 0.'



Note: When an army card is removed from the battlefield, each card in that Frontier on that side of the battlefield must be moved one Row closer to the Frontier card, ensuring that there are no empty spots between an army card and its Frontier card.





St. Elmo
Senglea
Birgu



1. Card removed

2. Card in Row below moves up one Row

Attachments: an attachment card is attached to (placed adjacent to or overlapping) an eligible game element as specified on the attachment card. It is not considered an army card and does not count towards Frontier card limits.

Tactics: a tactics card must be placed in the player's reserve area, which is not considered part of the battlefield. Once in play, a tactics card cannot be moved or removed except by card effects.



Note: If a game element with attachments leaves play, all of its attachments are discarded first.

Executing An Action

The player executes one Action ability on a Ready card they control (a player controls a card if it's in play and it originally came from their card deck). They first Tire the card, then resolve the Action.

A player can also use this deployment turn option to execute one Action ability on an Event card in their hand. The player must first pay the event card's cost using resources. Its effect is then resolved, after which the event card is placed on the player's discard pile. Event cards never enter play.

Sacrificing A Card

The player chooses a non-Leader card they control on their side of the battlefield and removes it from play (making sure to leave no empty spots in that Frontier), placing it on their discard pile.



Note: Sacrificing a card is not considered to be destroying a card.



3. Frontier Phase

Only Perform This Phase If: Either player has The Great Siege of Malta Objective in-play at the start of this round. The following two steps are performed in order.

Step 1: Might Combat

Only Perform This Step If: Both players have The Great Siege of Malta Objective in-play at the start of this round. For each Frontier (in order: St. Elmo, Senglea, then Birgu), players resolve a Might Battle.

In a Might Battle, each player sums up their Might Total Battle Value (TBV) of all Ready cards they control at that Frontier:

- ❑ If one player has a higher TBV than the other, then that player deals damage to that Frontier (using their colour tokens) equal to the amount by which their TBV exceeds their opponent's TBV.
- ❑ If the TBVs are equal, even if 0, then each player deals 1 damage (in their respective colour tokens) to that Frontier.

Example: At St. Elmo, Matthew's total Might on Ready cards is 3 and Susannah's is 1. Matthew places 2 damage tokens of his colour on St. Elmo. At Senglea, both players have 0 Might, so they each place 1 damage on Senglea.

Step 2: Zeal Combat

For each Frontier (in order: St. Elmo, Senglea, then Birgu), the players resolve a Zeal Battle.

In a Zeal Battle, each player sums up their Total Battle Value (TBV) in Zeal of all Ready cards they control at that Frontier:

- ❑ If one player has a higher TBV than the other, then that player deals 1 damage (using their colour tokens) to that Frontier.
- ❑ If the TBVs are equal, and greater than 0, then each player deals 1 damage (using their respective colour tokens) to that Frontier.
- ❑ If the TBVs are both 0, then no damage is dealt.

A player who does not have The Great Siege of Malta Objective in play at the start of the round cannot deal damage to a Frontier, even if they fulfil one of the above conditions. In this case, having a greater TBV simply has the benefit of stopping their opponent from dealing damage.

Winning a Frontier

Once a player places damage tokens (of their colour) on a Frontier equal to that Frontier's Health (e.g. 12 for Birgu), they claim that Frontier and place it in front of them, removing it from the battlefield.

Tie Breaker: If both players place their final damage token on a Frontier at the same time:

- ❑ The player with the highest Might Total Battle Value at that Frontier claims it.
- ❑ If there is still a tie, the player with the highest Zeal Total Battle Value at that Frontier claims it.
- ❑ If there is still a tie, the player with the first player marker claims it.

All rules continue to apply as if the Frontier card were still there, but no more Frontier Battles will occur at that Frontier.

The first player to claim two Frontiers wins the game!

Objective Attributes

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Name | name of this card. |
| 2. Battle Attribute | a Might or Zeal Battle Value. |
| 3. Health | defines the damage needed to destroy this Objective. |
| 4. Letter | defines the order in which this Objective appears. |
| 5. Abilities | this card's special capabilities. |



4. Objective Phase

Skip: If a player's current Objective is The Great Siege of Malta, they skip this phase.

Starting with the player who has the first player marker, each player makes one attempt to destroy the topmost Objective of their Objective deck.

Each Objective has a **Battle** attribute, either **Might** or **Zeal**, and a **Battle Value** in that attribute. The player sums up the **Total Battle Value** in that attribute (either **Might** or **Zeal**) of all **Ready** cards they control in the battlefield. If that total exceeds the Objective's **Battle Value**, then the player deals damage to the Objective equal to the amount by which it's exceeded, indicated by placing damage tokens on the Objective.

An Objective is destroyed if it has damage equal to or more than its **Health**.

Example: *the Objective's battle attribute is Might, with a Battle Value of 2. Matthew has three Ready units on the battlefield, whose Total Battle Value in Might is 8. Matthew deals 6 damage to the Objective. The Objective's Health is 6, so the Objective is destroyed.*

If the Objective is destroyed, fulfil any "When destroyed" effects on the card, then remove the Objective from the game. This will reveal a new Objective to be battled next round. Any damage that exceeded the destroyed Objective's **Health** is not applied to this next Objective.

If an Objective is not destroyed, its damage remains.

Card Abilities

Card abilities come in four types - **Action**, **Response**, **When Played**, and **Constant**. Abilities of the first three types are identified by a matching precursor.

Example: "Action: Deal 1 damage ..."

An ability without a precursor is a **Constant** effect, being mandatory and constantly in force while the card is in-play.

Many Abilities have a flavour title, which can be found after any precursor and before the ability's effect. These flavour titles have no effect on the game, they're simply a thematic shorthand to help players remember the ability's effect.

Example: "Learned" has no effect in the following ability "When Played: Learned - Draw 1 card."

If a card has multiple abilities, only one of its abilities can be initiated at a time.

Card Effect Rule: If the text on a card contradicts the rules, the text on the card takes precedence.

Action Abilities

An Action ability can only be initiated when performing the 'Execute an Action' option as a deployment turn.

To be initiated, an Action must fulfil one of the following conditions:

- ❑ Be on a Ready card the player controls - they Tire the card, then resolve the Action.
- ❑ Be on an Event card in the player's hand - they pay the event card's cost using resources, resolve the Action, and then place the event card on their discard pile.



Response Abilities

A Response can only be initiated immediately after its triggering condition occurs, and before any other game processes or card effects have occurred. It interrupts the game and resolves before its triggering condition resolves.

A Response is usually in the form of either “Cancel X” or “when X occurs, do this”, where X is the triggering condition.

Example: Matthew pays 3 resources and plays the Order of Malta “St. Elmo’s Pay” event card. Susannah pays 2 resources even though it is not her turn and plays her “Pitiless Butchery” event, initiating its Response which is to cancel Matthew’s “St. Elmo’s Pay”.

To be initiated, a Response must fulfil one of the following conditions:

- ❑ Be on a Ready card the player controls - they Tire the card, and then resolve the Response.
- ❑ On an Event card in the player’s hand - they pay the event card’s cost using resources, resolve the Response, and then place the event card on their discard pile.

It’s possible for a Response to trigger another Response, and so on, causing a stack of Responses to be resolved. These are resolved in Last-In-First-Out order, with the stack being completed when the original triggering condition is resolved (which includes being cancelled).

Multiple Abilities: If a card has more than one Action and/or Response listed, the player can choose only one of these to execute.

Example: The “Pitiless Butchery” card has a Response and an Action ability to choose from, but only one can be resolved when it is played.

Cancellations: Only an ability is ever cancelled. A cancellation never repeals the costs incurred in initiating the cancelled ability, such as Tiring the card or paying for the event.

When Played Abilities

A When Played ability can only be initiated at the moment its card enters play. Initiation is optional, and the card doesn’t need to be set to Tired to initiate the ability.

Constant Abilities

A Constant ability is enforced while it is in play. Its effect is mandatory. Unless it specifically says otherwise, a Constant ability only applies to cards belonging to its faction.

Common Terms

Terms frequently used on card abilities include:

- Cost -X:** Reduce the cost of the named cards by X. Multiple Cost abilities can be used to reduce a card’s cost, but a card’s cost cannot be reduced below 0.
- Destroy:** Remove the card from play and place it face-up in its owner’s discard pile. A card may be destroyed directly by a card effect, but is also destroyed if it has damage tokens equal to or more than its Health.
- Discard:** Discarded cards must always be discarded from the player’s hand - not from cards in play - face-up into that player’s discard pile. Players may peruse either player’s discard pile, but may not change the order of those cards.
- Enemy:** An opponent’s army card in the battlefield.

Miscellaneous Rules

Once all modifiers are taken into account, if a value is below 0, it is set to 0.

Damage tokens are not limited to those provided. If more are needed, any substitute can be used.

Solo: abilities are ignored in the two player game, see the Solo rule book for full details on solo play.