

GRAND CONQUEST®
by Donald Bengé

DESCRIPTION

GRAND CONQUEST® is played on a game board printed with a land and water map. Each of the four large islands has a cluster of five spaces enclosed in a red fortress-like structure, which are the capitols. A moat surrounds each capitol. Five drawbridges connect the capitol spaces with the rest of the board.

The island in the center has two access roads that terminate in five spaces called the "Quexes." Access to the center island and the Quexes is the same from any side.

Each player starts with twenty-four land pieces and six vessels that can be moved about on the map. All pieces and vessels move from space to space following the roads or sea-lanes. Between the spaces and roads are fields connected with paths via bridges and under passes. Soldiers, knights and camels are the only pieces that can move into the fields. Entry into the fields is done from any of the spaces designated with three steps. Pieces may move from one island to another across connecting bridges. Vessels may sail under these bridges. Sea spaces near the shores that are marked with anchors join land spaces, making seaports where pieces may board vessels.

HOW TO PLAY

Each player chooses a side, North, South, East or West (see compass) and places his pieces in the capitol and nearby spaces as indicated on the game board. Spaces at sea near each capitol are marked as the starting positions of the vessels.

South begins by making five moves. West then makes ten moves, and North follows with fifteen moves, after which each player makes twenty moves per turn in clockwise rotation. Four consecutive turns is called a round.

A move is made by playing any piece or vessel from one space to an adjacent space following the roads or sea-lanes or by moving in the fields between the spaces and roads. Each piece is limited to two, six, or eight moves per turn as described below. You may move twenty pieces once, or four pieces five times, or move any combination of pieces to total twenty moves per turn. The moves of the pieces need not be consecutive. You may pass your turn before making all of your allotted moves.

The object of the game is to capture the last two land pieces of any opponent or to capture more pieces than you lose. There are two other ways to win, which are explained below.

CAPTURE AND RECAPTURE

You capture an opponent's piece by moving onto his space or field and replacing it with your own. Some pieces cannot make captures. Some pieces and any vessel may be commandeered by enemy pieces that can then move them. Keep account of the pieces and vessels that you capture by placing them in your capture pile.

A "recapture" is a defensive capture made during an opponent's turn. If you capture or commandeer an opponent's piece, you must stop and allow that opponent to capture ("recapture") on that space or field, provided he can do so in one or two moves. If he takes two moves to recapture, both moves must be necessary or relevant to the recapture. He cannot make a separate capture en route nor make any move to reposition his pieces. If there is more than one way to recapture, it is the defender's choice. Sometimes, refusing to recapture may be the best defense. Examples of recapture can be seen in Diagrams 1 and 2.

After the recapture, you go on with the rest of your twenty moves. If you capture a piece belonging to the player on your left on the last move of your turn, he is not entitled to a recapture as it is then his turn. He must immediately start counting his moves. If he then captures, you can

recapture.

Soldiers, camels or knights in the fields can recapture in the fields only. They cannot come out of a field to make a recapture on a space. Recaptures can be made in the fields or on spaces, but not from one to the other.

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REGENERATION

If you make a capture or commandeer an enemy piece or vessel, and your opponent fails to recapture, you may then continue to move your piece that made the capture as if it were its first move, provided you do not exceed your moves per turn limit. Thus, capturing or commandeering will regenerate the moves of your piece. It is possible for one piece to make all twenty moves by making captures without being recaptured.

MOVES

SOLDIERS: Move one or two spaces per turn. They may mount an elephant, chariot, camel or siege engine and get a free ride, or they may board a ship or galleon. They may also make a capture when dismounting or disembarking. Mounting or dismounting is always a soldier move. The soldier must move to mount or dismount, while the major piece remains in place. Mounting may be done from a dismounted position only.

Soldiers cannot capture elephants. Soldiers can ride camels into the fields, or they may move into a field on foot. Two soldiers cannot occupy the same space or field unless they are riding an elephant or on board a vessel. Each player has twelve soldiers. Soldiers can commandeer camels and vessels only.

ELEPHANTS: Move from one to six spaces per turn. Elephants may carry one or two soldiers. These are your most powerful pieces because soldiers cannot capture them and because they are the only pieces that can capture siege engines. The rope bridges that connect North with East and South with West cannot support the weight of an elephant. Each player has four elephants.

CHARIOTS: Move from one to eight spaces per turn and may carry one soldier. Always be careful to place your soldiers facing forward on the chariots. They like to see where they are going, not where they have been. Each player has two chariots.

KNIGHTS: Move from one to six spaces per turn and may move through spaces occupied by your own pieces, counting those spaces as you go. They must land on an unoccupied space, board a vessel, or make a capture on their last move. Knights may not move through a space or field occupied by an opponent. Knights may move into the fields from any of the spaces designated with three steps and continue on to any adjacent field following the paths. Each player has four knights.

SHIPS: Move from one to six spaces per turn. Ships may capture other vessels at sea in the same manner as pieces do on land. Land pieces may board or disembark ships at the seaports only that are marked with an anchor. Ships may carry an elephant, knight, chariot, camel or two soldiers. Elephants, chariots and camels may carry their soldiers on board the ships. Each player has four ships.

GALLEONS: Move from one to eight spaces per turn and carry the same cargo as a ship. They may also carry a catapult. Each player has two galleons.

When an opponent's vessel is at a seaport, you may commandeer it with a land piece simply by moving aboard. This vessel is then immediately converted to your side and may be moved on that turn, and it remains yours after you disembark. If an enemy vessel at port is occupied, it can still be captured by your land piece, removing its cargo from the board and converting the vessel to your own use. The piece that commandeers an enemy vessel is regenerated. Soldiers cannot capture elephants on land nor aboard a vessel. A recapture by a land piece will convert the vessel back to the original

owner's side.

When one or two soldiers are on a vessel, another piece cannot move aboard until the soldiers have disembarked. An elephant may move to a port, two soldiers on a vessel may then mount the elephant and the elephant carrying the soldiers may then board the vessel. A vessel carrying an elephant and two soldiers may come to a port, and either soldier may disembark first. If the elephant disembarks, it must carry the soldiers with it. Land pieces cannot swim or wade in the water nor move from one ship to another at sea.

Beginners should start by playing several games without the camels, catapults and siege engines. Once you have learned to keep track of your moves, using these pieces will become easy.

CAMELS move up to six spaces per turn and may carry one soldier. Camels cannot make a capture without a rider. You can commandeer an enemy camel with your soldier if it does not have a rider. Each player has two camels and each camel starts the game carrying a soldier.

Camels can move into a field from any of the spaces with three steps where they may then move on to any other field following the pathways. A soldier may dismount a camel in an adjacent field to make a capture. A soldier may not dismount in the same field with the camel.

If your soldier dismounts a camel you had commandeered, that camel will revert back to the original owner's side. A soldier may not dismount a commandeered camel from a ship or galleon. You may dismount a commandeered camel and then capture that camel with your soldier. You could also capture that camel with another piece. This is a good sneaky way to regenerate moves.

Being unruly and obstreperous creatures, camels tend to wander off if left unattended. You may use the first two moves of your turn to move any camel belonging to any opponent that is not mounted with a soldier.

CATAPULTS move one or two spaces per turn but have no capturing ability. They do not start on the game board, but can be built by any soldier on an adjacent space at the cost of ten moves. They cannot be built in a capitol space, in a field or the center island. A catapult may not be moved or fired on the same turn it is built.

Each catapult may fire one shot per turn to hit an enemy piece or pieces that are on an adjacent space connected by a road. Many spaces have one or more target slots (see diagram #3.) that point to non-connected spaces that can also be hit by catapults. A catapult may also fire and destroy any piece or pieces that are in an adjacent field. Pieces and vessels hit by your catapult are placed your capture pile.

A catapult may board a galleon and may fire and destroy any vessel that is one connected space away. It may also fire and hit any space on land that targets the space the galleon is on. Catapults cannot board ships and cannot cross the bridge leading to the quexes nor occupy a space in any capitol.

A catapult shot is counted as a move against your twenty moves per turn but not against its allotted two moves per turn. Thus, a catapult may make two moves and still shoot.

A catapult shot against a drawbridge will bring it down immediately. A catapult shot at a siege engine will knock off all of the soldiers on it, but it will do no damage to the siege engine itself. They are the only pieces catapults cannot destroy.

During an opponent's turn, you have the option of firing a retaliatory catapult shot in lieu of a recapture.

If your opponent hits one of your pieces with a catapult shot, you cannot make a retaliatory shot or a recapture against that catapult.

SIEGE ENGINES move two spaces per turn but have no ability to capture an

enemy piece. Siege engines do not start on the game board. Any soldier can build a siege engine at the cost of ten moves. They cannot be built in a capitol space, in a field or on the center island. The siege engine is built on the soldier's space with the soldier on top of it. A newly built siege engine cannot move until the next turn. Siege engines are too big and bulky to cross over bridges or board ships or galleons.

Siege Engines cannot occupy spaces in the capitols as the drawbridges are too narrow to accommodate them..

Each siege engine may carry one, two or three soldiers. Soldiers must climb onto the siege engine from a dismounted position. A soldier may move from a siege engine into an enemy capitol space, even if the drawbridge is up. It may make a capture when doing this, but it cannot capture an elephant. This is what siege engines were designed to doŠ breach the enemy's stronghold.

Elephants are the only pieces that can capture a siege engine.

If an enemy piece, other than an elephant, has occupied a space in your capitol and raised the drawbridge, you may want to build a siege engine on your home island to dislodge him.

CAPITOLS AND THE QUEXES

For each space you occupy in an opposing player's capitol, that player loses four moves per turn. He will immediately regain those four moves if that piece moves out of the capitol or is captured.

For each Quex space you occupy in the center island, you will deprive each opponent of four moves per turn. Only soldiers, knights and camels can occupy the Quexes.

If enemy pieces occupy any combination of five spaces in a player's capitol and the Quexes, that player is dormant and cannot move or recapture. He is not out of the game as some one may later move out of his capitol or a Quex space thus freeing him to move. It is possible for dormant player to get back into the game and win.

DRAWBRIDGES

You may raise a drawbridge using two moves, and thus deny access to that capitol space by any enemy piece except a soldier from a siege engine. If a soldier moves over a drawbridge and into an enemy capitol, he may then immediately lower that drawbridge. It costs no moves to lower the drawbridge. You simply announce it.

Drawbridges must be lowered at the start of a player's turn but each may be raised again at the cost of two moves. A catapult shot at a drawbridge will bring it down immediately. If you occupy a space in an enemy's capitol, you may raise that drawbridge at a cost two moves thus protecting your piece from attack for the next round. At the start of your next turn, the drawbridge must be lowered. You may raise it again using two moves.

FOUR WAYS TO WIN

1. Capture the last two land pieces of any opponent. The other three players will then be equal losers.
2. Have the highest "count" as when any player has only one land piece at the end of anybody's turn. The "count" of any player is the total number of pieces and vessels he has on the board plus the number of pieces and vessels he has captured, plus the number of spaces he has occupied in the Quexes and his opponent's capitols. A dormant player cannot be the winner even if he has the highest count.
3. You win if all three opponents are dormant.
4. If four consecutives rounds are played without a capture, the player with the highest count is the winner. This should never occur as any player who

does not have the high count should make a capture.

Note that each condition of victory requires active aggressive play. If you want to win, you must not play passively. If you do not think you can win, you must make every effort to survive. It is considered very bad manners to commit suicide. Often an opponent who has little chance to win himself will want ally with you. No matter how hopeless your situation may seem, never despair. End games are full of surprises.

BARRIERS and VULNERABILITY

Three roads leading to the Quexes are marked with Vs. These roads are one way only for elephants, chariots and camels. They may not move back against the Vs, not even to make a recapture. Catapults cannot cross the bridge leading to the Quests. Elephants cannot cross the bridge that connects South to East or North to West.

A player is vulnerable when he has only two land pieces on the board. If a vulnerable player loses one of his last two pieces to a recapture, the game is over at the end of his turn and the high count determines the winner. A vulnerable player may not make a capture that exposes him to a recapture or retaliatory catapult shot unless the capture leads to a win for him on that turn. If a vulnerable player has the highest count, he may make any number of captures possible as he can then claim victory after any recapture. (See #2 above.)

If a player who does not have the high count, finds himself down to one soldier after a recapture, he must build a catapult or siege engine in order to survive. If he does not have ten moves left to do this, then the winner is the player with the highest count.

FREE FOR ALL STRATEGY

Players should mobilize quickly to take strong positions near the center. On the first three rounds, it is vital that you get some of your vessels out to sea. If you concentrate on land maneuvers you will give your opponents a big advantage in mobility at sea which may be very difficult for you to overcome.

If you attack the weakest player and leave him with just a few pieces, you run the risk of having one of your other opponents win the game by capturing the rest of his pieces. Situations change rapidly and you must be prepared to revise your plans. No matter how bleak your chances, you must always make every effort to win or at least survive. In an end game, seemingly hopeless situations can quickly reverse if an opponent blunders.

It is sometimes to a player's advantage to allow a dormant opponent to move and recapture by vacating a space in his capitol or the Quexes. Occasionally, two players may occupy the Quexes at the same time.

Alliances may be formed against the strongest (high count) player, but all should be aware that the strongest or most dangerous opponent might change several times in a few rounds. Generally, any agreement between players should be honored for a specified time and be made conditional upon certain happenings during that time. Therefore, any agreement to cooperate may last just two or three rounds. Since there is only one winner, no player can afford to make the strongest player's game any easier. Agreements, like treaties, may be broken at any time. As in the real world, deceit is often part of a strategic plan. World leaders may not care what others think, but in this game, where real friendships can be affected, treacherous actions should be avoided.

PARTNERSHIP PLAY

Partnership play is basically the same as in the regular game except that two teams of partners are playing to achieve victory over each other. Partners sit opposite one another and may not communicate with each other about the game. Otherwise, the strongest partner will be moving for both sides.

The partnership game is won when one team has captured the last remaining land piece belonging to either of their opponents, regardless of the strength of the surviving opponent. The game can also be won by making either opponent dormant on his turn. If four consecutive rounds are played without a capture, the winner is the partnership that has occupied the most number of spaces in the opponent's capitols and Quexes. If this total is the same for both partnerships, the winner is then determined by the partnership having the highest count.

You may not capture a piece or vessel belonging to your partner.

You may use your partner's piece or vessel to make a recapture, or use his catapult to make a retaliatory shot against a piece that has just made a capture, but you may not consult with him about that action.

You may board your partner's vessel and move it as long as your piece remains on board. That borrowed vessel returns to the control of your partner after you disembark. You cannot sail your vessel if your partner is onboard. Boarding your partner's vessel is not a capture and the boarding piece is not regenerated. A vessel carrying a soldier of each partner may be moved by either partner.

A soldier may mount and dismount his partner's elephant or chariot on the space adjoining the Quexes only.

Knights may jump over the heads of your partner's pieces on the five roads leading to the Quexes, but at no other place on the game board.

Your soldier may mount a partner's siege engine. Either partner may move a siege engine that is carrying a soldier of each partner. Your partner cannot move his siege engine if you have a soldier on it and he does not.

If you capture a piece belonging to the opponent on your left on the last move of your turn, he may make a recapture using one of his partner's pieces, or a retaliatory catapult shot with his partner's catapult, but not with one of his own pieces as it is now his turn, and he must immediately start counting his moves.

Your soldier may mount and commandeer your partner's camel but this does not regenerate your soldier.

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

Look to move a camel belonging to your right hand opponent, if your partner can also move it to a space where he can commandeer it. Attacking the opponent on your right can be particularly devastating, as he does not move until after your partner moves. Thus, if you weaken his defense, your partner may be able to continue the assault to win material. Do not be afraid to sacrifice material if it will result in a larger gain for your partner. Always remember that you are part of a team

The first two rounds of play are crucial. South should start by sailing a ship or galleon toward East. This will prevent East, who will be the first to have twenty moves, from sailing a loaded galleon to a forward position where it will inhibit South from moving toward the center on his second turn. Each player should make every effort to reach the Quexes or prevent their opponent's from getting there. Very often, being just one move closer to the Quexes can make the difference between victory and defeat.

If you find your partner vulnerable to an attack from the opponent on your left, it is up to you to make a heroic effort to save him. You must either attack or create threats of your own which cannot be ignored. Sometimes sending a sacrificial piece into the opponent's capitol will do this. You must always be aware that your opponents are also conniving to do you in. You may be safe from one, but not both if they choose to gang up on you. Often you will make moves that rely on your partner following through with a coordinated plan. The charm of this game is in finding the moves that will reinforce and complement your partner's moves.

I cannot stress the necessity of non-communication between partners. All players have my permission to kick their opponents under the table if they violate this rule. Do not squirm, clench your teeth, groan, grimace, or roll your eyes when your partner goes wrong. Guiding your partner is worse than illegal, it is unethical. It also destroys the real essence of partnership play. Using great restraint while your partner gropes and blunders demonstrates strong moral character. War may be hell, but Grand Conquest is, after all, just a game.

While you cannot talk to your partner, you may indeed cajole and tease your opponents. Cogent comments that are intended to endear you to your opponents are permissible as long as they do not give direction to your partner. Timely and appropriate sarcasm is always appreciated at the game table.

Playing two handed on the 4-player board is the best practice for partnership play. One plays both North and South while the other plays East and West. Each player is then his own partner. Be careful about the order of turns. When you are South and it is your turn, you cannot move North's pieces. You will quickly discover the many ways partners can synchronize their moves to make a successful attack or organize a defense. If you have three players, use the partnership rules giving the weakest player the advantage of playing two sides.

I strongly recommend players take the time to work through the problems in the Grand Conquest Puzzle Book. These problems are designed to teach you different ways to attack and win material. They are arranged in order of difficulty and each has only one winning solution. You will quickly learn the advantages of taking command of your partner's vessels and having a balanced presence on land and sea.

ORIGIN OF GRAND CONQUEST®

Since publishing my first game in 1972 (Good Grief—thirty-two years ago!) all my well meaning friends advised me to go slow with it and to keep my time and attention on my regular business, buying and selling rare coins. It was not good advice. That was the year Bobby Fischer created a sensation winning the world chess championship. Role-playing games and fantasy games were not to make their mark until several years later and war gaming was just beginning to become popular. The timing would have been perfect for Conquest.

In 1984, I had made a 2-player game with siege engines and catapults and even though it received rave reviews, I was never quite satisfied with it. In 1980, I licensed a German game company to make my games and they insisted on adding the advanced pieces to my 4-player game. This was quite cumbersome since I did not design it to be used with catapults. The firing range of the catapults was supposed to be a distance of one and a half inches, but since all of Europe uses the more efficient metric system, my rules wouldn't work in Germany. The company decided to have the catapults shoot a ridiculous range of three connected spaces. They also made a mistake in the rules I wrote for the siege engines. I hate mistakes.

Grand Conquest is a result of a lot of badgering by my game-playing friends. Back in 1972, I said I would someday make the game with camels, and a year has not gone by without someone reminding me that I promised to do it.

This new game took far more time for me to design than any other. All game inventors tend to get carried away with their inventiveness and therefore tend to make their games rule heavy. The secret of making a good game is ³KISS² which stands for ³keep it simple, stupid.² Clever ideas are a dime a dozen. Getting them into a game so that they are both fun and challenging is the hard part.

Moving camels and knights off the roads and into the fields and introducing drawbridges are ideas I had long ago but never seemed to have the time to work it out until now. I am really quite pleased with the result and I hope you will have as much fun playing this new game as I did designing it. Fair warning... it can be quite addictive. Please do not hold me responsible for time lost from work or espousal neglect.

Anyone who doesn't like to play games probably had a deprived childhood. My parents encouraged me to play at an early age. Maybe it was the easiest way to keep me out of mischief. Chess was my first obsession and when I was in the army, it became bridge. Generally, dice games are not my style and I have always found backgammon to be a bore. Fencing has been my true passion since I got out of high school. It is a sport that requires tactical thinking and physical discipline. In 2004, I was the oldest member of the U.S. Veteran's World Cup team. If it weren't for fencing, I would probably be fat and flabby.

It is always a thrill to hear from fans of my games and I will continue to answer all my email as long as it doesn't take more than 25 hours a day. My Burbank address may not exist after 2004, but if you type my name into any search engine on the Internet you should find me. If you send me email, put the word "conquest" in the subject or it may get deleted with all the spam.

I must express my grateful appreciation to Dietmar Gottschick, Patrick Stevens and Steve Newton who spent many long hours play testing this game and helped me get rid of some superfluous rules.

Since my school days, I had always been a big fan of Sid Sackson's games. I was thrilled to meet him at the toy fair in 1974 and discovered we had many other common interests. Some of the most joyful moments in my life have been spent visiting Sid and his wife, Berniece, every time I got to New York. Sid wrote the first review of Conquest for GAMES Magazine in 1979. It is to the wonderful memory of Sid Sackson that I dedicate Grand Conquest.

Thank you for buying my game. Happy Conquesting.

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