

Conquered Kingdoms

Fantasy strategy and territorial conquest

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Three houses hold keeps in a march country. Between them lie villages that any body may walk into and castles whose courses of stone must be brought down first. Crowns come from the ground you hold, and the ground also decides how many bodies you may keep in the field, so the map is the economy and every village is worth the march.

This manual states the rules the program actually runs: every figure printed here was dumped out of the shipped code rather than typed in beside it.

1. The season

A season is 60 turns. Each house plays a whole turn in order: crowns come in, masons work, bodies get their movement back, and then you raise what you can afford and give every body its orders.

Take every enemy keep and the land is yours: a house that loses its last keep quits the field and its remaining bodies disperse. If more than one house still holds a keep when the season closes, the mandate decides it — 10 points a keep, 6 a castle, 2 a village, and a tenth of a crown for every crown of strength standing in the field.

Holdings

Holding	Crowns a turn	Bodies kept	Courses of wall	Raises bodies
Keep	5	4	8 + 8 + 8	yes
Castle	3	2	6 + 6	yes
Village	1	1	none	no

The treasury holds at most 140 crowns, so a house that has run out of ground to spend on cannot bank its way back into the game. An untenanted castle stands behind fallen courses of 3 and 3 rather than 6 and 6: nobody has kept its masons on.

The seat that answers opens with 10 crowns more than the seat that moves first. That counterpoise was measured over identical-plan campaigns, not guessed: without it the first house won about six seasons in ten.

2. The ground

Ground costs movement to enter and gives cover to whoever stands on it. A body with any movement left may always take one hex, however heavy the going — without that rule a two-point body could never set foot in marsh at all.

Ground	Cost to enter	Cover	Notes
Field	1	0	—
Wood	2	2	—
Hill	2	1	—
Crag	3	3	no horse, no engine
Marsh	3	-1	no engine
Water	impassable	0	flyers only

Stepping into a hex beside an enemy halts the march there. Rangers walk wood and marsh for a single point, a dragon flies over everything for one, knights will not climb a crag, and engines will not enter marsh or crag at all.

The countries

Aldermoor March — 34 by 26, 2 houses. Open march country between two crowns. Villages lie thick in the middle ground.

Thornwood Vale — 32 by 24, 2 houses. A river cut across the vale with two fords. Whoever holds a ford holds the vale.

The Crown Basin — radius 11, 3 houses. Three houses on one basin, each a third of a turn from the next.

Every country is generated once and then turned onto the other seats — half a turn on the two-house boards, a third of a turn on the hexagonal basin — so no house is ever playing a different country from its neighbour.

3. The muster roll

Design	Crowns	Str	Assault	Defence	Move	Shot	Vs stone	Holds
Levy	6	5	2	2	2	—	×0.25	yes
Men-at-Arms	12	7	4	5	2	—	×0.25	yes
Longbowmen	14	5	2	2	2	3 at 3	×0.30	yes
Rangers	10	5	3	3	3	—	×0.25	yes
Knights	20	7	7	4	4	—	×0.20	yes
Catapult	22	4	1	1	2	4 at 4	×3.00	no
Sorcerer	26	5	2	3	2	5 at 3	×2.00	no
Troll	18	10	6	6	2	—	×0.60	no
Dragon	40	9	8	6	5	5 at 2	×2.50	no

Levy — Peasants with billhooks. Cheap, and they can hold a wall.

Men-at-Arms — The line of battle. Stubborn behind a course of stone.

Longbowmen — A salvo at three hexes with no reply. Poor against stone.

Rangers — Wood and marsh cost them one point. Screens and seizes villages. (woodsman)

Knights — Four points of movement. Will not climb a crag. (horse)

Catapult — Breaks courses of stone. It may march or shoot, never both. (engine)

Sorcerer — Fire at three hexes, ignoring cover; or mend your own walls. (sorcery)

Troll — Knits its wounds by one each turn. No troll ever held a castle.

Dragon — Flies over everything at a point a hex. Breath tells on stone.

Only a design that can hold ground may raise your banner over what it takes. A troll, a catapult, a sorcerer or a dragon can break a garrison and bring down a wall, but a keep taken by a dragon is a keep nobody holds.

4. Fighting

An assault runs 3 rounds and never to the death, which is what makes massing pay: each body of yours standing beside the defender adds 12 in the hundred to the blow. A salvo is a single round and draws no reply, which is what makes longbowmen and engines worth their crowns.

Cover raises the defence by 15 in the hundred a point, and every standing course of wall by 35. A sorcerer's fire ignores cover; a dragon in the air takes none.

What the slate quotes

Keep	f19 · House Kerrow
Outer curtain	8 / 8
Inner curtain	8 / 8
The keep itself	8 / 8
Garrison: none within the walls	

Catapult – salvo	2 hexes
Stone struck	12
Turns to a breach	2
Reply against us	0

The slate is read before the order, not after it. It quotes the same arithmetic the resolution will roll against — the forecast and the fight are one function, so the slate cannot flatter a blow the engine will not deliver.

5. Stone

A keep stands behind 3 courses, a castle behind 2, a village behind none. Every blow against a walled holding falls on the outermost course still standing, multiplied by the striker's figure against stone: an engine tells three times as hard as its shot, a dragon two and a half, a sorcerer twice, and a man with a ladder a quarter.

Masons lay 1 point back on any turn when no enemy stands within 2 hexes, so a siege that is not pressed is a siege that is losing. A sorcerer may mend 2 instead of striking, for 2 of its power.

When the last course comes down the holding stands open. Any body that can hold ground may then walk in and raise your banner; the holding renders nothing for 3 turns afterwards. Nothing may enter a holding whose walls are still up — not even an empty one.

A worked siege

Turn 12 Catapult sited two hexes from the castle, 6 + 6 standing
Turn 12 Salvo: 12 stone off the outer course – outer course down
Turn 13 Salvo: 11 stone off the inner course – the castle is open
Turn 13 Men-at-Arms march in: the banner goes up, wrecked 3 turns
Turn 16 The castle renders 3 crowns a turn and keeps 2 more bodies

6. The machine

The machine values every order in crowns: what the blow is worth against what the reply will cost, with the stone counted at its worth to the campaign. It is not made braver or more timid by its rank — every commander accepts the same trade. What separates them is how far down the sorted list of blows each will look before choosing.

Commander	Looks at
Cadet	one of the 6 best blows
Veteran	one of the 3 best blows
Marshal	the best blow on offer

Four other dials — its eye for stone, its taste for concentration, its care for its own holdings, and the tidiness of its muster — were each measured on paired seeds over both seat orders. All four came back flat or the wrong way round, so they are constants that every commander shares rather than pretended skill.

Measured, over campaigns played machine against machine: marshal 14-10 over cadet, 14-10 over veteran, veteran 13-11 over cadet (24 campaigns a pairing, both seat orders). Seat parity: 25-22 over 48 identical-plan campaigns with the ten-crown counterpoise.

Tempers change what a house wants rather than how well it plays: Bold, Steady, Wary.

7. At the table

Drag	shift the plate
wheel or pinch	close in on the point under the pointer
Click your body	take it up; pale hexes are its march
Click a pale hex	march there (the cost is quoted first)
Click a ringed hex	strike (the slate quotes it first)
N	next body with orders left

E	end the turn
0	fit the whole country
+ and -	close in, draw back
Arrow keys	shift the plate
Esc	put the body down

The season is saved to your own browser after every order, under one key, and the title sheet offers to resume it. If the browser refuses storage the game plays on without saving. Nothing is sent anywhere: the package has no network access at all.

The seed printed on the camp table reproduces the exact country and season, which is the thing to quote in a report.