

Sarcophagus

Version 2.0
Version Date 2-July-2004
Number of Players 2-4
Game Length 20-40 minutes
Author Phillip Lerche
Copyright ©2003 Phillip Lerche
Equipment to play: 1 piecepack (see <http://www.piecepack.org>)
Acknowledgment: Thanks to Brad Johnson for assistance with the diagrams
New this version: Face down setup, Sarcophagus moved lower in the pyramid, bonus fame scoring added.

Introduction

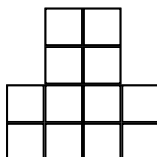
Each player takes the part of an archeologist discovering the secrets of one of the great pyramids and its sacred sarcophagus, hoping to gain the most fame by the end of the expedition.

Setup

Take any two null tiles and all four 5-tiles.

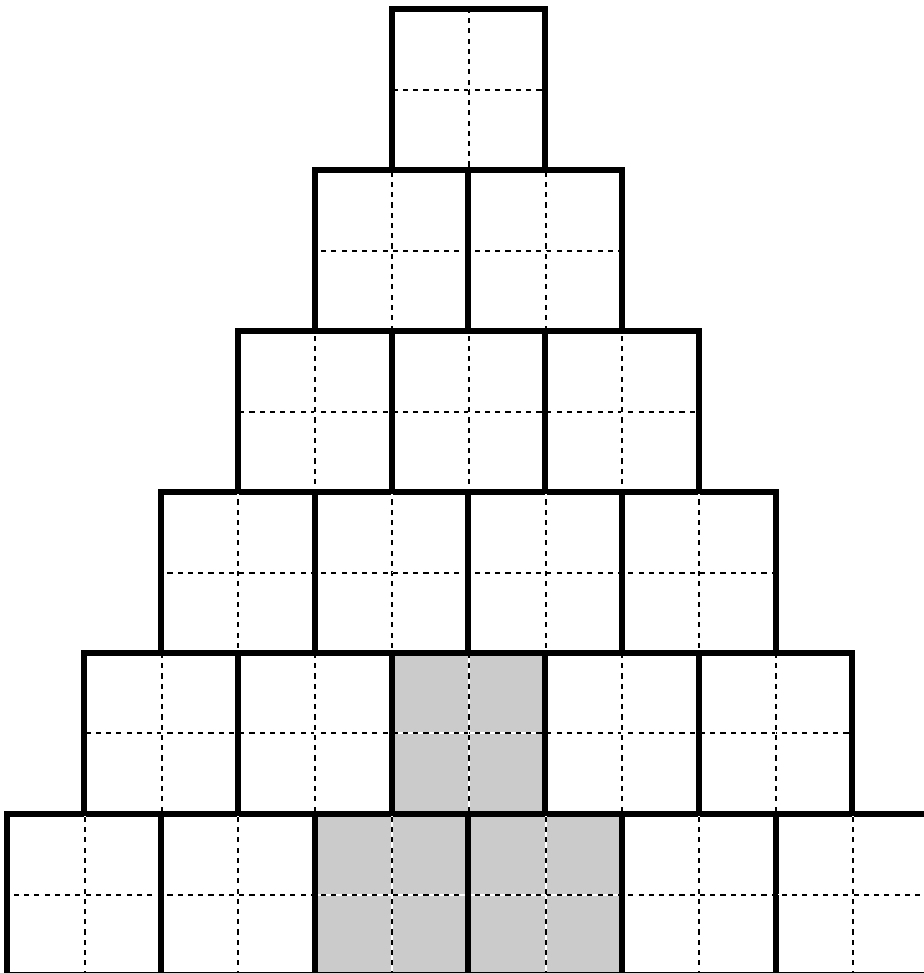


Place them face down and shuffle them thoroughly. Randomly choose three of these tiles and lay out a small pyramid consisting of 2 face down tiles on the bottom row and 1 face down tile on the top row.



This is the sarcophagus. Take the remaining three tiles and place them face down on top of the three sarcophagus tiles. The small pyramid should now be two tiles high.

Shuffle all of the remaining tiles face down. Randomly turn over the tiles and lay out the rest of a 6-5-4-3-2-1 pyramid (i.e. flat on the playing surface) such that the bottom row of the sarcophagus forms the two middle tiles of the 6-row of the pyramid and the top row of the sarcophagus is the middle tile of the 5-row of the pyramid. The tiles shaded gray in the diagram (below) lie above the Sarcophagus.



Turn the single tile at the top of the pyramid face up to show its value. The numbered tiles (2 to 5) represent the amount of fame that exploring that part of the pyramid or sarcophagus is worth. Ace tiles are special god tiles, and the null tiles are traps (see below). Suits of tiles have no specific relevance during play however claiming tiles of the same suit earns bonus fame points (see scoring below).

Each player then takes the pawn and six coins of one suit. These coins represent the investment made by the archeologists in the exploration of the pyramid. Null coins have a value of 0 and ace coins have a value of 1. The number of coins

each player has is always known. Players should keep the values of the coins they have in hand hidden from each other. The pawn is placed in front of the player to indicate which suit he or she is playing. (If two players are playing then each player uses two pawns and two sets of coins).

Aim

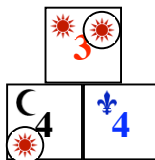
The aim of the game is to gain the most fame exploring the pyramid by claiming numbered tiles and avoiding traps.

Game play

Each player rolls a die. The highest roll goes first; re-roll to break any ties. Players then take their turns in clockwise order.

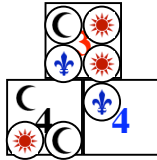
Each player's turn consists of furthering the archeological exploration by placing two coins suit side up onto the tiles of the pyramid. The first coin is always placed on the tile that is farthest to the left in the top row of the pyramid. The second coin can be placed on any tile in the pyramid that is face up, including the tile that the first coin was placed on. A tile holds a maximum of four coins. The position of the coin on the tile has no relevance. Additionally, if a player places a coin on a tile that is adjacent to one or more face down tiles, then that player must turn those tiles face up before the next coin is placed. A player with no coins left must pass.

Example: The tile at the top of the pyramid is turned over – the 3 sun tile. The first player has the sun coins. He must place his first coin on the sun 3 tile as it is the tile farthest to the left in the top row and it is the only one face up. He then turns over the 2 face down tiles that are adjacent to the 3-sun tile. He can choose to place his second coin on any of the 3 revealed tiles, and decides to place it on the moon 4 tile. Before ending his turn the sun player reveals the 2 face down tiles that are adjacent to the 4-moon tile.



If a tile has four coins on it after any coin placement that part of the pyramid is immediately checked to see if it can be claimed. A tile can only be claimed if at least two of its sides are free. If the tile is one that may be claimed the player who placed the most coins on the tile claims the tile and places it in front of him or her. If two or more players are tied for claiming a tile the coins are turned over and the player who has the highest total value of coins on the tile claims it. If the players are still tied nobody claims the tile and it is discarded.

Example: It is the sun player's turn again. His first coin is placed on the sun 3 tile which is the fourth coin placed on that tile. The tile has at least 2 free sides, so it can be claimed. The sun player has the most coins on the tile (two) so he claims the tile. The coins are returned to the players. Removal of the sun 3 tile means that the moon 4 and arms 4 tiles also have at least 2 free sides and are assessed to see if either tile can be claimed. Neither tile has 4 coins on so play continues and the sun player places a second coin.



Example: Later in the game it is the moon player's turn and she places a coin on the moon 4 pyramid tile. There are 4 coins on the tile and the tile has at least 2 sides free so it is assessed for claim. The sun player also has 2 coins on the tile, so the values of the coins must be compared. The total value of the moon coins' is $0+4=4$. The sun coins add up to $2+3=5$, so the sun player claims the tile.



After a pyramid tile is claimed or discarded the coins on it are returned to their owner(s), unless doing so reveals a sarcophagus tile. When a pyramid tile situated on top of a sarcophagus tile is claimed the player who claims the pyramid tile must also claim the sarcophagus tile. That player places all of his or her own coins from the claimed pyramid tile onto the sarcophagus tile. Coins belonging to players who did not claim the pyramid and sarcophagus tiles are returned as normal. If the tile above a sarcophagus tile is discarded then the sarcophagus tile is discarded sight unseen. Claimed sarcophagus tiles are not revealed until the end of the game and any coins on them are no longer available for play.

If the removal of a tile from the pyramid allows another pyramid tile to be claimed by freeing up a side, that claim is assessed before play continues.

If the claimed pyramid tile is a null tile then the player has encountered a trap set by the ancient Egyptian pyramid builders. If a trap is claimed, then the player who claimed the trap must immediately discard a number tile he or she has already claimed to nullify the trap. If a player does not have a number tile to discard then the trap has no effect. If a player has previously claimed a god tile (ace) then the spirit of an Egyptian god gives that player protection from all traps, thus any future traps claimed by that player are ignored.

If at any point in the game all players have played their coins to the pyramid and must pass then the tile farthest to the left on the top row is assessed for claim even though it does not have 4 coins on it. Play continues clockwise from the last player to pass after the coins have been returned. When the last tile is taken (or discarded) from the pyramid the game ends.

Scoring

Any claimed sarcophagus tiles are now given to their owners and revealed. If a trap is revealed that player must discard a number tile unless a god tile protects that player. Each player adds up the total amount of fame from each number tile they have claimed. Players also earn bonus fame points for collecting tiles of the same suit. 1 bonus fame is awarded for collecting 2 tiles of the same suit, 2 fame for 3 tiles of the same suit, and 4 fame for 4 tiles of the same suit. Traps and Gods do not count towards this bonus. The player with the highest fame score wins. If players are tied for the highest fame then the player with the least claimed tiles wins.

Example of scoring:

Ron has claimed the 5-sun, 2-moon, 3-moon, 4-moon, 5-moon, 2-crown, 3-crown and 4-arms tiles. He scores 25 fame for the value of the tiles, 4 bonus fame for having 4 tiles of the moon suit, and 1 bonus fame for 2 tiles of the crown suit. He gains no bonuses for the single sun and arms tiles he has claimed. His total score is 30 fame.

Copyright © 2004 by Phillip Lerche. Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license can be found at <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/fdl.html>.