THEOMACHY

# Introduction

Theomachy is a 2-4 player game which combines drafting, bidding, strategy, and tactical mechanics. One way to look at it is as a combination of Texas Hold ‘em Poker with a deck-building card game.

In Theomachy, you take the role of a god or goddess, you stake the souls of your worshipers against the deluded congregations of other gods (i.e., your friends), and strive to overcome them. You can help your worshipers with miracles and choose whether or not to listen to their prayers. Or you may decide to abandon the mortals to their doom. Your goal is to cause the other players to lose all their faithful – turning their gods into forgotten legends. You won’t be able to win every conflict, so you have to know when to bluff, when to cut your losses, and when to press an advantage.

Two Theomachy games exist – Theomachy: The Ancients, and Theomachy: the Warrior Gods. These games are completely compatible. You can freely mix and match cards, Gods, and myth items from the two games – plus with both games you can play with up to 8 people at the same time!

# Short Description of Play

The game starts with a draft, when the players choose the Prayer cards forming their initial decks. After building a deck, they choose a god and consequently the pantheon that they will represent.

The main game consists of consecutive rounds, called hands. In each hand:

* all players draw five cards, creating their hand
* The Constellation is drawn from the Element deck, and placed in the middle of the table – 3 cards face up (the “flop:) and 2 cards face down. Don’t peek at the face-down cards!
* all players move a follower “ante” towards the middle of the table, creating their initial Stake.
* during three consecutive betting phases the players can raise the Stakes, trying to judge the strength of the cards in their hand and calculate what the opponents may have in theirs.
* while betting, the players may play Effect, Location, and Power cards, which give them information about opponents’ hands, draw cards, kill their opponents’ worshipers, and much more.
* if at least two players remain in the game after the betting finalizes, a battle begins.
* in a battle the players may play Attack and Power cards, trying to make their Stake of worshipers stronger than the opponent’s.
* the winner keeps their worshipers and gets new ones, while the losers lose their Stakes
* when a hand ends, the players buy new Prayer and myth cards, preparing for a new hand
* The game ends when only one player has any worshipers remaining in his Congregation, or all other players have been eliminated by failed Last Stands.

# Game Components

#### Element Cards (24 total)

These cards provide the deities with power necessary to play other cards.

Each of these cards has two features:

* the background representing the sphere the card belongs to
* order and chaos symbols, from one to three

#### Prayer Cards (120 total)

The players build their decks from Prayer cards.

These cards are divided into two types: Action cards (Attacks, Effects and Locations) and Power cards (similar to Element cards).

Each action card has:

* type
* requirements necessary to play it
* frame indicating which sphere it belongs to
* text explaining its effect in the game

#### Myth Cards (20 total, 5 from each Pantheon)

The players buy these powerful cards during the game, paying for them with miracle tokens.

Each myth card has:

* pantheon it belongs to
* cost in miracle tokens
* text explaining its effect in the game

#### Deity Icons (12 total, 3 from each Pantheon)

The gods whose roles are taken by the players.

Each deity board has:

* pantheon it belongs to
* Ability – the deity’s special skill
* Demand – the way he earns miracle tokens

#### Worshiper Tokens (95 total)

These are die-cut counters, and represent the players’ faithful worshipers.

They are divided into three types:

* prophets, worth 10 Might
* priests, worth 5 Might
* followers, worth 2 Might

#### Last Stand Cards (4 total)

#### Hint Cards (4 total)

#### Ante Markers (1 total)

Used to indicate the current ante, if higher than 1. The token has a 2 on one side, and a 3 on the other. Simply set it to the appropriate side.

#### Prayer Track (1)

The upcoming cards (that will be added to player’s ­decks at the end of a hand) are placed here. Certain markings on it assist play.

#### Victory Markers (16 total)

These come in different denominations:

* 1 point (4 total)
* 2 point (4 total)
* 4 point (4 total)
* 7 point (4 total

#### Hero Tokens (4 total, one for each Hero)

Used to add a Hero to your Stake!

#### Miracle Tokens (13 total)

Used for buying myth cards.

# Glossary of Terms

ACTION CARDS – all Effect, Location, and Attack cards

ATTACK – a card which is used during the Battle – it typically increases the value of your Stake, or decreases your opponents’.

BATTLE – if at least two players still remain in the hand at the end of the betting rounds, then they engage in a confrontation in which they use Attack cards to seek victory.

CONGREGATION – the collection of worshipers that you use to participate in the betting rounds. Your ante and bets come from it. It comes in three denominations which are NOT interchangeable – followers, priests, and prophets.

CONSTELLATION – the set of 5 cards in the middle of the table which is used to power everyone’s Effect, Location, and Attack cards. It is subdivided into the Flop (the first three cards, always face-up), the River (the first face-down card, turned face-up after one round of bidding), and the Turn (the last face-down card, turned face-up after two rounds of bidding).

EFFECT – a card which benefits you during the bidding rounds and (rarely) during the Battle. Most are immediate discards, but some last through the end of the current hand.

ELEMENT DECK – a deck consisting of the Element cards. Each card displays one Element, and 1 to 3 Chaos or Law orbs. The Constellation is drawn from the Element deck each round.

FOLLOWER – the white tokens or poker chips worth 2 each. The lowest level of worshiper in your Congregation.

HEADS UP – the situation in an elimination game when only two players are left. Certain rules change, to speed up play.

LOCATION – a special card representing a sacred place. Locations can survive more than one hand.

POWER CARD – a card from the Prayer deck which display an Element and two Law or two Chaos orbs.

PRAYER DECK – the pile of cards from which the Prayer Track is formed. It consists of Power cards and Action cards.

PRAYER TRACK – the set of 6 cards which are available to players to choose from to enhance their deck at the end of a hand.

PRIEST – the red tokens or poker chips worth 5 each. The mid-level worshipers in your Congregation.

PROPHET – the blue tokens or poker chips worth 10 each. The highest level of worshiper in your Congregations.

TOKEN – all followers, priests, prophets, as well as your Hero, if you have one.

How to Play Game

# Game Preparation

There are three styles to play the game – the Basic Game, the Advanced Game, and the Epic Game. Choose which style you and your friends wish to play before starting. Some of the game phases differ, or are changed, depending on your style.

**THOR’S TIP  there is no shame in playing the basic game, even as an experienced player. Some veteran players prefer the basic game at times, when they don’t want to deal with the extra mental overhead of managing a Deity and its mythology!**

**The “basic” game is not inferior in terms of fun!**

## Game Setup

Deal 3 prophets, 5 priests and 8 followers to each player. They form each player’s starting Congregation.

Put the remaining tokens aside to form the bank.

Shuffle the Prayer deck and put it in the middle of the table.

Miracle tokens, victory markers, deity icons, and myth cards are not used in the basic game – leave them in the box.

## Choose Pantheon (Advanced & Epic Games only)

Before you build your starting deck, each player chooses a different pantheon. In case of disputes, we recommend that the owner of the game picks the order in which players select pantheons.

After choosing his or her pantheon, each player then takes all 5 Myth cards from his pantheon, shuffles them, and places them in front of his seat, face-up.

## Assembling your Starter Deck

#### Method One – Pre-Made Starter Decks (Basic Game only)

Look through the Prayer deck. 32 of the cards are marked with the number I, II, III, or IV. There are eight cards carrying each number. These are pre-made starter decks. Simply sort out these cards from the rest of the deck, and hand one set of 8 cards to each player. In a 2-3 player game, shuffle the unused starter decks back into the main deck.

That’s it – now everyone has a well-balanced starter deck, and play can begin.

**THOR’S TIP  at least for your first game of Theomachy, use the pre-made decks. Once you have at least one game under your belt, and a better idea of how the cards work together, you can use the Drafting method, described below.**

#### Method Two – Drafting Starter Decks (all Games, but not if you are using Method One)

This takes a few rounds. In each round:

* The players take an appropriate numbers of cards to their hands. The number of cards depends on the number of players and is as follows:
  + 2 players – 6 rounds, starting with 3 cards per round
  + 3 players – 4 rounds, starting with 4 cards per round
  + 4-8 players – 3 rounds, starting with 5 cards per round
* Each player chooses one card from his hand, and place it face down in front of himself. You can freely look at all your cards during the deck drafting.
* Pass all remaining cards to the player to your left. Pass the cards hidden, and don’t try to pass them until ALL players have selected the card they will keep.
* Repeat this sequence; choosing and passing cards until each player has only one card in hand. Do NOT pass the last card – discard it face down instead.

Go through the listed number of rounds. At the end, all players will have 12 cards in front of themselves on the tabletop. There will also be a pile of face-down discarded cards at once side.

Each player picks up her 12 cards, and sorts through them, selecting only 8 cards to form her starting deck. The excess 4 cards are added to the discard pile.



**THOR’S TIP  IMPORTANT - if you play with the Gods and Pantheons, you MUST draft your decks – do *NOT* use the pre-made starter decks! This is why you choose your Gods after building your starting deck, otherwise the game can be totally unbalanced. So far we have run many Theomachy tournaments, and no god has been seen to dominate.**

**This restriction does not work both directions, though – feel free to use the Drafting system (Method Two), even if you do not use Gods or Myth cards.**

## Final God Selection (Advanced & Epic Games ONLY)

Once the starting decks are complete, each player secretly chooses one of the three Gods from his pantheon and places his chosen God face-down in front of him on the table, next to his Myth cards. Return the rest of the Deity Icons to the box, face-down so other players can’t see them.

Once all players have made their choice, they simultaneously flip their chosen Deity Icon face-up. Place the miracle tokens next to the bank within everyone’s reach.



**THOR’S TIP  remember, if you choose ME, go through your Myth deck and pick out Mjollnir (since that’s my Ability). Then reshuffle the rest of your Myth deck and replace it on the table.**

## Finishing Preparations

* Shuffle all discarded cards from the Drafting rounds back into the Prayer deck.
* All players shuffle their 8-card decks (without peeking) and place them in front of them.

# Game Overview

The game consists of several consecutive rounds, called hands. It lasts until only one player has worshipers remaining.

## First Player & Play Order

On the first hand of the game, the First Player is determined randomly. We recommend it go to the game’s owner (or whoever has the longest beard!), but use any method that pleases you.

On second and subsequent hands, the First Player is always the winner of the previous hand.

The First Player starts play in each round of betting, and during the Battle. It always continues around clockwise from him (to his left). If players are eliminated from the game (or have folded), skip them and move to the next player in turn.

#### Start Phase

* Draw cards from the Prayer deck to lay out the Prayer Track.
  1. 2 cards cost 1 priest (put a priest over these cards)
  2. 2 cards cost 1 follower (put a follower over these cards)
  3. 2 free cards
* Each player draws 5 cards from his draw deck to form his hand. If you already have cards in hand (perhaps because you played a card last hand that permitted you to keep some), draw only enough to total five. If you don’t have enough cards in your draw deck, draw all that remain, then shuffle your discard pile, place it as your new draw deck, then draw the remaining needed cards. (You will need to do this every round for the first round or two, when you don’t have 10 cards yet.)
* In the middle of the table place 3 cards face up and 2 cards face down from the Element deck. These cards form the Constellation. If fewer than 5 Element cards remain in the deck, take all 24 cards and shuffle them together before creating the new Constellation.
  1. IMPORTANT: when you must reshuffle the Element deck, place the Ante marker next to it, with the “2” side face-up. The next time you must reshuffle, flip the Ante marker over, to the “3” side.
* Each player antes up followers from their Congregation to form their starting Stake. Each puts up a number of followers equal to the current Ante level. If no Ante marker is present, players only need put up one follower.



**THOR’S TIP  The Ante level never gets higher than 3.**

## Losing and Winning

If you have too few followers for your ante, you are eliminated from the game. If only one player remains, she wins!

## Three Betting Rounds

Three consecutive betting rounds now occur. After each of the first two rounds ends, the next face-down card from the Constellation is revealed. (Players of Texas Hold ‘em Poker may recognize this as a similar mechanism to the “river”, “flop”, and “turn” from that game.)

During each betting round, players may play any number of Effects, Power cards, and Locations on their turn. (And occasionally in reaction to another person’s action – check cards for details.)

#### Effects

These are usually discarded to your discard pile immediately after they are played. Effects with the keyword “ongoing” are an exception – they remain on the table and stay active till the end of the hand (after which they get discarded, too – “ongoing” is only relative).

#### Locations

These are played onto the table in front of you and are never not discarded until and unless they are destroyed. When you play a Location, atop it you always place a named token from your Congregation (never your Stake). If you lack such a token, you cannot play that Location.

#### Actions

At the end of your turn you must take an action. Actions available depends on what has happened before:

If nobody has raised the Stakes yet, you may:

* ***Pass*** – do not add any tokens to your Stake.
* ***Raise*** – add one chosen token from your Congregation to your Stake.

If the Stake has been raised since your last turn, you may:

* ***Call*** – add tokens from your Congregation to your Stake as needed to equal the Stake of the player who has the highest Stake.
* ***Raise*** – call (as above), then add one more token from your Congregation to your Stake.

You may always:

* ***Fold*** – discard all cards from your hand to your discard pile. You take no further part in this hand until the End phase. You are skipped during betting and you do not take part in the battle.

The next player takes his action only once yours is completely finished. Remember you may play Effects, Locations, and Power cards before or after you take your action.

#### Ending a Betting phase

A betting phase ends when one of the following conditions is fulfilled:

1. All the players have taken an action and no one raised the Stake. In other words, everyone passed.
2. It is the turn of the player who was the last to raise and no one raised the Stake in the meantime. All other players either called or folded.
3. Only one player remains in the hand. All other players have folded. In this case, immediately proceed to the End phase, skipping all remaining betting phases as well as the battle.

After a betting phase ends, flip over a face-down card from the Constellation, and begin the next betting phase. If all the Constellation cards are already face up (which happens at the end of the third betting phase), begin the battle instead.

**Remember**: Each phase is started by the First Player, regardless of who finished the previous phase.

## How to Play Power cards

Power cards are similar to the Element cards. Each has an Element, plus 2 black (chaos) or white (order) orbs. When it is your turn, you can play Power cards freely from your hand to your play area. However, there is no need to do so (and thus reveal your intentions) unless you need the Power card for an Action card, or you fear that another player may force you to discard from your hand, and thus risk losing it.

At the end of a hand, all Power cards in your play area are discarded to your discard pile.

## How to Play Action Cards

Before playing an Action card (Effect, Location, or Attack) you must meet the requirements displayed on the card’s top left.

#### Element Symbols

Including all revealed cards from the Constellation and all Power cards you have played, you must have available at least as many cards from a given Element as the number of symbols on your Action card indicates.

If you do not meet the requirements, you may play Power cards from your hand to enable you to meet them. A Power card once played may be used again and again until the end of the hand (when it gets discarded). *Example: Peter wants to play Disruption, which has two Earth symbols. Only one Earth card is visible in the Constellation. Fortunately, he has an Earth Power card in his hand, so he plays it first, and then plays Hatred. The Earth Power card stays in front of him, and it (and any orbs on it) remain available.*

#### Chaos or Order Orbs

In addition to your Element symbols, most Action cards also require a certain number of Chaos or Order orbs. Count all the Law or Chaos orbs present on all revealed cards in the Constellation and all Power cards you have played. You must have *at least* the same number of orbs (of the correct type) as the number on the card. *Example: Peter’s Disruption card also requires 4 Chaos orbs (in addition to its two Earth symbols). Luckily, the Constellation shows 3 Chaos Orbs on an Air card, and the Earth Power card he played in the previous example also had 2 Chaos Orbs, which is more than enough to power his Disruption.*



**THOR’S TIP  a few cards have no Chaos or Law component (Hatred, for instance). However, ALL cards require at least one Element.>**

#### Last Stand

If you want to call, but you do not have the right tokens, you can take a Last Stand card, and put it in your Stake. On top of it, you may place tokens from the bank sufficient to call the current betting level. From now on in this hand, any time you need a token to call a bet, you may use tokens from the bank, placing them on the Last Stand card.



**THOR’S TIP  You may NOT Raise or Fold, if you are on your Last Stand. You may only Call or Pass.>**

If you win the hand, discard all tokens on your Last Stand card back to the bank. If any card would in theory allow you to move one or more of these tokens to your Congregation, discard it anyway – this rule supercedes the card text.

If you *lose* the hand, with a Last Stand card in play, then you are out of the game. You have lost.

## Battle Phase

If at the end of the third betting phase at least two players remain in the hand, all remaining players begin the battle. Beginning with the Starting player, go around taking turns and performing Actions. You may not Raise, Call, or Fold during the Battle. See below.



**THOR’S TIP  If only one player remains in the hand at the start of the Battle phase, skip it and go directly to the End phase.**

#### Permitted Battle Actions

When it is your turn you may:

* Pass – just pass the turn to the next player. If all players pass during a round, then go to the Battle’s End segment (see below)
* Play any number of Attacks and/or Power cards. All *Attacks* *must be of the same Element type!* You may ONLY play Attacks from more than one Element if a card permits it (such as Mjollnir).



**THOR’S TIP  don’t get confused. You can play Effects, Power cards, and Locations from as many Elements as you please. It’s only during the Battle phase, and only using Attacks that you are restricted to a single Element.**

Attacks that manipulate your or your opponents’ Stakes happen immediately. Attacks that give you additional Might only take effect in the Battle’s End phase. Again, Battle moves on to the Battle’s End Segment once all participating players have consecutively passed.

#### Battle’s End Segment

Each player’s Might is determined by summing the Might of all Attack cards played PLUS the face value of all worshipers remaining in the Stake. (Prophets are worth 10 points, priests 5, followers 2.)

*Example: two players, Frank and Angela, remain in the Battle phase. Each has 1 prophet, 1 priest, and 4 followers in their Stake. Angela is the First Player – so she plays Chain Lightning (Might +7) and Unity (Might +1 per token in the Stake). Frank then plays Plague (which removes all followers from Angela’s Stake) and Quicksand (Might +6).*

*Angela’s Stake is now worth only 15 (because she lost her 4 followers to Plague, and all she has left is a prophet and a priest). Her Unity adds +2 to her total (since she has 2 tokens left), and her Chain Lightning adds another 7 for a total of 24 Might.*

*Frank’s Stake is worth 23 points. To this he adds his +6 Might from Quicksand for a total of 29 Might. He has more final Might than Angela, so he wins the Battle.*

## End phase

1. Determine winners and losers. If only one player remains in the hand, he wins. Otherwise, the player with the highest total at the Battle’s End segment wins. All tied players win.
2. Some Effects can be played in the End phase. In addition, some Myth cards, God Abilities, and God Mandates take effect at this time. Such are used or played in player order, starting with the First player and continuing clockwise.
3. Losers now discard their Stakes to the bank.
4. Losers now damage all their in-play Location cards. To damage a location, turn it 90 degrees from its “normal” position. If a card is already damaged, discard it to your discard pile, and discard any worshipers on that card to the bank.
5. If there is a single winner (i.e., no ties), he can take one Priest token from the bank and add it to his Congregation. *Exception – see Heads Up rules, following.*
6. If there is a single winner (i.e., no ties), and he *does not have a Prophet in his Congregation*, in addition to his free Priest, he can take one Prophet token from the bank, and add it to his Congregation. IMPORTANT: Only your Congregation matters – if you have no prophets there, you get a new Prophet even if you have one or more prophets in your Stake. *Exception – see Heads Up rules, following.*
7. All winners return their Stakes to their Congregations.
8. The winning player becomes the new Starting player. If there is a tie for winner, the current Starting player passes this job to the winner who sits closest to them, going clockwise.
9. All players discard all cards remaining in their hand or on the table (except for surviving Locations) to their discard piles. This includes your hand, used Power cards, and ongoing Effects you played in this hand.
10. Discard the Constellation to a discard pile next to the Element deck. If any cards remained face-down, reveal them before the discard.

#### Heads Up! (Basic & Advanced Games only)

If only two players are left in the game (i.e., all the rest have been eliminated), then winning a hand no longer gains the victor a Priest nor a Prophet (if eligible). All you get is to keep your Stake. This is intended to speed up gameplay when it comes to the crunch. *This rule does not apply to Epic games, since they do not feature player elimination!*

### Folded Players

Players can only fold during a Betting phase. A player who has folded may not play any cards, nor take any actions during the remaining Betting, nor during the Battle phase. In addition, he cannot be targeted by other players Abilities, Action cards, or Myth items unless that card explicitly permits targeting a folded player.

## Prayer Phase

#### The Prayer Track segment

This elongated track has slots for the 6 cards that are available for players to choose from during the Prayer phase.

1. each player in turn, beginning with the Starting player, takes one card from the Prayer Track and places it in his discard pile.
2. Each player pays for his new card by discarding a token (from his Congregation) of the same kind as the card’s cost (shown by the token above the card). If it has no token, the card is free. At the start of each Prayer Track segment, there are two free cards, two cards that cost a follower, and two cards that cost a priest.
3. If you dislike all the cards on the display, you may always blindly draw the top card from the Prayer deck for free. You may also wish to do this if both free cards have been taken by the time it is your turn to choose.
4. You MUST take a card – you cannot refuse this step.

#### Clean-Up segment

1. Look to see if any free cards remain on the track. If so, remove the free cards from the game and place them back in the box.
2. Move the remaining cards on the track to the right, to fill up the empty spaces. (This will result in the cards becoming less expensive.)
3. you should have some empty spaces on the left of the track. Fill them in with new cards drawn from the top of the Prayer deck, and laid face-up on the display.

Once the Prayer phase finishes, start a new hand if this is a Basic Game. If it is Advanced or Epic, proceed to the Myth phase.

## The Myth phase (Advanced or Epic Games only)

This phase ends a hand. In this phase each player, beginning with the Starting player, may tale one (and only one) of the following actions:

* Buy a myth card from the top of his deck, paying for it by discarding miracle tokens equal to its cost (for instance, the Tower of Babel costs 1 miracle). After paying the cost, the card becomes active. A few cards (such as Pandora’s Box) have an immediate effect, and are then discarded. Other cards (the great majority) are placed in front of your Deity Icon.
* Move the top Myth card to the bottom of Myth deck, thus revealing a new one. You cannot buy it on the turn it is revealed. You’ll need to wait until the end of the next hand.
* Leave the myth deck as it is. (Presumably you are saving up Miracles for the card displayed.)

# Exchanging Tokens

If at any time during the game you have no priests or followers left in your Congregation but you have tokens of higher strength, you MUST exchange them. This is not optional.

* If you have no followers, but still have a priest, discard one priest to the bank, and add two followers from the bank to your Congregation.
* If you have no priests, but still have a prophet, discard a prophet to the bank, and add two priests from the bank to your Congregation.

You must make this exchange *immediately* when you run out of a given type of token in your Congregation.



**THOR’S TIP  Your Stake does not count for this – only your Congregation. If you move your last follower to your Stake, you must then “break down” one of the Priests in your Congregation. This means you may need to exchange out followers even when you are playing an Attack card such as Sacrifice (which lets you add tokens to your Stake).**

# Pantheons, Gods, & Myth Cards

Your copy of *Theomachy* has four pantheons, each consisting of three Gods or Goddesses, plus a mini-deck of 5 Myth cards.

Each deity has an Ability and a Mandate. The Ability is on the *left* side of the icon, and the Mandate is on the *right* side.

## Deity Abilities

These fall into two categories:

* Passive Abilities work throughout the game, and simply modify the rules that apply to a particular player. *Example: Danu’s Ability is in play throughout a hand. Poseidon’s Ability happens in each Battle in which he participates. These are passive, since the player needn’t do or say anything to receive the benefits.*
* Active Abilities must be triggered by their player. Their text usually starts contains the phrase “you can …”. Before you use one of these Abilities you need to state you are using it (sometimes this requires that you discard a card, or a token from your Congregation to the bank). *Example: Marduk’s Ability lets him sacrifice a priest to gain a benefit, but he can’t do it in the final betting phase, because his card forbids it. Ares’s Ability is only used at the start of the Battle phase. Both Marduk and Ares can only use their Ability once per hand.*



***THOR’S TIP * If the text doesn’t say otherwise, you can only use a God’s Ability once per an entire hand, and only when it is your turn in a betting phase (or during the Battle). *Example: Morrigan’s passive Ability explicitly states that she can use it multiple times in a hand. Ares Ability only happens once (though he can discard multiple cards).***

## Deity Mandates

Your Mandate lets you earn Miracle tokens. When you meet the condition described by the Mandate, gain a token. You can only earn one Miracle token per hand, even if you (somehow) manage to fulfill your Mandate more than once.

## Myth Cards & Attributes

When you have a myth card available, its text explains when its Ability activates. When this condition is met, a player may use the card. Many myth cards are used at just before a phase begins, or just when it ends. *Example: Gae Bolga is played right at the start of the Battle, before any Attacks.*

The text on most myth cards lets you use them before the beginning of a phase, or at the end of one. Decide whether you wish to use such cards in player order, starting with the First player, and going around in order at the beginning of the proper phase.

After the phase has started in earnest, your chance to use relevant Myth cards is lost, and you can’t use these cards and attributes until the next hand.



**THOR’S TIP  The most important times to check your active Myth cards are just before the first Betting phase, at the start of the Battle phase, and when the Battle is won. Don’t forget!**

You can have more than one active Myth card at a time.

## The Heroes – Myth Cards

Each set of Myth cards contains one Hero, who works differently from the other Myth cards. When you buy a Hero, place his card in front of you, plus take its Hero token from the bank and put it on top of the card. Your Hero stays inactive – his or her text is not yet applied.

To use a Hero, add his token to your Stake just before a battle starts (when many other Myth cards activate). When you do this, the Hero card becomes active. The Ability of some Heroes activates when they are first added to the Stake. For others, it does not become relevant until the end of the Battle. Check your Hero to see how he operates.

If you lose the battle, the Hero in your Stake dies –return him, and his card, to the box.

# Special Rules

## Playing a Card as a Response

The text of some Effect cards starts with the words “Play when an opponent <action>”. Such effects may be played ***only*** as a response to an opponent’s action, regardless of whose turn it is. You may play Power cards before you use such an Effect. If more than one player wants to play an Effect card as a response to an action, do it clockwise, starting from the Starting player.

## Drawing cards and shuffling your deck

If for any reason (drawing cards at the beginning of a hand, Effect cards) you must draw a card and your draw deck has run out, shuffle your discard pile to become your new deck. This also applies to the Effect cards revealing cards from your deck.

## Participation in a Hand

A players who has folded take no further part in the betting rounds nor the battle. They are not affected by most opponents’ actions during these phases. If the text on a card makes you choose an opponent as a target, you may only choose a player who still remains in the hand. (A few cards can target or affect a folded player.)

However, players who have quit DO participate in the End phase and the Prayer phase. They take the cards from their Stake back to their hand, and can play them, and be a target of Effect cards played by others.

## The Discard Pile

Each player’s discard pile is face-up cards, but only the owner can look through it. Other players see only the top card of your pile. If you discard more than one card at a time, you can do it as a group, so your opponents can only see the top card of the group.



**THOR’S TIP  make sure that the top card of your discards gives away as little information as possible.**

The Epic Game

This is intended for players who want a longer, more epic game. It adds a lot of extra time to play, and is emphatically not for everyone.

In the Campaign Game, you compete for victory points, and players are never eliminated!



**THOR’S TIP  I like to use cash money instead of Victory markers to keep track of my points. Maybe that’s just me.**

Apply the normal game rules, but in addition, during the End phase, enact the following:

* All winners of a hand receive 1 Victory point. Use the Victory markers from the bank to keep track of your points. You can make change freely.
* If any player is eliminated (either because of a Last Stand, or he can’t make the next Ante), each winner of the hand receives 3 Victory points.
* Any player who has been eliminated creates a new Congregation consisting of exactly 1 prophet, 2 priests, and 4 followers.
* If any player gets to 10 Victory points, the game immediately ends, and he is victorious. (In case of a tie, both players rejoice in their shared win.)



**THOR’S TIP  it may not seem like there are enough Victory tokens for every player, but there are. If you have 1 VP, use a 1-pt token. If you have 2 VP, use a 2-pt token. At 3 VP use a 2 plus a 1, and so forth. You’ll never need more than 2 tokens to represent a given Victory point total, up to 9 points. (At 10 points you’d need 3 tokens, but since the game ends when someone reaches 10, it’s not really a problem.)**

Clarifications

Q - If you don't have a prophet, and you have Lia Fail in play, when you win a hand, do you earn 2 Prophets (one for the Lia Fail, plus one for your victory), or do you just earn the Lia Fail prophet, which then cancels out the Victory prophet?

A - Lia Fail does not block the normal Prophet, since you exchange from the bank to your Stake, so you still don't have a prophet in your Congregation when the card triggers.

Q - Deceit is an Attack which discards a random card from the hand of an opponent. If you are not the first player, it is weakened, because your opponent may have played all his Attacks before your turn. Is this intentional?

A - Yes, it's intentional. It works better when you have the initiative, but in some cases players benefit from holding back an Attack. Sometimes just the knowledge that your opponent has this card in his deck affects your choices, and this is why it's great.

Q – Is Starting Deck IV weak? It seems to just have an assortment of mediocre attack cards.

A - This deck is actually quite strong. It has many attacks, including two cards that permit you to play attacks from multiple elements. It's unpredictable and it's hard to spoil it when you add new cards during play. In addition, the Temple of War Location goes well with multiple “mediocre” attack cards. This deck is not always simple for a rank beginner, but in fact it was one of the strongest starting decks in playtests.