Grand Tribunal

Since time immemorial, wizards from all corners of the world have met in secret conclaves called Tribunals. The most important of these is the Grand Tribunal; held every thirty-three years, the Grand Tribunal draws magi from far and wide to display their magical creations for the approval of the archmages. These powerful judges vote on their choice for which three magic items are the best at each Tribunal, and award only the very best wizard the title of archmage at the Grand Tribunal. The next Grand Tribunal is fast approaching, and it's your chance to prove yourself as a true master of *ars magica* — the art of magic!

In **Grand Tribunal**, players use Vis (*wees*) tokens to activate cards representing magic item types, spell categories, and resources, which they then assemble into powerful magic items. Each round, players place their votes for the item types and spell categories they're most likely to be able to play. Three times during the game – at the periodic Tribunals – players are presented with 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-place awards for creating magic items with item types and spell categories that match those with the most votes. The player with the most points at the end based on those awards wins the game!

Components

Grand Tribunal is a board game for three to five players, inspired by the **Ars Magica** roleplaying game. It takes approximately 60 to 90 minutes to play, and is designed for players ages 12 and up. In addition to this rules sheet, it includes: 1 board, 2 decks of 55 cards each, 99 game pieces (24 Voting tokens, 60 Vis tokens, 1 Praeco pawn, 2 Tracker tokens, 4 blue 1st-place Award tokens, 4 red 2nd-place Award tokens, 4 yellow 3rd-place Award tokens), and 1 6-sided die. You'll also need paper and a pen or pencil for scoring.

Setup

Before playing, first follow these steps:

Distribute a Reference card to each player, and set any extras aside.

Place the board in the center of the table, within reach of all the players. Sort the cards into three decks — Items, Spells, and Resources — and place them next to the spaces indicated on the board. Discard piles will form during game play.

Deal one Item card and one Spell card face down to each player, and let the players look at their cards. Then, starting with the player to the dealer's left and moving clockwise, each player brings his starting hand to five cards by drawing three more cards from any combination of the three decks. In this way, each player begins with at least one Item and one Spell card, but may draw additional starting Items, Spells, and Resources as he wishes.

Turn over the top three Spell cards and place them in a line face next to the Spells deck. Do the same with the top three Item cards.

Place the Voting tokens, Vis tokens, and Award tokens in piles near the spaces indicated for them, along with the die. Distribute 12 Vis tokens to each player. Then take the Tracker tokens and place one on each of the left-most spaces in the Vis Source Track on the board.

Find a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil that you can use to record scores at the end of each Tribunal.

Elect a starting player by any means acceptable to everyone. Place the Praeco pawn in front of him. Turns continue clockwise.

Base Score

Advance or Install Cost

Installed Spells Allowed

Card Type

Card Title

Effect or Quote

Game Play

Game play proceeds as follows:

Praeco

The player chosen as Praeco (*pray-co*) during setup begins the game. When a player is Praeco, he plays his normal turn as described below, but first takes three Voting tokens from the communal pile called the Concilium (*con-sil-ee-um*) and places them on any three Item or Spell spaces on the board's Voting Track, one token in each of three *different* spaces. His votes are generally for the Items and Spells the player hopes will be popular at the next Tribunal. Placing these Voting tokens does not count as an action.

Each round a different player becomes Praeco; when the player on the Praeco's right has finished his turn, the Praeco pawn is passed to the player on the Praeco's left, who begins the next round as the new Praeco.

There are a number of rounds equal to the number of players, so that each player is Praeco once. At the end of the last round, a Tribunal is held. There are three Tribunals in each game, the last of which is the Grand Tribunal where the game's winner is declared.

Turn Order

During his turn, a player does the following, in this order: *take 2 different actions, discard, and pass the Praeco pawn if last.*

Take 2 Actions

Perform any two *different* actions in any order. Some actions may require the expenditure of Vis tokens, while other actions will give a player more Vis. Any unused Vis tokens are always kept between rounds and Tribunals. Actions are described in more detail below.

Discard

Discard down to your maximum hand size if you're currently over it. Max hand size is five cards, unless modified by card.

Pass the Praeco Pawn

When the last player in the round finishes, pass the Praeco pawn to the player on the Praeco's left, who starts a new round as Praeco.

Actions

During the action phase of a player's turn, he may do any of the following: *place a Voting token, draw an Item or Spell card, advance an Item or Spell, install a Spell on an active Item (free action), cast a Spell from an Item, draw a Resource card (double action), play a Resource card, extract Vis, or gather Vis (double action).* These each use up one of a player's two actions, unless noted as a free action or a double action. A single type of action can be taken a maximum of once per turn, unless it's a free action.

Place a Voting Token

Place one additional Voting token from the communal Concilium pile on any one Voting Track space.

Draw an Item or Spell Card

Take one face-up Item or Spell card currently on the board and add it to your Sanctum, placing it there face up. Immediately replace the chosen card with the top card from the appropriate deck.

Instead of taking one of the face-up Item or Spell cards, you may take the top face-down card from the Items or Spells deck, look at it, and then add it to your Sanctum face down.

You may have any number of Items or Spells in your Sanctum.

Advance Items or Spells

A player can take Vis tokens from his Vis stores and distribute them between available Item and Spell cards in his Sanctum in one of these two ways: *one Vis token can go on each of up to three cards, or up to two tokens can go on any one card.*

A player uses Vis tokens in this way to advance Items and Spells. The term "advance" means the player's wizard is working on that Item or Spell over a number of seasons (signified by rounds), adding

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The Sanctum

The table area in front of a player where he keeps his cards is known as his *Sanctum*. The Items in his Sanctum are called his *Laboratory*, the Spells are called his *Library*, and the Resource cards are his *Vault*. To one side are the Vis tokens that make up his *Vis stores* and represent his wizard's arcane power, as well as any Items that won awards at past Tribunals.

Vis Stores

Awards

Library

Laboratory

Vault

enchantments to it until it's complete. The black pips next to the word "Advance" on an Item or Spell card indicate the number of Vis tokens that must be transferred to that Item or Spell for it to become active (usable by the player for installing, casting, and scoring). Items have a variable advancement cost, but Spells always have an advancement cost of two, regardless of their effect.

You may move a card from being incomplete to being active any time after its advancement cost has been met, even if this is during a subsequent turn or Tribunal. It doesn't have to be at the moment that its advancement is complete. When a card becomes active, turn the card face up (if it isn't already) and return all its Vis tokens to the communal pile called the Regio (reh-gee-oh). Then move the card to a different area of your Sanctum so you and your opponents can tell the difference. Note that making a card active when its advancement is complete isn't an action in itself.

When a Spell is made active, it may be immediately installed (as a free action) on an already-active Item that can receive this category of Spell and has space for it (see below).

Install a Spell on an Active Item (free action)

As a free action, take an active Spell of the appropriate category from your Library and place it under an active Item in your Sanctum. The number and categories of Spells the Item can have installed on it are listed on the bottom of the Item card under "Installed Spells." Display each installed Spell so that only its type peeks out from under the top edge of the Item, not the name or the Spell's effects.

Spells can only be cast when they're installed on items. If no active Item is in the player's Laboratory to receive the Spell when it becomes active, the Spell remains face up in the active area of the player's Sanctum for later installation. Because it's a free action, a player can install as many Spells as he likes on his turn.

Cast a Spell from an Item

Remove a Spell from an Item in your Sanctum and immediately follow the effect given on it, discarding the Spell when finished. Spells in the discard pile are out of play until the next Tribunal, at the beginning of which they are reshuffled into the Spell deck.

Casting a Spell costs no additional Vis, but the player may choose to immediately pay 2 Vis tokens to prevent the Spell from being discarded. The Spell goes to its owner's Library instead, face up but inactive; the advance cost must be paid again to activate it.

Draw a Resource Card (double action)

Draw the top Resource card from the deck and, after looking at it, place it face down in your Sanctum. This uses two actions.

Play a Resource Card

Turn over one Resource card in your Sanctum and immediately follow the directions on the card. Note that "draw" always means to take a card from the indicated deck, unless it specifically says to choose a "face up" card from those next to the deck.

Extract Vis

Take Vis tokens from the communal Regio pile and add them to your Vis stores. In the rounds before the first two Tribunals, one Vis token is gained. In those preceding the Grand Tribunal, two Vis are earned. This is marked on the Vis Source Track for quick reference.

Gather Vis (double action)

If a player spends two actions, he may gather Vis tokens. The number of tokens earned by gathering Vis is governed by the Vis Source Track. On the Track, a player may choose either to gather Vis from an Uncontested Source or a Contested Source, with varying results.

If the player gathers from an Uncontested Source, he simply takes the amount of Vis specified by the space the Tracker token is currently on in the Uncontested Source Track, then moves the token one space to the right down the Uncontested Track. Each space shows two numbers, separated by a colon: the first number is the amount of Vis that the player collects, while the second number is the amount of Vis *every other player* collects. All of this Vis comes from the communal Regio pile.

If the player chooses to gather from a Contested Source, he takes the amount of Vis specified by the space the Tracker token is currently on in the Contested Source Track, then moves that token one space to the right along the Contested Track. In this case, the player must roll the die, rerolling a 1 or a 6; the number that comes up is the amount of Vis collected by that player from the communal Regio pile. After that player has rolled, *each other player*, in order, has the option of rolling a die to collect Vis from the Regio in the same way — but must pay one Vis *to the initiating player* for the privilege of doing so.

When a player gathers Vis from a Track whose Tracker token is on the last space in a particular Tribunal area, the Tracker token moves into the next Tribunal's area so that more Vis of that Source can't be collected until then. In this way, there's a limit to how many times players can gather Vis per Tribunal. It's also possible that a token won't advance all the way toward the dividing arrow before a given Tribunal is over; in this case, the Tracker token is moved forward to the first space in the next Tribunal area when the new Tribunal starts.

Ending a Tribunal

The final round of any Tribunal is the one begun by the last person to be Praeco. Once the last person in that round has finished his turn, a Tribunal is called to compare votes and score Items. If this is the third and final Tribunal, it's known as the Grand Tribunal and a winner is determined immediately after the scoring is completed.

Counting Votes

All active Items and the Spells installed on them earn votes. An Item gets votes equal to the number of Voting tokens on its Item type in the Voting Track, plus those on each of the Spell categories that match a Spell *installed* in that Item, disregarding multiple installed Spells of a single category. So, if there are two Voting tokens on Elemental Spells, an Item that has three installed Elemental Spells receives two votes, not six. Items do not get credit for simply *allowing* a particular category of Spell; they must have at least one *installed* Spell of this category to gain these votes.

The Item with the most votes gets a blue 1st-place Award token, the Item with the second-most votes gets a red 2nd-place Award token, and the Item with the third-most votes gets a yellow 3rd-place Award token. All other items get "Honorable Mention;" they don't receive Award tokens, but they can be improved and entered again in subsequent Tribunals. Items that win have their Award token placed on top of them and are moved to the side of the Sanctum. A winning Item can still have Spells added to it, and a player can cast Spells from such an item, but it can't be entered again.

If two or more Items tie, then their base scores are compared. The Item with the highest base score wins, and the remaining Item(s) compete for the next-lowest Award token. If this method doesn't break a tie, then compare the *number* of installed Spells on each Item. If this second tiebreaker still doesn't work, then each player gets the same-place Award token; the next-lower place is not awarded for that Tribunal, in this case.

Scoring

After placement is determined, scores are totaled for each active Item, whether they won an award or not. (A player can't elect not to enter an active Item in a given Tribunal.) Record scores for each player.

1st Place

An Item that wins 1st place adds one point to its base score for every Spell *installed* on it, and then multiplies this number by 4.

2nd Place

An Item that wins 2nd place adds one point to its base score for every Spell *installed* on it, and then multiplies this number by 3.

3rd Place

An Item that wins 3rd place adds one point to its base score for every Spell *installed* on it, and then multiplies this number by 2.

Honorable Mention

An Item that does not place gets only its base score, plus one point for each *installed* Spell. Remember, though, that it may be entered again in later Tribunal competitions.

Beginning a New Tribunal

When all of the scores have been resolved and recorded, the Voting tokens from that round are cleared off the board and put back in the communal Concilium pile, and the cards in the discard piles are shuffled back into their appropriate decks.

Each player adds 12 Vis tokens from the communal Regio pile to his Vis stores. Remember that any unused Vis tokens from the last Tribunal are kept for future use by their player, along with the cards in his hand and cards in his Sanctum.

The two Tracker tokens are moved forward on their respective Tracks to the first space in the next Tribunal area.

The player who owns the just-completed Tribunal's 1st-place Item begins the new Tribunal as the first Praeco, placing the Praeco pawn in front of him. Play then continues as normal.

The Grand Tribunal

The very last Tribunal of the game is known as the Grand Tribunal. Voting and scoring works like any other, except for one important difference: the winner of the game is determined immediately afterward. The player with the highest total points at the end of the Grand Tribunal is the winner, and he is invited to become an archmage!

Credits

Grand Tribunal is inspired by the Ars Magica roleplaying game. To find out more, visit www.atlas-games.com/arm5