

# MAGNUM OPUS



V1.0

A game by Lionel Borg – Illustrated by Arnaud Demaegd



*During the reign of Emperor Rudolph II, Prague was a capital of the occult arts. Alchemists and other leading figures from all walks of life gathered in this city. Some hoped to make alchemical formulas elaborated after months of study. Others enjoyed meeting extraordinary individuals and even became their patrons.*

*In the square beneath the Astronomical Clock and in the famous Golden Lane, lucky encounters allowed the alchemists to acquire their mysterious ingredients through clever dealings. The Emperor, a connoisseur of esoterism, intervened by wielding his influence over the participants in these schemes. He made his wishes known thanks to an emissary bearing an enigmatic seal representing an ouroboros.*

*Come to the City of the Alchemists to complete your Magnum Opus, your Great Work, outshining those of your rivals!*



30 min



2 - 5



12 +





## Object of the game

Each player represents an alchemist who has come to Prague to assemble the Alchemical Ingredients required to carry out one or two formulas for their Magnum Opus.

Each Ingredient acquired, each completed formula and each pair of Prime Ingredients earn Prestige Points. The player with the most points at the end of the game is declared the winner.

## Materials

This box contains...

- 1 Astronomical Clock Square board
- 1 Golden Lane board
- 54 Character cards (6 packs of 9 cards)
- 10 Prime Ingredient cards
- 10 Magnum Opus cards, each presenting two formulas requiring Ingredients
- 1 Ouroboros
- 26 Silver tokens and 4 Gold tokens

- 30 Alchemical Ingredient tokens:

6 X

6 X

6 X

6 X

6 X



*Prime Ingredients*



*Magnum Opus*



*Gold and Silver tokens*



*Ouroboros*

## Boards

Cost of revealed Alchemical Ingredient tokens

Position to be covered by an Alchemical Ingredient token



*Golden Lane*

Position to be covered by an Alchemical Ingredient token during the Supply phase

Round number (left visible when the round is being played)

Direction of rotation of packs during each round

Cost of revealed Alchemical Ingredient tokens

Position to be covered by an Alchemical Ingredient token during the Supply phase



*Astronomical Clock*

Position for a Prime Ingredient card



Start of game with 4 players



### Where is the Ouroboros placed?

Some players find it easier to place the Ouroboros to the right of the player who is its keeper during odd rounds and to the left during even rounds.

## Setup

- 1) Mix up the Alchemical Ingredient tokens leaving them face down (see instructions on the reverse side of this sheet for 2-player games), and place them next to the game boards.
- 2) Gather together the Gold and Silver tokens and place them near the game boards.
- 3) Draw 5 Alchemical Ingredient tokens (or 4 tokens with 2 players), and align them facing up on the Golden Lane board.
- 4) Reveal 1 Prime Ingredient card and place it on the Astronomical Clock Square board.
- 5) Distribute 2 Magnum Opus cards to each player. After having looked at them, each player keeps one of the cards face down and discards the other (face down). The cards kept will only be known to their holders until the end of the game.
- 6) Each player takes a pack of 9 Character cards of the same color, and 3 Silver tokens.
- 7) The youngest player takes the Ouroboros and sets it down in front of him or her. He or she placed one pack of cards not attributed to any player beneath it. The remaining unused packs are put back in the game box.

**Note :** The tokens held by each player must be visible to all of the participants throughout the game.

## Playing the game

A game is a succession of 5 rounds (or 4 with 2 players). Each round takes place in 3 phases:

- 1) Supply phase
- 2) Solicitations phase
- 3) Patronage phase

### 1) Supply phase

- With 3, 4, or 5 players, draw 2 Alchemical Ingredient tokens (or only 1 token with 2 players) among those available, place them in the Golden Lane, and then add another from the Ingredients revealed during step 3 of the Setup (they are taken in order of left to right).
- Now draw 3 more Alchemical Ingredient tokens among those available and place them in the Astronomical Clock Square.

### 2) Solicitations phase

Each player secretly chooses 1 Character card from the pack he holds, and then places it face down in front of him or her. The pack underneath the Ouroboros is thus not seen by anyone.

Next...

- Players who do not possess the **Ouroboros** transfer the remaining Character cards in their pack to their neighbor:
  - on the right during rounds 1, 3, and 5 ;
  - on the left during rounds 2 and 4.
- **The player who possesses the Ouroboros** transfers their pack to their neighbor like the other players, but takes the pack that was placed beneath the Ouroboros instead of the one transferred by their neighbor. The latter pack is placed beneath the Ouroboros.



When each player has made their choice and transmitted their pack to their neighbor, everyone reveals their chosen Character card. Each player then looks at their new pack in order to pick another card.

**Note:** The cards chosen are placed in front of each player in columns, one for each Character. These columns are disposed by numeral: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and lastly IX.

This operation is repeated until each player has 6 cards face up before them. **The packs of Character cards are no longer transferred after this.** They remain in front of each of the players.

### 3) Patronage phase

The player in possession of the Ouroboros calls the Characters by name one by one in the order of their numerals. The player who has the most cards bearing the called name in front of them is the sole beneficiary of that Character. They can obtain *Funds* in Silver tokens (if this is indicated on the card), and then make use once of the *Favor* bestowed by the Character in question. **If several players have the same number of the called card**, they may receive the *Funds* (if indicated), but they can neither use the associated *Favor* nor can they go to the Astronomical Clock Square (see below).

**The Character cards I to VI also indicate Alchemical Ingredients.** Their beneficiary can renounce the Character's *Favor* and any *Funds* indicated in order to purchase **one (only)** of these Alchemical Ingredients **present** in the Astronomical Clock Square for 3 Silver tokens.

**Note:** Once the effects of the called Character have been resolved, the cards associated with this Character are then turned face down in order to make it easier to read the remaining cards in play.



#### Important!

- Each Character will only benefit (once) a single player per round.
- A Character's *Favor* may only affect the cards of a Character with a higher numeral than its own.
- Any purchased Ingredients are displayed face up in front of the player concerned.

**Once all of the Character cards have been played,** prepare the following round:

- 1) Remove any remaining Ingredient tokens from the game boards and place them face up in the box. They are no longer available during the Supply phase.
- 2) Reconstitute the packs of cards by color and distribute one to each player.
- 3) The player in possession of the Ouroboros passes it to the player on their left. That player places a pack of Characters not yet distributed beneath it.

A new round can now start.

### The Character cards



This Character offers *Funds* and a *Favor*, but not the alternate purchase option if the player renounces the first two.



This Character does not offer any *Funds*. But she does have a *Favor* to bestow, which the player can renounce in order to make a purchase in the Astronomical Clock Square.



## End of the game

At the conclusion of the fifth round, there are no more Ingredients left to draw. Play stops here. Each player then reveals his Magnum Opus card, and scores:

- 1 Prestige Point for each Alchemical Ingredient purchased during the game;
- 1 extra Prestige Point for each pair of Prime Ingredients acquired;
- 2 extra Prestige Points for each completed formula within the player's Magnum Opus. A single Ingredient cannot be used in more than one formula on the same card, but Prime Ingredients can be used in a Magnum Opus formula.

The player with the most Prestige Points is declared the winner. In the case of a tie, victory goes to the player with most completed formulas, or failing that, the most Silver tokens (the richest contender wins).

### Example :

*A player has purchased the following Ingredients during the game:*



*Each of them earns 1 Prestige Point. So the player scores at least five points.*



*The pair of Ingredients gathered by the player were Prime during this game. That earns an extra point. At the end of the game, the player reveals his Magnum Opus card.*



*The player also managed to assemble the Ingredients for one of the formulas recorded on the card, scoring 2 more Prestige Points.*

*So in total he earns  $5 + 1 + 2 = 8$  Prestige Points.*

## WITH TWO PLAYERS

The game is played in 4 rounds (instead of 5).

### At the start of the game...

Remove 2 tokens for each type of Alchemical Ingredient, since they won't be used in play;  
Reveal only 4 Ingredient cards in the Golden Lane.

**At the beginning of each round,** place only 2 Alchemical Ingredients in the Golden Lane:

1 drawn at random from the face-down reserve tokens, and 1 from those revealed at the start of the game.



## The Character cards



1<sup>st</sup> card

After having fought in France for many years, the Landsknecht **Wolrad** has become a mercenary officer in the city watch that patrols the streets of Prague.

**Funds:** No Silver token

**Favor:** You may discard 1 Character card placed in front of another player.



2<sup>nd</sup> card

**Ludmila** reads the future in Tarot cards illustrated with strange pictures. The cards allow her to offer advice whose meaning is often obscure, but never worthless.

**Funds:** No Silver token

**Favor:** You may exchange 1 Character card placed in front of you with 1 Character card in front of another player.



3<sup>rd</sup> card

Respected by many important people, the influence of **Johann** is growing in Prague. This Catholic priest aspires to build a library for the city, where ancient manuscripts and maps can be found alongside both terrestrial and celestial globes.

**Funds:** 1 Silver token

**Favor:** You can add 1 Character card from your pack to those in front of you.



4<sup>th</sup> card

**Jezebel** haunts the taverns of Prague's poorer neighborhoods in the company of ruffians. Her charms distract the local citizens and travelers of both sexes.

**Funds:** No Silver token

**Favor:** You can give 1 Silver token to another player in order to take 1 Character card placed in front of them and add it to those in front of you.



5<sup>th</sup> card

In addition to his knife, **Venceslas** always keeps his lucky coin in his pocket. On the heads side, this ancient coin of unknown origin bears the curious image of a serpent biting its own tail.

**Funds:** 1 Silver token

**Favor:** You can take up to 2 Silver tokens from another player.



6<sup>th</sup> card

Using the pseudonym of "**Hermes Malavici**," this enigmatic alchemist knows the Golden Lane better than anyone. He can procure whatever he wants whenever he pleases.

**Funds:** 1 Silver token

**Favor:** You may purchase 1 Alchemical Ingredient at the market in the Golden Lane for 4 Silver tokens.



7<sup>th</sup> card

The voice of **Marie** is an enchantment. Fresh, perfectly pitched, and as pure as crystal, it contrasts sharply with the appearance of this merchant's wife from Prague's bourgeoisie.

**Funds:** 2 Silver tokens

**Favor:** You may purchase 1 Alchemical Ingredient at the market in the Golden Lane for 4 Silver tokens.



8<sup>th</sup> card

For many years now, astrologers, alchemists, and other practitioners of magic have paid visits to **Kunhuta**, offering their services to help her conquer the Great Evil, as she calls the ravages of time.

**Funds:** 3 Silver tokens

**Favor:** You may purchase 1 Alchemical Ingredient at the market in the Golden Lane for 4 Silver tokens.



9<sup>th</sup> card

This Prague nobleman is a patron highly esteemed by all those interested in esoterism within the city. In the hallways of the palace, the courtiers whisper that the Emperor himself seeks help from **Lukas** to acquire strange objects and unusual ingredients for his cabinet of curiosities.

**Funds:** 4 Silver tokens

**Favor:** You may purchase 1 Alchemical Ingredient at the market in the Golden Lane for 4 Silver tokens.

