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MICRO PROSE
STRATEGY

W. DAVID POSSIDENTE



Machiavelli
the
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"A prince must, therefore, always seek advice."

—Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince

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One Getting Started

Dear Nephew,

If you are reading this, then surely I am dead. I have left the majority of my wealth to my daughters. However, I have instructed the arbiter of my estate to provide you with some assets, a yearly stipend, and a fine map of the known world. With skill and good fortune, I trust you will lead the family to wealth and power.

I have but two pieces of advice! You must stick to the good so long as you can, but if compelled by necessity you must be ready to use other means. And, always remember the Golden Rule, "He who has the gold makes the rules!"

Uncle Niccolo

As you read the letter your uncle provided in the event of his death, you begin to realize the nature of the position you are assuming. You now are the head of one of the four strongest families in Venice, and you must protect and expand your wealth, power, and influence in order to survive. Your immediate resources include a sketchy map of the known world, a few transports for trading, a small yearly estate allowance, and enough cash to buy a few cases of whatever might be available for trade from the local craft and trade establishments. Pick your Venetian jaw up off the floor and get to work, my prince.

I can serve you as adviser on matters of state. My concern is not with the way things should be but with the way experience and history have shown that things are. As you shoulder your new responsibilities, I wish to present you with a gift unlike the favors and expensive trinkets others seeking your good graces might offer. My gift is the knowledge acquired from my extended experience in matters of state and a life dedicated to the study of the history of princely affairs.

A Prince's Goals

In *Machiavelli the Prince*, you have the primary goal of becoming the wealthiest and most influential of the four Venetian families competing over the span of time you've chosen to play. In order to succeed, you must achieve a number of secondary goals throughout the course of the game. To become the wealthiest prince of your time, you must become adept at playing politics. You must bring senators under your influence in order to reap the benefits of the Doge treasury. You will need to become influential in religious politics, as well. Control of the Papacy has many rewards and will speed your ascendancy to wealth. You must also learn the arts of war and use them appropriately. A successful prince will make the right decisions concerning unfriendly cities that refuse to trade with Venetians. At times, you may even benefit from attacking friendly cities and the trade transports of your Venetian competitors. The costs of such tactics must be weighed carefully before you undertake such a venture.

Many factors will affect your success. Let us continue to prepare you to promote and protect your interests.

Pre-Game Strategies

A winning strategy can start even before the game begins. In fact, sometimes it must.

Generating the Map

The designers prepared the *Historical Map* long ago, so there's nothing to say about generating it. The game will generate a *Random Map* without your input if you choose the

default parameter option. Click *Yes* when asked "Use default parameters for map?" If you use this option, you will have no advance knowledge of what the map will look like. The more expert you become with the game, the more you will appreciate truly random maps.

If you would rather decide yourself how the terrain features are generated, click on *No* on the default parameters screen.

♠ Figure 1-1



Customizing the map parameters is a straightforward process. You will be able to set the percentage of each terrain feature (within limits) that you wish included in the new world. Note that the *Large Rivers* and *Small Rivers* parameters are set by number, not by percentage.

The *Scatter* parameter setting you choose determines in what way the land and sea features will be distributed around the "flat earth" of Venice circa 1300 A.D. If you set the scatter at zero, you will not necessarily find one humongous land mass, but it could be close. The higher the scatter, the more spread out things will get.

The *Ocean* parameter has pre-determined limits; water will constitute at least 40 percent of the generated world. A setting this low will make any land mass pretty large, but if there is enough scatter, you could still have profitable sea routes.

The *Seed* number is simply an identification number for the map you generate. It has no effect on the world. If you would like to have a duplicate of a map you've played before generated for a new game, enter the seed number of that map.

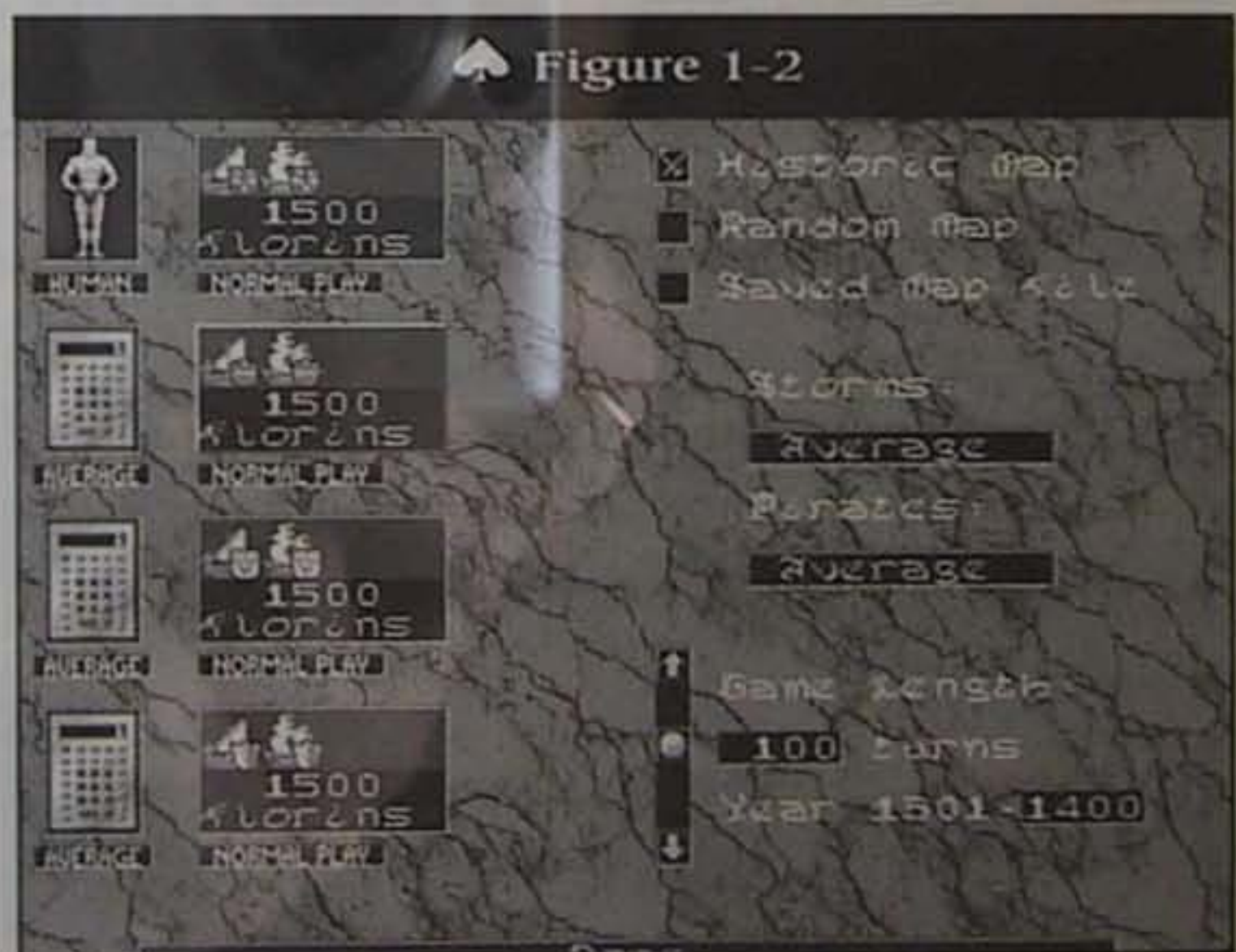
The Sequence of Turns

Beginning a game of *Machiavelli the Prince* is not as simple as just choosing the strength of your opponents. You actually encounter a strategic decision immediately. Your position in the sequence of turns among players will have specific advantages and disadvantages.

If you are the first player in sequence, you will have the advantage of taking first crack at the commodities that are generated in cities between turns. Another advantage to this position is that you have a better chance of being the first person to enter undiscovered cities and make a profit from the discovery of artifacts. The money you make from these artifacts can help give you a quick advantage

over your opponents. After a successful run of exploratory missions has earned you extra florins, your opponents will have to play catch-up.

On the other hand, the final position in the sequence of player turns is advantageous, too, because you get the last say in politics. For instance, there may be an election during a turn, and you must keep an opponent from becoming the Doge. Your opponent has a



two-vote majority, but playing last gives you the opportunity to assassinate one of these senators and bribe the other one if you wish to foil your opponent's plans. If there is a Papal election, you are ready to get yourself into the best position by buying just enough cardinals to win or prevent an opponent from winning this powerful position. The final player position gives you the ability to turn things as much to your favor as possible during crucial moments of the game.

Game Length

When you're deciding on the appropriate game length, a number of strategic factors come into play. If you want a short game, you must be ready to play fast and furious. In a fifteen-year game, you will be doing little more than trading for quick profits in order to put yourself ahead immediately. You should always play as the first player in sequence in a short game, because you will need every artifact discovery you can get. You will also want to find commodities in stock when you're ready to trade.

In the longer games, getting off to a fast start is advantageous, but long-range strategic planning becomes important quickly. Trade will be affected by the Plague, sieges, and Papal excommunications. Politics are your main concern, and trading only supplies the financial ammunition you need to keep your opponents at bay. Be prepared for a more intense, in-depth game. Once you get ahead, your opponents will be more than willing to join forces to knock you back down to their level. Intermediate-length games allow you to play politics meaningfully and to expand trade routes beyond the shorter, quick-profit scheme. In the longest two game scenarios, you should also be prepared to lose track of your trading missions unless you set up lots of trade routes; most players will become overwhelmed by the number of transports to control. If this occurs even with trade routes

in place, you're probably doing too well, and you may want to make your opponents step up to the next level of expertise—for the challenge.

Storms and Pirates!

Your choices here are based on a simple equation. If pirates and storms show up Rarely, you will not be pestered by their existence too much and

♠ Figure 1-3



will go about your plans with few interruptions. If you use the Normal rate, you will be bothered with these inconveniences from time to time. Should you wish to torture yourself—or challenge yourself (to see if you can handle the more extreme rigors of a pirate- and brigand-infested land, with storms that cause calamity nonstop)—then you'll want to set the mode to Frequent. Remember, your opponents will run into these problems with the same frequency.

Difficulty and Opponent Strength

If you want to learn the ropes quickly, then begin with the easy setting for yourself and make all your opponents novices. They will putz around while you learn how to exploit trade routes, explore the world to find new cities for trading, and make lots of cash with which to control the Doge and Papacy. You can also learn how to hire mercenaries to bring unfriendly, and even friendly, cities under your ownership.

After you pound mindless Venetian computer opponents for a while in easy mode, you may decide to try a more challenging game. In the first easy game you played, you probably mastered the arts of bribery, assassination, and other necessary means of prevailing in the Machiavellian world. If you enjoyed being able to smite others without being smitten back, then you want to stay in easy mode. Otherwise, move up a step or two and challenge yourself. If you like to experiment, set the computer opponents at different levels and see how they play against you. I have run into some surprising results, but the random generation of pirates and storms can defeat the most expert player at a very inopportune time.

After you've played a few games and your experience has grown, step into the big leagues and play against three expert computer players. Your best strategy changes in this mode because you may sometimes need the assistance of other players to keep a competing family in check. If you get ahead, don't feel too secure in your position. Your opponents are always plotting your downfall. If you reach the point where your pride is taking a beating, step back a little and play your opponents at a lower level. You'll find that the experience of playing tough competitors makes the other levels much more bearable.





Two

Foundations of Success



hat you do in the first few years (turns) is the foundation of your strategy. It's possible to fight your way back from a bad start, but it's much smarter to get a jump on the other Venetians.

Turn a Quick Profit

As soon as the game begins, you want to make the right moves and get a quick start so that your competitors are left in the dust wondering what hit them. At this point, my prince, you have only one concern: Money. In order to get the money you need to lead a long, prosperous, and enjoyably ruthless lifestyle, you have to turn some quick profits and develop your trade system. The map you have may be sketchy as you venture further from Venice, but it is quite accurate close to home.

Any transports you have should be filled with the Venetian glass, since it is the local specialty item. Take it to a close city for quick profits. Depending on the transport fleet your uncle left you, you may choose to allow one ship (preferably a small galley) to continue to explore, but always fill the cargo hold with the most profitable local item from the cities you discover along the way. In this way, your galley can continue to explore while consistently turning profits. If you are unsure which local product is the best choice, check the city report screen.

Turning a quick profit means refraining from playing politics. At this point in the game, there is no need to spend money on senators and cardinals when you'll need it for trade. Save your political money for the important upcoming campaigns.

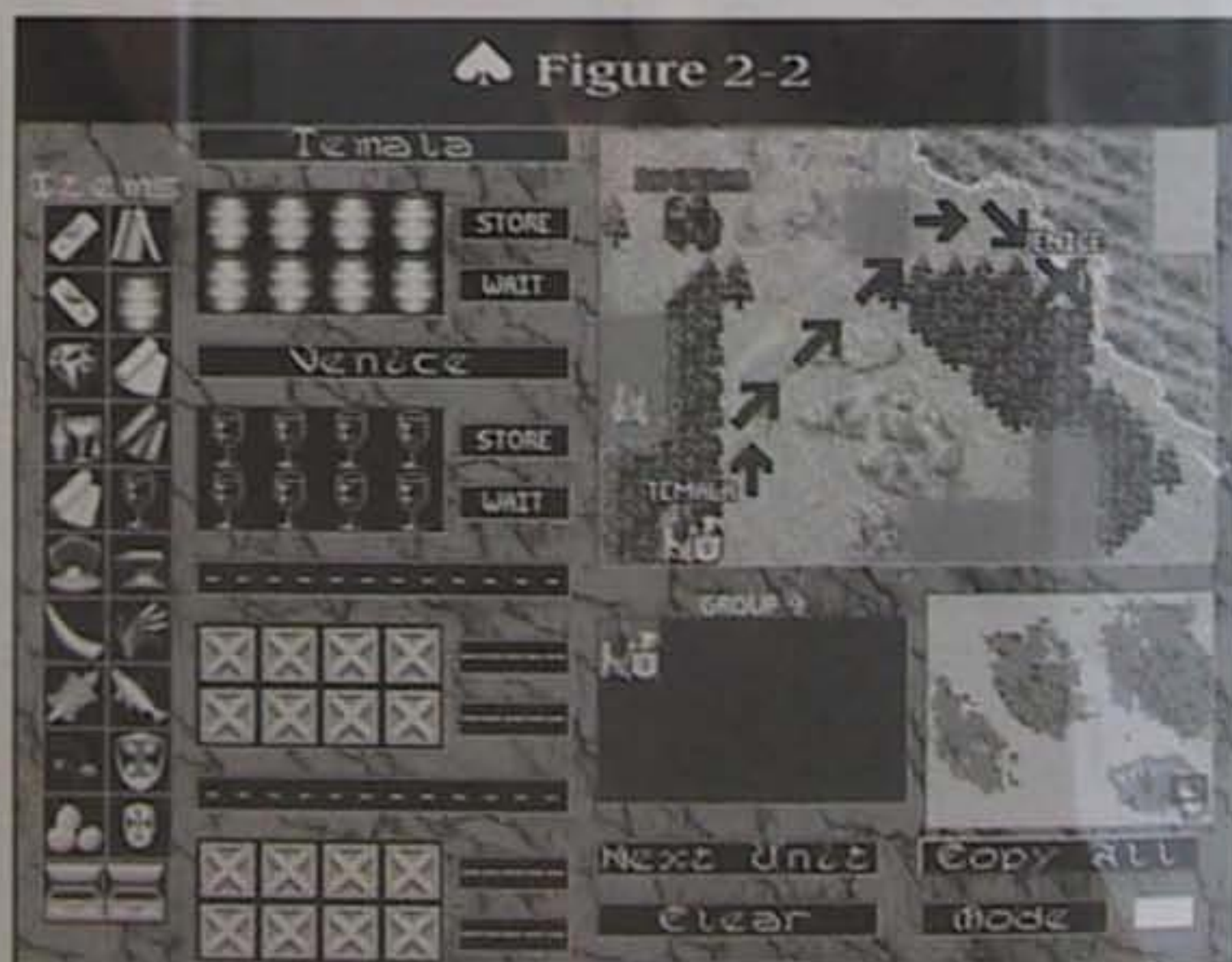


Modus Operandi

Before setting out with a load of goods, you must make a choice concerning the mode under which your transports will travel. The three options are green, yellow, and red. (You'll find the mode button on the movement screen.) The default mode is the green mode. Green means that the transport unit will take the safest

route. For ships, this means they will follow the coastline to avoid storms and pirates. Land caravans will take the open routes that should be more free of brigands, sand storms, falling rock, or avalanches. Yellow mode allows transport units to be less cautious than green mode and to move with more haste, but it is still cautious compared to the reckless abandon of the red mode. In red mode, the transports will take the shortest, fastest route—regardless of any dangers.

The mode you choose for transports should depend on the settings you decided on for the frequency of pirates and storms. If you opted for pirates and storms to be Rare or even Normal, definitely use the red mode. The profits you achieve from the speed of travel are well worth the infrequent losses you will sustain during the course of the game. At the beginning of a game, your ships will certainly follow the coastline anyway, looking to discover port cities and to map the world for you. Losing a transport at the beginning of the game could certainly be disastrous, but a simple strategy of following the coast and running short, quick trade routes close to Venice will normally prevent such mishaps.



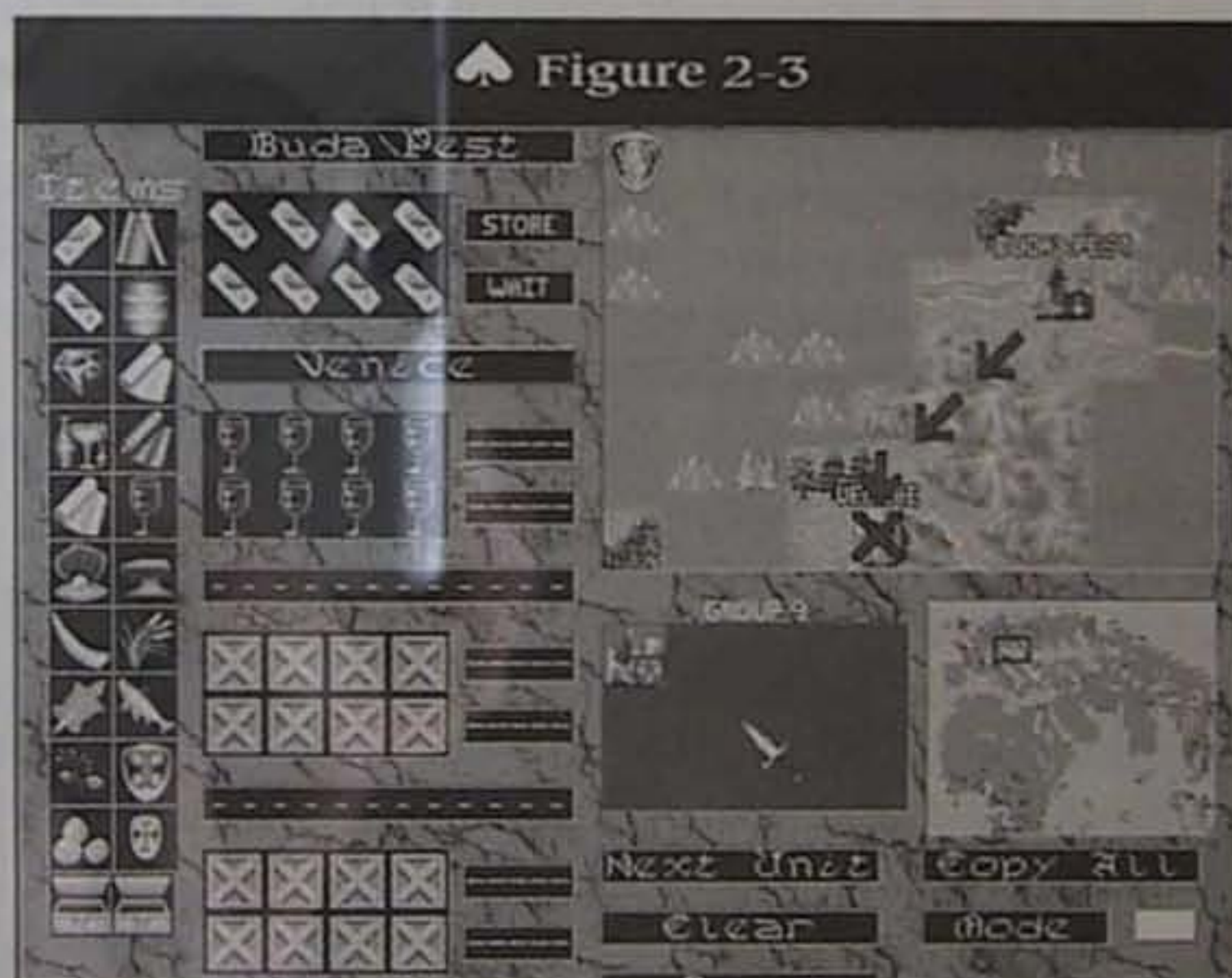
If you decided to be pestered by Frequent storms and pirate attacks, you should consider playing in the yellow or green modes. The storms and pirate attacks affect all players at a roughly equal level. Your opponents face the same random threat that you do and may have problems that will help you move ahead in the game. Computer players are fairly cautious regardless of the pirate and storm settings, however. Playing in the red mode will usually give you the advantage of quicker trade route profits.

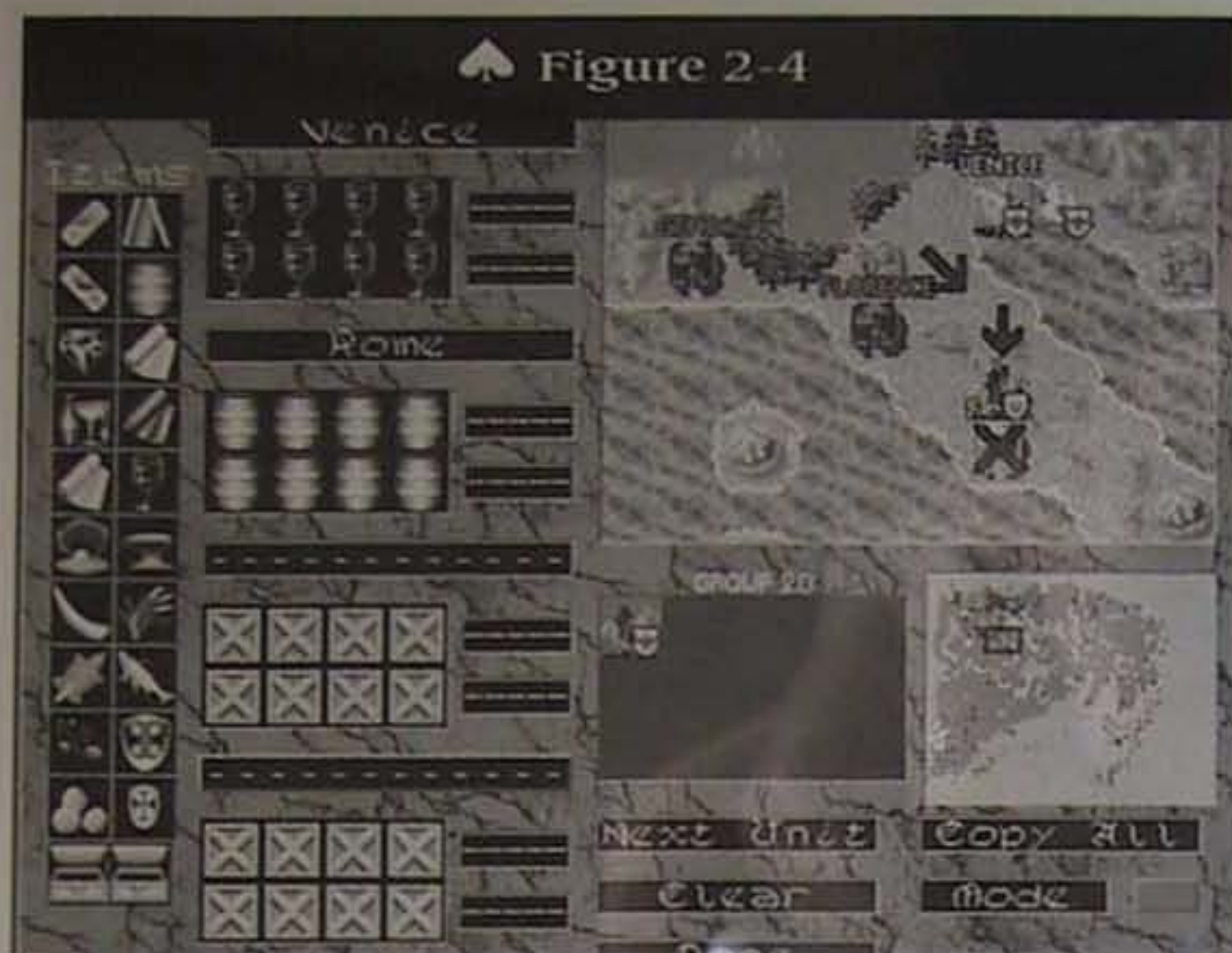
Short & Sweet: Trade Routes

Short, reliable trade routes will always be a factor in the game, even after you've discovered the entire world. The reason they are so important is that they allow you to make a quick, relatively consistent profit that you can immediately put to good use. You can not expand your transport fleet if you spend your first 10 turns exploring the world instead of engaging in steady, profitable trade. By the time you discovered all the world, your opponents would be in control of the Papacy and the Doge, and you would not be able to catch up.

One of the best over-land trade routes available early in the historical game is from Venice to Budapest. Usually, you can trade Venetian glass for a decent profit and bring gold and furs back for another quick florin. Whether a city begins the game open to trade, or "friendly," is fairly random. However, Rome and Budapest are almost always friendly, and Genoa and Florence are almost always unfriendly.

Taking Venetian glass to Rome is another good money-making venture. In this case, you should trade Venetian glass for grog. The glass should net you a good profit, but the grog usually only brings a few extra florins per keg. The point here is that it's quick, and a profit is a profit. If four quick runs to Rome net you 800 florins in two turns, why take three turns to make the same money off of one run to a more distant city?





Move Points

If you want to make the most out of your first few turns, you must keep in mind the number of "move points" your transport will be using as it crosses its terrain. Ships use one move point per space, as they are always on water. Land transports use a varying number of move points per space, depending on the terrain

and the type of transport. At times, it is wiser and less frustrating if you go around a mountain rather than over it. When you first discover a new city, count the spaces and move points between it and the nearest city. Find the fastest, most profitable route, then use it for the rest of the game or until it becomes profitable to build a road. If you click on the destination for your trade group, arrows will automatically plot the fastest route. It may look like it meanders out of the way, but the arrow course takes terrain and transport move points into account.



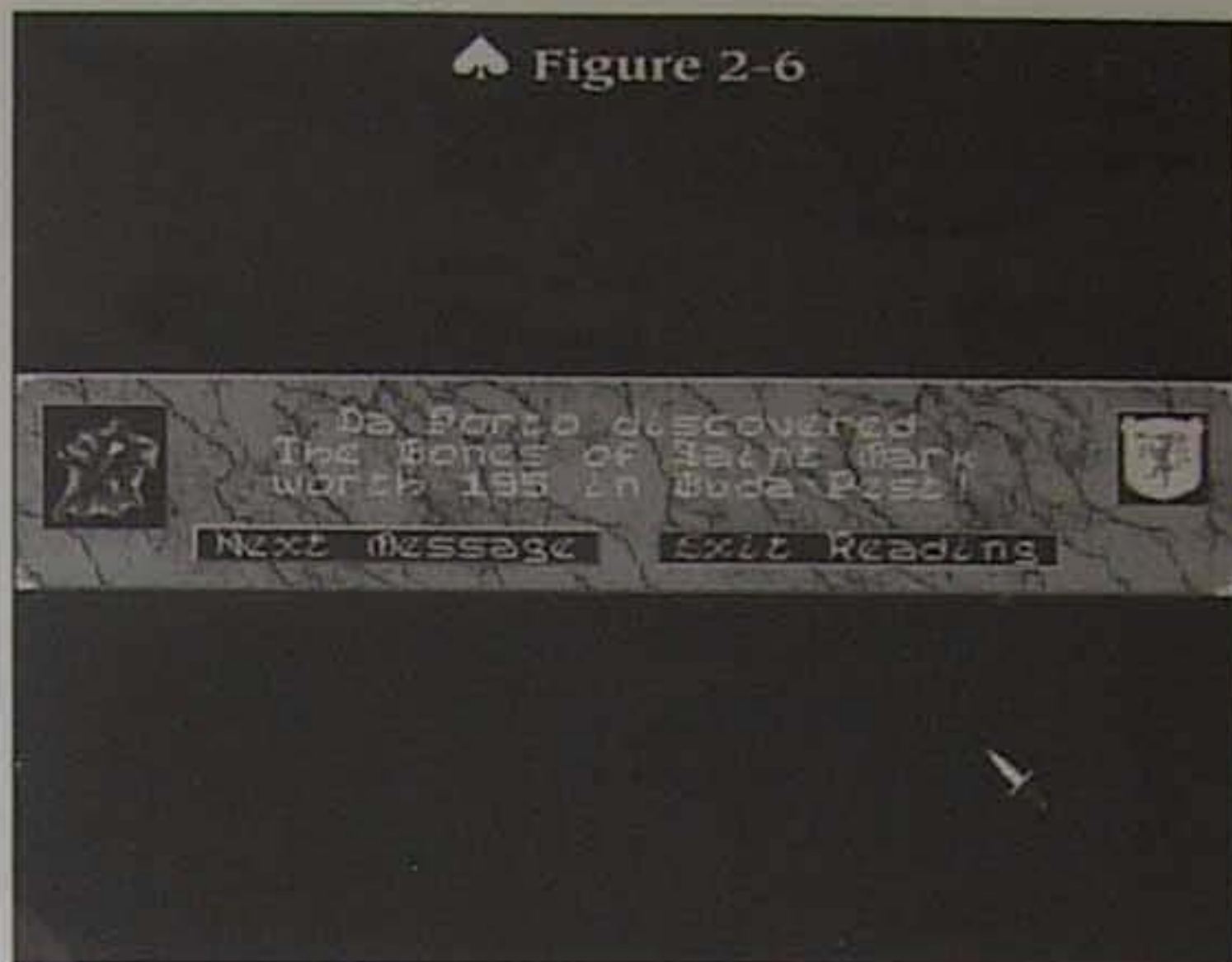
Exploration & Artifacts

"Stones and Bones" is what some might call them, but to an intelligent prince like yourself, the archaeological artifacts in newly discovered cities mean a quick financial advantage over your competitors. As your exploring ships and caravans enter friendly cities that have yet to be discovered by other Venetians, they may happen upon any



number of valuable artifacts, which will be immediately confiscated and sent to Venice for a profit. The profit is entered into your account instantaneously and can be used right away.

Expanding Your Transport System



In the first few turns of the game, you will be making some quick profit, and your explorers will be out finding other cities that are open to trade with Venice. Use the money you make to expand your transport system. Be careful to always leave money in your account so you can buy commodities for trade, but use the rest of your hard-earned profits to put donkey and camel caravans and large galleys into your transport fleet.

A worthwhile strategy is to continue using your explorers for exploration after they have discovered new cities. Buy a transport unit in the new city during the same turn in which you discovered the place so that it can immediately begin its trade route from the new city in the following turn. If you are making enough to buy an extra transport for exploration, do so. After a few turns, it is wise to have one transport each exploring the northwest, southwest, northeast, and southeast regions. You can expand exploration in later turns when money becomes more plentiful. The majority of cities usually lie on or near the coast, and small galleys can quickly find cities that can then send out an inland donkey or camel caravan for further land exploration.

Know Your Units

As you look over your choices in the *Buy Units* screen (reached by clicking on the galley floating on the Venice screen), you need to keep several things in mind. Whether you buy a cog, a galley, or a camel or donkey caravan depends on your needs, the terrain, and the length of the trade route you're setting up. The advantages of each transport unit become clear during the course of the game, but you've employed my services as adviser so that you may learn from my experience.

Camel caravans are listed at the top. You'll notice that they have eight move points per turn, carry eight cases of commodities, and cost 500 florins. Camels move better in the



desert than any other unit. Their movement cost is two move points over desert and three over any other terrain. It is best to purchase camel caravans for use only in desert areas unless a road already exists. The type of land caravan is not relevant if a road is present. All movement costs on a road are one point per space.

Donkey caravans are listed next. They have the same numbers as camels but move more slowly in the desert and more quickly over mountainous terrain. If you see grass, forest, or mountain terrain, chances are it is best to buy donkey caravans.

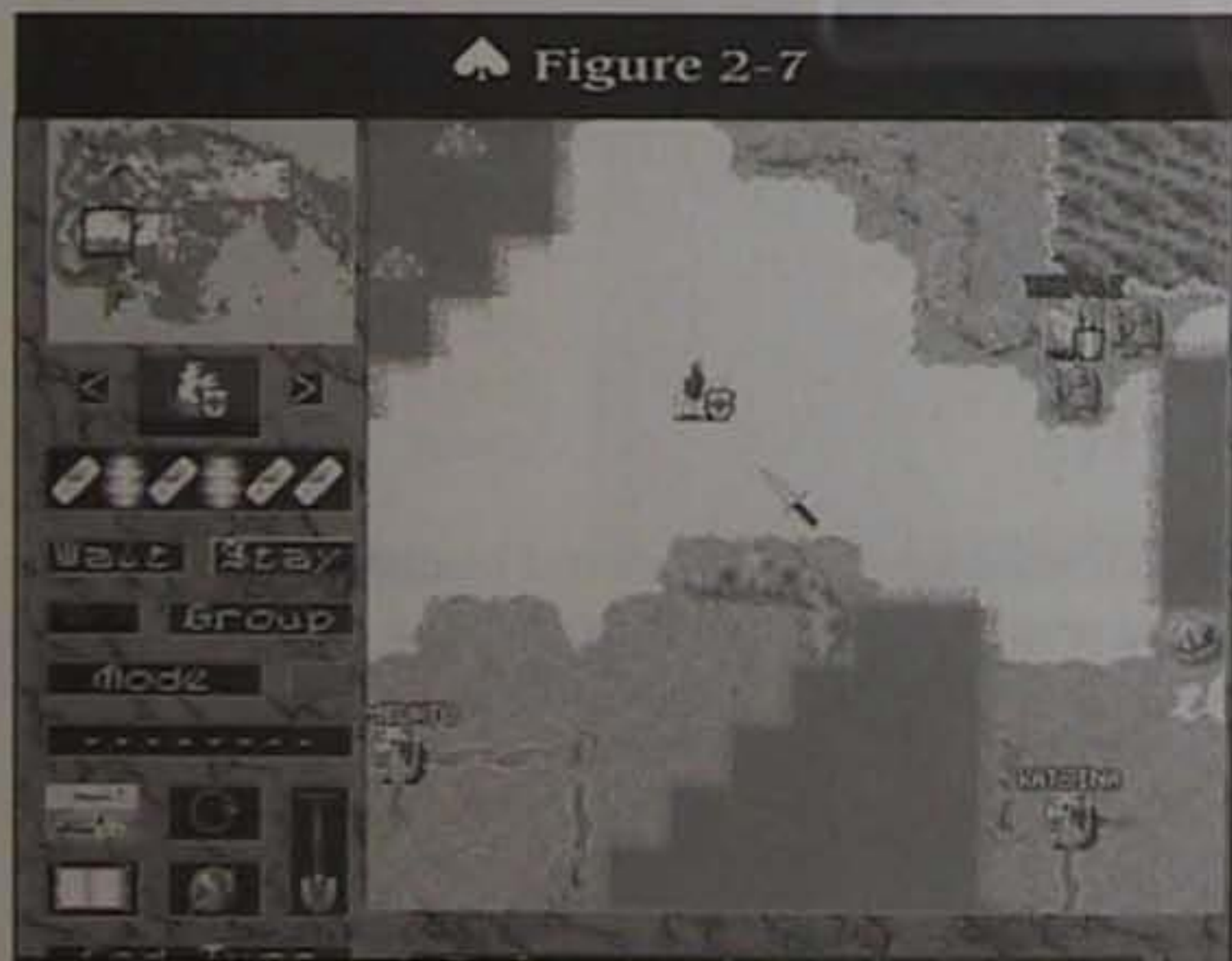
Large cogs are next on the list. These working ships carry more than any other ship—eight cases of commodities. They only have nine move points per turn, which makes them fairly slow compared to galleys. Cogs cannot outrun pirates. They cost 1,000 florins, and therefore each should be considered an investment worth protecting. Their best use is along short coastal routes. If you believe that pirates may be a problem at any time, you should add a unit of heavy troops to protect the ship and the commodities it carries. A great place to use this ship is on a trade route from London to Calais (on the historical map). Only purchase this type of transport unit if a port can supply enough commodities to fill the cargo holds.

Small cogs have nine move points, carry six cases of commodities, and cost 800 florins. You should use these vessels in similar situations as you would large cogs, except that they are better suited to ports that only supply a limited amount of commodities. It is usually more sensible to use the large cogs, unless you wish to pair small cogs on short sea routes for defense purposes.

Large galleys are the key to this world of trade routes. These swift ships zip through the waters of the world, outrunning pirates and weathering storms for the good of your family fortune. They are the staple of the rich trade routes that bring Africa and Europe together across the Mediterranean. They trade gold and ivory for cloth, grog and Venetian

glass. They are the carriers of spices, pearls, and precious gems around the coasts of Asian countries, bringing profit and success to your ventures. Large galleys carry four cases of commodities, which means they do not consistently deplete the supply of a city and drive the prices up. They have 15 move points per turn and can, in many cases, complete a full cycle of trading between two cities in one turn.

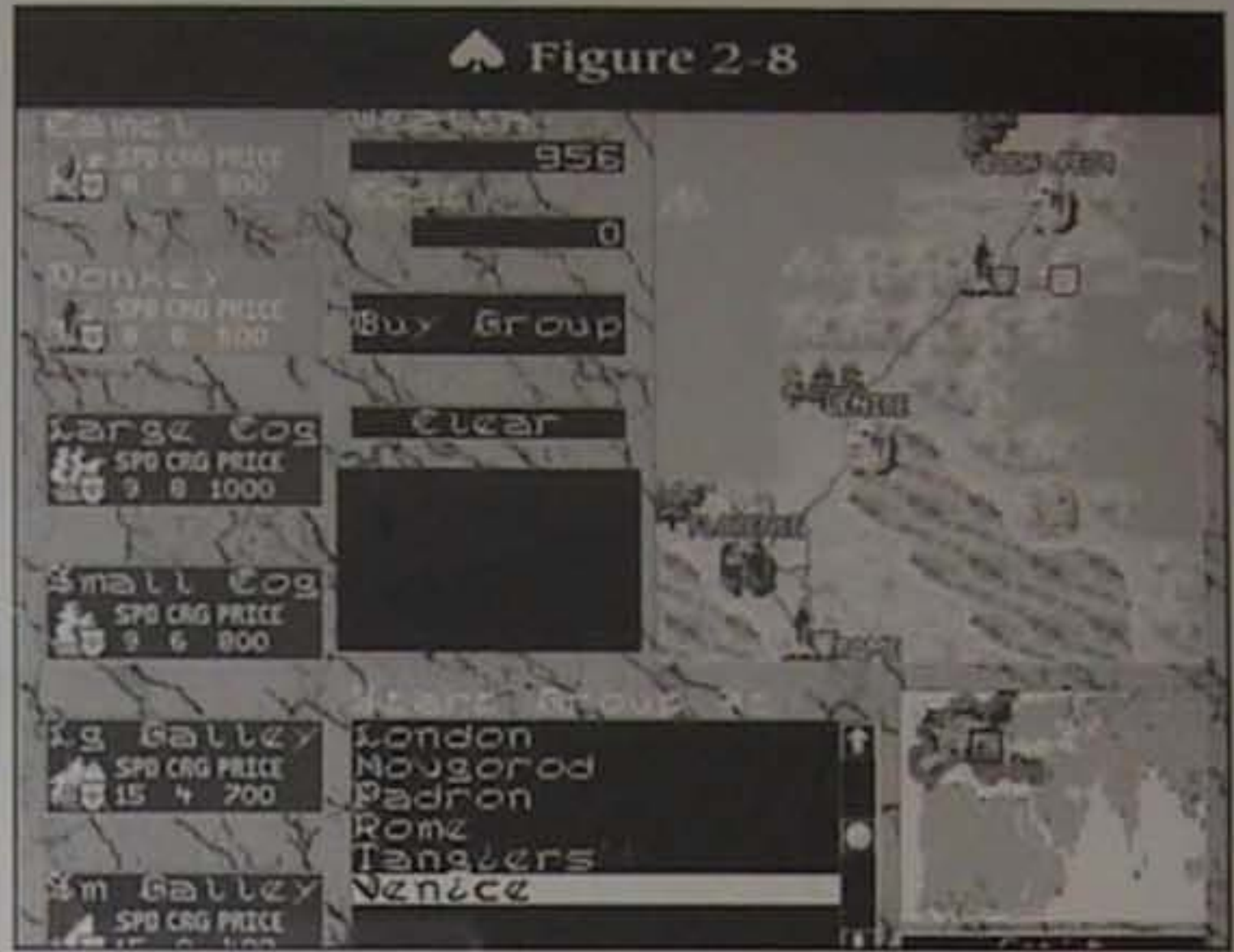
♠ Figure 2-7



The cost of large galleys represents their worth. Seven hundred florins is a lot for something that only carries four cases, but it is well worth the investment for the quality of service they provide.

Small galleys move as quickly as large galleys, carry only two cases of commodities, and cost 400 florins. What you have here is the cheapest mode of transport around. These light speedsters are best used in two

ways. First, they are the best explorers that you'll find seaside. Pirates usually do not wish to bother with them because of their small cargo holds, and so they tend to freely cruise around the coastlines of the known world, discovering new cities, providing cash from artifact finds, and giving you access to places where you can buy transports to do heavy trading from those newly found cities. Other than for exploring, your small, cheap galleys can be used to take specialty items that are not available in large quantities from one port to another. Specialty items tend to bring more profit if taken to a fairly distant port from the originating city. The speed and small cargo hold of a small galley are best suited for this type of trade route operation. You do not want to spend a lot of money on long routes, since storms may wipe out the ship or pirates may try to find out why you are sometimes running a trade route so far from the coastline. The profits from this type of high risk venture should be commensurate to the chance of losing the ship and the commodities involved.





Three

Running the Show

Up to this point, you've been making a lot of florins. You've been building your transport fleet at all those wonderful newly discovered cities where citizens line the streets as your entourage rolls through town. You've been finding long lost artifacts that Venetians will reward you for when you sell them to their personal museums. You are doing a fine job, my prince. The exploratory expeditions are well on their way to the edges of this flat earth and will stop in the farthest city in order that they do not sail over the edge. Our strategy will now focus on moving from short-range profit to long-range plans and succeeding in the realm of civil and religious politics.

Controlling Cities

Ah, the art of war. You must be schooled in skillful fighting and battle leadership in order to make it in this rough world. As you have seen in your explorations, a number of unfriendly cities refuse to trade with Venice. There may be any number of reasons for this hostility, but the fact of the matter is that they are in the way of our making profits. At first, this problem would seem quite to our disadvantage. Remember, though, that our goal of being the wealthiest, most influential family in Venice sometimes means cutting out the other families. Here, we can take over an unfriendly city and become owner. Venice will be pleased that a previously hostile state is under the control of a Venetian. Most importantly, you will be able to decide who has access to the precious, profit-turning commodities stored within the walls of the city you now own. Perhaps other less well-off competitors will grease your hard-working palm for admittance into the city and access to the captive markets.

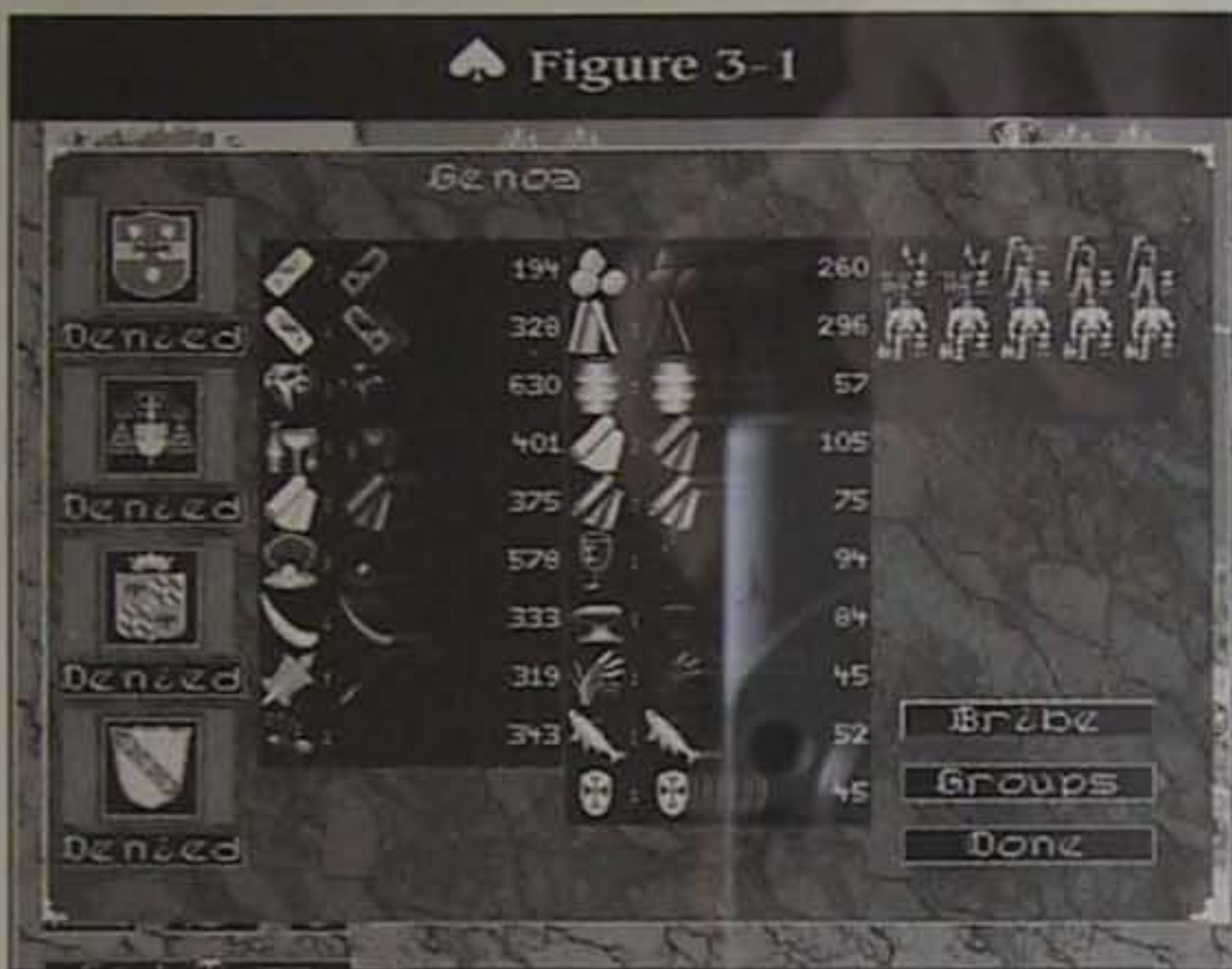
When taking over a city, you must plan ahead for the fight. Fortunately, you have Venetian family intelligence, and their spies have conveniently infiltrated the military units of every city and can inform you of the strength of the city forces. Reading the

intelligence reports, which show up when you right-click on the city itself, you can determine the kind of force you will need to defeat the defenders. Then, you waltz on over to the mercenary files—which should be fairly well-stocked by the time you begin conquering cities—and choose your soldiers of fortune. At times, you may wish to send out two mercenary groups to defeat a city that is very important to your plans. If you have earned enough to afford it, it shall be your decision.

On the historical map, a Venetian prince usually has two close enemies that are well worth crushing: Florence (Firenza) and Genoa. You must be careful here, because other

experienced Venetian princes are well aware of the simple strategy of attacking these cities. The money you spend on mercenary forces will come back to you many times over, due to the nearness of your conquests. The short distance makes for speedy routes, with which you can make a superb profit in trade.

Using the *City Report* or by right-clicking on each city, take a look at the defending forces.



Genoa is certainly a formidable opponent, and it might just take two mercenary forces to conquer such a foe. Florence is well-stocked with military units that can cause you some damage in battle, but these forces are not nearly as formidable as the Genoan defense units. This makes your decision fairly obvious. Destroy Florence, begin trade, and deny access to your competitors. Rebuild Florence's defense, so it can not be easily retaken by an opponent, and use the enormous profits to hire enough mercenaries to defeat the Genoan defenses.

Mercenary Concerns

Now that you have well-laid plans for pillage and plunder close to home, you should think about your future plans for more distant victims. As you decide which unfriendly cities to attack and in what order, there are some important questions to keep in mind. See the table on page 17.





MERCENARY CONCERNS

- ♠ *Where will your forces be traveling from to attack?*
- ♠ *How long will it take for them to arrive?*
- ♠ *Will you need more than one unit of forces to succeed?*
- ♠ *What commodities are available? Is the city worth trading with?*
- ♠ *How long would a trade route be?*
- ♠ *Should you build a road for the forces?*
- ♠ *Would the road be useful for trade after the siege is over?*
- ♠ *What trade groups could you keep on hand to take advantage of siege prices once you have taken control?*
- ♠ *Is there another city that is more profitable, nearer, or more susceptible to a takeover?*

Siege Profits

Never forget that when a city is under siege (by any forces, including yours) the prices of the commodities it demands will increase. The prices of commodities supplied there will stay relatively stable. Plan ahead for some quick, big profits.

Exactly what profit can you expect from siege profits? Follow this formula:

$$\text{New Price} = P + (P \times S)/(D + 10)$$

P is the normal price of a commodity not produced by the city and S is the Strength of the attack(s) on the city. That Strength includes points for Siege, Plague, Excommunication, and the Reformation. In this case it is siege, and the Strength is three points for each full turn the attack lasts. Thus, if it takes you three full turns to subdue a city, a commodity with a normal price of 100 florins should rise by $(100 \times 9)/10 = 90$ florins, to a new price of 190 florins. The last factor, D , is only relevant during the Reformation; otherwise, it is zero. Once the Reformation begins, D is equal to the distance of the city from the epicenter of the Reformation.

Whenever any calamity happens to a city, it produces this "economy storm." This formula applies to every economy storm and will be repeated for each calamity for your convenience.



The Doge

The Doge is the Venetian Senate, filled with ten senators who will happily join your family's political party for a nice-sized bribe. You have to learn how to operate in this arena in order to succeed as a Machiavellian prince.



The Doge controls the Venetian taxes and treasury and appoints the Minister of Justice, the General of the Army, the Admiral of the Navy, and the Minister of Engineering. Each of these positions can benefit a Venetian family. If you control the Doge (the Senate) by electing your candidate as the Doge (also the title of the head of the Senate), you will have the authority to decide which political

party is appointed to each cabinet position. You will also decide how high or low taxes will be and the amount of tax money allocated from the treasury to each ministerial department. Owing to the power of the Doge, it is wise to keep track of your competitors' actions here during every turn.

Prepare for Elections

As the game began and progressed through the first few turns, your concern was to make money, explore, and expand your transport system to increase your profits. You will spend a fair amount of this cash in the Doge elections in order to further increase your influence and wealth. Each senator has a loyalty bar below his portrait. This bar informs you of the senator's loyalty to his political faction. If a senator's loyalty is low, the bar will be colored red and will be short. If loyalty is average, the bar will be yellow and of medium length. When his loyalty is high, the bar will be green and long. Loyalty is determined by the popularity rating of a player, bribes during a turn, and a senator's pay.

If you go to the Doge screen during the first turn, you will see that all of the senators begin as part of the Neutral Party. All 10 will show the symbol of the green background and navigator's wheel. If you or another player should successfully bribe a senator, the



crest of the bribing Venetian family will appear behind the senator. If the bribe is unsuccessful, the senator will take the money offered and laugh.

The trick to having things work out well for you in the Doge is to know when the elections will be held. Fortunately, the schedule is regular. Every 10 turns, a Doge election is held. If you successfully bribe a senator before the Doge election—and he is not hung for treason, assassinated, or bribed away to another competing family—you will be assigned to one of the cabinet positions. You only need to bribe one senator to achieve this. The faction that controls the Doge must appoint all factions with one or more senators to a cabinet position. If you are the first prince in the sequence of player turns, you may need to bribe more than one senator to assure yourself an appointment. Your opponents will each have a shot at relieving you of your senators before the election is final. If you are the last player in the turn sequence, you can manipulate the final election outcome to your best advantage.

During the beginning of each turn, new messages will be available. The message screen will alert you to the election during the turn *before* it is held. There won't be any warning during the actual election year. You do not need to finalize your position until the election turn. If you need more than two senators, you will have to plan ahead. You can only bribe two senators per turn, so after the message warns you of the election, you would be able to bribe a maximum of four senators—if you are able to obtain two per turn. During the turn of the election you will be forced to vote immediately at the start of that turn. This doesn't mean too much, since you are able to bribe or assassinate during that turn and then click on the *Vote* button (at the bottom right corner of the Doge screen) to call a re-vote. You can click and vote this way any number of times during your turn. The last vote of the fourth player will be the one counted for the election and will determine the final result.

If you are in player position one, two, or three, the final outcome may be changed by the actions of players who are after you in the turn sequence.

So let's develop a strategy. First, make your money and save a bit for the tenth turn—you know, because the elections are then. Check to find out if any of your competitors have also prepared for this moment (bought senators). If not, bribe the Neutral Party senator with the lowest loyalty rating; it shouldn't be too expensive. When you right-click on *Bribe*, a set of scales will show on the screen. These scales give you an idea of how successful your bribe will be. If you had enough money, you could get up to a ninety percent chance of being successful. Raise or lower the percentages as you like. You can raise or lower by a single florin or by scrolling through tens and hundreds of florins at a time. Don't waste florins in this screen. You should choose a percentage and get that percentage at the exact number of florins it takes. Check by clicking on the single florin scale until lowering your bribe by one would lower the percentage by one percentage point. Now, offer the bribe and hope the senator doesn't laugh and take your money.

If an opponent has bribed a senator, you could ignore it, knowing that this will strengthen your enemy's position and allow that faction to get appointed to a cabinet position. Or, you could react by mercilessly assassinating the senator, or by bribing him



away to your own faction. Usually, bribing an opponent's senator away is more expensive than bribing a Neutral Party senator, but sometimes it's worth it in the long run. If it means you deny the competitor a cabinet post, then it would definitely be worth it. At times, it's cheaper to assassinate an opponents' senator and stick with bribing a Neutral Party senator. Any senator who is assassinated will be replaced by a Neutral Party senator. This senator is then available to be bribed. Whether it is worth it to bribe away a senator or assassinate him and bribe his replacement depends on the fee for assassination. Check the bribe fee, then the assassination fee, and compare them with what a reasonable bribe for an average Neutral Party senator might be.

If bribing a senator will give you a plurality—a tie in the race for Doge—the senator will inform you of this and demand a higher bribe than usual. If bribing one more senator will give you the edge in an election with one or more competing Venetian princes, that senator will inform you that he will give you a majority, and subsequently he'll demand more for his services. It may seem unreasonable, but think of it this way: When you win, you get 10,000 florins—minimum—over the next ten turns in the cabinet position of your choice; you get to control the appointments to the other positions and minimize the influence of your opponents; you can carefully raise taxes and allocate more florins for your cabinet position. It's worth the extra in the long run—as long as your Doge does not get assassinated.

Cabinet Positions

The *Council Head* position is useful in two ways. First of all, you can get rid of your opponents' senators by accusing them of treason. If the accusation succeeds, the senator will be hung and replaced by a Neutral Party senator. Success in this accusation is based on the loyalty rating of the senator. Low loyalty provides a higher chance for the accused to get the noose.

The second means of making this position useful is accusing Neutral Party senators of treason in order to have them replaced with senators who are cheaper to bribe. The success of my treason accusations has been fairly high ever since I became interested in watching the actions within the Doge. If you need a cheap senator, this is one typically ruthless way of getting your way.

Being *General of the Army* means that you are allocated a minimum of 1,000 florins to spend on the salaries of the Home Army. Sometimes the Home Army is reduced to nothing, thanks to its comparatively weak troop configuration. In this case, you can use whatever amount of florins is allocated to this post for hiring mercenary forces. The Venetian people actually believe that the Home Army will be used to protect their city from attack and to rid Venetian trade routes of pirates and brigands. You could be unreasonably idealistic and follow this line of thinking, or you could make the most of your appointment and accomplish goals that specifically advance only your position in the Venetian hierarchy.



If you decide to use the money allocated for this purpose on nothing, or for something you decide is more important to your cause at the time, your popularity will take a slight dive. At times, misappropriation of funds is most convenient and can be worth losing a few replaceable popularity points. It all depends on your needs.

Once you have control of the Home Army, you can send it out to attack cities you wish to control. Remember to check the defenses of the city you are attacking. If you want to defeat a city quickly, you can choose to send the Home Army in alone, in which case it is usually destroyed. Then you can use your allocated money to hire a decent mercenary group to actually try to take over the city. Otherwise, you can send the Home Army in and have another mercenary force on hand (at your cost) to provide the extra power you need to win quickly.

As *Admiral of the Navy* you also control a fighting force. Personally, I find the Navy is a better fighting machine than the Home Army. Forget about fighting the Genoans, who may be attacking Venice, and send the Navy out to do your bidding. You may find a helpless transport that belongs to a competitor wandering through the high seas. You may have a near-sighted lookout that mistakes this transport for a pirate vessel. Oops! It seems you have destroyed the unsuspecting vessel and sent it to the ocean bottom with all of those precious, expensive commodities aboard. I'm sure your Venetian compatriot won't take it the wrong way.

The *Minister of Engineering* is responsible for road construction. The money allocated here will allow you to put up all those little orange cones and barrels and "Men Working" signs. The naive Venetian masses think that you will be building roads to aid the entire Venetian population. We know, of course, that the best roads built are between cities to which only you have access. Be aware of the amount of cash allocated to this post. It is easy to overspend and dig into your own purse. No popularity is lost as long as you use most of the money for road building.

It is advantageous to you to be appointed road builder early in your reign as prince. Roads speed up your trade route travel and increase your profit-making ability. As the game progresses, your roads should already be in place. Being in command of fighting forces and being able to hang opponents' senators as Council Head will become more important to your overall strategy at a later time.

Taxes, the Treasury, and Appointments

If you gain control of the Doge, you will also be in control of taxes. Taxes begin at 3,000 florins per turn. The Venetian populace pays this money, and it goes into the treasury. The members of the Venetian populace like low taxes. If you raise the tax base a little, they might grumble a bit. If you raise taxes a lot, the Doge will become less popular with the people and may have an untimely accident. If you control the Doge and he has an untimely accident, you will be forced to spend your profits to campaign for yet another election—earlier than you had planned.



Act wisely here. Once taxes are fixed (on the turn after elections), they stay put until the next election. Don't be unreasonable.

The other side of the tax coin is that the more you raise them, the more you can allocate to the cabinet positions to which you have happily appointed yourself. If the tax scale is at 3,000 florins, you must split that up between the three posts that require treasury appropriation. Raise taxes to 4,000 florins and—joy of joys—you get to use any and all extra florins above the three thousand minimum for whatever pleases you. If you want to push your luck and raise the taxes to 10,000 florins per turn, you can allocate all of the extra 7,000 florins (per turn!) to the post of your choice. Sometimes this is fun. Imagine hiring 8,000 florins worth of mercenaries and taking over a close friendly city. Your popularity would surely take a beating, but you could deny access to your competitors. At least you could deny access until they ganged up on you in retaliation and thoroughly destroyed you. I just bet you can think of other exciting possibilities.

As Doge, making appointments can be tricky. If you have kept your competitors free of senators, you can appoint yourself to the position you prefer, and the Neutral Party will hold the other posts. The Neutral Party can hold as many posts as necessary, but you and your competitors can only hold one post each. If a competing family has at least one senator, you must give that family a cabinet post. You certainly don't want to, but unfortunately you can't assassinate more than one person per turn, and you may not have enough cash on hand to bribe everyone to join your faction. So you have a choice to make, and like taxes, it is a choice that will stand until the next election. The advantages of each post have been explained. If you appoint a competitor to be General or Admiral, that family may gain a city or attack your transports. If you appoint another Venetian as Minister of Justice, you will watch your senators, one by one, swinging in the Venetian breeze at the end of a noose. Appointing a competitor as Minister of Engineering means that the trade routes of your opponent will operate more efficiently and profitably. Let me suggest following Niccolo's rules for making cabinet appointments. For Niccolo's rules see page 23.

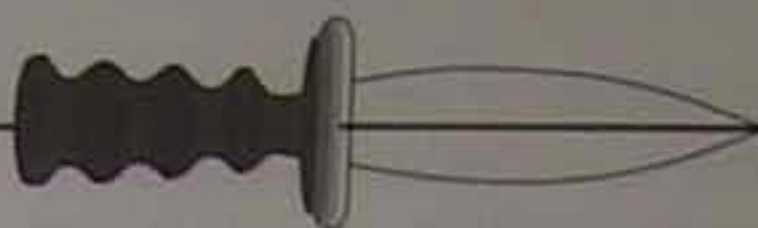
The Papacy

Power: In our Venetian reality, it will bring wealth, and wealth will make us victorious. The Papacy has power, and therefore it is our desire to control the Papacy. Let me explain to you the inner workings of the Pope's realm.

Once you enter the *Santa Marc's Church* screen, you will see that the Pope is pictured at the top and is connected to a certain city or country. That particular city or country controls the Papacy and the powers of the Pope. We want to be in that position as soon as possible.

In order to rise to power in the Papacy, we will need money. As long as we have been diligent in setting up efficient trade routes, we should find ourselves in a position to begin an early ascent to Papal control. The money that flows into our princely account will need





THE PAPACY

- ♠ *Do not appoint a competitor as Minister of Engineering early in the game.*
- ♠ *Do not appoint anyone else Minister of Justice unless your popularity is above seventy-five percent and your senators' loyalty can be kept green. If you are not concerned with losing your senators during your Doge-hood, this post is useless to your competitors.*
- ♠ *Do not appoint another Venetian family to the posts of General or Admiral if the forces that family will gain control of are occupying or are near a city that can easily be taken by those forces.*
- ♠ *Appoint competitors to the posts that allow a minimum of damage to yourself and are the least advantageous to them. If an appointment becomes too troublesome to you or too advantageous for an opponent, it may become necessary to assassinate a Doge that your own family controls in order to force an early election.*

to flow out into the hands of the faction that controls the Papacy. In this way, we purchase available cardinals and eventually become able to vote with those cardinals for a new Pope.

Purchasing cardinals is a simple process. On the church screen, you will see a heading in the lower right corner that reads: *Available*. There will either be cardinals standing there, waiting to be of service to a purchaser, or a note stating that none are available.

The time to begin purchasing cardinals actually comes *before* you begin to bribe senators in the Doge. The main reason for this is that you will actually make money from owning cardinals. Indulgences are paid by cardinals to your account. The amount of the indulgences rises practically every turn. Check the top right corner of the church screen to see the rate of indulgences. If you control the Papacy, you will also control the rise of the rate of indulgences. If you make enough money that you have an excess of florins to use—and using them will not prevent you from purchasing the commodities you need to continue to trade at full capacity or expand your transport fleet—then you should begin to purchase cardinals.

The Pope could die of natural causes at any time. If you do not have enough money or cardinals to win the election in the first twenty or thirty turns of the game, you should not panic. After this number of turns, you should be in the running—unless you have been hit



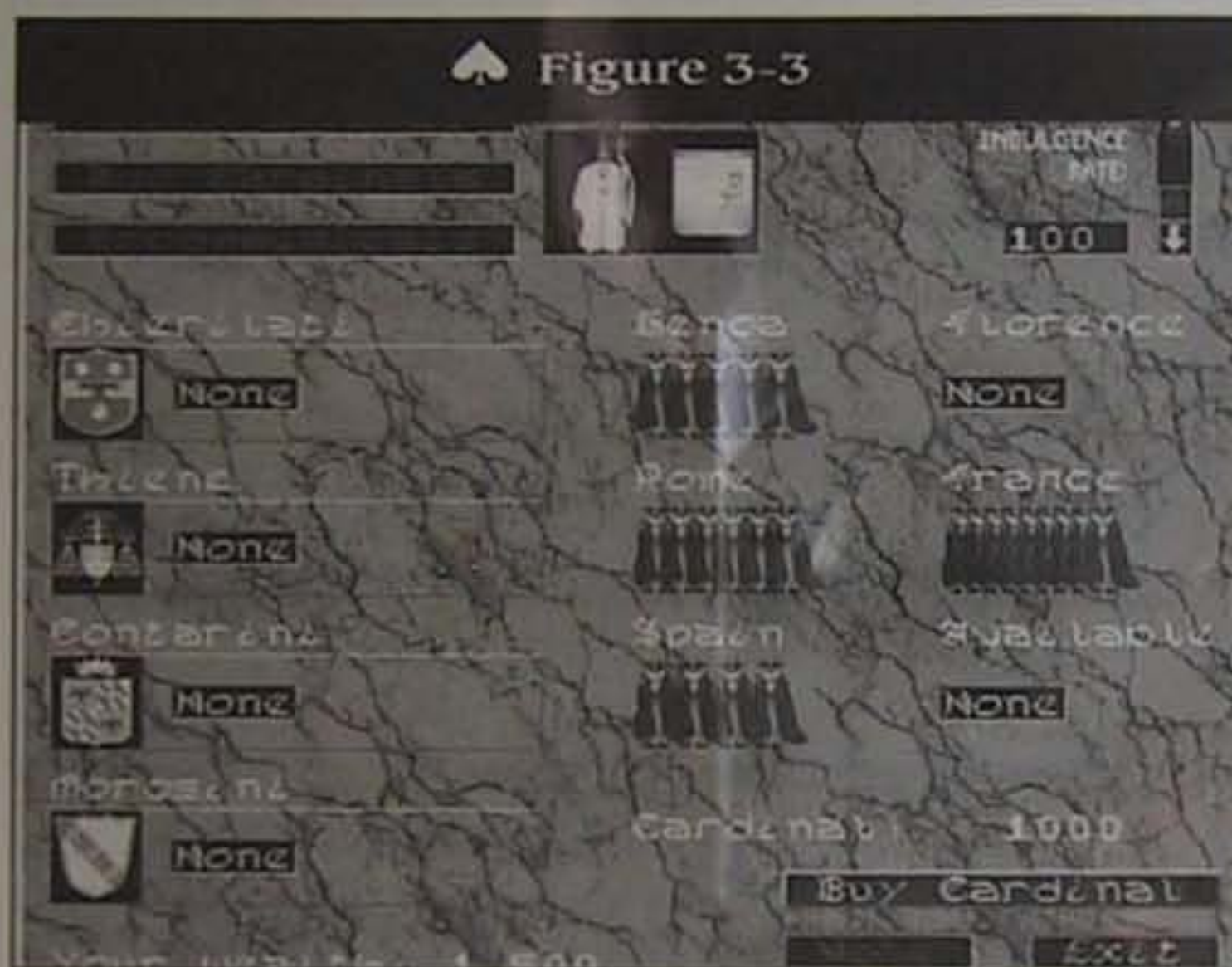
with unexpected setbacks. The number of cardinals that the other regional factions have at any one time changes randomly and sometimes drastically. Check this screen as you do the Doge screen, making sure that you follow the action during every turn.

Cardinals seem to be more prone to dying of natural causes than senators, but expect both to happen. I have served Venetian families that have had up to three cardinals die of natural causes immediately before an election for Pope.

Your Venetian friends are also able to buy cardinals and attempt to control the Papacy. They can assassinate your cardinals, as you can theirs. They *will* assassinate your cardinals, as you will theirs. The church is neither immune to nor adverse to power politics. Be prepared to accept this truth.

Until you gain control of the Papacy, we will only hear news of the Pope's decisions from our messengers. We will read of crusades being called, cardinals being added for purchase,

and perhaps the excommunication of a city that has fallen from the good graces of the church. Once you have gained control of the Papacy, you will decide the timing of such actions, and the Pope will carry out your wishes. Let me explain the advantages of each of the three actions controlled by the Pope.



Crusades

The Pope calls a crusade to raise armed forces that will be sent to do the bidding of the church. If you control the church hierarchy, these forces will be available to do whatever you decree. (I shouldn't need to explain the benefits of that!) Crusader forces are sent out like any other troops. They will usually number between two and five divisions, all of which exist under one fighting force. The only difference between crusader forces and the Army, Navy, or mercenary forces is that crusader forces do not regenerate and will disperse after the force is beaten in battle or a certain period of time has elapsed. In the latter case, the crusaders will have probably lost interest in the cause and gone home to their families and previous lives. After enough time has passed, the Pope can call another crusade and hopefully be able to convince enough zealots to rally to do the church's dirty work.



Adding Cardinals

Adding cardinals is the controlling faction's way of raising some extra florins. Fifty percent of the price of cardinals sold to anyone goes to the church, and fifty percent goes to the faction that controls the Papacy. If you wish to purchase the cardinals your ruling coalition adds to the church, the same is true. This translates into half-price cardinals, since you receive half of the purchasing proceeds back into your coalition's account. In order to take advantage of this great deal, be sure to add cardinals when you know that you will have enough extra cash in the next turn to buy the cardinals you wish to add to your side.

The Power of Excommunication

Excommunicating a city is the church's means of punishing a friendly European Christian town that has done something to upset the church hierarchy. From what I have seen and heard in my experiences, I believe that this is an official church explanation that hides the true intentions of excommunication. You see, excommunicating a city raises the prices of commodities drastically. A coalition that has a profitable trade route into a city that has been excommunicated would certainly reap the economic benefits of this tactic. If a Venetian merchant prince could gain control of the Papacy and excommunicate a city that is owned and accessible to that prince's transports only, the result would be tremendously beneficial to that prince's fortunes. I have even heard of a particularly shrewd merchant prince who happened to be in control of the Papacy. He lined his trade groups at a city's gates, sent an armed force to lay siege to the city, then excommunicated that same city. The moment the troops took control of the city, he made his family quite wealthy in a very short amount of time. Sometimes I wish I could take credit for such creatively ruthless thinking.

The formula for figuring out the rate of inflation for a given commodity during an excommunication is similar to the siege profit formula. The only difference is the Strength figure. In the formula, the new price of a commodity not produced by the city is determined by the formula:

$$\text{New } P = P + (P \times S)/(D + 10)$$

P being the normal commodity price, S the strength of attack, and D the distance from the epicenter (which is zero except when a Reformation is going on). The Strength of attack for excommunication is eight. Grab your calculator.

Papal Elections

The papal election is an exciting time. Most of the world is watching this event, but only a few know its inner workings. You are about to join the ranks of those privileged few.



All Venetian factions are included in any papal election. The other participants include France, Genoa, Spain, Florence, and Rome. Each voting group can have any number of cardinals, depending on the size of the cardinal pool. The pool is usually 30 or 36 cardinals, and the actual number depends on the frequency of recent deaths in the cardinals' ranks.

Be aware of messages regarding the health of the Pope. These will alert you to prepare for an upcoming election. If the Pope is reported to be ill, count on the pontiff's death during the following turn and an election the turn immediately after that.

In preparation for a papal election, count the number of cardinals held by each faction and decide how you wish to vote. If you would be able to win solely because of the number of cardinals you own, vote yourself into power. If you have cardinals but not enough to win outright, you have to make a decision. Your options include supporting someone else's ascension to control of the Papacy or, instead, hoping that others will support you. You can deduce the correct stance by a simple process. First, know who is eligible. Whoever was in control of the Papacy previously cannot run in the following election. Second, check your popularity. You have a better chance of others voting for you if your popularity is high. Third, check your overall worth. If you are far ahead of your Venetian rivals, they certainly will not vote for you to become Pope and help strengthen your position. In this case, other Venetian factions will usually cooperate to vote your strongest competition into power.

The Vote Button

As in the election for Doge, you will be asked to vote at the beginning of the election turn. There is a *Vote* button at the lower right corner of the Santa Marc's screen, in case you decide to change your voting position during the election turn. You can vote again, as many times as you like, by clicking on this button. This button is only available during the election turn itself. Use it as you would in a Doge election.

Death at the Vatican

Being in charge of the Papacy has its ups and downs. One of the more annoying aspects of the Papacy is that if, for some reason, the Pope you installed should die (and many seem to go well before their times), the papal code decrees that another region or faction must take control. In other words, you can't control the Pope twice in a row. This can be quite inconvenient. Princes and potentates whom I have served in the past enjoyed controlling the Papacy, with all its splendor and glory and pontifical get-togethers. It has been difficult for me to watch the sulking that these natural born leaders go through after losing the friend who wears the big mitre (the pointy hat). Another creative prince I once knew had a great idea. He waited until after the next papal elections and watched another Pope installed into office, wearing the big mitre and all. Then he hired an

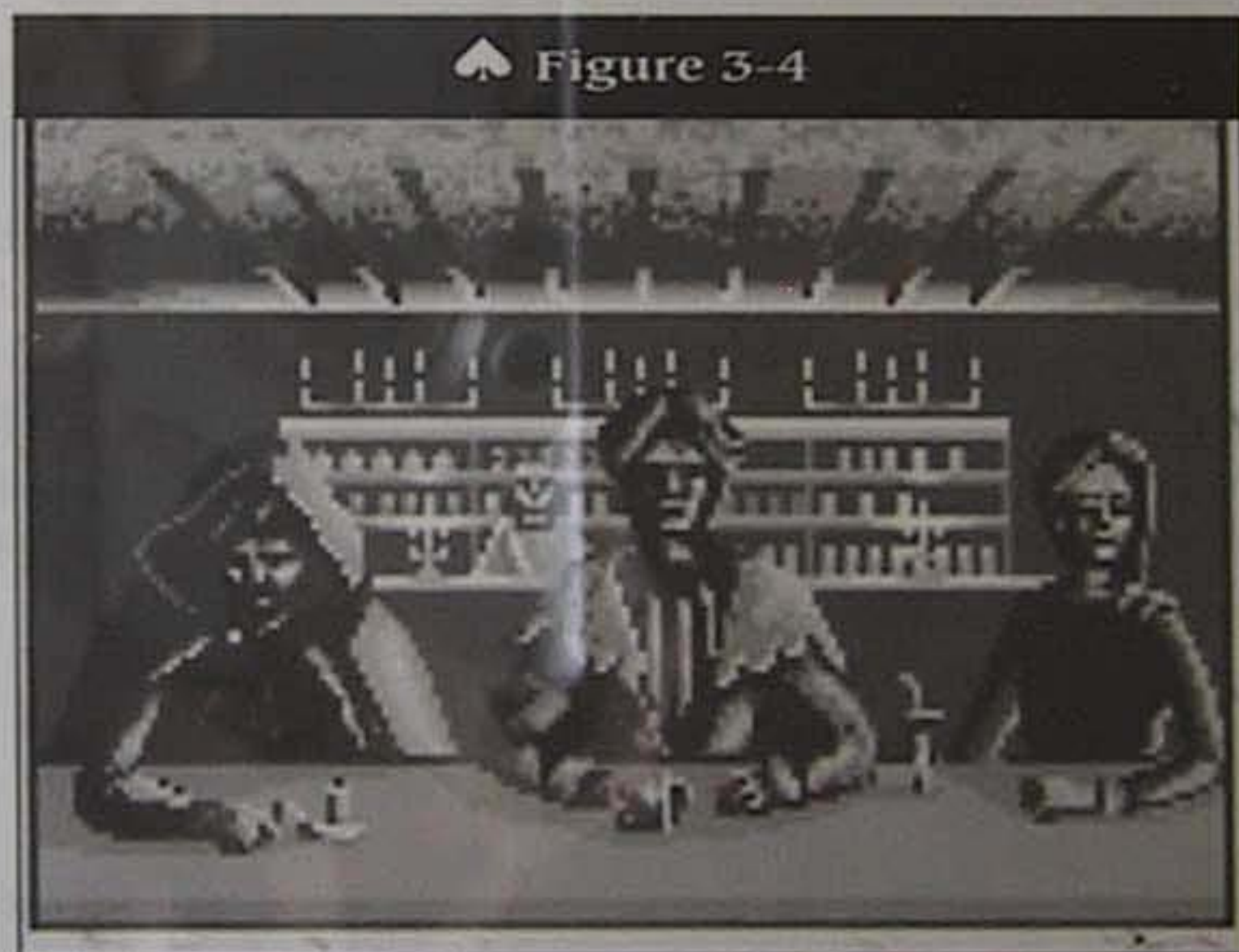


assassin to knock off this guy, who he truly believed wasn't doing such a great job, anyway. Before anyone knew what had hit the Vatican, another election was at hand and the next Pope elected was yet another of this prince's close buddies. Can you imagine the euphoria of my princely advisee? It was so nice to see him cheer up so quickly. Unfortunately, the assassin collected a handsome bribe and a tiny island of his own off the coast of Sicily in return for revealing my former employer's creative solution. My advice to you, if you wish to employ such tactics, is to hire a thug you can trust!

Iniquity

Speaking of thugs, I believe it is time I advise you of a place with which you must familiarize yourself. We'll be doing some unofficial business there. The *Den of Iniquities* is where the Venetian ruffians hang out. We've discussed some of their handiwork already. You should know a few important details about them.

One major item is that the dwellers there have been known to be less than professional on occasion (and you cannot demand a refund). Be prepared to watch them succeed in their work only to be caught in the act and give up your name in return for a lesser sentence or to save their lives. In this case, your popularity in Venice will take quite a beating. Another scenario is that the hired criminal will fail but not get caught. In this



case, you lose your money but not your good reputation. The worst that could happen is that the oaf you've paid fails miserably and also gets caught in the act. If you can't silence him immediately, you've lost your fee *and* your popularity goes down the drain with it. The cost of doing business is indeed high on such occasions.

From time to time, members of the Den will ask if you would like to try to blame another faction for the services you purchase. The possibility of thwarting an adversary and blaming another for the act is extraordinarily tempting. The likelihood that you will pull it off is slim. Each of these outcomes has a one-in-three chance of happening: the rival you choose will be blamed, you will be caught and blamed, or the blame will not be placed on anyone.



Arson

When you enter the Den, you'll find three skilled practitioners. The first is the arsonist. He'll be happy to burn down a pesky rival's villa if you like. No sense in spoiling the neighborhood with more than one villa anyway, right? He asks for a fee, but I personally think the pyromaniac does some jobs on the side just for kicks. He has recently expanded his practice and now travels to other cities, where he'll reduce your competitors' warehouses to ashes and cinders. If you want information on where your competitors are doing business, he'll show you the locations of their warehouses at no charge. Sometimes it is worth checking in with him just to see how your rivals are doing. He doesn't mind keeping track of these things; it's good for business. Just hope you don't run into a rival on your way out. The arsonist works for whoever pays.

The arsonist also is not as stupid as he might look. If he encounters guards that have been hired to protect the commodities inside a rival's warehouse, he may back out. In this event, the arsonist will only charge you half of the regular fee.

Slander

The guy in the middle is the slanderer. For a reasonable fee, this fellow will set out with a rumor that can lower the popularity of even the most loved Venetian prince. As a matter of fact, he'll even take requests. All you have to do is go into the text file *slanders.lie* and write up your own rumor. (Refer to the Designer Games section for details.) How's that for service? In most cases you'll be able to knock a competing Venetian's popularity down enough that you can successfully accuse one of his senators of treason or make it cheaper to bribe him away.

Assassination

The shady character on the end is the most useful—and the most dangerous. Don't get too close, because he doesn't want anyone to see his face. Rumor has it he's a direct descendant of Nero. That would explain his skill at stabbing people in the back. He demands the highest fee of the three, since he takes the most risk and his training took longer than any of the others. Strategic use of his talents has been fully detailed elsewhere in this text. The last time I had the pleasure of chatting with him, he mentioned a special on poisonings. You might ask if that's still available.



Advanced Trading

In order to continue the fun of playing politics mercilessly, you have to have a steady cash flow. The trade routes you establish early in the game should continue to serve you well and profitably. Now that you need to spend part of your profits to flatten your Venetian buddies in the Doge and the Papacy, let's get busy expanding trade routes and setting up some standard routes that have served many a merchant prince well.

Great Trade Routes

As I pored over the trade logs of my former employers, I came to know their most profitable trade routes and the commodities that were traded on those routes. I don't want to bother you with long-winded explanations, so I've put together a list (see page 30).

Now, this isn't a complete list, and times change. It seems that every time I serve a new prince they have different preferences for some cities. For the most part, however, these resources are pretty stable.

Supply and Demand

If you buy all of one particular commodity from a city, you will see during your next turn that the price of that commodity will have risen slightly. Supply and demand will figure in your commodity selections from turn to turn. The variations will keep you checking prices, and at certain times it will become profitable to switch to trading different items into and out of particular marketplaces.

A strategy that you can employ for profit is to buy all of one commodity in a city and store it in a warehouse. If you do this, the price of that commodity will rise, and you can then sell the commodity back to the city during the next turn.

To be successful in this tactic, you must carefully consider the city's production capabilities and





GREAT TRADE ROUTES

Venice to Budapest

Venice to Novgorod

Venice to Antioch

Venice to Florence

Tripoli to Katsina

Tunis to Timbuktu

Tunis to Marseilles

Tangiers to Marseilles

London to Calais

Hamburg to Frankfurt

Antioch to Xiangrara

Antioch to Samarkand

Samarkand to Xiangrara

Xiangrara to Anxi

Xiangrara to Calcutta

Temala to Chiaochi

Temala to Singapore

Calicut to Calcutta

Calicut to Singapore

Singapore to Chiaochi

Chiaochi to Canton

Canton to Nagasaki

Xian to Nagasaki

Xian to Canton

Molluca to Singapore

Molluca to Canton

Molluca to Chiaochi

Cairo to Mogadishu

Cairo to Tripoli

Cairo to Katsina

Glass for Gold and Furs

Glass for Furs

Glass for Relics

Glass for Cloth

Fish for Gold

*Wheat or Beer (from Marseilles)
for Gems*

Gems (from Timbuktu) for Beer

Silver (if available) for Cloth

Silver for Cloth

Furs for Gold

Relics for Gems and Furs

Glass (from Venice) for Wool

*Glass (from Venice via Antioch)
for Gems*

Gems and Fur for Wool

Wool (from Anxi) for Pearls

Gems for Fish and Silk

Cinnamon for Cloves

Nutmeg and Gold for Pearls

Nutmeg for Cloves

Cloves for Fish

*Fish or Gems (from Temala)
for Pearls and Silk*

Gems (from Temala) for Pearls and Silk

Wheat for Pearls and Silk

Wheat for Pearls

Nutmeg and Pearls for Cloves

Nutmeg for Gems (from Temala)

Nutmeg and Pearls for Fish

Gold and Ivory for Relics

Relics for Gold

Relics for Gold



its demand for the product. If the city produces enough of the commodity you wish to buy that it will restock its shelves by the next turn, you will not be able to sell that commodity back to the town markets. Choose a commodity that has a demand that always exceeds the supply and production capability of the city.

For example, if you think to buy gold in Tripoli, first check that the demand for gold always exceeds the supply. The supply will be the gold that is in color, and the demand will be the gray, shadow gold shown beyond the colored gold. At the beginning of a turn, the gold should be restocked to the city's full capacity. If there are gray shadow pieces of gold beyond that amount, you can check the commodities screen to see how many pieces of gold the city demands. Perhaps Tripoli wants six pieces of gold per turn. In this case, you can buy six pieces of gold from the supply at hand, wait until the next turn, then sell them back at a small profit. These extra pieces, which are not in the set amount replenished after each turn, will disappear into the local market after a few turns. Thus, the price of gold will come back down because of excess on hand. Then, you can use the strategy again to re-raise the price and sell from the warehouse.

This is usually not a profitable enough venture to merit purchasing eight warehouse spaces for 250 florins each. My suggestion is to use warehouse space in cities where you have already purchased space for more profitable reasons. In most cases, you do not use all of your warehouse space in a city. You can use the extra space—or the space left vacant until a trade group arrives—to make a few extra florins in this manner. Be sure not to use this tactic if you need extra money on hand for purchasing commodities that are more profitable, or if you need the money for political posturing. This tactic is more suitable for gaining small scale “gravy” profits when you have extra money to use during a turn, not for supporting yourself financially.

Warehousing

In the old days, when I was a youngster and just beginning my career, warehouses did not exist. Good advisers keep ahead of the times, though. Warehousing was something trading princes wanted from the cities in which they traded. It makes sense that if you want to sell things, but those things are not necessarily in demand, you need a place to store them—available to sell—until the demand exists.

The idea behind warehousing is that you can stockpile items and keep them available for trade. It is a simple idea. The strategies that you can develop become intermingled with supply and demand, availability, cash flow, cornering a market, and other concerns.

If you decide to warehouse, you will pay 250 florins for eight cases worth of storage space. It is normally worth the price. Early in the game, however, be cautious that you have the money to spare. It may be advisable to hold off a turn or two until you have made enough cash to spare the price and still be able to purchase more goods to trade. Be careful if you're asked by the manager of the warehouse whether you wish to have space. If you agree, the 250 florins will be deducted from your account immediately. The manager may not specify that you will be charged this amount when he asks.



♠ Figure 3-6

Byzantium		283		239
104240		259		245
Cairo		680		94
Antioch		280		76
Baghdad		330		155
Budapest		460		129
Byzantium		312		90
Cairo		234		53
Calais		287		64
Florence				61

Commodities

Warehouse

Flash

Let's say that one of your transports is delayed on the way to Timbuktu to pick up the gems that will be offered for sale. If your transport doesn't get into the city in time, the gems sit on the shelf and the mines are not going to get any orders for more gems, since the last ones did not sell. In previous years, you were out of luck. Modern times are here, and now you can send a messenger ahead to buy the gems and put

them into a warehouse. If you do this, the mine will get the purchase order for more and you can take, say, four cases of gems to Tunis instead of two. The profit you make is doubled, thanks to this new system. Merchant princes used to be forced to buy extra ships and caravans just to sit in the port or in the city with commodities loaded and waiting for the next scheduled trade group to arrive.

Certain trade routes can be lengthy, and the trade group running between these distant cities can take more than one or two turns to arrive. In this case, you have time to fill an eight-storage-space warehouse with the best commodity, even if only a few cases of that item are manufactured per turn. Stockpiling the most profitable products can be highly effective. You may find that you are able to stockpile more commodities than one trade group can carry. If this occurs, consider purchasing another trade group to run on that route. Just be sure to check that the receiving city has enough demand and that the influx of the goods will not drive down the price enough to make the trading unprofitable.

One aspect of warehousing that most princes have not been clever—shall I say, devious—enough to realize the potential of is using warehouses to make items unavailable to your Venetian competitors. Amazingly simple, this idea that you can take all the commodities away from your opponents for an entire turn by stashing them away in your warehouse (the commodities, that is, although stashing your opponents away in a warehouse isn't such a bad idea). When your Venetian neighbors' trade groups arrive ready to go stock up at the market, they'll find the market stalls empty.

Let me entertain you with a clarifying example. I once received word that a certain Venetian family's exploring trade group had arrived just outside the gates of a friendly city. My prince at the time had been trading with that city without competition from other Venetian traders. I sent word to our agents there ordering them to buy and warehouse all of the profitable commodities immediately, before the exploring trade group arrived in the



city. This was done, and the newly arrived trader took one look at the city, saw nothing to trade, and decided not to begin a trade route. The commodities were sold back into the city during the next turn. We made a small profit, and we kept the lucrative route and its commodities to ourselves.

Cash flow will be an important factor in the early stages of your princely reign. If you are tempted to take a commodity from one city through another and then into a third port of call, consider selling it at the middle stop to keep your cash on hand at a reasonable level. For instance, you might wish to take gems and furs from Xiangrala to Antioch via Samarkand. The items are expensive, but you will make a nice overall profit at the end of the journey. After purchasing the goods in Xiangrala, you head for Samarkand. After a couple of turns, you arrive, but there is an election for the Doge that year. You may have planned to keep the goods on the transport as you went through Samarkand, but since you are in town and need money to bribe a senator, you can sell the goods in the town. You do want to guarantee that you take a full load to Antioch, so after selling the goods at Samarkand and bribing the senator, you should finish your other trade routes, buy the Samarkand commodities back, and put them into warehouse space. You will have made a profit, though it will be smaller than what you would have made by going directly to Antioch. You will have been able to bribe that senator you needed for the election, and you will guarantee the availability of your commodities when you leave for Antioch (next turn), since you have them in a warehouse.

Popularity

Popularity is an asset—or is it? Many Venetian princes have counted on popularity to help them rise to the top of the ladder in Venetian social circles. It only got them so far. Without the respect that power brings, your family will be considered likable but weak. Combine the two with wealth, and you'll find yourself in the most influential of circles. You will also discover that you are the target of envious neighbors. This is the double-edged sword of popularity.

Let's consider the assets and liabilities of popularity. In the arena in which we find ourselves, it is certainly best to have it and keep it but sometimes also to risk it for other gains.

And Politics

Popularity is most highly regarded in the Doge. Your popularity determines the loyalty of your senators. If you are popular enough to merit a green rating, it is practically impossible for an envious compatriot to bribe your senators away from you. You also have the popular influence with which other senators will wish to be associated. Bribing a senator who has a low loyalty to his faction becomes much easier, and thus can be cheaper, when you are very popular. The important point here is that you will less often



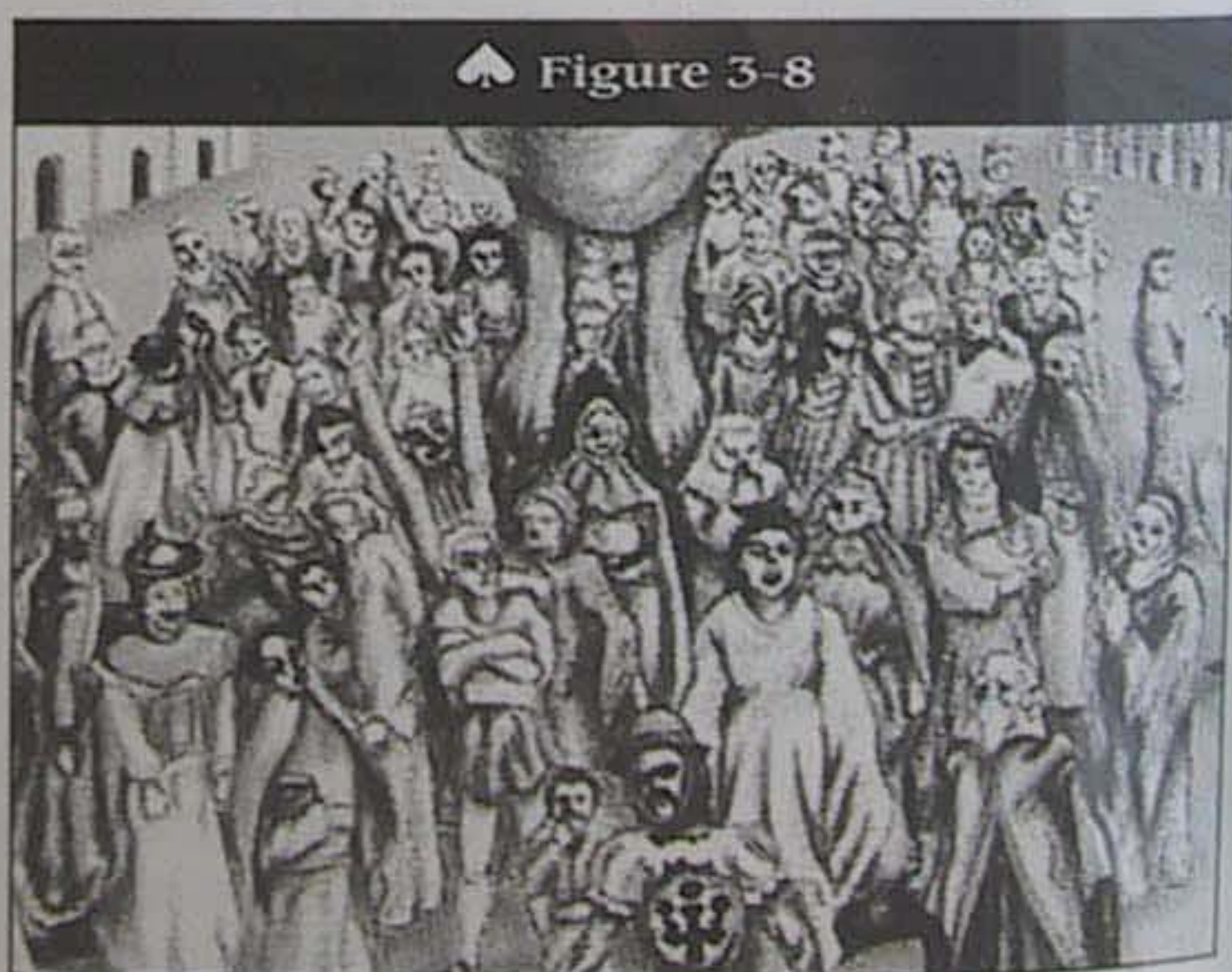


waste your money having senators laugh at you, take your bribe money, and remain with their own factions.

If your popularity is low—in the red is almost alarmingly so—you face the chance that your opponents will easily bribe away your faction's senators. This status leaves you in a poor position to manipulate politics to your favor. You will also have wasted the money that you spent to

bribe the senator in the first place. Considering that there are times when it is worthwhile, in a long-term strategy, to lose a great amount of popularity, you should do your best to make such unpopular moves soon after a Doge election. In this way, you will have achieved your position as Doge (or as a cabinet member). If you lose a senator or two, you have time to raise your popularity and regain senators before the next elections.

Loss of senators when your popularity is low can come in other forms, as well. The Council Head is prepared to accuse disloyal senators of treason and will often do so. If the loyalty of the senator is below fifty percent, there is a good chance of his being hung for treason before your disbelieving eyes. A nightmarish scenario is to have an opponent appointed as Council Head when your popularity is low. Every turn can bring yet another accusation of even the most loyal of your senators. I have seen feuding factions annihilate senators by the handful. If your popularity and wealth far surpass that of your Venetian competition, their envy will almost certainly overcome their regard for your senators' lives. The Council Head does not risk losing popularity for his faction by accusing other factions' senators of treason. Everyone becomes



fair game, and the populace are treated to some gruesome, but popular sights.

If neither you nor one of your opponents occupies the seat of Council Head, and you wish to dispatch a pesky senator, there is always assassination. The loyalty of a senator to a faction affects the success rate of assassination. Perhaps you don't wish to waste your hard earned florins on a failed assassination attempt.

Take a moment ahead of time to slander your opponent's family—more than once if it is convenient for you. It's not that expensive, and it should turn a few eyes when the senator meets his fate at the dark end of a Venetian alley.

In the realm of church politics, high popularity is also beneficial. Stay aware of upcoming elections, because you should raise your popularity at times when you wish to be elected Pope. If you don't have enough cardinals to win without support from elsewhere, your popularity determines whether another faction will vote in your favor.

When It's Low

I mentioned that there are times when it is beneficial to your long-range plan to risk losing a sizable amount of popularity. Some of my favorite tactics include attacking friendly cities and opponents' trade groups. Needless to say, these tend to lower your popularity. Let's save those good thoughts for later, though. If you decide to make a move that may cost you dearly in social circles, my advice is to only attempt such bovine maneuvers when your popularity is extremely high. Otherwise, you risk not just your popularity but your skin as well. If your popularity gets near or actually hits rock bottom—five percent is the lowest I've ever seen—it will seem like the entire world has turned against you. I've seen it happen. It's not a pleasant experience. Avoid it.

Risky ventures call for a popularity level that can afford hits of upwards of a forty percent loss. Be cautious and plan ahead. It's hard to find good princely advisees like you, and besides, I hate being unemployed.

Getting to five percent popularity is not exactly easy. Usually your mother and a few other sinister characters will have something to gain by propping up your image. If you



do achieve a low enough popularity, and the entire world turns on you, expect the unexpected. Your trade groups will be struck by calamities and attackers at a rate that seems unusually high. You will feel as if Mother Nature herself has targeted you. Your opponents will see you at your weakest and use the opportunity to exact revenge in various creative ways. Any senators you have will be hung for treason unless you control the Council Head. Be prepared for tough times and horrendous luck.

The Quick Fix: Villas

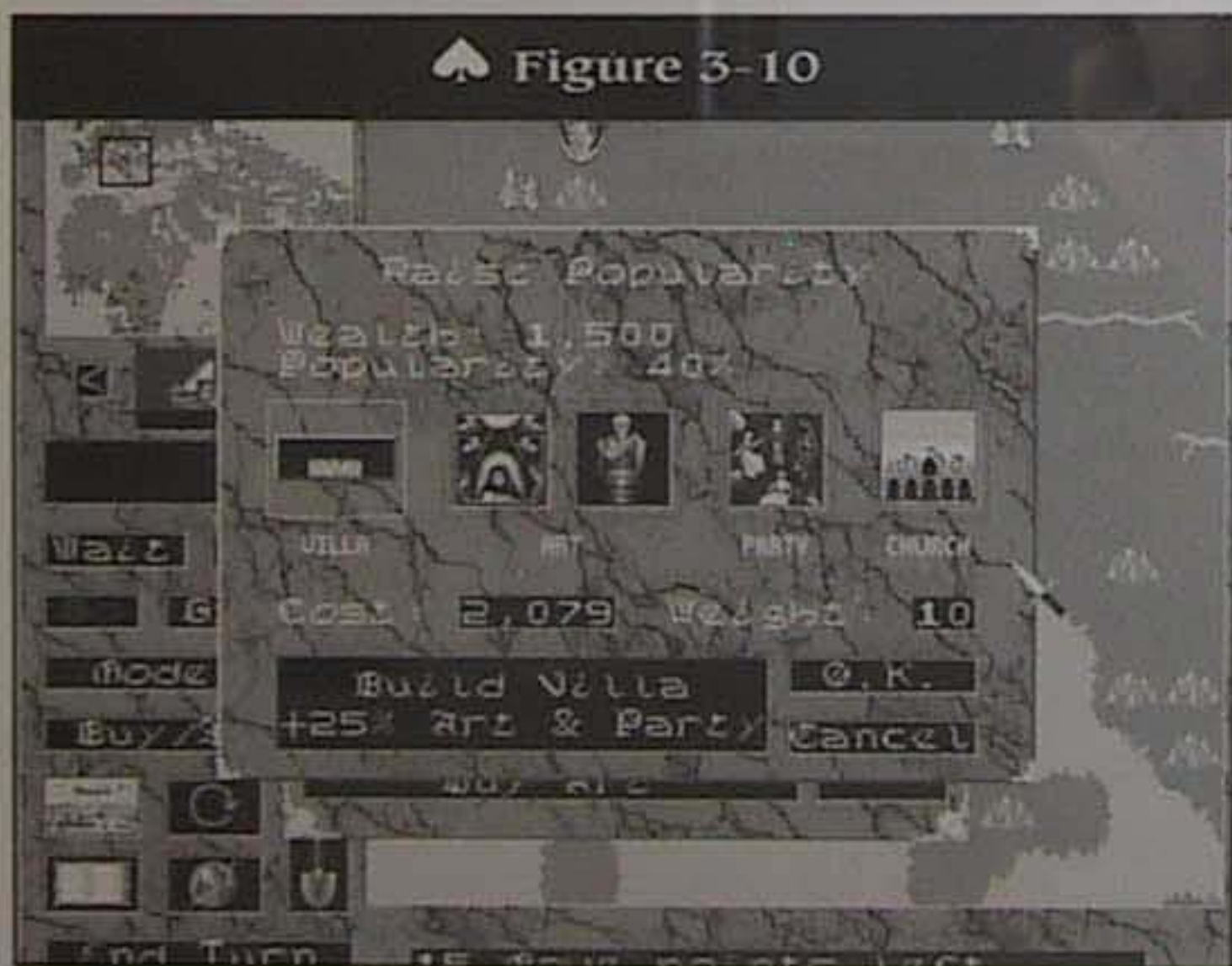
Since we are on the subject, let's discuss how you go about raising your popularity. The easy way is to purchase favor. Money buys goodwill, like it buys so many other good things. Start constructing a villa and just see how many visitors drop by to marvel at the opulence. This is the most expensive and most rewarding method of gaining popularity. It is also slightly risky. If you build a nice villa and a neighbor is looking for vengeance, what you have provided is a target for arson. Too bad there is no fire insurance available. Use the villa option only if you need to expand your popularity by a large amount, or if you have money to burn.

There are four stages to building your villa. Each stage raises your popularity rating and also provides you with a few hidden benefits. After construction is finished on the first stage, purchasing art and throwing parties will bring you 25 percent more popularity points (for a total of 125 percent) than they did before you had a villa. The second stage raises this extra gain to 50 percent (150 percent total); the third stage keeps it at 50 percent, but adds an extra one to three points. The final stage of your villa raises the benefits to 75 percent more (175 percent of the normal points), and

adds two to six points on top of that.

Venetians are very fond of works of art. They much prefer painting to sculpture, but if you fund an artist by commissioning either of these types of art, your popularity will certainly increase proportionately. When the piece is completed, you can watch your popularity rise all the more if you throw a masquerade party for the unveiling. The Venetian

♠ Figure 3-10



upper crust will surely make a showing. Just be sure to pay for security beforehand. Assassins are always a threat in the midst of a masquerade, and you need every invited senator and cardinal that you have on your payroll.

Last and certainly least is the option to make a donation to the church. This is the cheapest manner in which you can gain popularity and should be used mostly at the early stages of the game, or at times when you only need a few popularity points to aid a venture.

Noble Pursuits

Now we go beyond quick and easy popularity fixes to the more noble pursuits that can affect your status as a citizen. These are ventures that you might undertake in the course of your reign which could raise or lower your popularity.

Conquering cities is a marvelous thing for increasing your trade and wealth. Depending on exactly who you attack, your popularity could soar or plummet. As you know, this is one of my favorite topics, so let's get to it.

Enemies of Venice

If you attack an unfriendly city, one which, for some unknown reason, refuses to trade with any and all Venetians, you just can't go wrong. Nobody in Venice will fault you for trying to weaken or overthrow an enemy of our great city. If you succeed, you have two choices to consider. You *could* turn over control of the city to Venice. In this scenario, all Venetians would be granted access for trade to the newly opened city. Venetians would flood the streets shouting, joyfully praising your family and all it has done for Venice. Your popularity would skyrocket, and you would be the toast of the town for years to come. I strongly recommend against it.

The smart scenario is that you retain ownership of the city for your family only. Like I said, you can't lose. No self-respecting Venetian will have any complaints about this. These are merchant folk. They understand that you have a right to the spoils of something that your family financed and that was earned in honest competition against an enemy of the state. The great thing is that your popularity will go up, not from attacking an enemy city and winning, but because everyone knows you are worth a good bit more now. Your popularity rises when your worth rises, and most cities are worth something.

Friends of Venice

The flip side of this coin is the effect that attacking a friendly city has on your popularity. Let's just say that on the streets of Venice, this maneuver goes over like a lead balloon



(regardless of whether balloons have been invented yet). This strategy is extraordinarily risky, dangerous to an extreme, and downright suicidal. Venetians who depend on trade to these cities for the income that feeds their families would be out for your family's blood. Your competitors who once had access are sure to hire mercenaries, assassins, slanderers, and arsonists to exact revenge against you. If you can attack a friendly city at the appropriate time, I strongly recommend it.

Protecting Venetian Interests

On a more minor scale, there are things that you do to protect your own interests that provide slight boosts to your popularity. It's natural to want to protect your trade groups from pirates and brigands. If you happen to run into these scum and inflict punishment on them for trying to take your property, you'll get some popularity points. Other Venetians won't ever be harassed by the same fools. The formula is simple.

On the same note, marauders may attack Venice itself. These are usually crazed zealots from a competing empire. I could name the Genoans, for instance, or the Berbers, Mongols, Corsairs, or even the British. If you have forces nearby and you help defend Venice, Venetian ally cities, or even other Venetian trade groups, you'll receive a few cheers from the populace.

Constructing Roads

Building roads is another way of doing something for the sake of self-interest that Venetians will take as a sign that you are a do-gooder. If you ever build a road for another Venetian's trade route, I'll resign and publicly acknowledge my failure as an adviser. (That is, unless you have some deviously ruthless plan to steal away the route.) Build roads for yourself and your own trade routes! If the commoners wish to see that as an act of charity, so be it. Take the popularity points; it's a free side effect.

Fellow Venetians

Some of the most rewarding undertakings for a merchant prince are undertakings with unpleasant side effects. I've explained the dangers of attacking friendly cities. If you happen to attack a fellow Venetian's trade group or explorer group, not only do you lose popularity, but you will be forced to pay reparations. This is truly a cruel and unusual punishment for a merchant family. You also can lose popularity for attacking a city that another Venetian has conquered and owns. When you face the choice of attacking or not attacking an opponent's property, the most important consideration is what you will get out of it. The second most important consideration is how far away from Venice you will



be when you attack. If you are in a neighboring city, the news will spread like wild fire. If you are near the edge of this flat earth, chances are good that no one in Venice will ever hear word of your treachery. Be sure to bear that in mind.

Dirty Deeds

Visits to the Den of Iniquities can take a toll on your popularity as well. Assassinations are the least digestible to the Venetians. Considering that only one life is lost, they are harsh, but more forgiving than one might expect. High political and religious figures are closely watched by their security guards. You take the most risk here, and take the greatest fall if you are caught assassinating a Pope or Doge. You can recover, but you'll feel the sting from the public outcry.

A reckless arsonist can get you into some trouble, especially if you target a Venetian's villa. Again, you can survive the immediate effects of the loss of face you might suffer from this vengeful act. Being busted for slander produces a minimal loss. Expect to recover in one turn.

After a hired lurker has succeeded or failed in carrying out the ordered deed, you may have the option of pinning the blame on another Venetian family. Imagine assassinating the Pope and blaming an adversary, who then loses popularity for something you perpetrated! As I mentioned earlier, there are three possible outcomes, and each has an equal chance of occurring. You might be caught anyway, the adversary who you wish to receive the blame could get a surprise, or it may happen that neither occurs.

My advice on these matters is simple and straightforward. It will be necessary to use these professional services at some time in your career. Be careful, choose wisely, and don't get caught.

There is one more overlap between popularity and the Den that you need to know. The scoundrels who inhabit the Den of Iniquities have no loyalty to you. If you reach a point at which your rivals envy you, or if you have perpetrated an act that they believe merits vengeance, you could find yourself at the receiving end of the work of a paid professional from the Den. At this



time, it is best to have a high popularity. The cost of services at the Den goes down with your popularity rating and up with it as well. The higher your popularity, the higher the cost of Den services aimed to hurt you. This works for your rivals as well. If you wish to attack a Venetian adversary, it would be cheaper to attack when the adversary's popularity is low.

Self Protection

My self-protection advice is not in regard to the costs of guards for your transports. I am your adviser and I assist you with strategy, not price lists. My advice on this subject will not cover what prices you will pay for protection but what is worth the price and when it is worth paying.

Pirates!

At the beginning of your reign, you will be exploring the coast with your ships to find new cities and to establish the shoreline of the world. Owing to this, you will probably not encounter pirate activity. They tend to limit themselves to open waters and occasional lightning raids on well-established, regular trade routes. Also, pirate activity increases with distance from Venice, where the Home Navy defends the local waters and important local trade routes.

When you will be sailing through open waters, you will certainly find guards well worth the price. If you continue the same trade route for a long time (the entire length of the game, for example), you may decide to put guards onboard after twenty turns or so. The farther the route is from Venice, and the longer you have been using it, the more essential it becomes to have guards.

Brigands

Brigands are those pesky thieves who operate along your inland trade routes. Local rumor has it that there's a famous brigand somewhere around Britain called Robin Hood. Brigands are not yet organized at the beginning of a game because they have no regular trade routes to plunder. Eventually, though, they will appear. Brigands seem to lurk where there is a lot of cover; mountainous terrain and forests are their favorite spots. Until roads are built through these types of terrain, most trade groups would rather go around anyway, instead of spending all the time it takes to work their way through a forest or up, over, and down a rocky mountainside. Avoid their lurking areas or consider posting guards with your overland groups, especially (as with pirates) farther from Venice and on regular routes.

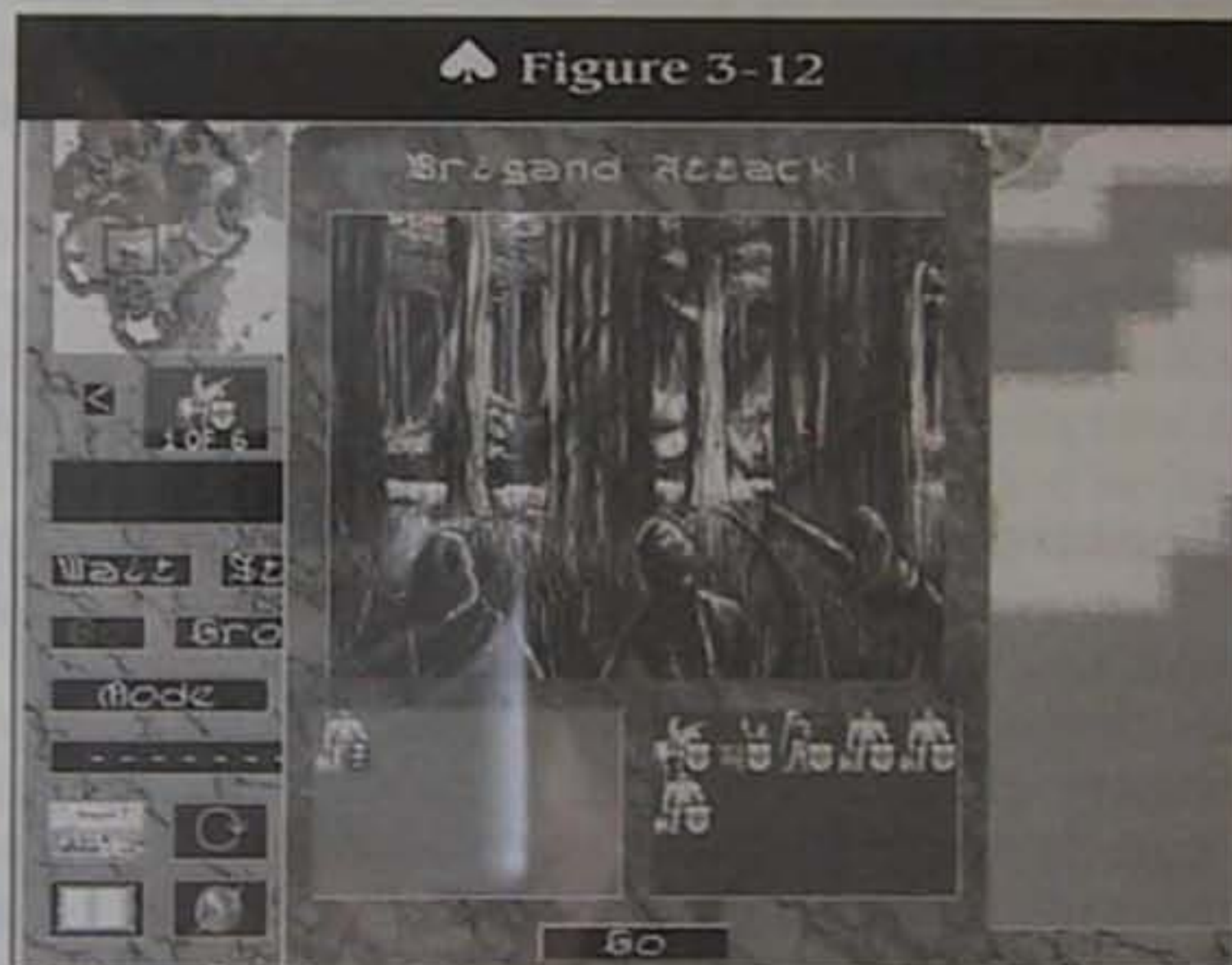


What to Expect

As the game progresses, you must worry more about pirates and brigands interfering in your business affairs. Depending on the setting you chose at the setup for the game, you could have Rare, Normal, or Frequent attacks. The mode you set your trade groups on (safe green, semi-cautious yellow, or reckless red), will have a great deal to do with how frequently you find yourself dealing with outlaw elements.

I have already advised you that using the red mode for your trade groups is my preference. The reason for this is not only that I enjoy hearing news of a good battle, but that the time saved along many trade routes is worth more than enough money to pay for one or two lost transports. Getting the jump on your Venetian competitors means taking risks and ordering your ship captains and caravan commanders to take the quickest route—regardless of the dangers involved. If you make two runs in the time it takes your competition to make one, the dividends will certainly outweigh the risks in the long run.

With the passing of time and the establishment of your regular trade routes, expect pirates and brigands to appear more frequently. You have a choice as far as defense of your transports and goods are concerned. You can play it safe or react after being attacked.



Playing it Safe

If you decide to play it safe, you will be defending your transports during most every run. You have money invested in each of those transports and also in the goods they carry for you. Why shouldn't you defend them? It makes good sense.

If you decide to follow this reasoning, you will need to hire security forces to accompany your trade groups. Set yourself up with whatever is available at the port from which your trade group starts its journey. You will almost always find that a detachment of either light or heavy guards is available, but never both. You have to take what you can get. If you think it is necessary to have more defense than a light guard unit provides, but that is all that is offered, you can enlist the services of more than one unit to make up for their lack of strength.



When enlisting the services of these security forces, you must foot the bill. First, you will purchase the guard unit as if it were a commodity. Later, you can sell it back to any city at the going rates. More importantly, you will pay a fee for each turn you employ the guard unit, for each unit employed. If you have 10 trade groups and 10 light guard security detachments, it adds up to 100 florins *per turn* in fees. Not to mention, you would pay about 400 florins to purchase the detachments. Be careful in the early stages of your princely reign that you don't overextend yourself. I would not recommend spending money for guards if you will be paying for them with money you need for buying commodities. Stick to your priorities.

Another tactic you can use is pairing trade groups. You can put as many trade groups together as you like, and they will defend as one large group. Each transport has a defense of one, so three in a group would defend as three. The strength of the pirates or brigands tends to hover between one and three units, depending on how far along you are in the course of the game. Most of these pests can't stand each other, though, and they usually hang out in singles. One on one, though, means a vicious attacker versus a transport defended by traders, not a trained group like the guard units. If you go against brigands or pirates without defense, the situation will turn ugly all too soon. Pairing groups gives you a much better chance against a lone attack force because of sheer numbers. Even though two trade groups are still not trained to fight as guards, numbers will drive away the attackers in most cases.

Reacting with Mercenaries

Experience with other princes' strategies for defending their trade fleets has lead me to the conclusion that you should use defensive measures more often as an offensive weapon. Let me explain. Simply put, sending out available forces to protect your trade routes is more profitable than protecting individual trade groups. If you constantly pay for security to protect a trade group, you will quickly fall behind in available cash (which could be used to expand your trade capacity).

The money you spend on buying guards from a city can be recovered. As a matter of fact, there have been times when I advised princes to buy and sell guard units as a commodity. I didn't want them to waste available cargo space, and we could at least make a small profit. The money you spend on guard unit fees is not recoverable. It goes straight to the taverns and brothels of the next port of call. If you aren't able to pay guard unit fees, they will turn on you, take your goods, and become pirate and brigand forces that you will have to face again and again until you can neutralize them.

Sending out forces to protect your trade routes is a quick way of exacting revenge on thieves. It also reduces your chances of seeing such criminal elements in that area again for some time. Pirates and brigands only hang around in areas where they find easy targets. Once they encounter heavy forces and are routed, they disappear.



I have advised you not to waste cash on defensive guard units because of the fees. You should also bear in mind the fact that each unit takes up precious cargo space on your transport. Instead of making fifty florins or so, you are paying that much to protect something that probably won't be attacked. Wait until your transport is attacked along its trade route. That is the time to retaliate. In the short run, you may lose one transport. In the long run, you will save thousands of florins. Over the course of the first fifteen years of your reign, you should not lose any transports. After this time you can expect to lose one transport per decade, unless you fail to seek out and annihilate the pirates and brigands that appear along your trade routes.

Let us imagine that you are into your twentieth year of leading your family faction to honor and glory among Venetian families. A report arrives announcing a pirate attack along the coast of western Europe. One of your large cogs has been attacked and lost off the coast of England as it sailed from London to Calais (carrying high grade silver and returning with fine cloth). What should we do? Panic? That's not our style. Retaliate? Retaliation will bring respect, a gain in popularity for protecting Venetian interests, and it will clear up that trade route for decades. No pirate will venture into those waters after a swift and decisive act of vengeance. An added benefit is that your competitors will witness your reaction and will think twice about attacking your trade groups.

With the money we have collected (because we have not been throwing it away on useless guard detachments over the course of twenty interrupted years without one attack), we go shopping in the mercenary hiring screen. Lo and behold, there happens to be a mercenary group in London fighting under the command of Hawkwood. If we hire the force immediately after we realize we will need its services, it will set sail during the next turn and more likely than not run into the pirates we're after.

This is the quickest way of dispatching those who commit piracy along a trade route. The mercenary force in the city closest to the trade group affected will overwhelm the pirate forces. Of course, this also works with brigand attacks along land routes. I remember a group of brigands with the nerve to attack trade groups between Budapest and Venice herself! The smallest mercenary force in Venice was hired, and they were more than sufficient for wiping out both groups of thieves. Rumor is that they killed all but one from each group, so that the survivor would warn others of their fate if they dared to test the patience of Venetians again.

Reacting with the Home Forces

Another option you might have available is to send out one of the home forces of Venice to take care of the attackers. This is an option only if you have been appointed General of the Army or Admiral of the Navy. I would also suggest that you use this option only if the attack is close enough to the force that you can move into the area of the attack in one or two turns. After that much time, the attackers will be on their way to safe haven to count and divide their loot.



Reacting with Crusaders

If you happen to be in control of the Papacy at the time of an attack, you may be able to save some mercenary expenses and send a Crusader force. Again, hunting down the attackers should be as swift an operation as possible. You will save money in the long run by countering a pirate or brigand attack with a lightning-quick stroke of brutality. If you send a force to the area to sit and wait for the attackers to return, you will be wasting a military group that you could put to better purposes elsewhere.

Bait

When a trade group is attacked in an area distant from any mercenary, home force, or Crusader force, bait offers a final option. Send out a transport loaded with guard units and try to tempt the thieves into attacking you again. One transport with enough security forces to defeat the attackers should be sent to patrol the area while other trade groups continue to trade for you. The regular trade groups should be protected with guard detachments also, in case they are the next to be attacked. Once the lowlife scum have been defeated, trade groups can return to normal operations.

Attacks from Opponents

At times, one of your trade groups will disappear after sighting a military force displaying the crest of an opposing Venetian faction. Unfortunately, we have no time for guessing games. We must retaliate or we will face further attacks. I certainly would not suggest that you hire a mercenary group to attack any of the home forces of Venice, even if they were ordered to attack us by a competing faction. It would be wiser to finish off a trade group owned by the faction that attacked our group. No one wants a war of attrition over trade groups, so this activity should cease after we retaliate in kind.

Be aware of suspicious activity of home forces under the authority of competing factions. After one prince was caught assassinating the senator of a competitor, the Home Navy was sighted off the port of Antioch by one of our land caravans that was trading in the city. I immediately sent orders to two trade groups that were on their way to Antioch with full loads of Venetian glass. Otherwise, my princely employer would surely have lost these trade groups. After successfully winning the position of Doge, my employer removed that family from control of the Navy and re-established the trade route to Antioch. When our next trade group arrived in Antioch, the Navy had moved elsewhere.

Attacks by your opponents are fairly random. If you are attacked by a mercenary group or one of the home forces, you might see the crest of the opponent the turn before the attack. You might only notice that a trade group that once existed has disappeared. In the latter case, you may have an idea of who it was if you were recently caught committing an unpopular act against a particular Venetian faction. In either case, their



actions are usually in retaliation for something you did to advance your cause. If they get away with it, you can retaliate immediately, or you can wait until you can exact a higher price. Just remember that revenge is best when served cold.

Building Roads

Becoming Minister of Engineering is a great stroke of luck if it comes early in the game. Get at least one senator before the first election, if at all possible, and hope that your appointment is to this position. During the early years, having control of the Army or Navy is fairly useless. The forces are so minimal in strength that you would usually need another mercenary force to ensure a successful attack on any unfriendly city close to Venice. Trade is the important factor at the start, and having money and power to build roads will help in accelerating trade where *you* decide it should be accelerated.

Overspending

Before you set out to build roads, be aware of the temptation to finish a road, which may lead to building until you suddenly realize you have spent all your available florins. You must plan when, where, and how you will construct roads. You can tell how much each piece of road will cost if you click once on each terrain square involved. Add it all up, then spend only as much as you have planned to spend.

If you nail down the cabinet position of Minister of Engineering, you will be granted 1,000 florins each turn with which to build roads. Again, watch that you refrain from overspending, but be sure to spend most of the money. In this way, you avoid losing popularity for pocketing public funds.

Your Best Interests

Previously, discussing popularity, I mentioned that building roads will help you gain small advances in popularity. I also mentioned that I would resign and publicly admit my failure as an adviser if you built roads for other Venetians' trade routes. If you wish to be charitable during your reign as prince of this faction, do it in such a way as to benefit your position. When you construct roads, put them between cities that you own and to which access is denied our competition. The next best option is to build a road between one city that you own and another that you do not, intending to send an Army down the road and conquer the city.

This is a best-case scenario. More common is the option of constructing roads that simply help to cut down the amount of time traveling, thus speeding your rate of trade. If you speed trade, you also speed your profit-making.



Two of the best Historical trade routes, along which you should consider building roads as soon as you are able, are between Tunis and Timbuktu and from Tripoli to Katsina. Find these cities in northern Africa quickly, conquer them if you must, establish the trade routes, and build the roads. These routes will consistently serve you well. The roads you build will enable you to use two trade groups that cross paths on the way between the cities, maximizing trade without depleting the supply of goods.

Fast Exploration

Earlier, I gave you advice on the importance of discovering cities first and possibly gaining from finding relics and artifacts. If you find yourself in a position where you need a quick route into a new-found city, employ the tactic of building a road directly from the group you wish to send into the city to the gates of the place. Even if an opponent's group is ahead of you, you can count the total moves it will cost for you to arrive and find the relics to determine if building a road would get you in before your competition has a chance to take its turn.

Using this strategy, however, you will find that the unexplored squares on the map (sepia squares) resist attempts to have roads placed on them. To continue to construct a road under these circumstances, you must construct the portion of the road immediately in front of your trade group, move the group onto that square, then construct the next piece of road on the square that is now in front of the group. Repeat this process until you have used the amount of road construction money you planned for or until you have arrived at the destination.

Construction on an Existing Trade Route

If you are going to build a road along an existing trade route, you can begin the construction anywhere along the route. If there is trade underway already, seek out your trade group and build directly in front of it before it has taken its moves for the turn. If the trade group is in a city, build from that city in the direction the trade group will be traveling. This way, your trade group will benefit immediately from the construction.

Troop Movement

The movement of troops is a slow process. Military units move only as quickly as their slowest elements. They also have trouble dragging their machines of war through dense forest and mountain terrain. The construction of roads greatly reduces the amount of time necessary for troops to arrive at their destination. If you have the money available, send the engineers ahead of the troops. Hopefully, you'll be using the new road after your forces have opened trading to the city you are about to conquer—I mean liberate.



City Reports

City reports are handy wells of information. The most useful of features is the detailed list of the access granted by all the cities known to you. There is no quicker way to find out which cities have been conquered by opponents. The only other option is to stumble into the city, totally unaware that you have been denied access by a competitor. If you check the city report for this information every turn, you will save yourself the surprise and humiliation, and you can send out troops to rectify the situation as soon as you realize what has happened.

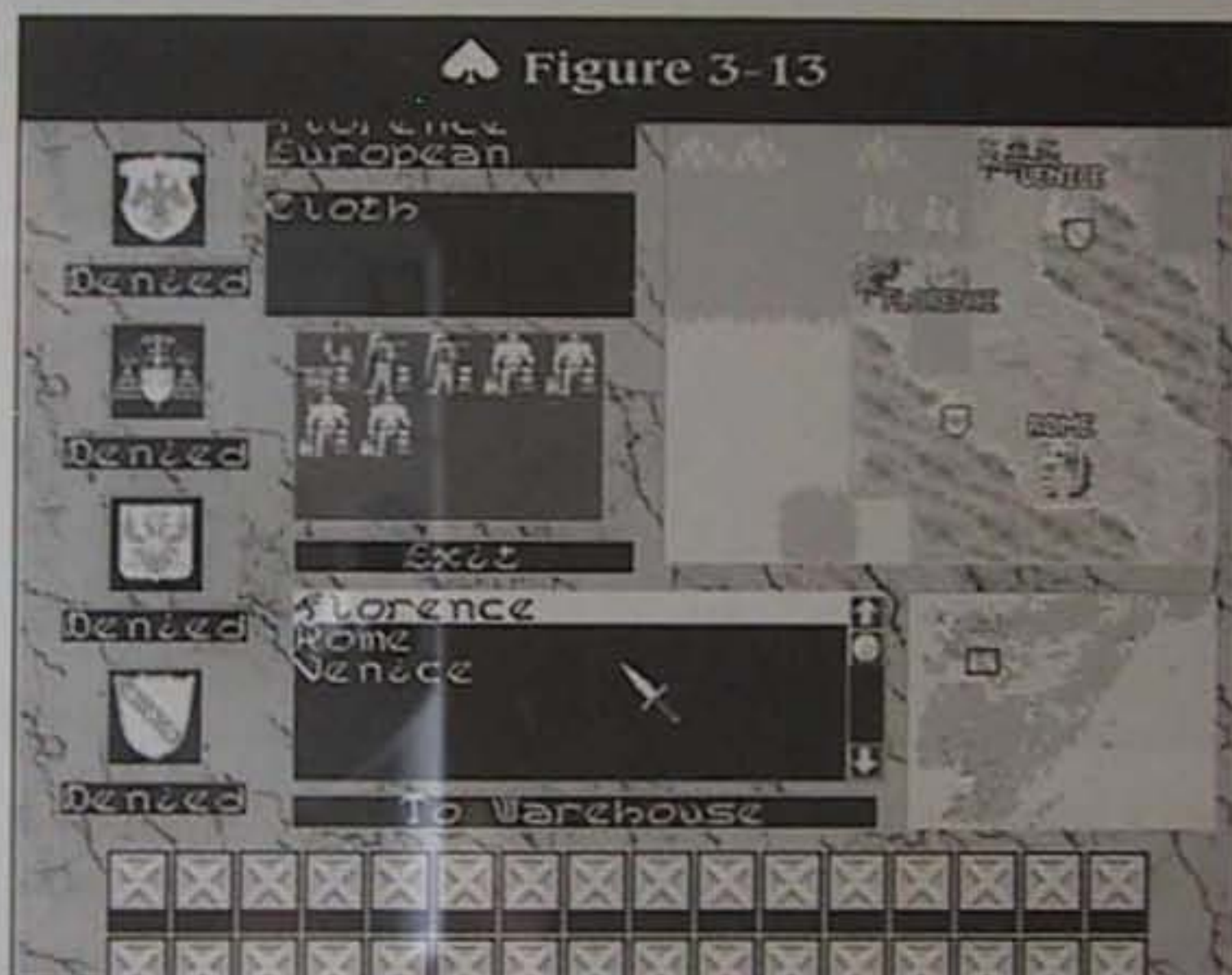
City reports also list the commodities a city is known for producing in quantity or at a comparatively low cost. As you discover cities, recheck the city report and find out if there is a commodity you should be especially interested in trading.

When the Plague has struck a city, or the city has been excommunicated by order of the Pope, you will be notified of this status on the city report. If you come across such a notice, you can use the report to immediately check the prices of that city's commodities—to examine the coincident inflation. If you notice unusually

high prices on a city report, it may be an indication that the city is under siege. Try to be aware of these potential profit opportunities as soon as they occur.

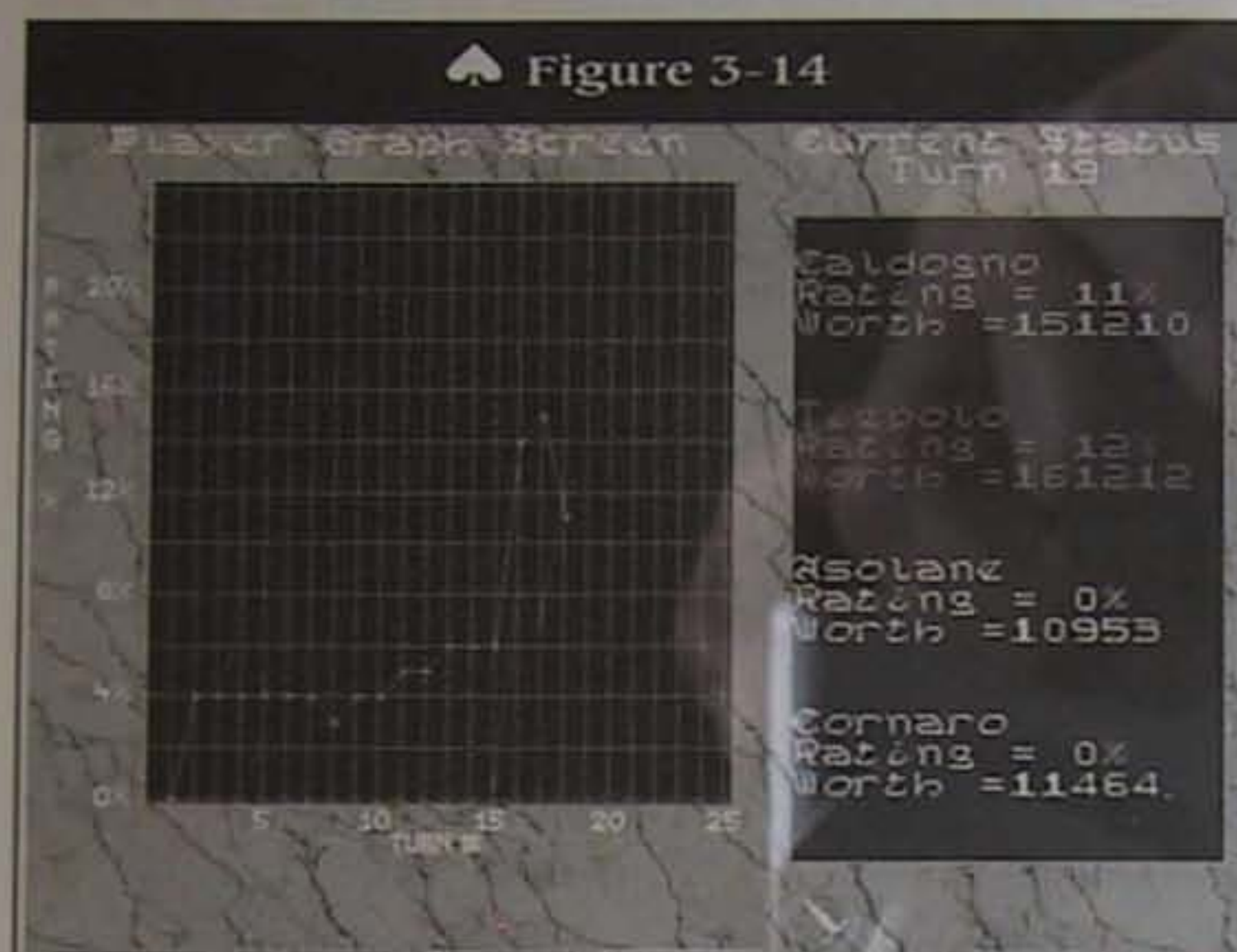
A city's defenses are listed in the city report. You can scroll through the cities and decide which should be the recipient of your next effort to free the inhabitants of their despotic rulers. You can also use this information to decide if you need to send a mercenary force to protect one of your cities from invasion (if its forces are weak). In addition, you will sometimes find that an opponent's city is suffering from inadequate protection. What to do?

Last, but not least, you can also check your warehouses easily in this screen. There are times when one needs quick cash. Preview this screen to see if you can dump warehoused goods to raise money for more urgent matters.



The Player Graph

There are two screens that relate to you the progress of the game. For strategy's sake, you should check them after each turn to ensure that you are not surprised by the rise or fall of an opponent. If a competitor has become too successful, you will find out from this screen and be able to react accordingly. Information is power. Use this screen to be sure you are in control of the flow of the game.



If you just happen to play like the champ I know you to be and you reach one million florins in cash, the player graph will appear, indicating the end of the game. When this happens, you have won handily, and the program is showing you how well you pummeled your rivals. Well done.

The player graph also appears when the time runs out on a game. If you chose a short game, your graph will show a

quick line of progress. If you play a long game, your line of progress, which charts your overall worth during the course of the game, will rise more slowly, due to the length of time involved.

Strategies for Random Maps

In order to create a random map with your own design instructions, just answer *No* to the default settings offered when you choose the *Random Map* option from the start up screen. The custom options will show up. I do not have room to advise you on a strategy for each and every possible map that you can generate, but some general strategies are as follows.

If you are playing a world that is primarily ocean, with islands and large expanses of water, try using a sizable fleet of ship transports. Large galleys are the most suitable trade transports for this type of world. They are fast explorers and their holds carry a profitable amount of commodities. Large galleys also easily outrun pirates and weather storms reasonably well. Use cogs between cities whose locations provide you with short, safe trade routes.



If you end up in a world that is primarily land, with mountains, deserts, and forests, you will need to focus on trading with a large fleet of caravan transports. Owing to the fact that deserts are reliably a small percentage of the globe, focus on donkey caravans until you know where the desert areas are located. In this type of world, road construction becomes a top priority. Seek out trade routes that profit you most, and build the roads that will increase your profit by increasing the speed of your trade groups. Remember to build roads that connect to any city you own and to which your opponents are denied access.

In a world varied in its features (as is the historical one), you will need a varied transport fleet. Use large galleys to follow and explore the coast line. Purchase donkey trade groups to explore inland from newly discovered cities. Keep in mind that cogs do not have the ability to navigate small rivers. Do not buy a cog to run a short trade route between cities that have even one square of small river that must be navigated to reach port. Avoid purchasing a ship on an inland sea or lake before you have confirmed that you can use it for trade with another city located on the same body of water.





Four

Extreme Ruthlessness

With the essentials behind us, we now venture to destroy what little light of misbegotten ethical behavior may yet reside in your brain. Remember this: Anyone who dares cross us in the search for fortune and fame must be smitten with malice and prejudice. Those who venture into the cities we treasure for our own ends have a destiny that lies with the worms.

Ensuring a comfortable future for yourself does not mean that you must destroy your competition in the process. Friendly competition among patriotic Venetians is good for everyone. As long as you and your family enjoy comfortable lives, why complain? Live and let live? Nah.

It's always more satisfying to reduce your competition to nothing, then to offer your opponents (and their families) jobs as oar pullers on your large cogs. We play for keeps in this book. Prepare for a Machiavellian smorgasbord.

Attacking Transports: Risky Business

First of all, attacking your opponents' trade groups is a relatively stupid idea during most of the game. There are times—they're rare, but they do exist—when it is actually a good strategy to interrupt an opponent's trading or exploration with an aggressive military attack.

Attacking an opponent's trade group is risky. If you are caught, you will be forced to pay reparations to your opponent. This punishment completely obliterates any profit from the attack. In some cases, the judgment will exceed the value of the trade group attacked, if it is destroyed. This is not because you are being punished for your deed. If you attack a trade group, there are usually between two and five transports involved. Also added to the reparations bill is the cost of commodities lost through the force of the battle. If you attack ships loaded with gems, the price you pay will be extraordinarily high. Added to

the reparations bill, despite whether there are commodities on board, is a flat fee of 250 florins per cargo hold. Some reparations bills have required merchant princes to pay the entire amount of the wealth available in their accounts. Any remaining debt above what you have, however, is ignored. Think about this. If you happen to have a very low number of florins in your account, that would be the best time to attack an opponent's trade groups. A smart prince would spend all his available florins on goods in a city, stocking a warehouse or transports, before risking an attack that could result in reparations.

This does not get you off the hook completely. In addition to your financial woes, you can expect to suffer a large degree of popularity loss as well. This crime is considered particularly heinous because it affects the status of Venice overall. Having strong Venetian families is beneficial to Venice as a whole. If you attack a fellow Venetian, you are damaging the strength of the home city on the world scene.

Strategies and Advantages

Now that you have been made aware of the punishment you face in the event that you are caught, let's discuss the strategies and advantages of attacking a fellow Venetian's trade groups. Distance from Venice is the key to reducing the probability of being caught. This should be paramount in your mind when considering an attack. Ask yourself if you are far enough from Venice to have a better than average chance of pulling it off.

If you are not very far from Venice, you will have a low chance of success, risking a high reparations bill and a stupendous loss of popularity. These ratios swing more to your advantage the farther you get from Venice. Not every opponent's trade group operates at the edge of the known world, so you need to have a reasonable idea of how far is far enough. The chances of being caught decrease each move point from Venice. The formula is as follows:

$$100 - (Mp \times 3) = \%$$

Thus, if you are one move point away from Venice, there is a 97 percent chance of being caught: 100 minus (1 x 3) equals 97. If you are 31 move points away, there is only a one percent chance of being caught: 100 minus (33 x 3) equals 1. Any attack beyond 31 move points from Venice has zero percent chance of being caught, of having to pay reparations, and of losing popularity. Go for it!

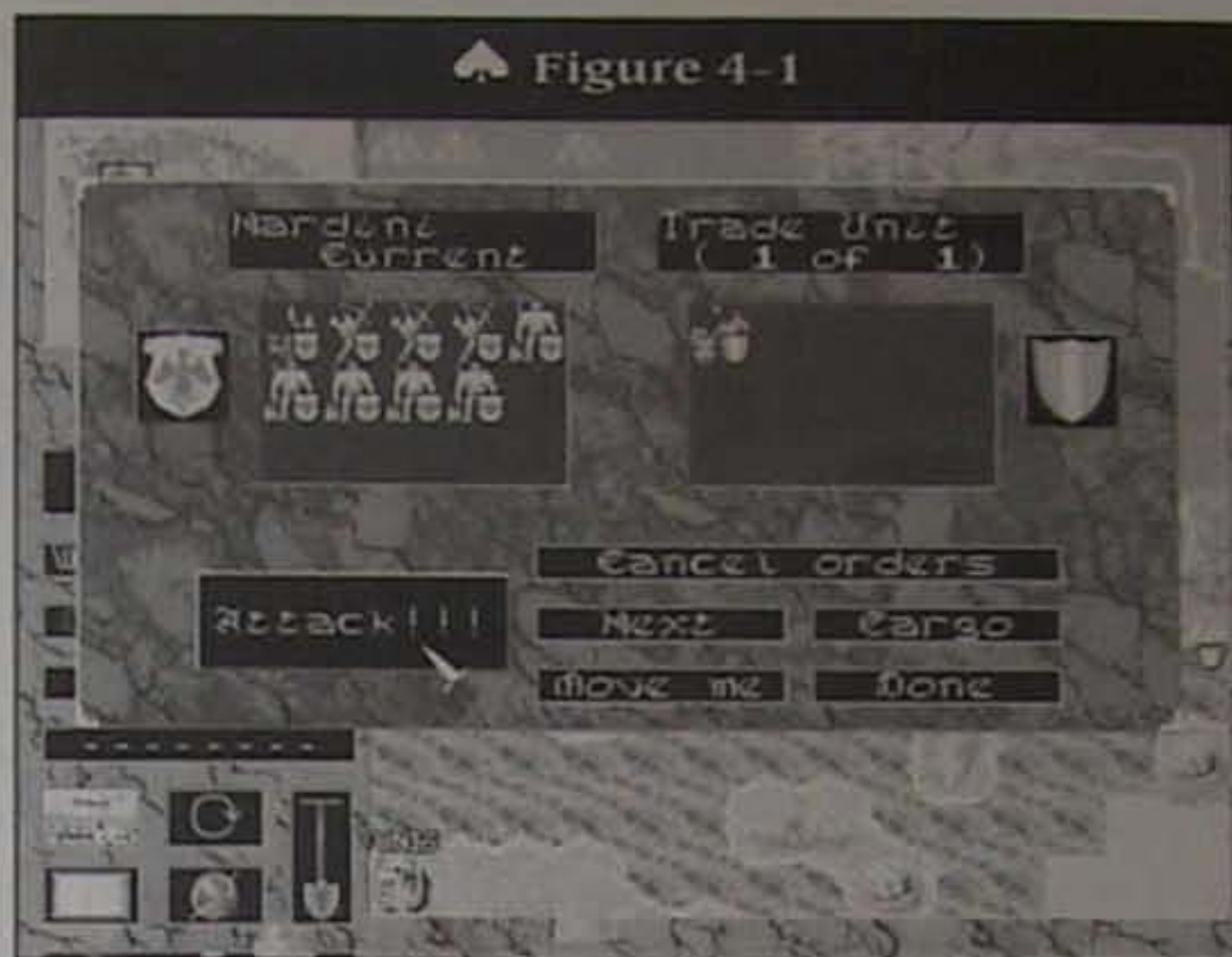
There are no advantages or disadvantages to attacking on land or at sea. Attacking along the coast or on the open sea does not change your chance of success. Neither does attacking on open land, forest, or mountainous terrain. If you attack in a city, however, your chance of success drops by 50 percent.

The advantages of taking one of your competitor's trade groups off his hands are worth the battle—if you have the money and forces. For one thing, it is a morale booster for you and your family. Admit it, you would really enjoy getting away with this, especially if you gain some spoils from the venture. The chance that you will acquire a



transport *and* its commodities is small, but it happens occasionally. You capture one out of every three transports in the attacked trade group. If there are only one or two transports, you get nothing. If you do capture a transport, you will receive one-third of the commodities on board. The rest are lost in battle.

In addition to the immediate rewards you receive, any opponent's loss strengthens your position in the game. The poor victim loses a trade group. If there happened to be commodities on board, they are lost to him as well. In addition, this attack interrupts his flow of trade on what is probably a three- or four-city trade route. Any other trade group that is depending on receiving goods from this leg of the trade route will be forced to wait for a replacement group to arrive (or load goods that are less profitable). There is a domino effect to many attacks, which hurts the opponent in many ways. In order for the competitor to bounce back, he'll need to purchase another trade group, supply it, and send it out to trade.



Attacking Explorers

Attacking exploring groups is a fantastic way to disrupt the progress of an opponent. Most explorer groups are individual transports that simply seek out and discover new ports and cities—with which your opponent opens trade. If you can capture or destroy an opponent's exploration group, you create a setback that takes some expense and much precious time to recover from.

In most cases, an explorer will be in search of a city with which its owner can immediately open trade. Interrupting this search denies access to cities for the number of turns it takes your opponent to recover, and it prevents trade profits from flowing into the opponent's account during this time. In a best-case scenario, destroying an opponent's explorer group can provide you with the time necessary to defeat a city's defenses, take control, and deny access to your opponents before they even discover the presence of the city.

Bear in mind that, since an explorer group might consist of only one transport, it will also likely be carrying extra defense units to protect it. When attacking any opponent's



group, expect to encounter two or three transports that are paired for defensive purposes. If you attack with a fighting group of one infantry or naval unit (left over from a recent attack on a city, say), you should expect to have a poor chance of success against an opponent's explorer or trade group. If you are going to take a risk of this magnitude, at least attack with a force that will succeed. If you are caught, you must pay reparations regardless of whether the attack was successful. Be sure to have a big enough force to destroy the group you attack, so that if caught you at least have had the meager pleasure of disrupting your competitor's trade route or exploration process.

Liberating Friendly Cities

We have come to my favorite type of strategy. Why would attacking a city that is friendly with Venice be a favorite? Why attack if they accept your trade groups and offer their mercenaries and other services willingly? There is only one reason: greed.

The problem with cities open to Venice is that they are open to all Venetians. All Venetians have access, all Venetians can trade, all Venetians can profit. If you conquer an unfriendly city, it is certainly advantageous to you, but it is not a disadvantage to your competitors. They had no trade with the city and will lose nothing. Attacking a friendly city is both advantageous to you and disadvantageous to your opponents. It's a win-win situation for your faction, because it kills two birds (or more) with one stone.

First Necessities

In the early stages of a game on the historical map, you should consider using your money and the first mercenaries you can hire to conquer Florence and Genoa, which will be unfriendly. In a game played with a random map, check the area immediately surrounding Venice for unfriendly cities. If you find unfriendly cities near Venice, it is in your best interest to obtain ownership of these cities quickly. Otherwise, you may lose control of these cities to competitors. Competing players will not attack friendly cities, but the better computer players will immediately go after the close cities which are unfriendly. Make sure you take control of these cities before you set out to conquer friendly cities, which are not subject to competitor aggression.

Timing

The best time to attack a friendly city depends on a number of factors. Before you attack, check your popularity rating. If you are attacking close to Venice, you will suffer a sharp decline in your popularity. (Of course, these are the cities that will cause the greatest disruption in your opponents' plans.) A popularity drop could affect other plans you have



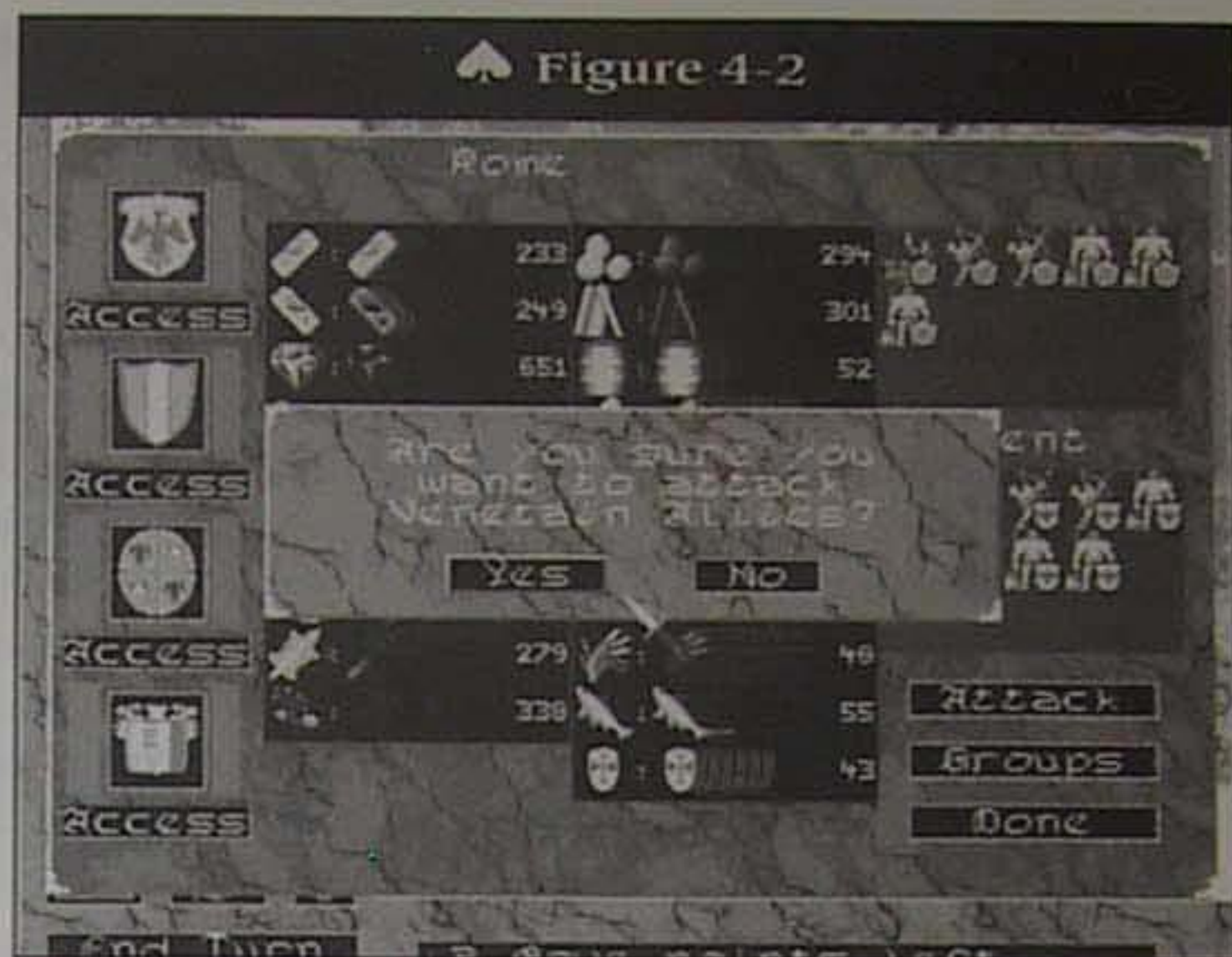
for that turn. If you are far enough away—at least 31 move points away from Venice—you will not see your popularity decrease. The formula for your chance of being caught is the same as it is for attacking an opponent's groups.

Be sure you have enough money to support a serious campaign. If you hire mercenary forces to attack a city, you will have to pay for their salaries every turn. Plan-

ning ahead means that you know how long it will take for you to reach the city and whether you can cover the cost of the total number of turns you will pay the mercenary salaries. Remember that a city is defenseless after being conquered, and you should seriously consider keeping a mercenary force in town until the city's defenses are strong enough to hold off an opponent's attack. If you release the mercenaries immediately after your victory, an opponent will probably hire the mercenaries that you have left in the town, take the defenseless town away from you immediately, and wonder why your adviser failed to warn you to avoid that situation. You need to count these post-victory defensive turns when you figure the total number for which you must pay the mercenaries' salaries.

Another consideration is the availability of mercenaries at the time you wish to attack. Mercenaries appear at different times throughout the game. They also are present in different cities. Make sure that you have an available mercenary group, preferably close to the city you wish to attack.

Finally, be aware of the possibility of being forced to pay reparations to a city if you are caught attacking. Make sure that you are far enough from Venice to prevent being caught. If you forget, or decide to take the risk of being caught, reparations are based on one turn's rent for all the defense units the city lost in the battle.



How to Choose a Target

The most efficient way to choose a target is to weigh the cost, the location, and the benefits. There are times during a game when you will instinctively think to yourself, "I wish I had control of that city all to myself." This is the time to ponder an attack.



Consider the overall situation, and if it is in your best interests, begin to formulate a plan and prepare to make your move.

When deciding on a target, the most enjoyable factor to ponder is how much you will gain by obtaining control of the town. Keep profit foremost in your thoughts. There is no sense attacking a town that has no commodities to trade and does not provide a link in a worthwhile trade route. On the historical map, Padron usually fits into this category.

Worthwhile cities include those well stocked with commodities—those which are going to provide substantial profit. Of course, trade is a two-way street. Also, consider the prices a city offers for commodities that are in demand there. Check the local markets to decide two things: Where would you be exporting goods to and where would you be importing goods from? On the historical map, Xiangrala is one of the great cities to own in this respect. Gems and furs are usually found in abundant supply, and the surrounding cities—of which there are many—offer good prices for these products, while supplying other products for which Xiangrala has a healthy demand.

Providing a link in a trade route is a useful benefit when shopping for friendly cities to own. Let's take another example from the historical map. Tunis is by far one of my all-time favorite friendly cities to take over. It is usually an ally of Venice but not always. Tunis connects Europe to Africa via the Mediterranean Sea. It can be discovered in two turns from Venice (with a galley). An exploring caravan can be sent off to find Timbuktu to the south-southwest. Gems in Timbuktu can then be sent to Tunis. At Tunis they are loaded onto a ship transport and carried the short distance across the Mediterranean to Marseilles (or whatever port is paying the highest price for gems). The return shipment could easily be grog, cloth, or Venetian glass, which all sell high in Timbuktu. If you gain control of Tunis, your competitors are locked out of this sweet, short trade route. Timbuktu just doesn't have enough gems for everyone, and it is best to hoard them for your own profit. Getting quick control of this lucrative trade route—by taking over friendly Tunis—will give you a substantial edge over your opponents. Consider the possibility of trade route links carefully when choosing which ally city to obtain.

Disrupting a fellow Venetian's trade route is a good reason to desire conquering a city that gives all Venetians access. Be aware that this can be a dangerous venture. You are taking food out of someone's mouth, and you may have to defend yourself because of it.

Novgorod, on the historical map, is a location with which Venetians typically set up a trade route. Merchants in Novgorod buy Venetian glass at high prices and sell furs at low prices. You don't even have to build a road to Novgorod, because another Venetian will do it for you soon enough. If you want this city for yourself, wait until the road is built, gather the necessary forces, and march into town. Novgorod may take some extra units to conquer, but once it's done, your fellow Venetians will be out of luck. Be sure to leave a strong force to defend the city after the attack, because there are usually three Venetian factions who want to wrest control away from you and reinstate their business dealings. Victory here deals quite a blow to the earnings of your opponents. If they see no way to regain control of Novgorod, you may soon be attending funerals for your faction's senators and cardinals, as they vent their frustration with you.



Not only can you disrupt your competitor's trade routes, you can take a friendly city and thereby contain your opponents' ability to explore an area. Antioch (on the historical map) is a gateway to the cities of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Getting and keeping control of Antioch is usually a bloody affair. Take plenty of forces, because the locals are zealous about protecting their stock of precious relics. Once the place is yours, you gain a valuable commodity base, a valuable trade route link, and a city from which exploring caravans can be sent to discover the rest of the world. Again, be prepared to leave a security force around to defend the city. Your competitors find out about Antioch fairly quickly and want to get in on the action. Expansionists that they are, they will not appreciate being contained to Europe.

Having a city accessible to all Venetians means you have to share all the resources the city provides. Some cities have enough to go around, but most do not. It would be frustrating to roll into a city and find that the goods you want to take with you are not in stock because your competition just emptied the shelves. I see no point in wasting time and having to wait until a city resupplies itself before our trade can resume. If we need a mercenary group, it would be nice to have control of a city where we know we can get one without waiting in line. If others do not have access to the goods and mercenaries and other benefits, they are ours alone to enjoy.

Let me leave you with a few spare words of advice on this topic. Opponents will always hear about your attack on a city that is an ally of Venice and will threaten exact revenge during the entire time it takes to conquer the city. Take the city as quickly as possible. Also, be sure to check the city's defenses before you attack. At first, they will be your adversaries, but after a victory they become the defenses for your newly acquired city. Third, it may be advantageous to build a road to speed your military forces on their way. The money is well spent if the road becomes a thoroughfare for trade groups after the city is yours. Last, be advised to have trade groups waiting outside a city you are about to conquer. Always be prepared to take advantage of siege profits caused by the inflation during the fighting. You will find the best prices immediately after the fighting ends, followed by a swift return to the regular prices.

What the Black Death Can Do for You

The plague will normally show up in cities that have recently been ravaged by war. Hygiene tends to sink to a low point during such a turbulent occurrence. Once the plague hits a city, it can easily spread to neighboring cities. The question you must ponder is whether the tempting, super-inflated prices in a plague town are worth the risk of losing your transports and any goods on board.

My advice to you is simple and straightforward. Profit is always the key. If you can take a commodity into a plague town and make a killing, go for it. The profit should be more than adequate to cover the cost of replacing your transport if it fails to make it out of the city without being infected. (Do not think about the people who may perish with the group. They knew the risks when they joined.) Since you can only lose a transport



♠ Figure 4-3



when it leaves a plague city—never while entering—you should refrain from taking valuable commodities out with you. If the transport survives, go get more highly profitable goods for another trade run. If the transport gets infected, you should have made more than enough in profits to replace it immediately and continue the trade route during the next turn.

Here is that wonderful formula for figuring inflation when the plague hits a town. You have seen it before.

$$\text{New Price} = P + (P \times S)/(D + 10)$$

P is the normal price for a commodity not produced in the city; S is the strength of attack; D is the distance from the epicenter (which is zero except during the Reformation). The strength of attack for the plague is two per player turn for three full turns.



The Reformation

The Reformation is a religious rebellion. The church in Rome starts the game with a relatively high popularity rating of its own. Like yours, this rating can be lowered by many things. Unlike yours, however, it can never be raised again. Once the rating goes low enough, there's a chance every turn that a Reformation might begin. If the rating reaches zero, the chance goes to 100 percent.

Just so you know, the things that lower this popularity rating are raising the indulgence rate, adding cardinals to the House of Cardinals, and excommunicating a city (the last is the big one). You should also note that the popularity rating affects how easy it is to cobble together a group of Crusaders. If you call a Crusade and nobody comes, you'd better start worrying about the Reformation.

Effects

The Reformation is when a lot of hard work and strategic planning go down the tubes in a heartbeat. First, one of the Christian cities decides that enough is enough and the Pope has got to go. All of the cities within ten move spaces of where the Reformation began are swept up in religious rebellion against the Papacy. The result of this is that these cities become enemies of Venice, whether they are open to Venice as allies or are controlled by a Venetian, such as yourself. All trade is interrupted, trade routes are shut off, and armies come pouring out of the city where the Reformation began. These armies start attacking Venetian trade groups, attacking cities allied with Venice, and—if they get to it—they will even attack Venice itself. When cities allied with Venice—whether they are owned by a Venetian or have open access to all as friendly cities—are sacked and conquered by Reformation forces, all warehouses owned by Venetians will be pillaged, plundered, looted, and burned, in that order.

Venice and Rome will not become unfriendly cities automatically, even if they are within ten spaces of the city in which the Reformation occurs. Reformation armies appear at the city where the Reformation began and move to overthrow the Papacy at the Vatican in Rome. If Venice happens to be in their way, they will certainly attack and try to take Venice. If Venice falls, the players who are in the positions of General of the Army and Admiral of the Navy will each lose 25 popularity points. A player who is in control as Doge at the time Venice falls to a Reformation attack force will also lose 25 popularity points. To add to this player's misfortune, the Doge controlled by that faction will be killed, 75 percent of the senators of the Doge will be killed, and new elections will take place. All players lose any villas they have constructed. The villas are plundered, looted, and destroyed. A full third of every Venetian's cash accounts will be taken by the new Reformation government installed in Venice as "reparations" for the families of their slain soldiers or for some other official cost they invent. If you see that Venice is under attack and could well fall into the hands of a Reformation Army, by all means spend your



money to buy warehouses and stock commodities somewhere far from their influence. You could buy more trade groups. Even better, hire mercenaries in Venice before they become unavailable to you. If you've used that strategy to try to save Venice and failed, use the money you would lose anyway to hire other mercenaries that you can send to free Venice from the grip of outsiders.

This is as good a time as any to fill you in on an important piece of information. Regardless of what happens during the course of your reign, neither you nor any of your rivals can ever be completely eliminated from play. Even if you or a rival hits zero florins and becomes unable to make any more money or do anything during a turn, that player continues and begins the next turn with the estate allowance that was willed to every player for the beginning of each new turn.

And the Papacy

The Reformation affects the Papacy in a number of ways. You will notice that any Crusades in progress will immediately be called off and the Crusader Army will be ordered back to Rome—if it can make it. The indulgence rate is lowered to what it was when you assumed control of the family (remember the beginning of the game?). If the Reformation armies make it to Rome, you will probably have more to lose than trading rights with the city. If Reformation armies are victorious against Rome's defenders, the Pope will be killed and 75 percent of the cardinals will be slain beside their poor pontiff.

The economy storm brought about by the Reformation occurs in every city within 10 move squares of the city where the Reformation began. Venice and Rome are excluded from becoming enemy cities, even if they are within 10 move points of this epicenter, but they are not excluded from the inflationary prices if they are within that range. Here's the formula for inflation prices once again, performing its final encore.

$$\text{New Price} = P + (P \times S)/(D + 10)$$

P is the normal price of a commodity not produced in the city; S is the strength of attack; D is the distance from the epicenter of the Reformation, which is the city in which the Reformation began. The strength of attack for the Reformation is seven.





Five

AI: How Your Rivals Play

As you play *Machiavelli the Prince*, you can tell how you and your Venetian adversaries are doing by checking the *Player Graph* screen. You may wonder how your opponents actually play the game, though. What do they do during their turns? Are they plotting behind your back; can they plan a sneak attack? The artificial intelligence (AI) that makes these decisions has been programmed to react according to the level you have chosen for the computer opponents to play. The order of the AI levels from easiest to hardest is: Novice, Fair, Average, Good, and Expert.

The following information is provided so that you are properly informed about your competition. Any advantages that seem unfair in the most challenging levels of AI play have been included to make the game challenging to someone who has played extensively. You don't want your opponents to bore you after only a few games. After all, you will always control the strength of your Venetian rivals during the setup of the game. You can decide just how much you want them to challenge you.

Exploration

At the Novice and Fair levels of AI play, your rivals' explorers will follow random exploration routes. When AI levels are set to Average, the random exploration routes give way to fairly direct routes that competitor's groups take towards cities. At AI levels Good and Expert, explorer groups know where the other cities are and take the direct routes.

Novice explorers will move at a pace of negative four move points per group per turn, as compared to your groups. So, a galley that moves at fifteen move points per turn for you will move at eleven move points per turn for a Novice opponent. Fair explorer groups will move at negative three move points. Average, Good, and Expert exploration groups will move at rates of negative two, negative one, and negative zero move points per turn, respectively.

If you decide to play a challenging opponent, check for roads that they may build between cities with which they set up trade routes. If you can somehow keep track of one of them, follow their explorers or trade groups to cities you have yet to discover.

Trade

As mentioned before, opponent explorer groups are at a disadvantage in their move point ratios, except for Expert opponents. The same move point disadvantages for each AI level of opponent also apply to trade groups.

Novice and Fair competitors' trade groups keep fairly short trade routes. Average, Good, and Expert rival groups will branch out to use triangular trade routes that cover three cities, depending on the profit and length of the route.

Calamities and random events—such as storms and pirate attacks—affect Novice and Fair players as they affect you. Once you get to the Average, Good, and Expert AI levels, calamities are less prevalent (against them, not you!). An Expert level player may have the advantage of avoiding random events altogether.

Your AI opponents will usually react if you attack a friendly city with which they frequently trade, especially if they have purchased warehouses in that city. If you leave no mercenary, Venetian Home Army, or Crusader forces at the city, your more challenging opponents will try to regain the cities and reopen access to their trade groups immediately. Check the city report to watch how fast they move back in to reclaim a former trade route. If you retain control of the friendly city you capture, beware of repercussions somewhere in the political sphere. Again, the level of opponent will determine the quickness and severity of their reaction.

AI reactions are determined by the way you play a game. Opponents have an adjustable like/hate rating toward you which shifts during the course of a game. The rating affects the way an opponent acts and reacts to you during a turn in progress and in future turns, depending on events.

Politics

Believe it or not, AI players do not continuously plot to outdo your faction by banding together and ganging up on you. Nor do they join forces and support one faction over another so that at least one of them can beat you for highest worth at the end of the game. AI players are independent factions that play to succeed individually. Depending on their level of competence, they will have like/hate ratings toward each other and will react accordingly to the actions of other AI rivals. In most games, AI rivals will tend toward leaving other AI players alone, which might sometimes seem like a focus on cooperating against you. The times when they may actually be out to get you as a team are the times when you are well ahead of them all in overall worth, after you have been



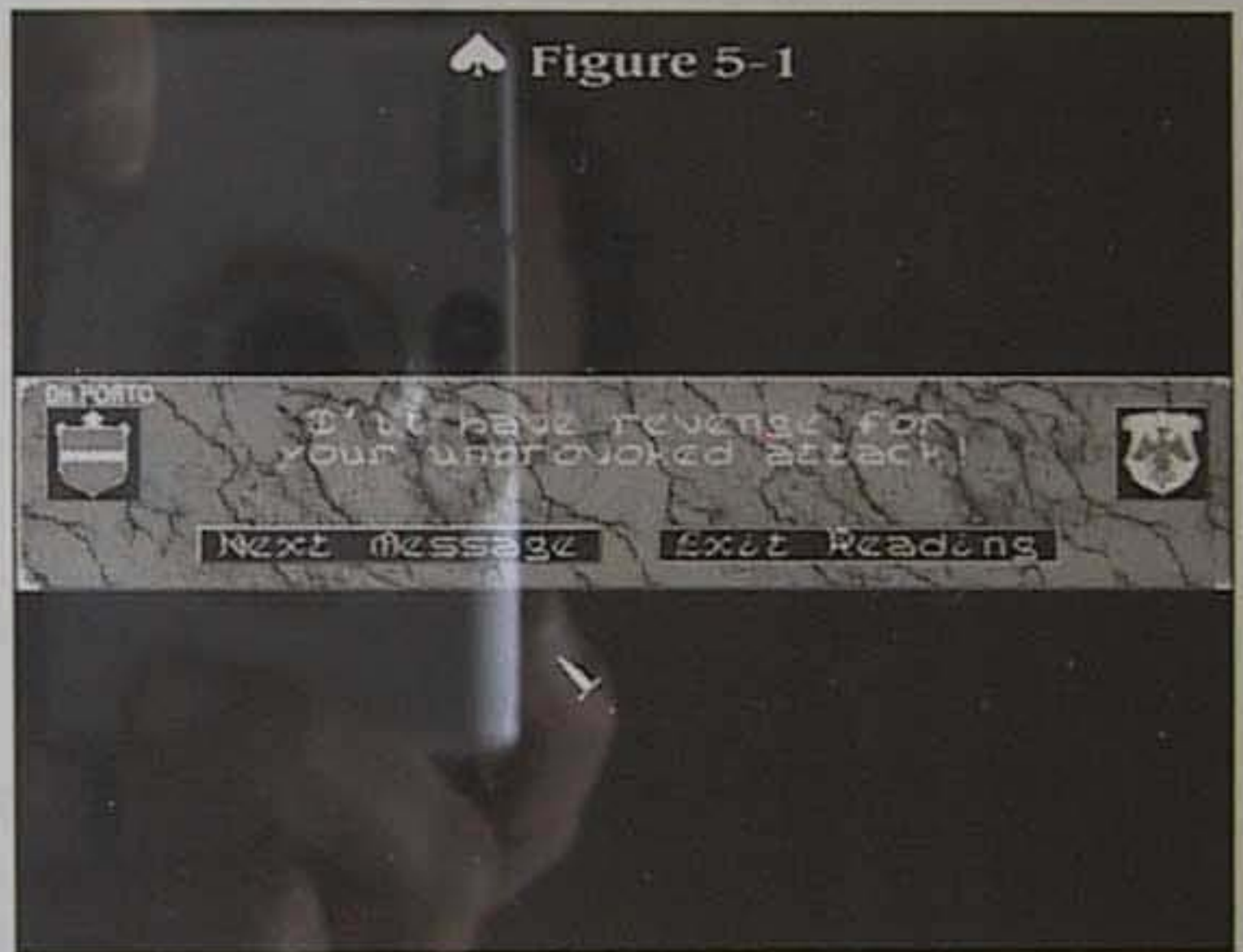
visiting the Den of Iniquities too frequently, or after an attack and takeover of a friendly city with which they all had profitable trade routes. They will be acting independently toward the same goal—slowing you down.

In the Doge, the Novice, Fair, Average, and Good players all bribe senators at the highest percentage available to them (usually 90 percent). Owing to this, they probably will fall behind in the political arena if you decide to bribe at around a seventy to seventy-five percent chance of success. The two highest levels of AI, Good and Expert, are able to avoid having their senators accused of treason by the Council Head, unless you are in control of this cabinet position. Novice, Fair, and Average AI will accuse each others' senators randomly but will not accuse the senators of Good and Expert AI.

AI visits to the Den of Iniquities occur infrequently because, as mentioned before, they tend to leave each other alone. The Good and Expert level AI players are completely immune to Den attacks from all other AI rivals. Also, these two levels of AI will not make attempts to assassinate the Doge or Pope of their respective factions. Other, lower level AI players can be targeted for the specific actions of Den dwellers by Good or Expert level AI and by each other.

If your actions cause AI competitors to join forces against you during the course of the game, you will usually see the result of this soon after you do something that stirs up their collective anger. Novice and Fair AI players may bumble around before they can get together to attack, and they may not be able to pull it off at all. Average, Good, and Expert level AI are much better at cooperating in joint efforts to exact revenge against you.

The AI use of military units is standard. Unlike you, they will use the forces they control to carry out the missions for which they were initially designed. If you are ahead in the game, or have attacked an AI opponent, they will use military resources to deny you access to cities that were previously accessible to all Venetians or to gain control of an unfriendly city and deny access to you. They also have no qualms about using military units to destroy your trade groups if you have been caught aggressively seeking out and destroying theirs. As you might expect, the higher the level AI is, the more proficient and timely are your opponent's reactions.



The Reformation causes AI players to scramble to recoup their losses due to changes in city allegiance and losses at the hands of Reformation forces. AI competitors in military cabinet positions become responsible for defending Venice. If their trade routes have been lost or interrupted, or if their trade groups are attacked by Reformation armies, they will take any opportunity to turn a Reformation city into one that they can own. If you are ahead in overall worth at this point, you may be denied access if their efforts are successful. You should also frequently check the city reports during this period. If rival AI players cannot obtain control by military force, they may bribe their way back into a former trade route city and resume trading in that manner.





Six

Designer Games

After you have played and perhaps mastered this game (with the help of your humble adviser), you might consider personalizing *Machiavelli the Prince* to your own liking. This section provides an assortment of tips and instructions on how to do just that. In all of the following cases, you should avoid changing the format of these files from the original text. If you use a standard text editor (such as the *Edit* utility that comes with DOS), you should have no problems.

Commodities

You can change the descriptions of all the commodities to suit your tastes. The graphics won't change for you, so you might want to keep your descriptions close to home.

Simply edit the file for the specific commodity (they're all named *comod##.inf*, where "##" is a number between 00 and 19—the number of the commodity) and change the text of the description. One last point, though: The size of the on-screen boxes won't change, so try to keep your text close to the same length as the original.

Slander

When you customize the *slanders.lie* file to your liking, you have two options. If you're only re-writing the existing slanders, than do so. If you add or delete slanders, however, you must change the number on the first line of the file. Add to or subtract from the number so that it reflects the number of slanders in the file. Remember that all slanders must be no more than 35 characters.

Artifacts

The artifacts in the game are contained in the file *relics.txt*. You can, of course, modify the relic listings to suit yourself. The big qualifier to this is that the structure of each relic listing must conform to a particular design, or else the game will not be able to read it (and that might very well cause other problems!).

Every line in this file has this format:

Name lp or sl file.bin

The “#” is a number that you shouldn’t change. “Name” is the name of the relic, which you can change. Make sure, however, that the new name is not longer than the original name. The letter between the two pipe characters must be either *p* or *s*. Use *p* for plural relics and *s* for singular ones. The last part is the name of a graphic file. All of the little pictures that accompany the relics are stored in binary files. Whichever file you specify at the end of the line is the one that will be displayed with this relic. Thus, for example, “arkcov.bin” will show the Ark of the Covenant graphic. Note that if you specify a file that does not exist or is not in the same directory as the rest of the game, you’ll get an error.

Military Groups

Each of the military groups in the game, including your enemies and all mercenaries, is drawn from a file of its own. Surprise, you can customize these as well. Mercenaries are in files called *merc##.sts* (the “##” is a number in the actual name); all of the other groups are in the files called *war##.dat*. Once again, as with the relics, there is a specific format that you must use in order for the game to recognize the data.

The first line of a military group’s file contains its name. Note that no extra, “trailing” spaces can be at the end of this or any other line. Also, the length of the name is pre-set; you must fill every space, replacing each of the original characters without any less or any more than the original number.

The second line is the turn at which the unit will become active during the game. Note that the groups of enemy cities like Genoa will always have starting turns greater than zero. Reformation armies will have starting turns of 200. (No, they don’t actually wait for turn 200, which never comes. These units are activated as soon as the Reformation begins.)

The next five lines have the combat options. First is the name of the city in which the group will start. The next four lines appear only in the war group files. The name of the group’s target city, if there is one, is next. The groups of Genoa, for example, will always target Venice. Then come three lines with either “Yes” or “No.” The first determines whether that group will pause to attack trade groups on its way to the target city. The second indicates whether the unit will attack cities friendly to Venice.



including ones that are on the way to the target city; this line is "Yes" for all Reformation Armies. The last tells the group whether to attack cities that are closed to Venice. Note that the last two might both be "No," indicating that the group should not attack cities at all but roam about attacking trade groups. They shouldn't both be "Yes," though. Why? Well, it's fine to tell them to attack all cities, but as soon as a group like this conquered a place, it would be required to attack it again immediately. (Think about it, and you'll see that it's true.) Yes, it's a nicely chaotic idea, and the constant war will drive the prices up in that city, but how will you gain access if there's always a war going on?

Last, but not least, are the actual units in the group. Each unit has a line of its own and is listed by type. The type is expressed as a number. This list (at right) includes those numbers and the units to which they relate in this file.

MILITARY GROUPS

- 7** *Knights*
- 8** *Siege Train*
- 9** *Calvary*
- 10** *Horse Archers*
- 11** *Marines*
- 12** *Arquebusiers*
- 13** *Foot Archers*
- 14** *Infantry*





Seven

Unfair Advantages



nfair advantages come in a few different forms in this game. Whatever your reasons for wanting to use them, here they are. Even for the most ethical prince, they may come in handy.

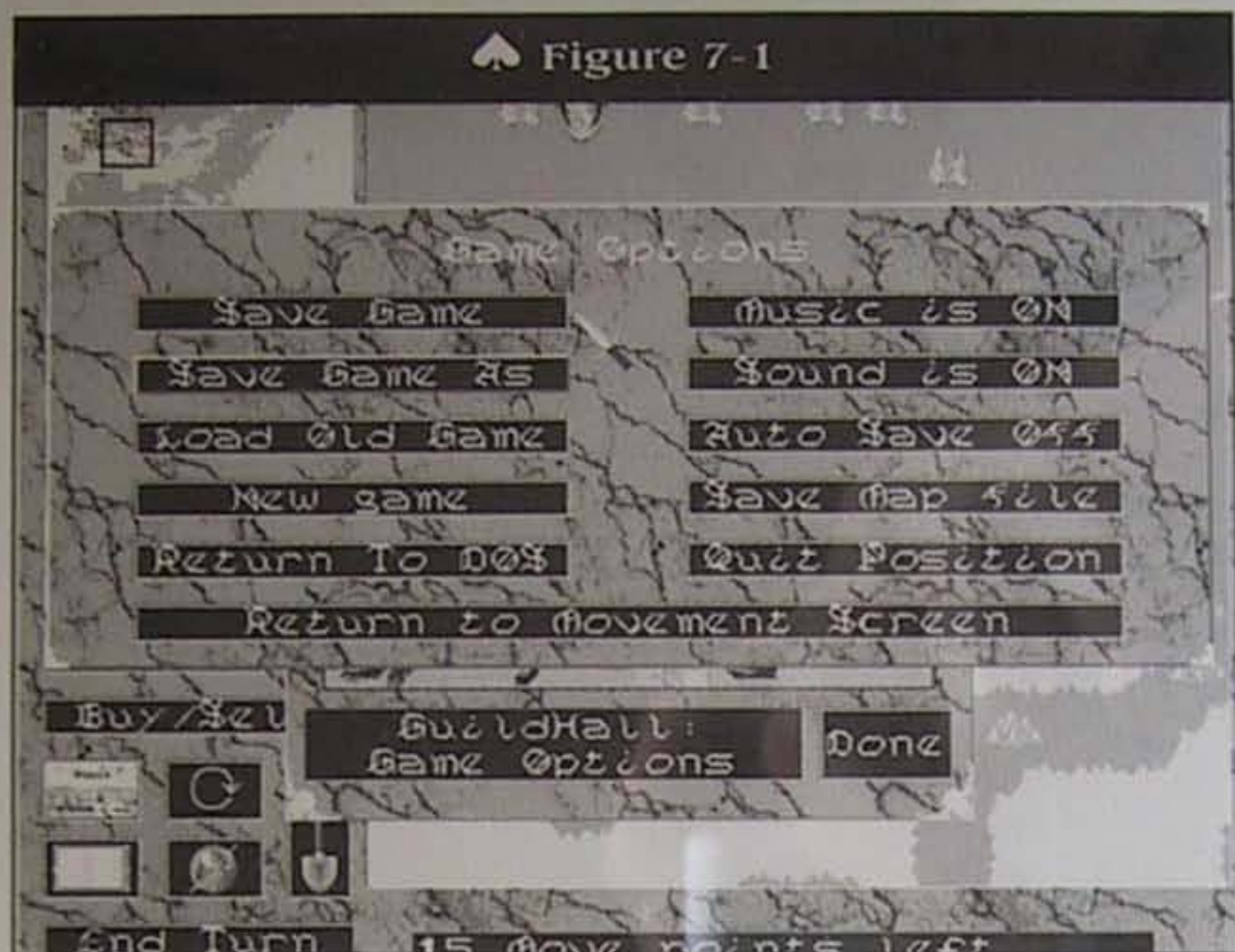
Guaranteeing Success

The simplest and most well-known way to assure success for any of your endeavors during the course of the game is the *Save Game* option. You will find the relevant command in the *Guild Hall* on the *Venice* screen. You can save a game before any uncertain action or one that has a computer-decided "random" outcome if you wish to guarantee that the outcome turns out to be in your favor. The following is a brief list of some of the actions this strategy might include:



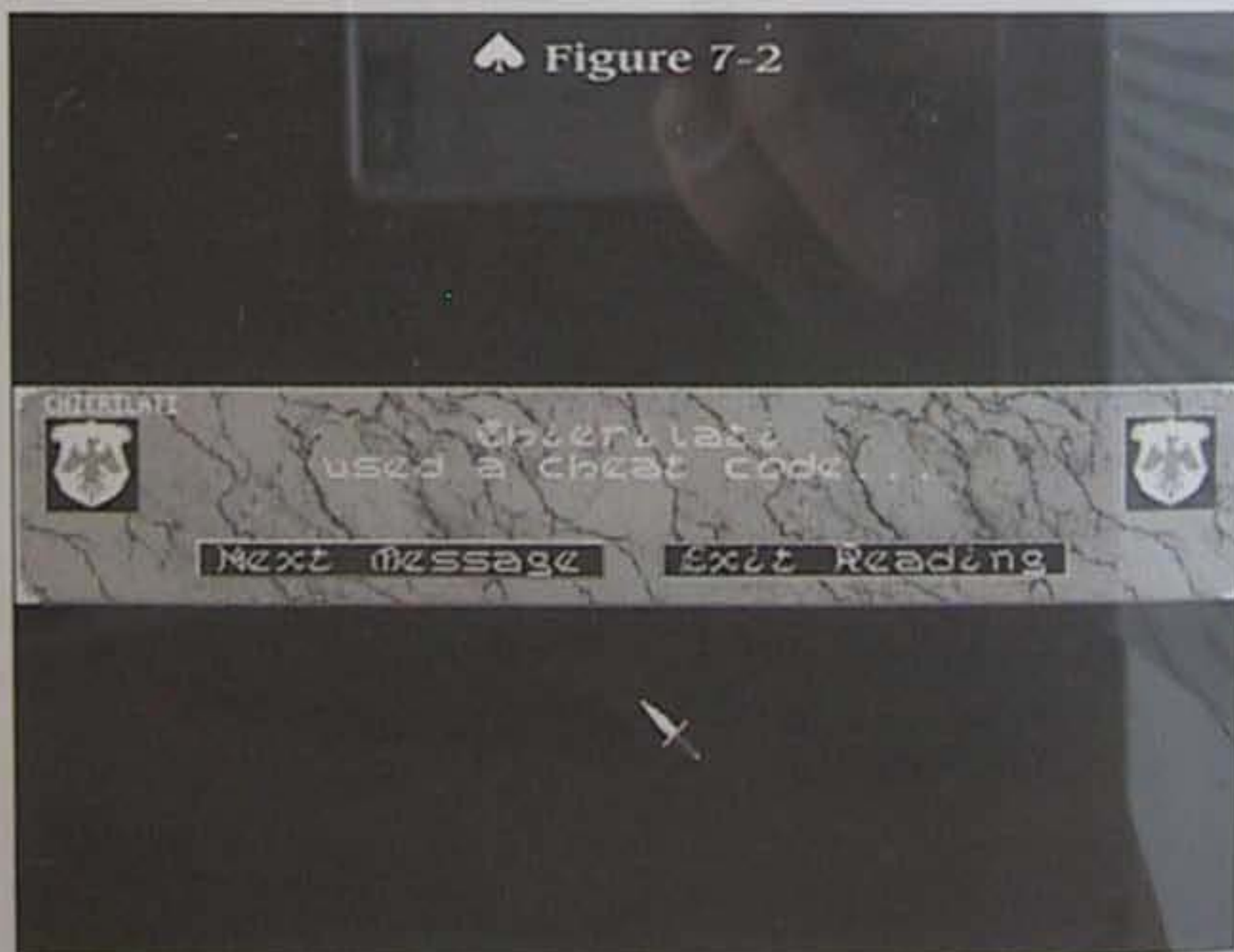
- ♠ *Attacking any city*
- ♠ *Going into a plague town with a trade group*
- ♠ *Bribing a senator in the Doge*
- ♠ *Assassinating someone under control of another faction*
- ♠ *Exploring an area for a city*
- ♠ *Conducting an election*

♠ Figure 7-1



In each case, saving a game just before you act will allow you to restore the game at the point before the random event. If the outcome of your action is not to your liking, restore the saved game. You can make another attempt, or you might decide that it is not worth the effort and continue the game using a different approach.

♠ Figure 7-2



Cheat Codes

Cheat codes are "back doors" used by the game's programmers and designers. The development teams use the codes mostly for testing purposes. Usually, codes save them the time of having to play through a game in order to get to the point at which they can test a theory or a new feature that they want to install (or find a bug). To use a cheat code, you must type a specific command at the *Venice* screen. The command will only work when used at this particular screen. You will hear a beep, and every player will receive a message that states, "(Your name) has used a cheat code."

Cheat codes are as follows:



- ♠ *HDIVIEW: This code reveals the entire map of the world, including all terrain features and the location of all cities.*
- ♠ *HDIKASH: Use this code to add to the total number of florins in your cash account. Each time you apply this code you get fifty thousand (50,000) florins.*
- ♠ *HDISPY: This cheat allows you to watch the actions of each of your Venetian opponents during every turn. Be aware that AI players make decisions and movements quickly. If you want to know what they are doing and where they are doing it, be prepared to get only a quick glance.*
- ♠ *HDIKARNAGE: This appropriately named code activates any and all inactivated mercenary groups. They become instantly available at the city in which they reside. Any mercenary group that is hired through this means will become inactive again only after it is completely defeated. Such a group will become active again only if you repeat the cheat code or when the actual turn arrives at which they would normally be activated.*



The Easter Egg

"Easter Egg" is an insider's term used by game designers, programmers, and QA testers. Easter Eggs are "hidden" features that are not cheats—more often they're jokes or alternate graphics. *Machiavelli the Prince* has only one egg. If you go to the *Venice* screen and type *MPS QA*, you'll find the secret artifact. You'll see the head of someone who works at MicroProse, along with a quote that fits. The quality assurance department did a wonderful job testing this product, as usual, and got a kick out of this designers' addition to the game.



You can add the head to the artifacts that you can discover in the game. Refer to the Designer Games section for details. The head graphic is in a file named *doc.bin*.





Appendix A

PBEM: Play by E-Mail

You can play *Machiavelli the Prince* with your friends by having them over and taking turns, with more than one player set to the human mode. However, if you want to play with others who aren't within driving distance, or if you haven't done your laundry recently, you might consider playing by e-mail ("e" for electronic).



The instructions in the game manual for playing via e-mail are not exactly correct. Changes were made to the game after the manual went to print, and those changes are reflected here.

For those of you who are not familiar with e-mail, you will need a floppy disk or a modem for transferring files (if you use a modem, you might also need instructions on how to install and operate it). Set up and play the game in the usual manner. Remember to set the correct number of players to *Human*.

When you've finished your first turn, go to the *Venice* screen and click the *End Turn* button. At the bottom of the resulting screen, you will see a button labeled *PBEM END*. PBEM stands for "Play By E-Mail." Click this button.

Now, you must determine the disk, directory, and name of the save file. In this way, you could save the game to a floppy disk for transferral to another computer. Choose a name, then click on the *OK* button. *Machiavelli* will then ask you whether or not you want to send the game via modem. Click *Yes* if that's your plan; the *Modem Setup* screen will appear. At this point, you set everything up as you would for the beginning of a modem play game. When you're done, the game will attempt to connect to the other computer at the phone number you enter. If the connection is successful, the save file will be transferred.

When the other players have finished their turns, you should get the file back so that you can play your second turn. Play continues in this way until you have trounced them all.





Appendix B

Advice from the 'Prose



Who better to come up with winning strategies than the people who designed, programmed, and tested the game? Here's some insight from the insiders.

Ken Lightner, Designer

Popularity

Most players don't realize the benefits of the popularity score, since it's not a physical object or position you can use on someone, but popularity feeds into a number of important areas under the covers of the Machiavelli engine. The most obvious benefit is the direct effect it has on your ability to bribe senators into your faction. This advantage alone can pay for the cost of raising the popularity after only two senators or so. However, once it's up there, it provides you with a number of other advantages. Each senator's loyalty is initially set to the player's popularity, so the higher the popularity, the more expensive your senators are to bribe away. This loyalty also affects the chance of the Council Head

succeeding in an accusation against that senator. Your popularity affects the cost of assassinating any senator, cardinal, Doge, or Pope. It makes slanderous attacks against you more expensive. Last, the odds of other city-states voting for a Venetian Pope are affected by the player's popularity.

There are a number of less-than-brute-force ways to gradually raise your popularity in the early parts of the game. Building roads will often increase your popularity, and there are plenty of other advantages to roads, anyway. Defeating pirates and brigands can raise your popularity, so if you're paying wages for a large number of guards, don't forget to use them to your advantage. Later, if you're given a military position, remember that opening cities up to Venice raises your popularity significantly. So, if you don't have any other pressing need for the unit, move it down to a relatively unimportant closed city and attack. You may even discover an important relic once inside.

The Importance of Roads

The pricing in Machiavelli is set by the distance the city is from a commodity source. It's not completely linear, but that is the general idea. So, generally speaking, all investments have a similar return. If I buy a galley and sail it between two cities, I am following the economic model of the engine to achieve normal trade profits. I can increase those somewhat by running long routes, but only if the commodity is only available in one general area. These distances are calculated by adding up the movement point cost of each square between the cities along the fastest route—moving basically as a mercenary unit does—switching from land to sea at any port. The best way to achieve above average profits, then, is to not pay as much for your initial investment (land units are cheaper) or turn over your assets quicker. Building roads allows this tactic. Where the profit over a mountain pass may be based on a fifteen square distance, the road distance might



only be five. This means you make three times as many trips and rack up three times the profit.

The disadvantage is that any player can use the roads once they are built, but if you are having this problem, the best answer is mercenaries! Also, be aware that roads may point opposing players to a city they have not yet discovered. Building between two remote cities is the ideal way to avoid both of these problems.

Use of Mercenaries

Mercenary uses fall into three main categories: gaining entry to cities, closing another player's entry to a city, or pirating. All of these activities are extremely expensive, so careful thought must be placed into carrying them out. Just getting the mercenary down to the target can cost thousands of florins. For any important city, you would probably want to bring two or three units and leave at least one for a few turns afterward to avoid counter-attacks while the new government builds up its own defense force.

Basically, mercenary actions are a desperate recourse that should generally only be considered in desperate situations (or when funded with public money!). For me, there are generally plenty of open cities to trade in. Therefore, early in the game I just use my "funded" mercenaries for exploring and opening weak cities to Venice for the popularity. It's not that you can't make money off opening up a rich city, it's just that there are usually easier ways to make the same money.

However, later in the game problems start to occur that can only be rectified by the application of military might. You can be sure that once you have found a highly profitable route, the other players will soon be running it as well, causing you four related problems: the purchase price of the commodity increases, since more are being bought; the supply decreases; the sale price decreases; and the demand decreases. This may cause inventories to pile up, which, in



turn, ties up more of your capital on smaller returns. The solution is to close access to the city to any competitors. This is an expensive task, but if it's undertaken soon enough, the long-term benefits are well worth it. There are two considerations worth remembering. First, either close the route far from Venice (30 squares or more), or be prepared to spend even more in reparations and popularity losses. Second, remember that your opponents will want to retake the city as soon as it is lost. Guard the city after victory until sufficient defenders are available. Remember, any mercenaries who make their home near the city will be the first enlisted by the other side, so watch for them being hired or—better yet—keep them in hire yourself. (Hopefully, they can do useful stuff somewhere else. This also means that when you do fire them, they will be out of circulation while getting home.) This is a tough strategy to pull off without losing a ton of cash. It helps to be Doge, or at least to have a military position. This essentially doubles the usefulness of the position, since the part you must do to keep popularity is actually also being invested in the empire. However, note that in these positions you are responsible for the safe-keeping of Venice also. I usually rely on the temporary hire of a Venetian captain for this, so you only have to watch for attacks and react to avoid the disastrous consequences of Venice being sacked.

Final Notes

Finally, there is one important rule of thumb which all too often is ignored in favor of revenge. Whenever you are spending money making your own position better, you are spending against all three other players. In some ways, it's like gaining three times as much. However, when you spend money lowering someone else's position, you are spending directly against them, and actually losing every dollar you



are spending against the other two players. I recommend holding back on *any* personal attacks that aren't essentially free until the game narrows to two players (where the other two are far enough behind not to worry too strongly about). At this point, the advantages of these underhanded attacks can give you the edge you need against the one last player who still might beat you.

There are exceptions to this, but they mostly revolve around you gaining position at the expense of another player. For example, if I get control of six senators shortly after an election, then I'm headed right for the Den of Iniquities so I can reap the benefits of Doge. On the other hand, killing senators I don't need myself or burning warehouses are personal attacks that gain nothing for my position in the long run.

Ed Pike, Designer

This game revolves around politics and trade rather than armed conflict. So keep in mind that much can be gained in the trade arena by arranging mutually beneficial political arrangements; there are many win-win opportunities. Constant backstabbing in the Senate can lead to serious weaknesses in the defense of Venice and become a drain on everyone's funds. Exploitation of the Papacy will eventually cause the Reformation and a restriction on the money-making capabilities of the church. Historically, both institutions were abused to the point of collapse. All this leads to one final point to ponder about Machiavelli the man: There is a very credible school of thought among historians that Niccolo Machiavelli was an arch-Republican and that *The Prince* is actually a poison apple whose advice would lead any would-be prince to self destruction, paving the way for the rise of a Republic.



Kathy Crowe, MPS Quality Assurance

When I'm testing a game, I not only try to test the limits and win, but I also spend a lot of time in the parts of the game in which I have the most fun. From a strategic perspective, these sometimes turn out to also be places where you can gain lots of money and power. Such is Santa Marc's Basilica in *Machiavelli the Prince* for me. You can get a big jump early in the game if you're able to acquire one or two cardinals in the first 10 years. Not only do they provide power (you get to vote in Papal elections), but you get a sum of money (indulgence) each year for each cardinal your faction has bought. In addition, cardinals don't die or get assassinated as often as senators, which is why I tend to stay away from the Doge's Palace until I'm rolling in dough.

One of my highest priority goals when I get going in a game is to become Pope as soon as possible. Once you're Pope, the money just starts rolling in! However, you must decide how to get there. You'll need to develop a strong balance between establishing trade routes, bribing senators, and buying cardinals. If you try to buy too many cardinals early on, you may find that you get a slow start on building trade routes, which a little later in the game are the real sources of income.

Jonathia Caspian-Kaufman, MPS Documentation

My favorite way to play *Machiavelli the Prince* is on the random maps, because you never know what you're going to be facing. I keep my small galleys in exploratory mode and race along the coastlines that are available to me as far



as I can go. Once, I had a map on which Venice was one of two cities on an enclosed sea, so I had to set out overland to discover a city on another coast. From there, I could again sail around. Of course, sea-based exploration is much speedier than land-based caravans, but most times there are real interior jewels like Timbuktu. You just can't get there from the sea.

Another thing to remember is to keep buying new units. Whenever your treasury hits a magic number—say 1,500 florins in the first decade or two of the game—you should invest in a new unit and set up a trade route to a more distant port. I get so caught up in exploration sometimes that I forget to do this. My treasury funds are just sitting around, and unlike in the real world, they don't earn interest.

Finally, one of my earliest strategies when I was learning the game, and one I still use occasionally to test out new theories, is to play two or more opponents at once. I take Player One *and* Player Three, or even all four players. Keeping the resources of each position is a challenge, but you can gang up on the AI players more easily, and playing both sides of a message allows you to see what effect your machinations have on other players. I can send a map chunk to my other player and see how useful that information is to receive. Or, I can burn down the villa my other player bought and see what kind of detriment it proves. Then, when I'm in a real multi-player game, I have a better handle on my options.



Notes



Notes



Computer Game Books

The 7th Guest: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
Aces Over Europe: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
Aegis: Guardian of the Fleet—The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
Alone in the Dark 3: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
Armored Fist: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
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Shadow of the Comet: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective: The Unauthorized Strategy Guide	\$19.95
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Sid Meier's Colonization: The Official Strategy Guide	\$19.95
SimCity 2000: Power, Politics, and Planning	\$19.95
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SimFarm Almanac: The Official Guide to SimFarm	\$19.95
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