

IBM and Compatibles CD-ROM Data Card



READ ME FIRST!

Hi! We know you're anxious to begin playing ARCHON ULTRA, but before you do, please be sure that your system meets the following minimum system requirements:

- 386DX/33 MHz IBM PC or compatible
- 4 MB of RAM (8 MB recommended)
- MS-DOS 5.0 – 6.22
- An Uncompressed hard drive with **5 MB** of free space
- VGA graphics with a Color VGA Monitor (1 MB RAM recommended)
- A 100% Microsoft (or Logitech) compatible mouse
- Microsoft Mouse driver version 9.00 +, or Logitech Mouse driver version 6.00+
- CD-ROM drive with 350 ms access and 150 KB transfer rate

The minimum amount of free base RAM required is:

563,200 BYTES OF FREE BASE RAM
1,400,000 BYTES OF FREE XMS MEMORY

Note: hard drive size and total system memory available have no bearing on free RAM. Follow the directions below to determine if you have enough available memory to run the game.

CHECKING FREE BASE MEMORY

Each game included with this compilation has different requirements of free base RAM to run. The requirement for each game is listed under the specific title information. To check your free base RAM, type **MEM** from within the DOS directory. The free base RAM is listed as "LARGEST EXECUTABLE PROGRAM SIZE." Compare the listed amount to the amount of free memory required by the game. Also listed is "FREE EXTENDED MEMORY" (or free XMS). If your amount is lower than the game requires, follow the instructions for making a "boot disk" given under the "Memory" section of this data card, or free up additional memory (see the Memory Management section of your DOS manual) before continuing.

WINDOWS® 95 DISCLAIMER

These products were developed before Windows 95 was released and have not been compatibility tested with the Windows 95 operating system. If you have Windows 95 installed on your machine and there are problems running the game, you may need to boot up under an MS-DOS operating system, or make a boot disk using an MS-DOS version between 5.0-6.22. Please contact SSI Technical Support if you require assistance after you have attempted to make a boot disk.

INSTALLING THE GAME

The CD that comes with the game is in a compressed format, and must be installed before you can begin play.

1. To install a game, place the CD in your drive. Be sure this drive is the active drive. (For example, to make drive D the active drive, type **D:** and then press Enter.
2. Type **INSTALL** and press Enter. You will be prompted to make a selection as to which of the five games you would like to install. A screen listing basic system information is displayed. If the install program detects any unmet system requirements, the problem areas will be highlighted in red. Clicking on any item (or typing the corresponding item number) displays additional information and/or help for that item.
3. Follow all on-screen prompts.

If you experience problems during installation, please refer to the "Troubleshooting" section. Additional information regarding memory, sound, video, and mouse setup can be found there as well.

STARTING A GAME

1. Boot your system normally with MS-DOS 5.0 - 6.22.
2. Be sure that the hard disk containing the game is the active drive.
3. Change the current directory to the game's directory. For example, to change to the default directory of Archon Ultra, type **CD\ARCHON** and press enter.
4. Type **ARCHON** and press enter to start the game.

For complete and specific "how to play" information, please refer to the manual on the CD. Critical information is included in the README.TXT file on the CD. Some changes were made too late to include in this data card. Please read the README.TXT file on the disk before playing ARCHON ULTRA

TO VIEW THE GAME RULE BOOKS AND NOTES

The ARCHON ULTRA CD includes the rule book in text format (**.txt**) as well as Portable Document File (**.pdf**) format. The text version can be read using any ASCII text reader/editor. The **.pdf** files are read by a program called Adobe Acrobat™. Adobe Acrobat can be installed when "Install Reference Manuals" is selected from the install menu.

After you have installed one or more manuals, the installer gives you the chance to install Adobe Acrobat™ to your hard drive. (At one point during the install, Adobe Acrobat™ will ask for permission to modify Config.sys and Autoexec.bat files, we strongly recommend that you tell it to "skip this step").

To view game documentation using Adobe Acrobat:

1. Move to the corresponding Adobe Acrobat directory (default is C:\acrodos).
2. Type **ACROBAT** and press Enter.
3. When the program begins, an OPEN FILE menu is displayed. To view the game rule book, select the ARCHON.PDF file .
4. Control icons for the Acrobat Reader program can be seen at the top of the screen. You can navigate through the documentation by using the arrow icons; to customize your view size for a page, use the magnifying glass icons.
5. You can print the entire document or custom sections by selecting PRINT from the FILE pull-down menu.

NOTE: For more detailed information on using Acrobat™ Reader, pull down the HELP menu and select "Acrobat Reader Help," or open the HELPREAD.PDF file.

TROUBLESHOOTING

This section provides you with several easy steps to solve some common problems.

MEMORY

ARCHON ULTRA: requires **563,200** bytes of **free base memory** and **1,400,000** bytes of **free XMS** memory to run.

Read the front page of this data card to find out how to check your free RAM. If you do not have enough free base memory, the game may tell you in the form of an error message or it may crash after startup or during play. Not having files and buffers set correctly for the program can result in corrupted data in saved games.

HOW TO MAKE A BOOT DISK

You can free more memory without changing your normal system configuration by creating a boot disk. A boot disk is the best way to temporarily change your system's configuration without possible side effects.

To make a pre-configured boot disk from the install program:

1. Place a blank disk in your A: drive. (Note: It must be your A: drive.)
2. Place your ARCHON ULTRA CD into your CD-ROM drive.
3. Change the active drive to the CD-ROM drive (usually D:) by typing **D:** and press Enter.
4. Type **INSTALL BOOT** and press Enter.
5. Follow the on-screen prompts until you see the message "Boot Disk Creation Successful."
6. Add the appropriate CD-ROM (and, if applicable, sound card) drivers to your boot disk. These are in the C:\CONFIG.SYS and C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT files or hardware manuals.

Note: Your sound card may require sound drivers to be loaded on the boot disk. Please consult your sound card's manual for the necessary drivers.

To Start a Game with This Boot Disk:

1. Place your boot disk in your A: drive.
2. Reboot your machine (**Ctrl-Alt-Del** on the keyboard, or hit the reset button).
3. Be sure that the hard disk containing the game is the active drive.
4. Change the directory to the game's directory. For example, to change the default directory type **CD\ARCHON** and press Enter.
5. Type **ARCHON** and press Enter to start the game.

This procedure works for most systems. Certain conditions, however, may prevent our programs from successfully creating a boot disk for your particular system setup (a nonstandard mouse driver or operating system other than MS-DOS, for example). If you experience problems using this procedure, try the manual boot disk procedure below. (Note: This procedure may not work with PS/1s or laptops.)

To Create a Boot Disk Manually:

1. Place a floppy disk in drive A: (note that it must be in drive A:).
2. From the C: prompt type **FORMAT A:/S** and press Enter.
3. Go to the A: drive by typing **A:** and press Enter.
4. Type **EDIT CONFIG.SYS** and press Enter. When the blue screen appears type in the lines just as they appear in the sample CONFIG.SYS which follows. Save this file (it already has a name), then exit.
5. Type **EDIT AUTOEXEC.BAT** and press Enter. When the blue screen appears type in the lines just as they appear in the sample AUTOEXEC.BAT which follows. Save this file (it already has a name), and exit.

(continues on next panel)

To Create a Boot Disk Manually (continued)

Sample files:

CONFIG.SYS

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DOS=HIGH,UMB
FILES=25
BUFFERS=25,0
```

AUTOEXEC.BAT

```
PATH=C:\;C:\DOS;C:\MOUSE
PROMPT $P$G
MOUSE
```

IMPORTANT: Be sure to include the necessary CD and sound card drivers in the appropriate files. Refer to your respective CD and sound card manuals, or original CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files, for the correct names and locations of the drivers required.

Additional drivers will be required for some sound cards. For example, the Pro Audio Spectrum 16 card requires a line resembling the following:

```
DEVICEHIGH=C:\PROAUDIO\MVSOUND.SYS D:3 Q:7 S:1,220,1,5M:0 J:1
```

MOUSE SETUP

If your mouse is not functioning, you should make sure the driver has been loaded. Windows and other programs of its type have built-in mouse drivers that do not function outside of their environment. Loading a mouse driver may be as simple as typing MOUSE (and pressing Enter) before starting the game. Since the command differs from mouse to mouse, consult your mouse user's guide.

If your mouse is acting erratically, it may be due to an old mouse driver for your mouse, or it may not be fully Microsoft or Logitech compatible. Check with the mouse manufacturer for an updated driver.

SOUND CARDS

ARCHON ULTRA will automatically detect your sound card. ARCHON ULTRA only works with genuine Creative Labs Sound Blaster products, and cards from other manufacturers which use the exact same hardware as the Sound Blaster series of products.

If your card uses software to emulate a Sound Blaster, it may not work with ARCHON ULTRA.

if you are not getting sound with ARCHON ULTRA, or the game freezes at startup, try the following command line switches:

ARCHON /S:BLASTER or **ARCHON /S:SILENT**

VIDEO CARDS

ARCHON ULTRA was tested on the following specific video cards: *ATI Ultrapro 2MB; ATI VGA Wonder Plus; Cirrus Logic CL VLB; Diamond Stealth Pro; Diamond Stealth VRAM; Diamond Stealth 24 VLB; Diamond Viper VLB; Expert TopVGA; Glock-VGA+; Orchid Prodesigner II; Spider VLB; STB Power View; Trident 9000; Western Digital 903.*

Note: Video cards with 512k memory are not recommended — you may experience minor graphics problems using these cards (although this should not affect gameplay).

CONTACTING SSI TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If you are having problems, please consult the "Troubleshooting" section of this data card before calling technical support. We have a staff of technical support specialists ready to help you with any problem you may encounter with the game. If your problem is due to your system configuration they will tell you of the game's requirements and suggest some possible solutions.

Because of the millions of different hardware and software combinations possible with today's PCs, **you may still have to consult with your computer dealer, hardware manufacturer, or software publisher in order to properly configure their product to run with our game.**

If at all possible, be near your computer when you call. The technical support specialist will need specific information about your machine and may need you to access or change some files while you are on the phone. If it is not possible to be near your computer, be sure to have the following information:

- A listing of all of your machine's hardware and its settings.
- The contents of your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files.
- All the information listed after the MEM command (read the "To Check Your Free RAM" section for pertinent information).
- The current configuration of your game.

Our technical support number is (408) 737-6850. Our hours are 11 AM to 5 PM, Pacific time, Monday through Friday, holidays excluded. **ABSOLUTELY NO GAME PLAYING HINTS WILL BE GIVEN THROUGH THIS NUMBER.**

If you cannot get through during our normal business hours, please fax our Technical Support Dept. at (408) 737-6814. Please include a printout of your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files along with a complete description of the problem.

SSI ONLINE

Strategic Simulations, Inc. is currently represented on three online networks: CompuServe, GENie, and America Online. We also maintain a home site on the World Wide Web. You can reach us on these networks as stated below.

World Wide Web

<http://www.ssionline.com>

America Online

E-Mail: Stratsim (stratsim@aol.com)

SSI Files/Discussion are at Keyword: SSI

CompuServe

E-Mail: 76711,250 (76711.250@compuserve.com)

SSI Files/Discussion are at GOTO GAMAPUB

GENie

E-Mail: SSI.TECH (ssi.tech@genie.geis.com)

SSI Files/Discussion are in the Game Publishers Forum (Type SCORPIA)

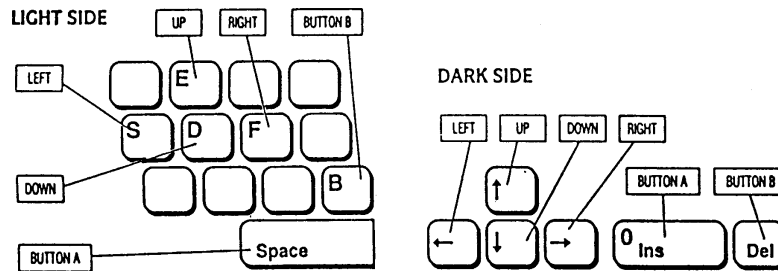
SSI BBS

We have a BBS containing patch files to update most of our products to the most current version, as well as product demos and new product announcements. If you have a 9600, 14.4K, 21.6K, or 28.8K baud modem, call (408) 739-6137. If you have a 1200, 2400, 9600, 14.4K, 21.6K, or 28.8K baud modem, call (408) 739-6623. Your communications software needs to be set to N,8,1 and your modem must be 100% Hayes compatible. Demos are not available to users with modem speeds under 9600 due to file size and download time.

Canadian customers using 2400—14.4K modems can call our Canadian Affiliate board, Instant Access, at (403) 473-9131, (403) 473-2025, or (403) 472-0178 for the latest updates/demos.

Additional Material for ARCHON ULTRA

The Default Keyboard Configuration for ARCHON ULTRA:



DELAYS

On certain machines, the screen may go black for several seconds, or the mouse cursor may temporarily disappear and the screen remains unchanged. These delays are due to the large amount of data being accessed. This is especially noticeable when playing modem or link games. Machines with slow drives or slow microprocessors will also experience delays. Please wait for at least three seconds before assuming that a problem exists.

PLAYING ARCHON ULTRA

Note: You can save or load your game by using the menu bar at the top of the screen. Only one game can be saved at a time. Also note that you cannot save a modem game.

Modem Play For ARCHON ULTRA

To play a game by modem, choose the modem option in the pull down Game Menu. Note that this option is available only while the Main Menu is displayed (i.e., before a game has started or immediately after you select New Game). For additional information on modem use please consult the README.TXT file.



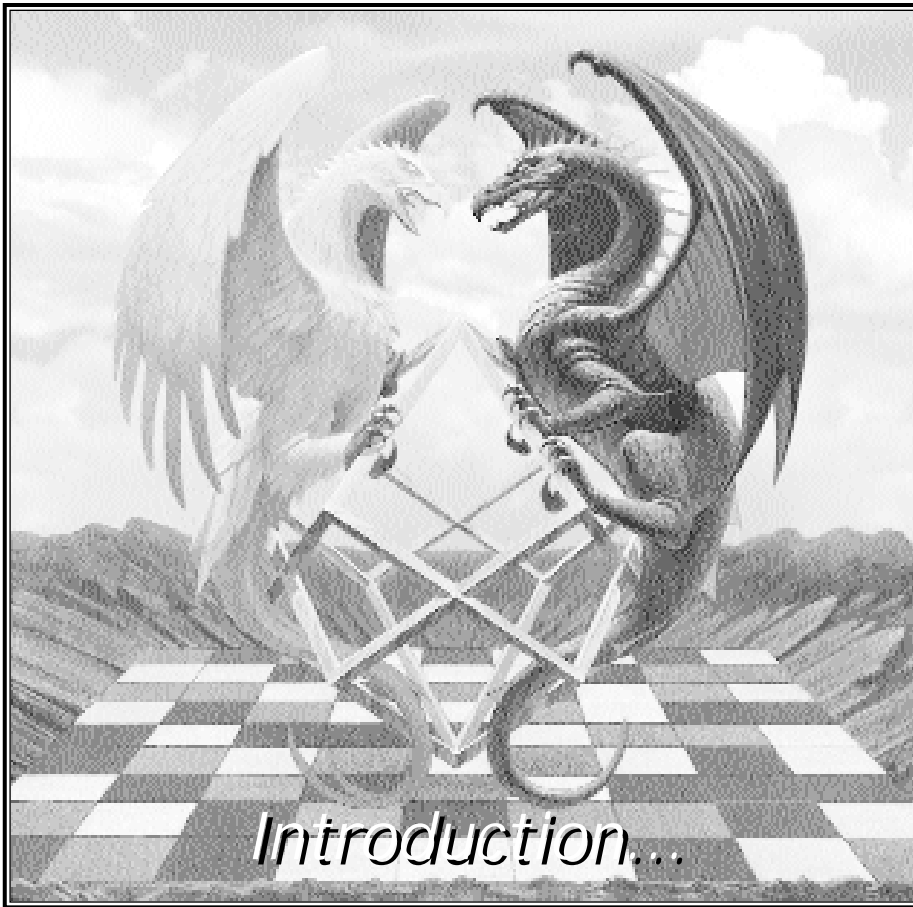
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®

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Every century, the unceasing cold war between the primal forces of Light and Darkness heats up. The occasion is a contest, a battle game, formal but dangerous, combining strategy and tactics, magic and mayhem: a mythic hybrid of gladiatorial combat, Olympic games, and Super Bowl. At stake are power, prestige, influence, and bragging rights for a hundred years. As the Millennium approaches, a particularly significant game looms. . . .

There's a board. There are pieces with varying powers, squares to move into and an opponent to conquer. But the squares keep changing. And once you decide where to attack, the board explodes into a battlefield. Your pieces include unicorns, golems, and a wizard, and they need all their strange powers to fight the banshees, goblins, and sorceress they face. They cast spells and missiles; they pummel, pierce, and explode in flames; they move each other around, take on each other's shapes, and shriek at each other. If you square off on a spot that stays favorable, your piece will be hard to kill. If you're smart, fast, dexterous, and far-sighted, you may win.

PRELIMINARIES

Game Contents

Your game box should contain the following:

◆ Disks ◆ Rule Book ◆ Data Card

This rule book explains the rules, procedures, controls, and options in ARCHON ULTRA and offers advice on playing the game *better*. The disks contain the game program and associated files. The data card explains how to install and start the game and how to manage modem play.

Copy Protection

There is no physical copy protection on your disks; make backup copies if you wish, and put the originals away for safekeeping. See your data card for an explanation of our copy protection procedures.

Late-Breaking News

Printing schedules require the manual to be written before the game is finished. For last-minute updates, changes, or corrections to the information contained herein, read your data card, and look for a README file in your game directory.

Modes of Play

You can use the keyboard, a mouse, or a joystick (our own preference) to play ARCHON ULTRA against either the computer or another person, either "in person" — sharing the keyboard or using any combination of keyboard, mouse, and joystick(s) — or at a distance, via modem connection. For details on modem play, see your data card.

The Controls Paradigm

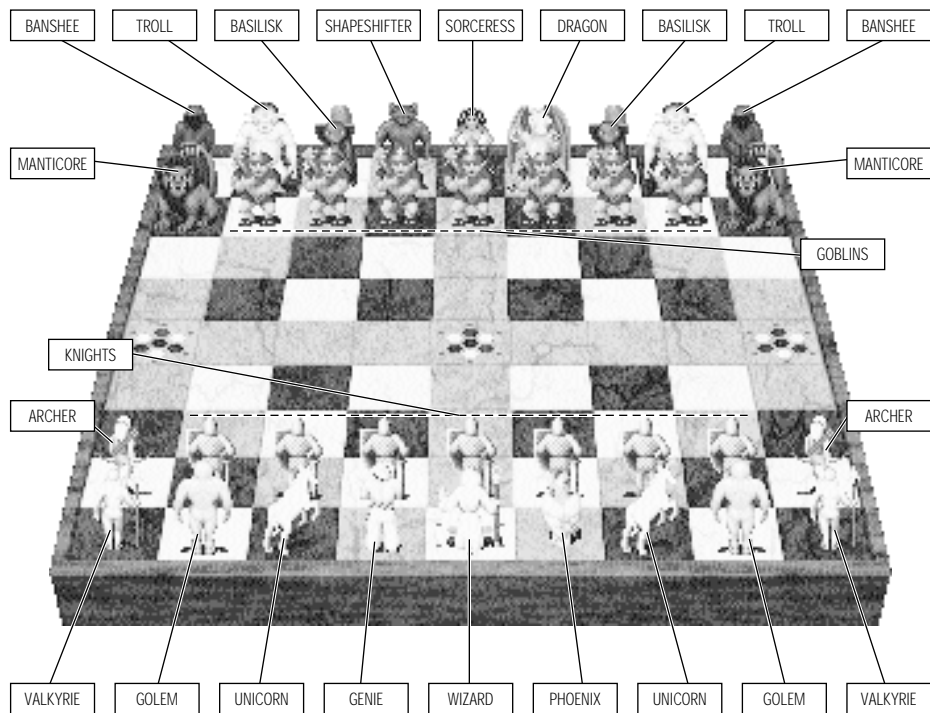
For the sake of simplicity, in the following pages we use the joystick paradigm to explain game mechanics. If you prefer a different input device, please "translate" appropriately.

The Original Archon

ARCHON ULTRA is not a sequel to ARCHON but a substantial revision. If you are a fan of the original, you should recognize the basic game framework: the board and pieces, the goals of play, the rules and many of the mechanics. Much is new, however, especially on the battlefield.

Even on the board, some changes are obvious: a new, 3D perspective; more detailed and colorful graphics; far more extensive animation; enhanced sound and music. Some are subtle: the luminosity cycle has been modified and lengthened slightly, and power points are more important than ever. You may have to modify your favorite strategies.

Combat is very different, indeed. Battlefields vary depending on the luminance and location of the contested squares. The old, cycling barriers are gone. In their place are a variety of terrain features, including boulders, destructible trees, swamp, lava flows, and even battlefield versions of the power points. All the pieces have a multiplicity of powers, and many of their traditional abilities have been modified or replaced. Unicorns now gallop and jump; the dragon and the phoenix now fly over the heads of groundlings. Attacks are more sophisticated and varied, proper tactics more of a challenge, and battles more intricate, more spectacular, and simply more fun.



◆ THE BOARD ◆

THE GAME IN BRIEF

The Game

ARCHON ULTRA depicts the eternal struggle between Light and Darkness as a contest of action and strategy between opposing forces wrought from myth and legend. The Light Side and the Dark Side are equal in number, balanced in strength, but not identical. Their aim, however, is the same: conquest of the five *power points* or the elimination of the opposite side.

Pieces

You begin with eighteen pieces representing eight different sorts of fantastic creatures: knights, golems, unicorns, and the like. Each type is unique: none are identical to any of the pieces on the other side.

The Two Screens

ARCHON ULTRA is played on two screens. On one — the board — you and your opponent take turns maneuvering your pieces into favorable positions. When you place a piece on a square already occupied by one of your opponent's pieces, the game shifts temporarily to the second display, the battlefield.

Hostilities

In old-fashioned and — admit it — somewhat dull board games (chess, backgammon, and their ilk), the “defending” piece gets removed quietly from the board, and the “attacker” wins the “battle” — and the square — without a blow being struck.

In ARCHON ULTRA, we do not allow such docility, such rank defeatism on the part of the defender. No! If you want that square, you have to fight for it! When you try to occupy a square held by the enemy, the disputed square becomes a screen-sized battlefield . . . and then, in the words of a certain orange-skinned monster of comic-book fame, “*It's clobberin' time!!!*”

MENUS, OPTIONS, AND CONTROLS

The Main Menu

Use the four cursor (arrow) keys to move the highlight around the menu, and press **Enter** or **Insert** to make your choices. When you are satisfied with the results and ready to begin the game, choose the **START** that corresponds to the side you want to go first.

If, after starting the game, you realize the settings are not to your liking, use the pull-down menus to select **NEW GAME** and start over. (See “Pull-Down Menu Options” on page 6.)

Players

If you are playing against the computer, be sure to select **Computer** on the side that you want it (not you) to play.

Cyborg allows you or another person to play with computer assistance. You direct strategy by moving your pieces on the board, while the computer fights your

battles for you. You can choose to override the computer and fight any particular battle by pushing **Button A** or the equivalent after the battlefield appears and before the action gets underway. In this way you can learn the pieces one at a time without having your overall game suffer. (For information on buttons and their equivalents see the next section, “Controls”).

Controls

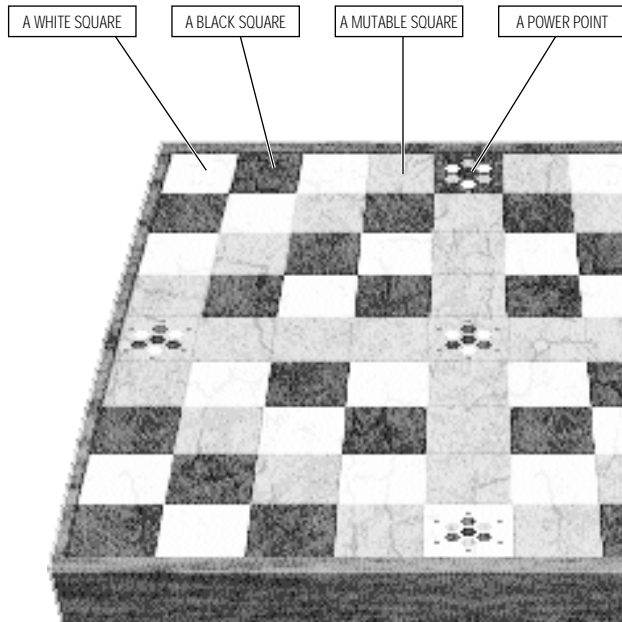
We recommend using a joystick, but you can play ARCHON ULTRA with a mouse or the keyboard, instead.

Joystick

If you have a joystick, either you or another player can use it to play Dark or Light. If you have a pair of joysticks and either a game card with two joystick ports or a specialized Y-cable that, in effect, splits a single port into two, you and your opponent can both use joysticks. (This is the best setup for a two-player game.)

In general, pushing the stick in any direction moves the cursor, highlight, or your piece in the analogous direction. Pressing **Button A** makes a choice (of piece, square, or option) or initiates an attack. **Button B** gets you into the pull-down menus or, on the battlefield, activates your piece's second attack, defense, or special power.

Warning: Some joysticks require special procedures before the computer will read them properly. If your joystick misbehaves, check the instructions that came with it.



◆ INITIAL BOARD LUMINOSITY ◆

THE BOARD

The Luminosity Cycle

ARCHON ULTRA'S "chessboard" *changes*. While some squares are always white or always black, others — the *mutable* squares — vary in brightness throughout the game in a simple pattern: black → dark → barely dark → neutral → barely light → light → white . . . and reverse. Back and forth, throughout the game, the cycle continues, the luminance shifting after every other turn.

Your fortunes in the game tend to ebb and flow with the luminosity cycle. This is because pieces of the Light Side are harder to defeat on light squares than on dark ones. Conversely, Dark Side pieces are stronger on dark squares and weakest on white ones. A temporarily white mutable square has the same effect on Light pieces in battle as a "permanent" white square; a totally dark mutable square gives Dark pieces the same benefit as a square that is always black.

Power Points

The five power points, indicated on the screen by flashing red symbols, are of vital importance. Pieces on power points heal faster than usual and are protected from the effects of magic spells. The more power points under your control, the stronger *all* of your pieces (not just those on the power points themselves) are in combat. If your pieces occupy all five power points, you win the game.

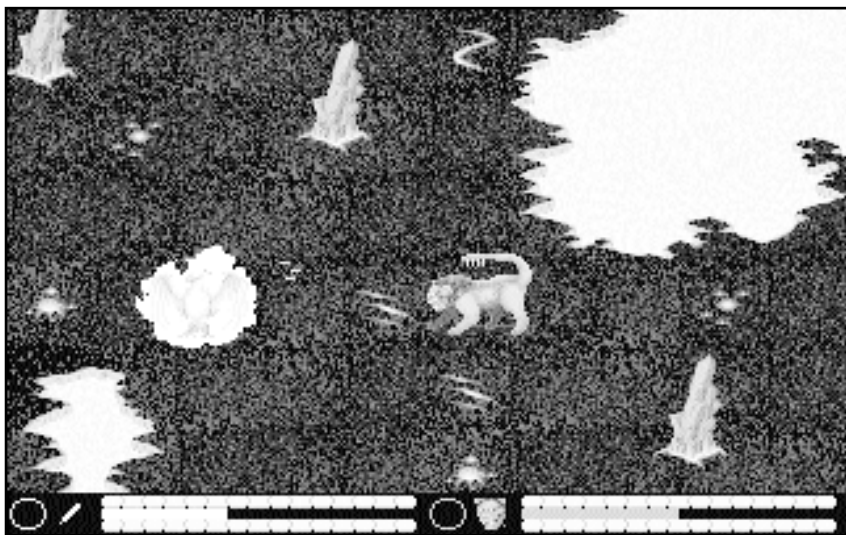
Movement

If the cursor (a large, flashing square) is on your side, it's your turn. Using the mouse, joystick, or the appropriate keys, move the cursor from its starting position at your mage's home square to the base of the piece you want. Once you push the button to confirm your choice, move the altered cursor to the piece's intended destination. (If a piece has nowhere to go, the computer will not allow you to "pick it up.") Push the button again, and the obedient creature will walk, slither, fly or teleport to its new position. If you pick up a piece by mistake or change your mind, put the cursor back underneath the piece and press the button again. You can then freely select another piece. (If you recall the strict "touch-move" rule of the original, you may find this to be a kinder, gentler ARCHON — on the board, at least.)

Movement comes in three flavors: *ground*, *fly*, and *teleport*. *Ground* movers cannot move through occupied squares; *fliers* are restricted only in where they land. *Fliers* can also move diagonally; *ground* pieces cannot. Only the wizard and the sorceress can *teleport*, but for practical purposes you can think of them as *fliers* in disguise.

On any turn, you can move a piece as far as its range allows in any direction or combination of directions. It can stop on any square not already occupied by one of your own pieces.

A piece landing on a square occupied by a member of the opposition initiates a battle between the two pieces for control of the square.



◆ THE BATTLEFIELD (ON A DARK SQUARE) ◆

THE BATTLEFIELD

Combat

Action on the battlefield is immediate and simultaneous; there is no taking turns. Joysticks direct movement of the pieces. Pressing **Button A** initiates an attack — swinging a sword, firing an arrow, casting a fireball — in the direction the joystick is pointed. (If you choose the **Simple** firing option, you do not need to push the joystick; simply pressing a button initiates an action in the direction you are facing.) Depending on your piece, **Button B**, in the same manner, may launch a different attack, activate a

temporary defense, or cause the piece to perform a special move or maneuver, like jumping or teleporting. (Check your piece's powers in the section headed "The Opposing Forces" on page 14.)

You can attack or move in any of eight directions: up, down, left, right, and the four diagonals. (Strictly speaking, some defenses have no real diagonal counterparts, but they are still effective against diagonal attacks.) *Important:* with only a few exceptions, your piece cannot move while a button is pressed, but if you fire while already moving, the attack will go in the direction you were moving. (With **Simple** fire, this is the only practical way to get off a diagonal shot.)

Attacks are of three main types.

- ◆ Knights and goblins wield hand weapons (swords and clubs); they must be very near an opponent to inflict damage.
- ◆ Some pieces, such as the banshee and phoenix, can inflict damage in a circular area around themselves; usually, the longer the opposing piece is within the affected area, the greater the damage it sustains.
- ◆ All other pieces "throw" missiles of some sort and can, consequently, do damage from a considerable distance. Some missiles travel in a straight line; some can "home in" on their targets, at least to some degree; some change course in response to pressure on the joystick. Some missiles increase in strength or number the longer you hold the fire button down; most have some limits to their range, and some do less damage as they approach those limits. See "The Opposing Forces" on page 14 for details.

The Attack Interval

While combat is fast and furious, you can't just fire away as fast as your finger twitches. It takes a moment to raise a sword into position to strike, longer to conjure even a small thunderbolt, and at least a second to rip a boulder out of the ground and lift it high enough to throw. The exact "reload" time depends on the piece and the power involved. In most cases, if your piece is manifesting a power that can vary in duration or intensity, the longer you hold the button down, the longer it will be before the power is available again.

Pushing the button before your piece is ready to strike will accomplish nothing — except to keep your piece from moving. At the exact instant you can launch another attack, the computer rings a bell — a high note for the Light Side, a lower one for the Dark Side — to let you know.

Icons at the bottom of the screen also inform you of available options; if an icon is visible, your piece can perform the corresponding action. Some pieces even change shape to indicate their readiness.

Obstacles and Terrain

The terrain of a battlefield depends on the square it represents and, especially, the current luminance of the board square. Light battlefields feature grass, trees, and clear water. Black or nearly black squares result in dark battlefields of volcanic rock, weird fungus, and glowing lava. Intermediate squares produce gray rock and green swamp. Despite differences in luminance, all five power points have similar magical analogs on the battlefield.

Terrain

Regardless of the luminance of the square, the ground is harmless. Water slows a piece wading through it, and the green swamp water of neutral squares is also dangerous. Molten lava is, of course, very nasty, indeed.

Fliers, floaters, and hurtling missiles are unaffected by the terrain beneath them.

Obstacles

Obstacles prevent the passage of missiles and pieces — except for the dragon and the phoenix, which can fly above them.

There are two classes of obstacles. A monolith or rock formation is impervious to all attacks. Trees and giant mushrooms, on the other hand, can be damaged and destroyed by fire, lightning, and various forms of magical energy. Damaged trees and mushrooms are vulnerable to more weapons and are less effective barriers than they were before being harmed.

Power Points

On the battlefield, power points are active intermittently. When active, they heal — at least partially — the wounds of pieces on or above them.

Life, Death, and Wounds

The *lifelines* at the bottom of the battlefield screen indicate the current lifespan (health/strength) of the two battling pieces. When a piece is wounded, its matching lifeline is reduced in proportion to the severity of the wound. When its lifeline is gone, the piece is “dead” and combat is over.

A victorious piece returns to the board in control of the disputed square. However, a seriously wounded piece is easier to defeat the next time it is forced to fight. Even the strongest piece can be worn down by waves of attackers.

On the board, wounded pieces heal: slowly, by the simple passage of time; more quickly, by resting on a power point; or instantly and completely, by a **Heal** spell.

◆ MAGIC SPELLS ◆

Magic is arguably the most significant strategic element in ARCHON ULTRA. Only the two mages — the wizard and the sorceress — can cast spells, and each mage can cast each spell only once.

A spell may be cast instead of a regular move on the board. With the cursor beneath your mage, push **Button A**. Instead of moving the cursor, however, just push the button *again*, and you will get a new message: **Select a spell**.

Push the joystick up or down to survey the spells still available, and push **Button A** when you find the one you want. If further actions on your part are required, additional messages will direct you appropriately.

Remember that a mage cannot conjure the same spell more than once, and a spell cannot be cast against power points or pieces on them. Details are given below.

◆ *Teleport*

Effect This spell moves — teleports — any one of your pieces *any distance* from one square on the board to another.

Actions Required After selecting the spell, move the cursor to the piece you want to teleport, push **Button A**, and then move the cursor to the destination square and select that square.

Restrictions You cannot move an enemy piece. You cannot move onto a square already occupied by one of your own pieces (as usual). You cannot teleport *onto* or *off* a power point. You cannot teleport an *imprisoned* piece. (See “Imprison” below.)

Additional Note Do not confuse this spell with either a mage’s normal three-square movement or its special battlefield ability. Those are examples of minor magic, on the same order as unleashing thunderbolts, and are not bound by the restriction of the seven major board spells.

◆ *Heal*

Effect This spell instantly heals any piece of all wounds it has sustained on the battlefield.

Actions Required After selecting the spell, move the cursor to the wounded piece, and push **Button A**.

Restrictions You cannot heal a piece resting on a power point. Be careful: it is possible to waste the spell by “healing” an already healthy piece.

◆ *Shift Time*

Effect Two effects are possible. Most often, the spell reverses the flow of time: i.e., the direction of the luminosity cycle of the mutable squares. Squares that had been growing gradually darker would now grow lighter — until the cycle peaked. However, if the spell is cast when the luminosity cycle is at either peak, **Shift Time** will cause the cycle to shift abruptly to the opposite extreme (from black to white, or vice versa).

Actions Required None after selecting the spell.

Restrictions None.

◆ *Exchange*

Effect This spell causes any two pieces on the board to trade places.

Actions Required Move the cursor to either one of the pieces you wish to transpose, and push **Button A**. Then do the same to the other piece.

Restrictions Neither piece can occupy a power point; neither can be imprisoned.

◆ *Summon Elemental*

Effect This spell allows you to attack any enemy piece with a new, temporary piece representing one of four elementals: animated spirits of the ancient elements of earth, air, fire, and water. Combat is conducted on the battlefield as usual, except that the elemental vanishes after the battle, win or lose.

Actions Required Once the spell is selected and the elemental appears, move it to the piece you wish to attack, and press **Button A**. On the battlefield, direct the elemental just as you would any other piece. (For more information, see "The Elementals" on page 32.)

Restrictions You cannot send an elemental to attack a piece on a power point. You cannot direct the elemental to a vacant square or to one occupied by one of your own pieces. You cannot choose which elemental will respond to your summons.

Cease Conjuring

This is not a spell; it is a way to avoid casting a spell if you miscalculate. If you change your mind while selecting a spell, or if the spell you want is unavailable or canceled, you may push **Button A** when **Cease conjuring** is displayed. This will allow you to start your turn over.

◆ *Revive*

Effect This spell restores to the game, fully healed, a piece previously lost ("killed") in combat.

Actions Required The procedure is similar to the *Teleport* spell or a normal move, except that the revived piece is selected from a special window, and its destination must be a vacant square next to the mage.

Restrictions You cannot "revive" a piece unless it is dead. One of the (initially five) squares adjoining your mage must be vacant, and you must put the revived piece on one of those vacant squares.

◆ *Imprison*

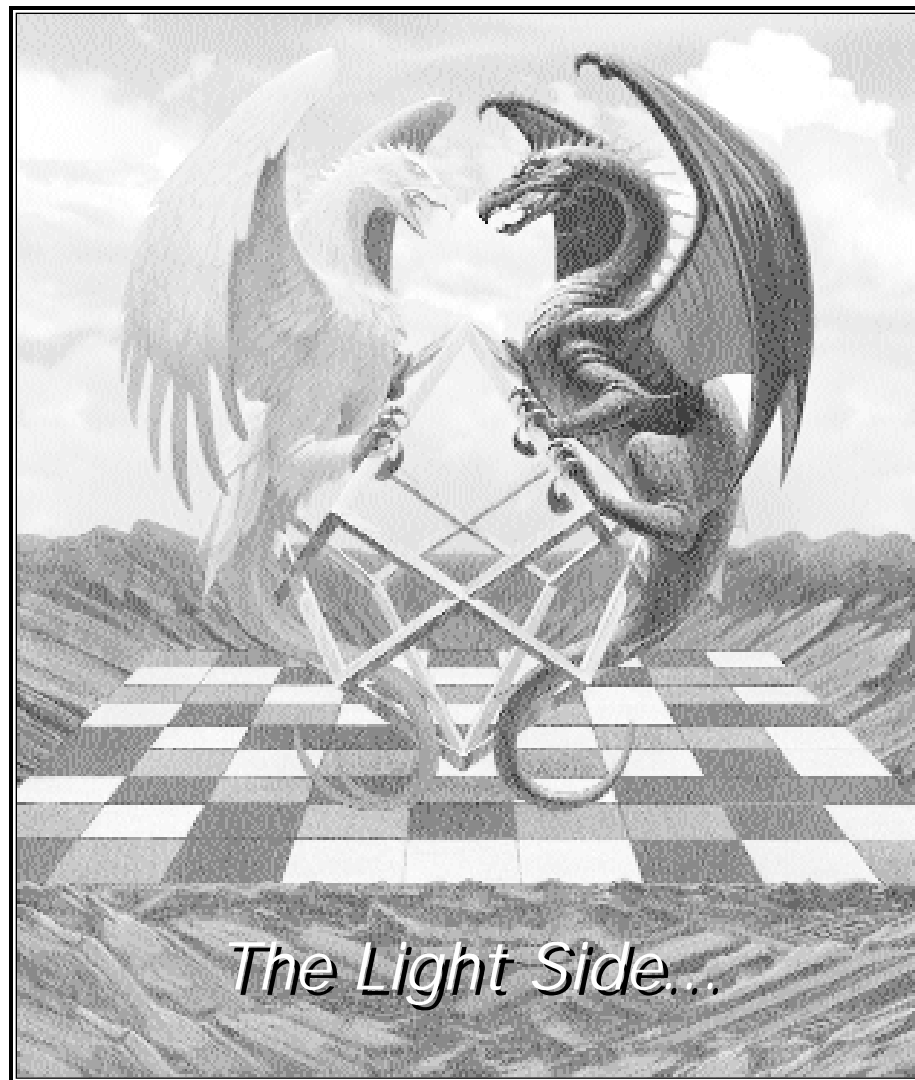
Effect This spell keeps a piece on the board from leaving its square. The piece can fight its attackers on the battlefield, but it cannot be moved off its square. Important: *an imprisoned mage cannot cast spells!* Imprisonment is temporary and based on the luminosity cycle: a Dark Side piece remains imprisoned until the mutable squares turn black; a Light Side piece is freed when mutable squares turn white.

Actions Required Once the spell is selected, move the cursor to the intended victim, and push **Button A**.

Restrictions You cannot imprison a piece on a power point. You cannot imprison any piece at a time when the luminosity cycle would automatically free it.

◆ **THE OPPOSING FORCES** ◆

In the entries that follow, a *variable missile* is any medium- or long-range attack whose size, intensity, or number is affected by the length of time you hold down the appropriate firing button. A *directable missile* is any similar attack whose direction you can alter after the moment of firing. A piece's *lifespan* is the amount of damage — loosely, the number of wounds — the piece can sustain before dying.



Wizard



Description:

An ancient man of vast supernatural power, the leader of the Light Side.

No. in the Game: 1

Board Move: Teleport 3

Battle Move: Ground

Button A: Sun sphere

Attack Type: Variable missile

Button B: Teleportation

Power Type: Special movement

Lifespan: Average

The sun sphere grows in size and power as long as you hold down **Button A**. Once you release the button, the missile continues for only a short distance before dissipating.

The wizard can change position abruptly — and radically — by teleporting. While holding down **Button B**, push the joystick in the general direction you want the mage to go. (Use this procedure even if you are using **Simple** firing.) The longer you hold the button down before pushing the joystick, the farther the wizard teleports. Note that the wizard is vulnerable to enemy attack during the beginning and ending of the process.

Since the wizard is most commonly used on the board to cast one of the seven spells, he rarely ventures from the safety of his home power point. (See "Magic Spells" on page 12.) Avoid using him in combat unless attacked. In a fight, stay in the open, and do not get too close to an opponent: the sun sphere needs room to grow and is easily thwarted by obstacles.

Genie



Description:

A magical being from the astral plane, half man and half cloud.

No. in the Game: 1

Board Move: Fly 4

Battle Move: Float

Button A: Bolide

Attack Type: Directable missile

Button B: Transformation

Power Type: Special movement

Lifespan: Long

The genie's bolide is slow but powerful, limited in range, but very maneuverable. With **Button A** down, use the joystick to steer the bolide to its target.

Button B shrinks and speeds the genie. With the button down, the joystick moves the shrunken form around the battlefield. The genie remains small as long as you keep the button down, but you must release it to fire the bolide.

Use the speed of the miniature form not only to escape enemy attacks but also to get close enough to the genie's opponent to blast it with a bolide. Be bold; only the best of the Dark Side's pieces stand a chance against the genie.

Phoenix



Description:
A flaming bird of great magical power.

No. in the Game: 1

Board Move: Fly 5

Battle Move: Fly

Button A: Giant fireball

Attack Type: Area effect

Button B: Flaming feather

Attack Type: Independent,
homing missile

Lifespan: Long

The phoenix cannot stop in mid-air; while flying over the battlefield, if you are not pushing the joystick, the phoenix glides forward at reduced speed.

Button A plunges the phoenix to earth, where it explodes in a seething mass of fire. The fireball not only scorches foes caught in its flames but also protects the phoenix from all possible harm.

Once loosed by **Button B**, a feather drifts slowly toward the opposing piece and bursts into flame when it strikes. The damage done is small, but the feather is almost impossible to evade. Indeed, it is so maneuverable, and so persistent, that the initial firing direction is almost irrelevant.

Release feathers as often as possible. Against goblins, you can keep your distance and singe them to death with feathers. Against almost everyone else, stay close — the closer, the better. (They need room for their missiles to reach your altitude; don't let them have it.) Don't hesitate to take advantage of obstacles to block their shots. Trap foes in corners or against barriers. Use the fireball *defensively* when necessary to keep from being hit. Never sit still when vulnerable.

The phoenix is a match for anything on the Dark Side. It is devastating against the banshee. A battle with the shapeshifter is a long, unprofitable war of attrition; avoid initiating such a fight unless the square is white and no other Light piece is within striking distance. Because it negates the phoenix's advantage of altitude, the dragon is a challenging opponent, but the phoenix's true nemesis is the fire elemental, which *cannot be harmed by fire!* It is possible to evade and outlast an elemental, but it's not easy!

Unicorn



Description:
A small, white horse with a golden, spiral horn.

No. in the Game: 2

Board Move: Ground 4

Battle Move: Ground (variable)

Button A: Energy bolts

Attack Type: Variable missiles

Button B: Jump

Power Type: Special movement

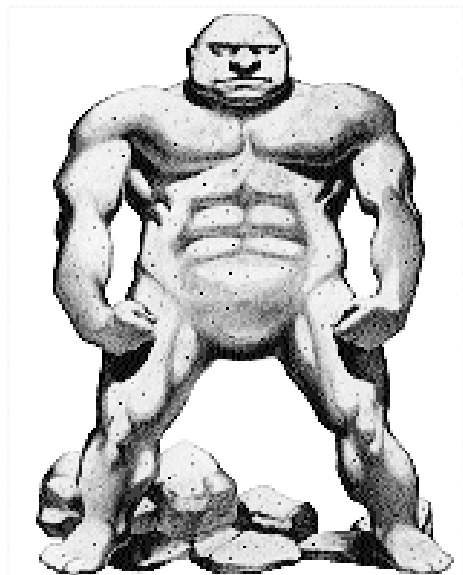
Lifespan: Average

The longer you hold down **Button A**, the more energy bolts you fire. The more blasts, the more potential damage — but the longer you must wait to fire again.

The unicorn's movement is unusual in several respects. If it keeps moving in a single direction, it gradually picks up speed. It can also jump (**Button B**) over hindering or dangerous terrain, like swamp or lava. The faster it gallops, the farther it can jump. Note that once firing or jumping is finished, the unicorn will resume its movement *even if a button is still pressed*.

Speed and distance are the unicorn's prime weapons. Use galloping and jumping to stay away from opponents, and exploit the speed of the energy bolts, which is matched on the Dark Side only by the basilisk's eyebeams. Never get closer than is necessary to hit the target. Try to use lines of obstacles as alleys for fire.

Golem



Description:
An artificial being, shaped of earth and stone, and animated by magic.

No. in the Game: 2

Board Move: Ground 3

Battle Move: Ground

Button A: Crystalline rock

Attack Type: Explosive missile

Button B: Invulnerability

Power Type: Defense

Lifespan: Long

The golem's crystal missile keeps moving only as long as **Button A** is held down. If the button is released before the rock hits the target, the crystal shatters explosively, scattering dagger-like shards over a wide area. Unfortunately, an opposing piece is not likely to be hit by more than one or two shards, and the damage done by each fragment is much less than that done by the intact crystal.

The magical golem also boasts the ultimate defense. To transform it into an invulnerable (if immobile) pillar of granite, hold down **Button B**. Generally speaking, this secure state lasts until you release the button, but there is also an overriding time limit.

The advantages of this slow-moving creature are a long life and a deadly attack. (That big crystal hurts!) Since its missile travels slowly, the golem must get close to the enemy. Be aggressive!

The golem is a reasonable match for most pieces on the Dark Side, but avoid the basilisk's eyebeams, and be wary of the lowly goblin. It can duck below the crystal, and it can attack far more often than the golem can turn invulnerable. When golem does meet goblin, try to keep water or lava between the two pieces.

Valkyrie



Description:
Beauteous blonde war-maiden from the legions of Valhalla.

No. in the Game: 2

Board Move: Fly 3

Battle Move: Float

Button A: Magic spear

Attack Type: Directable missile

Button B: Lightning

Attack Type: Multiple, defensive (stationary) missiles

Lifespan: Average

Each of these ferocious females is endowed with three great magical gifts: the ability to stride the air as if it were solid ground; an enchanted spear that, when thrown, obeys her will and then reappears in her hand when needed; and the power to call down lightning from the heavens.

The spear is not quite as maneuverable as the genie's bolide, but you control it in much the same way: hold **Button A** down and steer with the joystick. (The valkyrie cannot move, of course, while you are directing the spear.) Like the bolide, the spear vanishes when you release the button.

Button B unleashes a trio of lightning strikes in an arc around the valkyrie in the direction you are aiming.

The valkyrie is most comfortable at a moderate distance from her opponent: close, but not too close. When battling ground-pounders, keep the valkyrie over or near dangerous terrain. Use lightning strikes to keep trolls, banshees, manticores, and goblins from getting close enough to use their short-range weapons. (Never let anyone inside that arc!) Lightning is not only one of the few weapons effective against the banshee's cursed skulls but is also one of the best ways to attack the dragon. Unless the battle is on a favorable square, avoid tangling with the fast missiles of the sorceress and the basilisk.

Archer



Description:
A fearless half-elf Amazon of unparalleled skill in archery.

No. in the Game: 2
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Arrow
Attack Type: Missile
Button B: Magic arrow
Attack Type: Homing missile
Lifespan: Short

The archer is the simplest piece to use. Both kinds of arrows are fired in the same way; the only difference is the button used. Magic arrows do slightly more damage than the standard variety and, to some extent, "home in" on their targets; regular arrows don't.

Tactics are simple: the archer must get close enough to ensure a hit with her rather slow-moving arrows without getting close enough for infighters like the banshee or the goblin to employ their short-range weaponry. Use hindering terrain to keep goblins, trolls, and the banshee's skulls at bay. If the archer must battle the dragon or the sorceress, use obstacles to block incoming missiles, and try to remain inside the effective range of dragonfire.

Knight



Description:
A medieval man-at-arms, armed and armored against fearsome foes.

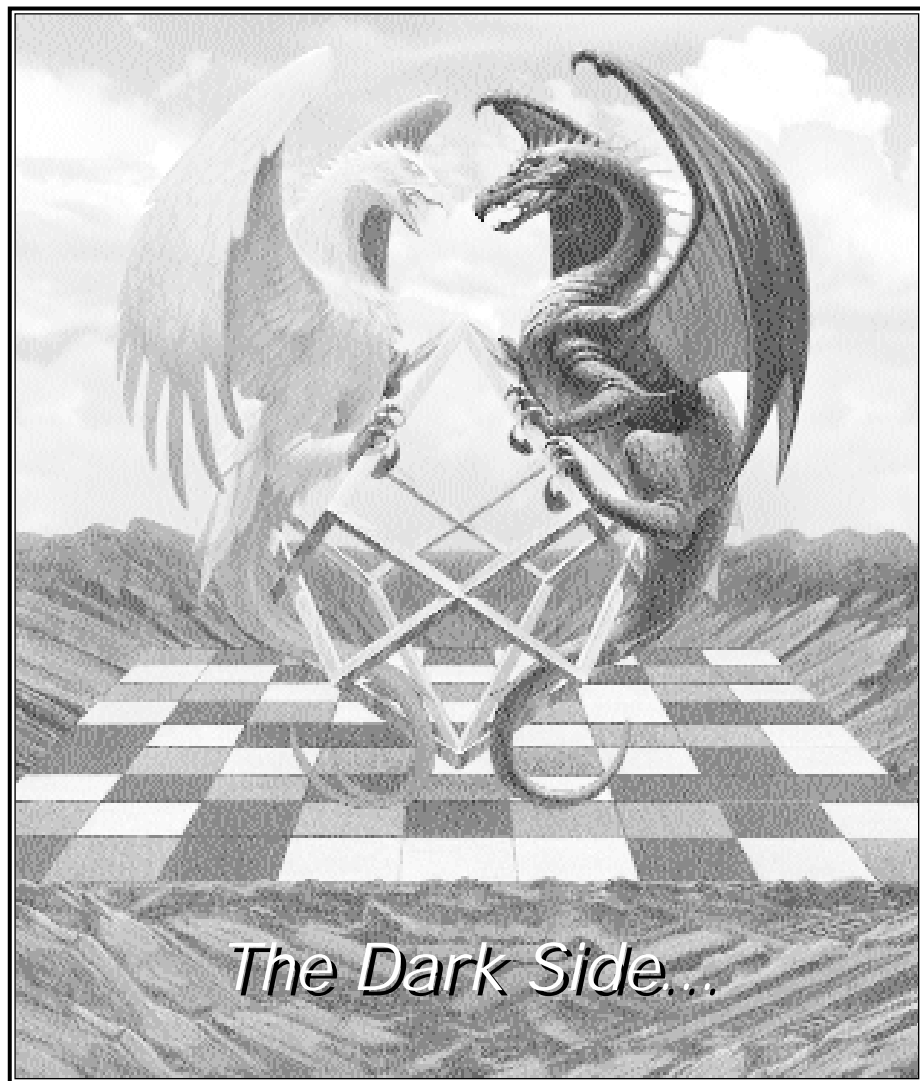
No. in the Game: 7
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Sword
Attack Type: Hand weapon
Button B: Shield
Power Type: Defense
Lifespan: Short

Sword strikes are among the most rapid attacks, but they do freeze the knight in position momentarily.

Use the shield to block enemy attacks. Press **Button B** to raise the shield, and do not release the button before the club or missile hits (or misses). The shield's protection is limited to the front and shield side; it cannot affect attacks from the back or the sword-hand side, and even an off-center, grazing shot could get past the edge of the shield. The shield is ineffective against gas, sonic attacks, and the shock of the troll's stomp.

Although they cannot withstand more than one blow from many of their enemies, knights need not be mere cannon (or dragon) fodder. Provided they are swift and clever, their speed of attack gives them a chance to survive and triumph. Knights can be surprisingly effective against the dragon, because they can attack from a position (almost directly underneath) at which the dragon cannot strike back. One wrong move, on the other hand, and they're flame-broiled.

Tactics for the knight are simple: get in close and stay there! Move quickly but erratically. Stand still only to use your shield. Attack constantly; only the goblin can keep pace, and a human player may panic. Exchange blows with a goblin only if you have a distinct luminosity advantage. Use feints against a human-controlled goblin; try to get the goblin to waste its crouch and then clobber it when it pops back up. The banshee is lethal! Never attack a banshee unless one is stuck on a white square, and think twice about it even then.



Sorceress



Description:

Eternally young and ever beautiful, the Dark counterpart to Light's wizard.

No. in the Game: 1

Board Move: Teleport 3

Battle Move: Ground

Button A: Thunderbolt

Attack Type: Variable,
directable missile

Button B: Teleportation

Power Type: Special movement

Lifespan: Average

The thunderbolt does not actually travel; instead, it quickly extends outward from the sorceress, growing in length and strength as long as you hold down **Button A**, until it reaches its maximum size. While growing, it can be directed — shifted sideways — at least slightly.

Teleportation works the same as it does for the wizard. (See "Wizard" on page 15.)

Safest on the black power point, the sorceress is, like the wizard, most often used on the board to cast the seven spells. (See "Magic Spells" on page 12.) Avoid risking her in combat unless she is attacked.

On the battlefield, tactics are similar to the wizard's. Her thunderbolts, being narrower, are less prone to being stopped by barriers, but they do need room to develop. Keep her at a safe distance; teleport away from dangerous attacks or foes that get too close.

Dragon



Description:
A monstrous, serpentine reptile, flying and fire-breathing.

No. in the Game: 1
Board Move: Fly 4
Battle Move: Fly (variable)
Button A: Fire
Attack Type: Variable missile
Button B: Gas cloud
Attack Type: Missile
Lifespan: Long

Like the phoenix, the flying dragon glides forward without joystick input; pushing the joystick moves it faster. Like the unicorn, the dragon moves faster the longer it flies (not glides) in a specific direction.

Holding down **Button A** increases the size and potency of the dragon's fiery gout.

The dragon is without peer in the battlefield. One gout of its flaming breath will kill many creatures, and a second blast is almost always fatal. Highly mobile, hard to hit, and harder to slay, it is second in value only to the sorceress.

No piece is more feared; no other piece is as effective against the phoenix. It is, in fact, too useful against all the Light Side heavyweights to risk chasing knights all over the board, whatever the temptation. Although vulnerable, the pesky knights are too dangerous if they get close.

In battle, keep the dragon away from its opponents; its deadly fire needs a lot of room to reach a target on the ground. Use the gas cloud against anyone who gets too close for the fiery breath, and then use the dragon's superior speed to open up some breathing space.

Shapeshifter



Description:
Shapechanger, doppelgänger, nightmare thief of form and power.

No. in the Game: 1
Board Move: Fly 5
Battle Move: Varies
Button A: Varies
Attack Type: Varies
Button B: Varies
Power Type: Varies
Lifespan: Special

The use and effect of the buttons depend entirely on the shapeshifter's current opponent, whose shape, powers, tactics, and control scheme it borrows in battle. (It is thus the hardest piece to play well.)

The shapeshifter has no fixed lifespan. Instead, it darkly mirrors its opponent, being strongest on squares where its enemy is weakest. If it survives the battle, its wounds heal as soon as it resumes its normal form on the board.

The success of this piece is solely dependent on the proper battleground. Avoid white squares like the plague! Attack strong pieces on black or dark squares, but ignore the knights. Why take a chance on getting the shapeshifter killed for so small a prize? (Conversely, if you are playing Light, the best way to attack the shapeshifter on neutral ground is with a knight.)

Basilisk



Description:
A small, crested reptile with lizard limbs, a snake's body, and gorgon eyes.

No. in the Game: 2
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Paralyzing eyebeams
Attack Type: Missile
Button B: Poisoned breath
Attack Type: Missile
Lifespan: Short

The primary effect of the basilisk's fast eyebeams is gradual paralysis; the more an opponent is hit, the slower it moves. Total paralysis is fatal.

Keep your distance! The sluggish basilisk is best at moderate or long range. Use the poisoned breath, with its more limited range, to supplement the eyebeams — to keep infighters from closing or to finish off a badly wounded piece. Properly used, the basilisk is more than a match for slow or short-range fighters.

Troll



Description:
Subhuman cave-dweller, a shambling giant, dull but strong, clumsy but hard to slay.

No. in the Game: 2
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground (Varies)
Button A: Boulder
Attack Type: Missile
Button B: Shock stomp
Attack Type: Area effect
Lifespan: Long

Traditionally, trolls were paralyzed by direct sunlight. In ARCHON ULTRA, the effect of light is not quite so drastic: a troll's speed depends on the luminance of the square; the lighter the square, the slower it moves. On any battlefield, a troll regenerates, slowly healing its wounds. (Death is final, however.)

A troll stomp jolts a nearby opponent, throwing it off balance and backward, delaying its attack: the closer the piece, the greater the impact. It has no effect, however, on fliers or floaters.

Use the troll to pulverize knights; it is much more effective against them than the golem is against goblins. Against other opponents, it needs to get as close as possible to ensure hits and do damage. Because of its long life and regenerative ability, it is the one piece that can profitably trade attacks with any opponent. It is truly formidable, however, only on dark squares.

Banshee



Description:
Death's herald, a ghostly apparition of dreadful mien and lethal cry.

No. in the Game: 2
Board Move: Fly 3
Battle Move: Float
Button A: Wail
Attack Type: Area effect
Button B: Cursed skull
Attack Type: Independent, homing missiles
Lifespan: Average

The wail is a timed attack that affects a circular area around the banshee. While screaming, it can pursue its victim whether **Button A** is up or down.

A cursed skull rolls along the ground in slow but inexorable pursuit of the opposing piece. (Dangerous terrain — swamp or lava — is one of the few hazards that will keep the skull from reaching its target.) The skull fastens onto the victim, doing slight damage and, more importantly, slowing the victim down. A phoenix's fireball can burn the skull off, and elemental attacks can destroy it, but otherwise the attachment lasts as long as the banshee lives. No more than three skulls can be active at any time.

The banshee fares well against lightweights and poorly against heavyweights. Its skulls cannot reach the genie or the phoenix (unless it's grounded), and the golem can render itself invulnerable to the wail. If you want to indulge in some gratuitous pawn-bashing, use the banshee to terrorize the knights, who have no real defense against either banshee weapon.

The banshee requires — and rewards — considerable skill. Avoid firing lines. Use the cursed skulls to slow down opponents, and then get in close for the kill. When attacking, follow the opponent closely to prolong exposure to the scream. Circle the opponent to avoid return fire.

Manticore



Description:
A legendary beast, lion-bodied, human-faced, and spike-tailed.

No. in the Game: 2
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Tail spikes
Attack Type: Missile cluster
Button B: Roar
Attack Type: Short-range directional effect
Lifespan: Average

The manticore's roar staggers and repels anyone in front of him. Its range is short, but, unlike the troll stomp, it affects even fliers and floaters.

The manticore is stronger than its counterpart, the archer, but also a bigger target. Be bold against weak opponents, but remain at mid-range when fighting more dangerous adversaries. Use the roar to keep knights away, throw off the timing of other attackers, and render opponents vulnerable to a fusillade of spikes.

Goblin



Description:
A dwarf's dark cousin, short and squat, strong and savage, garbed in looted armor.

No. in the Game: 7
Board Move: Ground 3
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Club
Attack Type: Hand weapon
Button B: Crouch (duck)
Power Type: Defense
Lifespan: Short

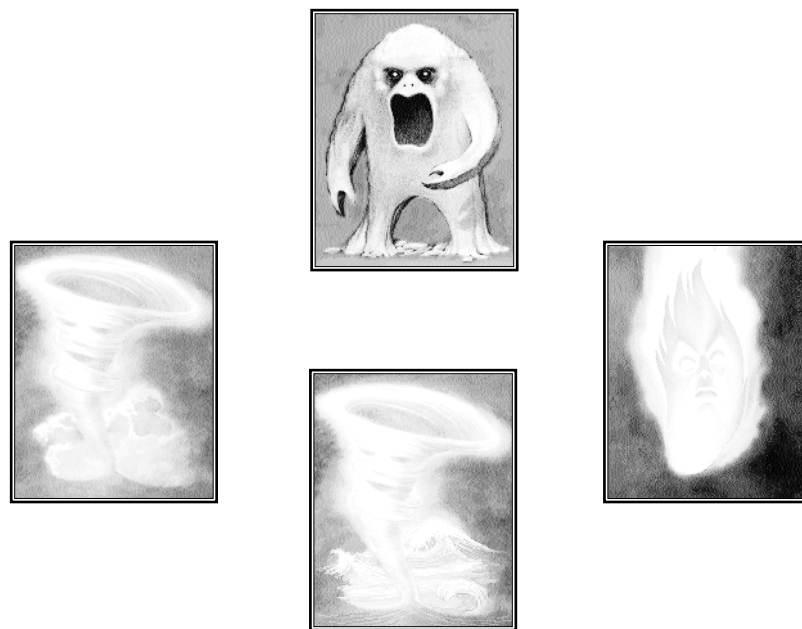
The club works just like the knight's sword.

Use **Button B** to duck safely below a sword slash or incoming missiles; keeping the button down extends the crouch, but there is a time limit. The maneuver is ineffective against the phoenix and the valkyrie's lightning. (It won't help against elementals, either, but who would waste an elemental on a goblin?)

On dark squares the goblins' gnarled clubs are more than a match for the swords of the knights. Since it can usually avoid the deadliest attack with a well-timed crouch, a well-directed goblin can bring down the most potent of enemies.

Where these infighters are concerned, he who hesitates . . . is dog food. Keep moving. Duck below incoming missiles. Attack, attack, attack! Exchange blows with a knight only if you have the advantage in luminance. Try to get a human-controlled knight to waste its shield on a feint, or circle around and strike at the vulnerable side.

◆ ELEMENTALS ◆



Despite their individual differences, all elementals have certain things in common that greatly affect their tactics on the battlefield. First, they cannot keep fighting indefinitely. Reflecting not only their health but also the increasing difficulty of keeping them on the material plane, their lifelines decline over time. Eventually, even an unscathed elemental will vanish, leaving its opponent the victor by default. So, be aggressive! (Of course, if you are *fighting* an elemental, simple avoidance is a prime tactic.)

On the attack, all elementals become their own missiles, hurtling across the screen in a straight line until they hit an obstacle, or you release **Button A**. In missile form, they move faster and are harder to damage, but they cannot change direction. All elementals should stay in the open, away from barriers.

Finally, all elementals have the power of self-destruction (**Button B**); they can release their remaining energy (and more) in a powerful explosion that may well be fatal to an opponent, as well. The longer the lifeline remaining, the more damaging is the explosion. This "ultimate weapon" is a last resort; use it only if the elemental is about to vanish or if you are certain it will kill — or at least seriously wound — the opposing piece. (Remember that an elemental cannot return to the board, anyway, so its survival is irrelevant.) The surest way to catch the opposing piece inside the blast radius is to trigger the explosion at the moment of impact of a normal attack.

Earth Elemental



Description:
Lumbering and powerful, a vaguely humanoid incarnation of earth and rock.

No. in the Game: 1 (maximum)
Board Move: Special
Battle Move: Ground
Button A: Rolling stone
Attack Type: Special missile
Button B: Self-destructive explosion
Attack Type: Area effect
Lifespan: Long (time-limited)

The earth elemental is the slowest but strongest elemental. Since it cannot leave the ground, it can harm fliers only by exploding (**Button B**) beneath them. If possible, attack floaters or ground pieces instead.

Air Elemental



Description:
A spirit of air, embodied in the form of a whirlwind

No. in the Game: 1 (maximum)
Board Move: Special
Battle Move: Float
Button A: Tornado
Attack Type: Special missile
Button B: Self-destructive explosion
Attack Type: Area effect
Lifespan: Average (time-limited)

The air elemental is faster than the earth elemental but not as damaging. Unlike earth, but like fire and water, it is as effective against fliers as it is against ground pieces.

Fire Elemental



Description:
A hovering ball of fire, self-sustaining and intelligent.

No. in the Game: 1 (maximum)
Board Move: Special
Battle Move: Float
Button A: Fireball
Attack Type: Special missile
Button B: Self-destructive explosion
Attack Type: Area effect
Lifespan: Average (time-limited)

The fire elemental is fast and nasty. Since it is invulnerable to flame, it is a lethal opponent for the dragon or the phoenix.

Water Elemental



Description:
A whirling, self-aware column of spray and mist.

No. in the Game: 1 (maximum)
Board Move: Special
Battle Move: Float
Button A: Waterspout
Attack Type: Special missile
Button B: Self-destructive explosion
Attack Type: Area effect
Lifespan: Long (time limited)

The water elemental is slower than the air elemental but otherwise similar.

◆ PLAYING HINTS AND TIPS ON STRATEGY ◆

The Board: Openings

Conservative Opening

This involves moving your unfavorably located pieces onto more favorable squares (white squares for Light pieces, black squares for Dark pieces). The idea is to establish a strong, balanced position early on. Since the corner pieces (the valkyrie & banshee) are mobile and especially vulnerable to magical attack (via the *Summon Elemental* or *Teleport* spells), these are often the first to be moved. Being ground-movers, the unicorn and basilisk will be stuck on the “wrong” square until you clear an escape route — either directly, by moving the knight/goblin in front of them, or indirectly, and more slowly, by moving other knights/goblins and then adjacent pieces in the back row.

Magical Assault

The aim here is to wipe out the strongest enemy piece right off the bat, before it can do any harm. This is most surely done with a combination of spells: *Imprison*, *Summon Elemental*, *Teleport*, and, if needed, *Shift Time*. The first spell holds the victim immobile while you attack with an elemental and then one of your strongest pieces teleported across the board. *Shift Time* may be used to prevent the imprisoned piece from getting away before you can finish it off.

A simple, fast, and sneaky variation for the Light Side is to teleport a knight (either one blocking the unicorn or one on a black square) onto the shapeshifter, and go for a double kill. (Some Dark Side players find this *very* frustrating.)

Monster Romp

This is risky but fun and sometimes surprisingly effective. Just fly or teleport one of your strongest pieces (the genie/dragon or phoenix/shapeshifter) to the other side of the board, and take it on a rompin', stompin' tour of all the occupied squares unfavorable to the pieces stuck on them. This procedure tends to throw new players into a panic, which is always helpful. More experienced players will either imprison the attacker or counter with a monster romp of their own. Rapid attrition on both sides usually follows.

The Board: General Hints

Stay on Your Color!

The effect of a square's luminance on the lifespan of your pieces is large — often as much as 50%. Attack on unfavorable squares only if you have an overwhelming superiority over the defending piece.

Plan Ahead

Most successful attacks require more than one move to execute. Before taking a square, consider what you will do afterwards. What piece will continue the assault if the first attacker dies?

Avoid Traffic Jams

Make openings in your front line for ground-movers to pass. The greater your force's mobility, the greater its flexibility and strength.

Protect Your Mage!

The wizard and the sorceress may be tough on the battlefield, but doom is nigh should you lose your mage early in the game. Since power points are immune to magic spells, it is a wise idea to keep your mage “at home.”

The Board: Spell Strategy

Teleport

This spell is handy for tossing a slow or unfavorably-placed piece into your opponent's back row to raise a ruckus. Alternatively, you can teleport a wounded piece out of danger.

Heal

Never heal the shapeshifter! Since the shapeshifter regenerates completely between battles, the spell would be wasted.

Shift Time

Use this spell to prolong an imprisonment by reversing the flow of time before the luminance cycle peaks, freeing the enemy piece. Conversely, especially if you are playing second, you can free your own imprisoned piece early by casting the spell at the opposing luminosity peak: in that case, the cycle will jump to *your* peak, and your piece will be freed. A more strategic use of the spell might allow you to win the game by keeping the luminance favorable long enough to make a concerted attack on the power points.

Exchange

An enemy advance can be frustrated temporarily by exchanging a menacing intruder (e.g., an opposing dragon or genie) in your territory with a weaker piece (a goblin or knight) toward the rear.

Summon Elemental

Since elementals are neutral beings, unaffected by changes in luminance, they are well suited to attacking an annoying enemy piece that remains on squares favorable to it. The spell is also *de rigueur* against mages that venture off their home power points.

Revive

Revive only strong pieces. Also, avoid placing a revived piece on an unfavorable square, or it may die again immediately.

Imprison

The real trick with this spell is timing, coupled with *Shift Time* if necessary, to prolong the effect. Imprison a threatening intruder to blunt an attack, or immobilize a strong piece on a mutable square; then attack when the luminosity cycle is most favorable.

The Battlefield: General Hints

Don't Move in Straight Lines

Monsters are tricky; you should be, too. Dodge and weave. Don't become predictable.

Hit and Run

Don't just fire a shot and then sit there waiting for a retaliatory strike. Take your finger off the button *immediately* after firing, and boogie on out of there! If you hit something, it can probably hit you.

Use Diagonal Shots

Although difficult to master, angled shots will improve your performance dramatically. Few players manage consistent diagonals.

Think in 3D

Remember that three dimensions are being displayed on the two-dimensional screen. Pieces move at different altitudes, which can make aiming confusing. A dragon that seems to be next to a knight is not really lined up to fire; it is actually nearer to you (visibly lower) but considerably elevated (visibly higher).

Watch the Shadows

Before firing, line up your shadow with your opponent's. When directing a missile, move the missile's shadow toward the shadow of the target piece.

Don't Overcompensate for Altitude

A missile fired by a ground piece toward a flier moves upward *automatically*; you do not need to "help" by firing diagonally "up." That causes the missile to move into the distance, not up into the air. Just make sure your piece is back far enough to allow the missile to get high enough to hit. (Faster missiles need more room for altitude changes than slower missiles.)

Trap Your Opponent in a Corner

This is especially helpful for sluggers with slow, easily dodged missiles and for the poor infighters (knights and goblins).

Feint!

Trick your opponent into attacking by moving into the line of fire momentarily. Then, in the interval before the enemy piece can attack again, close in and loose your own attack.

Confuse Your Opponent

When at close range, dodge back and forth. This is especially important when you cannot afford an exchange of blows, and it is vital for a knight or goblin.

Know Your Piece's Strengths and Weaknesses

Different pieces require different tactics — sometimes radically different — and the nature of your immediate enemy should also affect your course of action.

◆ QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ◆



Question *Help! I can't move my pieces! I push **Button A** to pick up a piece, but when I try to move it, only the cursor goes anywhere. What's going on?*

Answer To maintain consistency while accommodating a variety of input devices, we made some changes to the original ARCHON interface. If you look closely, you can see that, when you select a piece to move, the cursor changes shape. Go ahead and move the hollow cursor to the destination square; press **Button A**, and the piece will follow.

Question *Why can't I get my pieces to fire?*

Answer You're not pushing the joystick while the fire button is down. Under the **Standard** firing option, you must hold the appropriate button down and push the joystick in the direction you want to fire. (This seems to be a particular challenge for anyone using the keyboard.) If you can't get the hang of it, pick **Helped** on the main menu, or set **Firing** to **Simple**.

Question *My attacks often go in the wrong direction, and sometimes I can't seem to fire at all even though I know I'm pushing both the button and the joystick. What's wrong?*

Answer You're pushing the button while you're still moving your piece. Make sure the joystick is in "neutral" — or at least pointed in the right direction — before you press the trigger. Your "nonexistent" attacks might be hitting the outer walls (and vanishing), but you're probably pressing the trigger before your attack interval is up.

Question *When my friend casts **Shift Time**, the screen changes immediately. When I do it, it waits a turn before anything happens. Why?*

Answer You had the first move. All luminance changes take place after the second player's turns. (That's one of the advantages of playing second.)

Question *Sometimes when I'm firing really fast, I don't hear the "reload" sound. Am I going too fast for the computer to keep up?*

Answer No. If you happen to have the button pressed and the joystick already pointed at the end of the attack interval (which some people call the "reload time"), the computer won't bother sounding the bell; instead, it simply launches your attack.

Question *Is it possible for two pieces on the battlefield to kill each other? If so, who gets the square?*

Answer Yes, "double kills" are possible. You can even get killed by a "dead" piece if it has already launched an attack. (Zapping an archer, for instance, would have no effect on an arrow already in flight.) In such cases, the disputed square on the board will be left empty. The same thing happens when an elemental wins a battle.

Question *My missiles seem to pass right through enemy pieces without harming them. Why?*

Answer A missile can't actually pass through an enemy piece. Because the battlefield exists in three dimensions, however, it is possible to miss not only above or below a piece but also in front or behind. In either of the latter cases, it might seem as if the missile is — or should be — hitting the target. Because of the 3D factor, a piece in ARCHON ULTRA is harder to hit than it was in earlier versions of ARCHON. To improve your performance, move in closer before firing, and make sure the shadows are lined up.

Question *My archer attacked the dragon on a black square. She got killed, but she did hit it with an arrow, so I know the dragon was wounded. On my very next turn, I attacked the dragon again, but it was no longer wounded. Why not?*

Answer On the battlefield, a piece's lifespan is enhanced by favorable luminance and boosted by the magic of the power points its side controls. One of the benefits of this magical enhancement is that "nicks and scratches" (a category into which, under the circumstances, your single arrow wound fell) are not permanent. The luminance bonus is also the reason a badly wounded piece may make what seems to be a miraculous (if only partial) recovery between battles. On a white square the dragon would have lacked any luminance benefit, and the bonus for occupying power points might not cover even a single arrow wound.

Why were you attacking a dragon on a black square?

Question *Why did you make so many changes to the game? I liked ARCHON the way it was.*

Answer So did we. Although some people wanted nothing more than a graphically-updated ARCHON, most people wanted more. We thought we could use lessons we learned from ARCHON 2: ADEPT and our other games to make the pieces more interesting and the battlefield more exciting. The extra button allowed us to make combat more elaborate without complicating the interface. In short, we wanted to make the game better.

Question *ARCHON ULTRA has the same board and pieces as the original ARCHON. Why didn't you make more changes?*

Answer Huh? We wish we could introduce you to the last questioner. We had several ideas for somewhat similar games with different boards, pieces, and objectives, but publishers were more interested in a revised and updated version of ARCHON itself. We actually made far more changes than were originally planned; they're summarized at the beginning of the manual. You're probably underestimating the differences in the two games because you have unconsciously "updated" ARCHON in your imagination. (We've done it, ourselves.) It was a great game, but it was simpler and more primitive than you recall.

Question *Why did you rename the genie?*

Answer We got tired of having people think we were spelling it wrong. We weren't — "djinni" is the original rendition — but people are used to "genie." Since the genie in ARCHON ULTRA owes as much to the movies as it does to *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, the more westernized spelling seems appropriate. So we changed it.

That was part of the reason we added regeneration to the troll: people expected it. Gamers who learned their fantasy from role-playing games did not realize that traditional trolls had no such powers.

Question *Do you make up these questions?*

Answer We've collected, articulated, reworded, and edited them, but we haven't had to make them up — not even this one.

Question *Why can't I make copies of ARCHON ULTRA for my friends?*

Answer We at Free Fall Associates live on what we earn from game sales. Royalties quite literally pay the rent. If we can't pay our bills doing this, we can't keep creating games for you to enjoy. Even a really successful game has to pay for a couple of years of development time for several people, plus more years of accumulated debts caused by delays, inadequate advances, canceled projects, and wrong turns — plus enough money to finance the *next* project. Unless ARCHON ULTRA sells well enough to manage all that, it may be the last Free Fall game you'll see for a while — maybe ever.

Imitations of arcade games or other designers' ideas may be all too common, but our games are original products of our own bizarre imaginations and many years of work. (We first put battling "chesspieces" in a game *ten years ago*.) We can't afford to continue creating new games if half the people playing them don't pay for their copies. We try to play fair with others, and we appreciate your playing fair with us by purchasing a legal copy of this product.

Thanks from Anne, Jon, Paul, and Fred.

◆ ABOUT THE DEVELOPERS◆

Paul Reiche III is not as young as he used to be. He's married now and trying to support a family. His partner, Fred Ford, is single and trying to support Paul. Jon Freeman and Anne Westfall are still married and trying to support each other.

Paul and Fred share a rented office in Novato in the same building occupied by every other game developer in Marin County. Jon and Anne share a rented house with their computers — and horror stories with every other game developer in Silicon Valley.

All four have been in "the biz" a long time. Paul once worked at TSR™. Fred once toiled at Island Graphics. Anne once labored at Epyx, back when it was still called Automated Simulations. Jon once *founded* Automated Simulations.

Recently, besides helping on ARCHON ULTRA, Paul & Fred developed STAR CONTROL 2™ and have been working on a new game for another publisher. Jon has also designed a Sega® game for another publisher, and Anne has been serving on the Board of Directors of the Computer Game Developers' Conference. For some reason they all seem short of spare time, but in odd moments they read, go to movies, and try to stay in shape.

Jon Freeman
Free Fall Associates
1993



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