

WAR IS INVINCIBLE

# HYPERBOREA

CONFLICT IN A FANTASY KINGDOM

## One upon a time...

Once upon a time, in the Fantasy Kingdom of Hyperborea, lived different factions that were always at war, one against the other. Magicians were finally able to create a magical "barrier" to keep them separated and the six existing factions lived in peace for many years. But the magical forces that created that barrier fell with times and populations were again free to leave their settlements and to explore other zones of the World. War arose again...

I have to say that I do not like Fantasy games very much, even if I know that "dressing" a good game in a Fantasy "suit" sometimes is chosen only because it helps to sell more boxes. The best example is still *Dungeon and Dragons* (formerly *Chainmail*, a classic war game about medieval battles) so editing a fantasy game is still a good booster for games companies. So I must confess that I initially approached *Hyperborea* with this kind of bias in mind.

Asterion Games has surprised me and all the players with high quality components, including 60 wonderful plastic miniatures (each faction has a different miniature and color). The board must be composed before play using part of the 30 big heavy cardboard hexes (85 mm): the form of the board and the number of hexes depend by the number of players. All configurations are pretty balanced but the one for 5 players has two sides longer than the others, and this may be a slight advantage for 2 of the players if the distribution of cities and ruins is not balanced, as we will see later. Every faction has a "Basic Territory" (composed of 3 connected hexes) and each of them may be played in two ways: the front face is used for the standard "Invasion" game and the back face for the "Faction War" game (more of this point later). A summary table for the Advanced Technology cards was not included so I created one for my use (available to everybody that will write to me). For what I heard Asterion Press later included copies of this table that may be useful to know which cards and resources may be selected/

invested during the game.

Each player has his own mini-board which shall be used to program his actions and to advance in the technologies. With the

**Pietro Cremona**

*A very interesting Civilization game with a „cube building“ basic mechanism*

standard game every faction has the same initial resources, while in the "Faction" game each people has his own characteristics: at the set-up they may select between two different "faction cards" who have different resources and abilities (more power when attacking, better use of the cubes, easiest purchase of technologies, etc.).



The box contains also a lot of different materials and the complete list of them is not interesting for this review, but I have to mention at least the 36 round "development counters" that will help to rise the technology tracks of the players (to be randomly placed on the main board and collected during the game) and the 4 decks of "Technology cards". Finally we have 144 colored wooden cubes to be used for the actions. The only minor components' defect that we may point is on the colors selected for some the cubes, as the tonality of red, green and gray may be confused with those of violet, blue and green: if you have the possibility to extract cubes from other games I suggest to do this in order to have more "decide" tonalities (I exchanged those cubes with the ones of *Lookout's Merkator*).

After the first test of the game I called *HYPERBOREA* mechanics with the name of "CUBE BUILDING" and I will explain why... later on!

The game is won if the following conditions are met:

- Collect 12 gems
- Purchase 5 Advanced Technology Cards
- Have all your units on the main board

The SHORT Game ends when ONE of those conditions is met: the INTERMEDIATE game needs TWO conditions and the EXTENDED game ALL THREE. Who and how many players meet the conditions is not important: if, for example, a player buys his fifth Advanced Technology on the "short" game you immediately stop playing and you pass to the VP calculation.

**HOUSE RULE:** after a few games we decided at the unanimity that this rule had to be modified in order to allow ALL the players to play the same number of turns. Therefore we stated that *"the game end IMMEDIATELY only if it is the last player of the turn that meet the necessary conditions: otherwise the turn must be completed"*. I strongly recommend this modification as the VP calculation is more balanced.

### ... AND ONE DAY PEOPLES STARTED A NEW MIGRATION...

After having randomly composed the board (the central hex tiles are face down and nobody knows which terrain they will show) each player place 3 units on his "base" and pick up ONE CUBE per color (blue, red, green, yellow, orange and violet) plus an extra cube of his choice and put all of them in the bag that has the same color of his people. This initial choice is already important as the cubes are used for the actions and each color has a different influence, so the players have to decide which initial strategy they will select before pick-up the seventh cube.

GREEN cubes are used for movements on the board, REDs are necessary to fight, VIOLETS to recruit new units, ORANGES to advance on the technology tracks, YELLOWS to gain Victory Points (VP) and BLUE to purchase the Technology Cards. There are also GREY cubes in the game that a player must take when he buys a new Technology card but those cubes are normally a "weight" for the players, similarly to the "Deck Building" games with useless cards, as they reduce the number of the actions that may be performed in a turn.

The hexes shows different terrains and each type has a cost: to enter a DESERT tile the units have to spend only 1 Movement Point (MP), while entering a WOOD will cost 1 MP extra. Exiting a SWAMP hex will cost 1 MP extra while entering or exiting from a Mountain costs 1 MP extra. Those costs are cumulative, so exiting from a Mountain to enter a Wood, for example, will cost 3 MP. Moving from one hex to another of the same terrain does not cost extra MP: pass-

ing from a Mountain hex to another Mountain hex cost only 1 MP. Again it is important to memorize very well those costs to avoid problems during the game: is not so easy to move in Hyperborea because the Movement Actions are not too many, so it is necessary to optimize their use.



Many hexes have "cities" and/or "ruins": each city has icons that show which kind and how many actions can be done entering it. Each ruin hosts a certain number of "Development counters" and one dark gray GHOST miniature to protect those treasures. There are three kind of ruins: Bronze (that contain 1 counter), Silver (two counters) and ONLY ONE gold (with 3 counters). After having paid the cost to enter a specific Hex the player may decide to immediately enter an empty city of that hex (if it is still free) in order to use its actions. Alternatively he may attack the Ghost of a ruin in order to collect one development counter of his choice and use the related bonus. Those bonus include extra cubes, extra movements, technological advances, new units, etc.

Each player starts the game with a personal board, 7 cubes and 3 units (miniatures) already on the board, on his initial Territory. The personal boards are all identical and show 6 Technology tracks and 12 Actions tracks (two for each color): they all have 2 cases with the exception of the Advanced Technology tracks (Blue) which have 3 cases. Each case is colored (same colors as the cubes) or has a multicolor symbol. Players place their cubes on those cases, matching the colors, and when a track is completed a bonus is assigned (movements, attacks, new units, fortresses, advancement on the technology tracks, gems, etc.) which may be combined or added to the actions received entering the cities. The two blue tracks will allow you to purchase the Advanced Technology CARDS.

Six round markers are also placed on the Technology tracks of the personal board (do not confuse these tracks with the two



### 40 Lines for Meeples

Dagmar de Cassan, Editor-in-Chief

Without a clever game designer there would be no thrilling games.

But not many consumers know this and in many lists of the community the company or the merchant are named as a seal of quality and trust instead of the game designer, see BBG, for instance.

This should and must change! As for books, music or films the creative author should be in focus, not the commercial company, just take a look at the lists of News or Spiegel, they ignore our games because of their meaninglessness.

Our contribution to change this situation is our game designer meeting, which is always held in Vienna on the Weekend of the Donau-inselfest.

And then there is our game designer competition, the winning game is published by the Games Museum to present the author and his game to a wider public.

The most successful game so far was PORT ROYAL, our winner from 2013, and we are curious about the ideas of our designers for 2015. Everybody comes to the designer meeting, entries in the designer competition must come from Austrians or from designers living in Austria!

We especially want to support Austrian designers!

Our database LUDORIUM shows many games there, come over and look,

<http://www.ludorium.at>

If you like our WIN, become a subscriber! We have a PayPal account, so the payment of € 6 for a one-year-subscription is safely and easily done, see <http://www.gamesjournal.at>

Our Games Companion GAME BY GAME 2015 is available, <http://www.spielehandbuch.at>

already discussed for the purchase of “advanced technology” cards); the players must place one marker on case 3 of a track of their choice, a second one on case 2 of a different track and third one on case 1 of another track. During the games those markers will move from left to right and when they reach the fourth or the sixth (and last) case new cubes are permanently assigned to the players’ reserve (bag). Here again the choice of which technology to boost from the beginning will determine the strategy of the players: for that reason before assigning the markers I recommend to deeply examine the territories near your base to understand which advantages you may have in conquering them before the arrival of your opponents. Sometimes it is better to rush and conquer, while in other situations it is recommended to settle and grow before leaving the Initial territory.

### ... AND THEY MET OTHER FACTIONS: LIVE IN PEACE OR FIGHT? ...

Did you follow until now? Well, as it is time to start the game: all players must randomly take THREE cubes from their bag, placing them on their personal board. On his turn each player MUST place all the cubes on some tracks or discard them: normally only the grey cubes are discarded if you do not have Advanced Technology Cards that allow you to use them. After having placed the 3 cubes each player MAY use his units to enter a city or a ruin and therefore acquire extra actions, cubes, etc. Every city has icons that explain what they offer to their owner: Movement Points (MP), Technology advances, Battle points, etc. All those “potential” actions are cumulative and the player decides if and when to use them: for example if you get 2 Movement Points (MP) from your personal board and 1 MP + 2 Technology advances from the main board it is up to you to decide if you wish to move some of your units for as total of 3 MP and to advance a marker 2 cases on your Technology tracks; or to move first one unit in another city, collect its “action” and then move two other units, etc.

All the units used to get actions INSIDE cities are the laid down: they cannot be used again until you “restore” your hand. All units OUTSIDE cities remain standing and may be used later in the turn. When a player decides to stop doing actions he randomly draw 3 new cubes from his bag and place them on his personal board: now he, and his opponents, knows which action will be available next turn (and may start to think about the better way...).

NOTE: If the bag contains at least one cube you must sort it and put it on your board.

As you remember we started the game with only 6+1 cubes so you have to collect at least another 2 extra cubes in order to be able to play the THIRD round at full strength. Sometimes players forget the importance of adding those two new cubes to their bag during round 1 and 2, so they will play round 3 with just ONE cube and with really few possibilities.

If the bag is empty you RESTORE your hand: all your units are again available (all standing) and all the cubes of the already completed tracks on your personal board are send back to the bag. You may now draw the usual 3 cubes for the next turn. You are allowed to discard inside the bag cubes from unfinished tracks (not a good move, unless you really need a particular color!); this a voluntary decision that you must take before drawing the 3 cubes.

In principle the bag should always contain a multiple of 3 cubes in order to play a full hand every turn: it is allowed to count the cubes inside the bag but not... to look at their color. You now understand that if you need a particular action you MUST HAVE the cubes of the related colors; and to get those cubes you need to advance on the right Technology track; and to advance here you should do the right actions on the cities of main board; and... ok, I think that it is clear now!!!

Like most of the “Deck building” card games here you must try to “balance” your reserve of cubes with a good mix of colors. Sometimes is better to avoid to acquire extra cube of a color (even if they are cheap or easy to collect) when you have already enough of them in your reserve: try to collect also the other colors. Having too many cubes in your bag means also that you will not be able to RESTORE too often and you risk to be attacked when you cannot defend because all your units are already spent. Less cubes means that you may “rotate” them quickly and that the necessary colors will be available soon.

But how can we get those damned cubes? When your technology marker reach case “4” you may collect ONE new cube of that color and add it to your bag. Put your marker back to “0”. You may also decide to advance instead to case “6” where you will get TWO cubes of that color: then, again, the marker goes back to “0”. From our experience very often it is better to take only ONE cube and then concentrate on another track instead of going up to case “6”. This depends of course of your general strategy, but remember that a balanced number of cubes for each color will allow you to be more flexible.

After a few turns your population probably has grown enough and some units already moved to the border of your Territory (note that the face down tiles must be revealed as soon as a unit is adjacent to them): now you know exactly which terrains surround your Initial Territory and you may decide if you prefer to hunt new treasures from ruins or to reach some interesting cities. Units of different factions may live together on the same hex, especially if they found an agreement on the use of cities/ruins. But sometimes diplomacy is not enough and you must search for stronger “arguments”. It is therefore time to look at the “battle” tracks of your board: each icon with a “sword” will grant ONE Attack Point (AP): combining MP and AP you may advance with your units in a territory and attack the enemy: each sword eliminate a unit. Attacking is normally used to enter a city or a ruin or... to reduce the number of migrants that are advancing towards your border! When you move your units on the main board your goal is always to find some new cities to exploit, in order to advance on the technology tracks, or ruins to explore to find GEMS (each gem means 1 VP) or bonuses.

When you kill a Ghost you keep it on your board and you will get some VP at the game’s end: 1 Ghost = 1 VP; 2 Ghosts = 3 VP; and so on.

When you kill an enemy unit you capture it and keep it on your board: you cannot capture a second unit of that color until you have at least one of every color (a very unlikely event). Each captured unit will give you 1 VP.



If you are playing the “Factions” game you have to know which are the differences: the RED player, for example, may easier get AP and quickly increase his population, so his main attitude will be to attack, destroy and occupy cities; GREEN is faster in moving as his units ignore the penalties of the difficult terrains so, as an example, the mountain

barrier that your opponent thought was so protective... can be easily bypassed; BLUE has an advantage on getting new technology cards and their bonus; ORANGE may use grey cubes as they were "orange" or exchange them for a color of his choice; YELLOW may exchange gems to get immediate advantages (draw 3 extra cubes, double movement get 3 technology advances); VIOLET may kill a Ghost and transform it in a unit of his color.

A lot of discussions arose on the net in the last few months about the relative strength of each Faction and, of course... each color was the strongest one for some or the worse one for others: as it usually happens with this kind of games it is very difficult to find an answer to those claims and, more important, it is always a questions of players. Of course if nobody attacks the REDS they will become very powerful, or if we allow YELLOW to get all the gems that he may reach... he will have so many bonuses, and so on! What I can tell is that we played more than 20 games, that we all had a good pleasure and that we never felt that one faction was more powerful than the others. My opinion is that sometimes people play one game and immediately think that everything is clear in their mind so they have the right to heavily criticize something that they really do not know.

OK, let's go on.

Last... and not least, there are the ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CARDS: you may purchase those cards using the two Advanced Technology tracks of your personal board (remember? The ones with three cases each!). At the set up four decks of those cards are placed on the board: TWO cards from each deck are turned and showed so players have always the choice between 8 cards. In your turn you may even discards two of the face up cards, replacing them with two new cards, before deciding which one to purchase. Each card has some information printed on it: the usual track to fill with the right cubes in order to gain the effect printed on the "icon" and the number of VP that each card awards to you at the game's end (1 or 2 VP). Some cards have a "permanent" effects so you may fill their track with cubes that will never come back to the bag. This is a difference that you should note because your "hand" becomes lighter and, again, you have to program this tactic well in advance to be sure that you will have some cubes of the right color at the right moment.

Let's quickly look at those decks:

DECK I is oriented on Movement and Com-

bats and we add the colors of the cases shown on ALL the cards we get 13 red and 13 green cases, together with 5 multicolor "jolly" cases.

DECK II is mainly used to gain Gems or to increase the Population and has a total of 12 violet and 11 yellow cases cubes, plus 7 multicolor and 1 each for red and green.

DECK III helps in Technology with 12 orange and 10 blue cases, together with 5 multicolor and 2 each for red and green.

DECK IV is the only one with cards which allow the player to use GREY cubes (there is in effect at least one grey case per card). With 19 grey cases, 4 orange, 3 violet, 3 reds, 2 blue, 1 green, 1 yellow and 7 multicolor this deck is the most flexible



Please note the other players will not seat "idle" when a very interesting card is shown (especially those with a permanent effect), so always look at the cubes that they have available for their next turn and how many are already on their Advanced Technology tracks because sometimes you have to act very quickly and ignore all the other actions in order to concentrate on the purchase of a much wanted card.

### ... BUT A NEW KING FINALLY TOOK THE POWER...

We already know the three possible scenarios: Short, Intermediate and Extended.

When the conditions are met the players need to calculate their VP in order to find the winner.

You gain VP meeting the winning conditions, collecting gems, killing ghosts and enemy units, and controlling territories on the main map, adding the number of cubes that you have at the game's end (both inside the bag or on the action tracks).

The player with most VP will be the new KING OF HYPERBOREA

You will not find any "innovative" mechanics in Hyperborea as this game is a mix of "Worker Placement" (units inside cities and

## GAMES BUYER INFORMATION SYSTEM - GABIS

### STRUCTURE

Each game review also features an evaluation which can help you to find the game that best suits your tastes. The color accompanying each game title represents the USER Group. The headline also contains icons for age and number of players. The BAR in the evaluation box displays color codes for up to 10 features of a game.

### USER GROUP

We have defined 4 target groups (color accompanying the head line)

#### Kinder:

Games for children an educational games. Adults can play in a guiding function.

#### Familien:

Children and parents play together, all have the same chance to win and have fun.

#### Freunde:

Young people and adults play together as equals

#### Experten:

Games with special demands on rules and playing time. Especially for game geeks

Please note for the user groups **Children**, **Family and Friends**: Children who love to play can be ahead of their peers! Please note that our target group "families" does not imply the classical concept of "family games"! Furthermore, our user groups can overlap. The choice of suitable games always depends on your playing partners and your fun with games!

Games that are especially eligible for **Solo** play or for **2 players** or **Large groups** of players are marked with an icon.

### FEATURES

Each game targets preferences for different features in a player, therefore each game is not suitable for each player. We have listed 10 features players note when deciding on a game. Only if a player finds his preferred features in a game he will enjoy the game. The color code marks the dominant features. Educational games train the highlighted preference.

Empty boxes: This feature is neglectable or not present

One colored box: This feature is present, but not essential

Two colored boxes: This feature is present and important in the game

Three colored boxes: This feature is dominant and essential

#### Chance:

The game is influenced by dice, cards or any other form of random generator

#### Tactics:

Take decision, short-term planning, planning based on one move

#### Strategy:

Think ahead, long-term planning, planning for several moves

#### Creativity:

The player has to provide words, phrases, images and other creative efforts

#### Knowledge:

Cultural and educational knowledge, long-term memory

#### Memory:

Remember, learn by heart, short-time memory

#### Communication:

Talk to each other, negotiate, inform

#### Interaction:

Influencing each other, bluffing, auction

#### Dexterity:

Motor skills

#### Action:

Body movement, balance and reaction

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Version:** The edition of the game on which the review is based

**Rules:** This lists the languages in which rules are available or are included in the game, often even more translations can be found on the web.

**In-game text:** A YES marks a game with language-dependent components that cannot be played without translation or knowledge of the language



ruins), "Deck Building" (cubes in the bag) and "Civilization Development" (explore and fight), with a sort of "Resource collection" (gems and cards). There is also a good interactivity between players, as they sometimes ally against a common enemy or they multiply the diplomatic efforts to avoid a fight for specific objectives, and so on. The final result is that this "mix" is good and we appreciated very much the game.

Usually during the very first game players are very "cautious" and they try to accumulate cubes, increase their population and finally advance in the main map. After a couple of games things change very much and strategies start to define: some players advance quickly in new territories in order to get as many "development counters" as they can, even if they risk to be invaded; others prefer to calmly increase their power and quickly advance during the "middle game" in order to gain a permanent control of key positions and therefore to maximize the territorial VP; others concentrate on the gems and try to get 12 of them quickly in order to meet one of the victory conditions. Collecting Advanced Technology cards is also interesting to meet another condition. Playing with the "Factions" also helps to differentiate the strategies, of course, as each player will try to use his faction's bonus at the best.

The game is OK for 2-3-4-6 players. I still have some "reserves" for the 5 players game because it depends on the initial random distribution of tiles: if the fourth and fifth players (the two that "lives" on the longer sides of the map, therefore the extra hex far from the other three) have a good number

of favorable tiles close to their base they may get an initial advantage. As we mostly played the 6 players game and we tried only twice the 5 players scenario I am not 100% certain of the above note, but our feeling was decidedly that.

I am also not sure that a "perfect strategy" can be found. Of course some of us tried the "trick" of collecting only 9 cubes and then place one of them on each track on the first 2-3 turns in order to remain with only THREE cubes available to be used EVERY TURN and EXCLUSIVELY to purchase new Advanced Technology card and thus quickly fulfill one of the victory conditions. This may surprise the other players the first time and could be devastating in the SHORT game, but once that this trick is known the other players may easily counter it, usually creating a "Saint Alliance" AGAINST the one who tried it.

Hyperborea is not difficult to be learned: the rules are short (9 pages only, plus another 7 with different summaries, examples and tables) and can be explained in half an hour. But the game is quite long (more or less 25 minute per player in the intermediate scenario) because often the players need to wait their turn before "fixing" a new tactic or modify their basic strategy. The actions of the other players or the purchase of some Cards may surprise even the best programmed tactic, players therefore must have a general strategy in mind and need to stay on that line, but they must also adapt every turn their tactics to the existing situation.

I definitely recommend this game to expert

players and also to casual players if someone already knows the game and is available to explain the rules and to help on the first turns. Obviously HYPERBOREA is not for families. ☑

Pietro Cremona

## INFORMATION

**Designer:** A. Chiarvesio, P. Zizzi  
**Artist:** Miguel Coimbra und Team  
**Price:**  
**Publisher:** Asterion Press 2014  
[www.asmodee.com](http://www.asmodee.com)

PLAYERS:  
2-6  
 AGE:  
12+  
 TIME:  
180+

## EVALUATION

Civilization building, "cube" building  
 Users: For experts  
 Version: it  
 Rules: de en fr it  
 In-game text: no

**Comments:**  
 Good mix of familiar mechanisms \* Easy to learn \* Rather long duration

**Compares to:**  
 All civilization developing games and all games based on a deck-building mechanism

**Other editions:**  
 Asmodee, Marabunta, Yemaia

