

Introduction to my Bronze Age Collapse Simulation

(Directions for access is in a later section.)



It is a 6 player simulation of the Bronze Age Collapse, a period around 1200 BCE when many advanced civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean suddenly declined, leading to widespread destruction, an overall "dark age". The causes likely involved Sea Peoples invasions, climate-induced droughts, and internal rebellions. **Topics covered:** Battle of Kadesh (Largest Chariot Battle in History), Sea Peoples Invasions, Homeric Myths, and Assyrian-Kassite Wars.

Each nation has its own uniquely named units with their own statistics and descriptions. There are game rules players should follow located in the lower right of the map. They read:

- 1) Assyria and Babylon must fight each other.
- 2) Egypt must go to war with Hittites.
- 3) Sea Peoples must war Egypt, Hittites, and Greece.
- 4) Follow thru these wars; you cannot peace out.
- 5) For Late Game: If at any point 3 of the original 6 players survive, the above rules can be ignored and you can choose to ally end.

Info for Egypt Player:

A) Southern Nile River and Delta are not connected by water, so you cannot take Nile War Galley or other ships outside.

B) Cataracts are unkillable, and unpassable (by sea), but be free to use it to remove any unnecessary units.

How I made the Map

First is the research phase. I compiled notes using academic sources: *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed* by Eric H. Cline, *The Hittites* by Oliver Robert Gurney, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Civilizations* by John Haywood, *Assyria: The Rise and Fall of the World's First Empire* by Eckart Frahm, and *The War That Killed Achilles: The True Story of Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War* by Caroline Alexander. I took detailed notes on political boundaries and historical events. For military units, I used Osprey Publishing's illustrated books, which provided specific unit details and visual references for Bronze Age armies. Since these illustrations are used transformatively for educational gameplay purposes in a non-commercial context, this falls within fair use principles for my project.

Second, for my scenario, I needed a more specialized and focused satellite view, so I turned to NASA's Worldview platform (<https://worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov/>), a powerful web-based tool developed by NASA's Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS). It enables scientists, educators, and the public to visualize environmental changes, natural disasters, and geographic features across different time periods and spectral bands. I used the tool in the following way: I selected the MODIS/Terra Corrected Reflectance (True Color) layer, navigated to the Eastern Mediterranean region (centering coordinates approximately 32°N, 35°E), adjusted the date slider to find a roughly cloud-free composite from the summer months, and downloaded a high-resolution snapshot at 6877x5314 pixel resolution. I then made modifications to remove any clouds blocking the land view, enhanced the Nile, Euphrates, and Tigris Rivers with visible color overlays for gameplay clarity, and adjusted the Persian Gulf coastline to reflect Bronze Age sea levels.

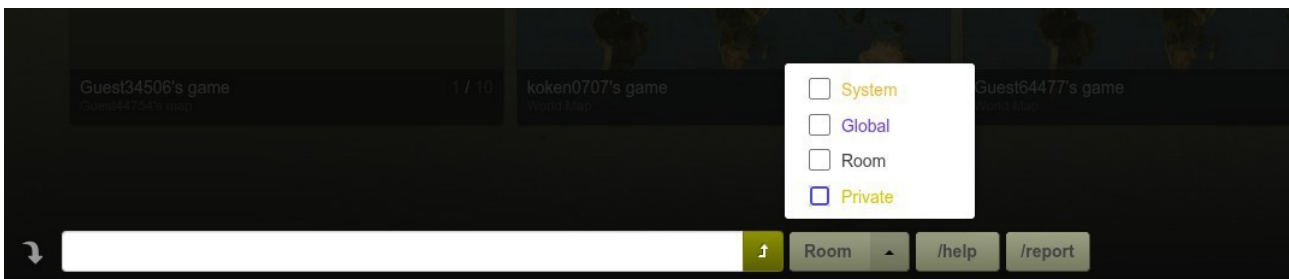
Third, I first sketched territorial boundaries on notebook paper, then translated them into the in-game map editor. I placed all cities and assigned territorial names to the six playable factions. I introduced neutral environmental hazards, like the Nile cataracts, to increase historical simulation accuracy; these served as impassable barriers reflecting real geographic constraints. I maintained organized file folders for all research materials, visual assets, and design documents. Excel spreadsheets tracked unit statistics across multiple balance passes as I playtested and tweaked values.

Fourth, I focused on faction design and historical accuracy. Each civilization received a unique unit roster based on my research. I cross-referenced military capabilities from my source materials to ensure each faction felt distinct while remaining historically plausible. Special attention went to technological advantages: I gave the Hittites superior chariots, while Egypt gained bonuses in naval mobility along the Nile.

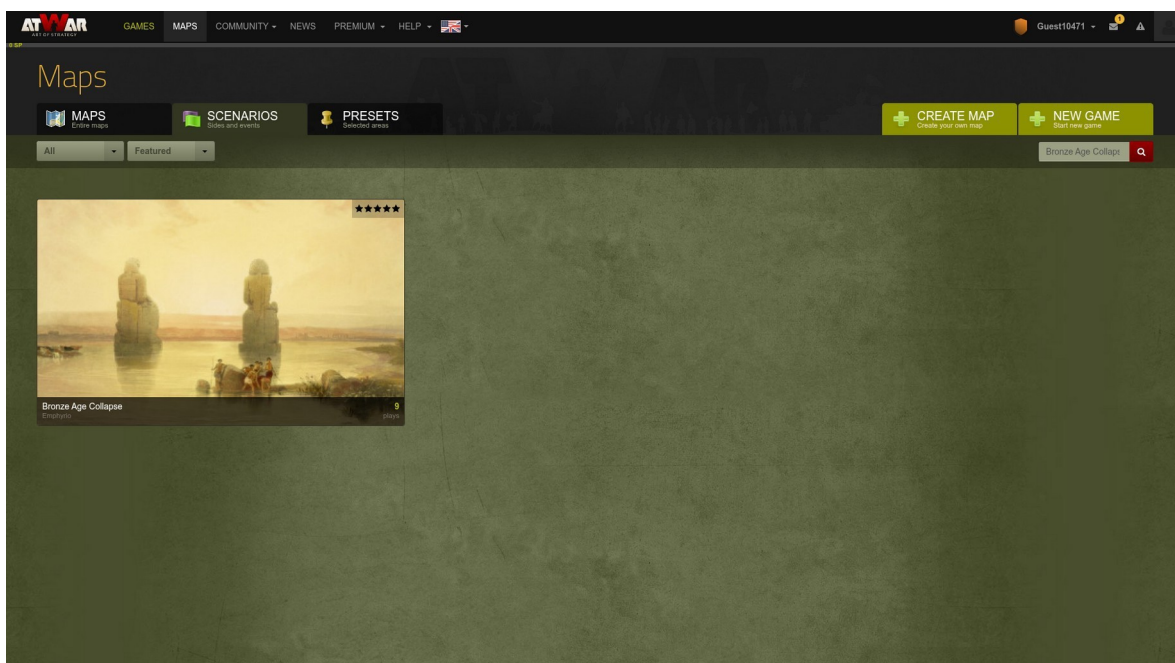
Fifth, I implemented the scenario's victory conditions and event systems. To defeat an enemy player, you must capture their capital (marked with a flag) and hold it for two turns. As stated before, there are game rules players must follow that pair countries as enemies. Throughout the game, there are event messages that mark various country-specific event units the player can use.

Directions to access the Map on the AtWar Website:

- 1) Go to <https://atwar-game.com/> on any browser, but I suggest using an incognito tab to avoid cookies.
- 2) In the very top left of the website you see a green “PLAY AS GUEST”. Click on it. No password or email is needed to set up a guest account.
- 3) A pop up will show asking you to play the tutorial. This is optional, you don’t need to do it to look at my map. To decline, click “Continue to Lobby”
- 4) To avoid any message disruptions, click the bottom left arrow (↶), then click on the box that says “Room” and uncheck all boxes. It should look like this. It will autosave.

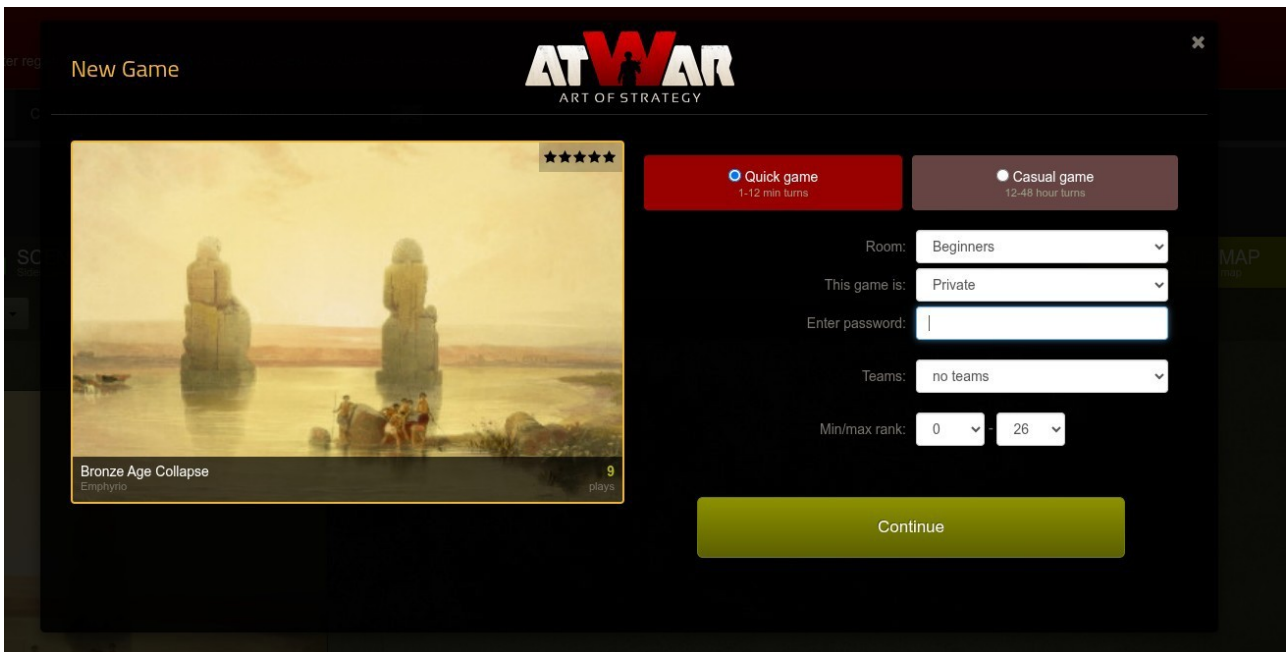


- 5) In the top left, you should click on “MAPS” (To the right of “GAMES”)
- 6) Then, you must click on “SCENARIOS” (Scenarios, unlike Maps, have territories autoassigned by map creator to named sides). There in the search bar, you can search for “Bronze Age Collapse” or my username “Emphyrio” to find it.



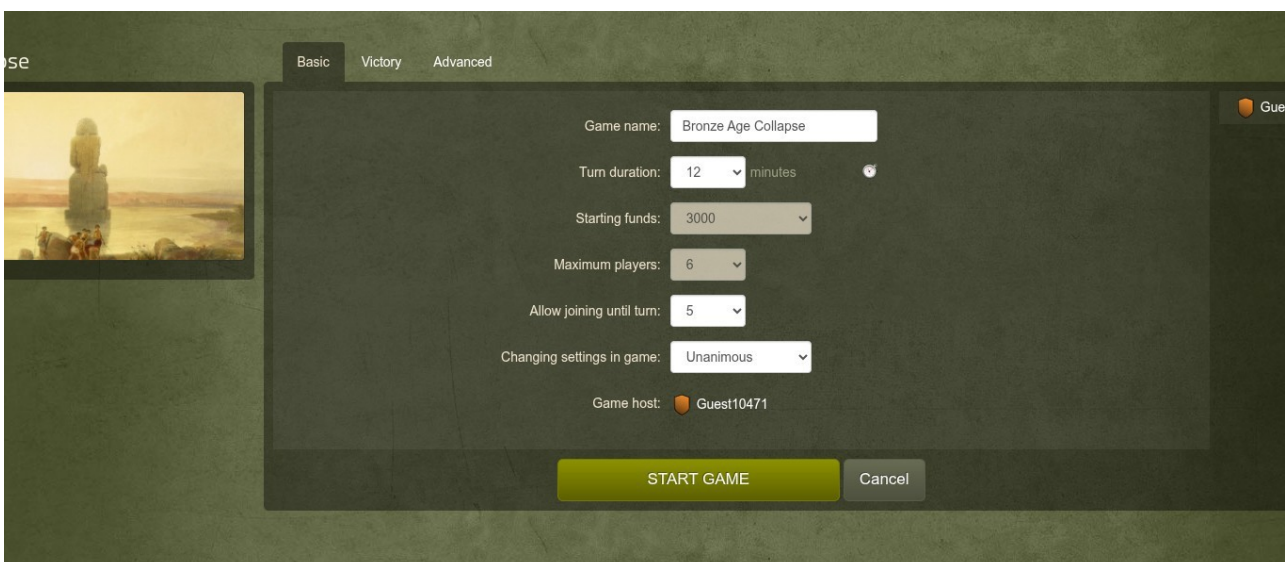
- 6) Click on the portrait and then click “Start new game”

7) The following image is what will now pop up. In “This game is” section, make it “Private”, then enter any password, it doesn’t matter what it is, just have it so no random can join your game.



8) After filling out the password field with your password, click the green “Continue” box

9) In the next screen that shows, I suggest you change Turn duration from 4 min to 12 min to give you time to check out the map. It should look like this:

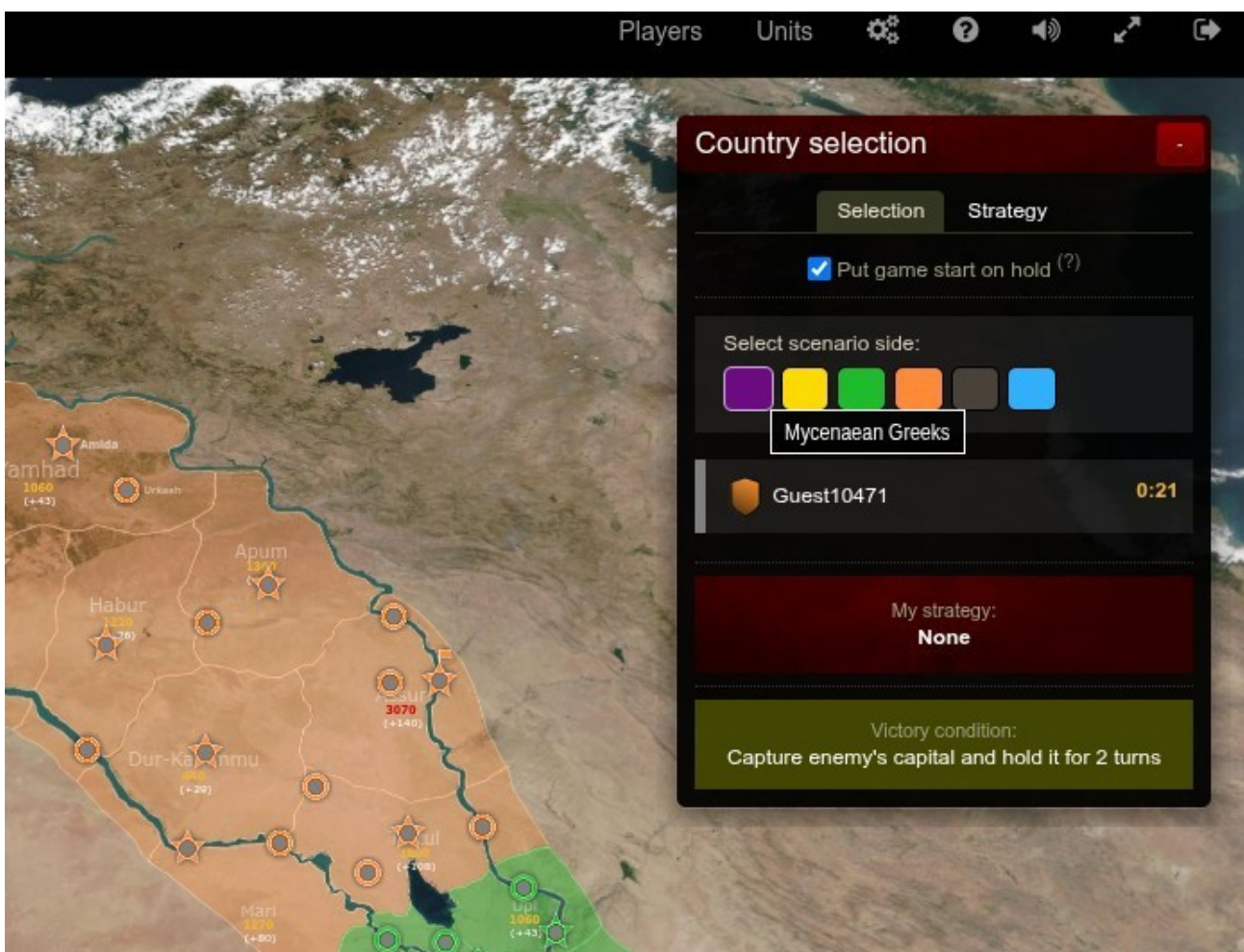


10) Click “START GAME”

11) A warning box will pop up saying "This game is not really intended for solo play - it's impossible to win. Start anyway?" --> Click OK to open the map

12) It will take a few seconds for the map to load

13) After the map loads, I first suggest clicking “Put game start on hold” box. You are free to zoom in with +/- buttons or your mouse wheel, and move the map by dragging with left click. You can hover over the colored boxes to see the name of country (as shown). Clicking on any will choose that side and change the screen. Once you choose a country, you cannot switch without leaving and creating a new game (steps #5 – 12). Once you happily select a country, uncheck “Put game start on hold” to start the game timer. You do not need to choose a strategy, you are fine with just “None”



COLOR KEY:

- Purple = Mycenaean Greeks
- Yellow = Egyptian New Kingdom
- Green = Babylon
- Orange = Assyria
- Black = Hittites
- Light Blue = Sea Peoples

(For the next page's steps, I chose Egyptian New Kingdom [Yellow])

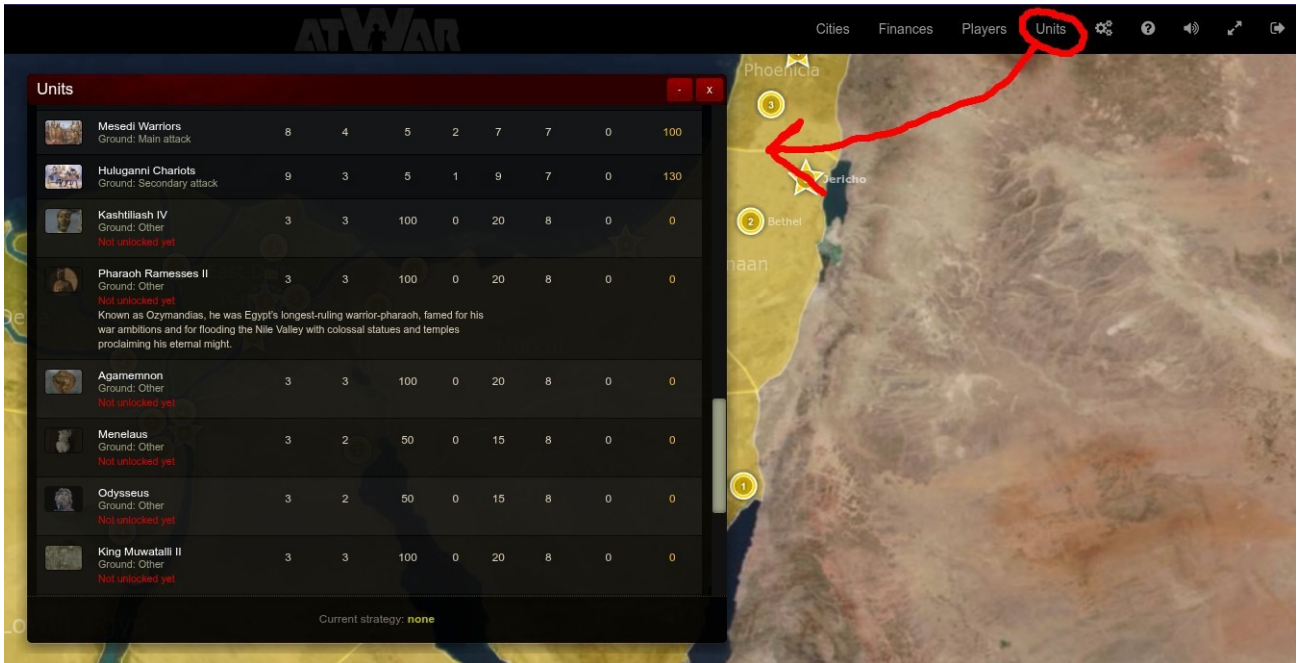


14) The above pop up will show turn number and any event messages. You can close it with “Continue”.

15) Zoom in and click on any city to show a city screen. It features its name, a city image, and units available to be built. There are country-specific units.



17) To view all units available in the game, click the top right “Units” and you can scroll through to view stats. Clicking on any row opens up descriptions I wrote. Click again to close. **Visual:**



18) You can move units by dragging to capture gray neutral territory. Clicking end turn will advance the turn counter by 1. Specific turns have specific events and messages. They will be listed in the next page.

19) You are free to continue playing the game. To leave the game, click top right exit symbol and press “OK”. You can then close your window. Since it is a guest account, it will be auto-deleted by AtWar after 48 hours, so you don’t have to worry about it.

Turn Events and Messages for “Bronze Age Collapse”

(AtWar events are scripted, automatic in-game messages that trigger units being added to the map on specific turns. Used to represent major historical moments)

Turn 1 - “The 13th Century BCE. Which empires will survive their fierce rivalries? Will they be prepared for the sudden, devastating onslaught of the Sea Peoples?” → Neutral environmental units like Cataracts, Trojan Walls, etc. spawn their respective game location.

Turn 2 - “Commanders have arrived. Ramesses II seeks to restore Egyptian dominance in Syria. In Mesopotamia, Assyria and Kassite Babylon quarrel over their frontier border.” → Country-specific commanders pop up. Sea Peoples get some units in Southern Turkey.

Turn 7 - “The Mycenaeans conquered the Minoans on Crete around 1450 BCE. Now will it be their turn to be conquered by the Sea Peoples?” → Sea Peoples get some units near Crete.

Turn 9 - “A severe drought has hit central Anatolia. The Hittite economy has suffered a permanent setback.” → The Hittite player total econ per turn is decreased by 200.

Turn 10 - “Babylonian nobles have successfully revolted against Assyrian domination. These uprisings capitalize on growing internal crisis in Assyria, where Tukulti-Ninurta faced severe opposition from his own elites and priesthood over his sacrilegious treatment of Babylon (such as stealing the statue of Marduk), culminating in his deposition and assassination in ~1207 BCE.” → Babylon gets some units to spawn.

Turn 11 - “Bronze Age trade networks were highly interconnected. Disruptions in one area would cascade across entire civilizations.” → Acts as a prelude for the next turn’s event.

Turn 12 - “A serious revolt has broken out in Lower Nubia!” → SP take control of Nubian units.

Turn 13 - “The Greeks had a strong oral tradition of bards reciting heroic tales for generations. The supposedly blind poet Homer crafted his monumental works in the later 8th century BCE, weaving timeless themes of honor and fate.” → Mycenaean Greeks get commander units “Achilles” and “Ajax” as well as eight “Bird-Headed Triaconters” (ships).

Turn 14 - “Driven by drought and famine, Libyan Tribes have conducted a significant invasion of the western Delta.” → Sea Peoples get Libyan Tribal Warriors (x35) in Libya (located on the northwestern border of Egypt). Pharaoh Ramesses III is spawned for Egypt.

Turn 15 - “The Battle of the Delta has erupted! Massive waves of Sea Peoples—displaced warriors and refugees from collapsed eastern Mediterranean civilizations—launch a desperate invasion by land and sea.” → More Sea Peoples show up in Egypt.

Turn 18 - “The Greeks have devised a cunning plan! After ten years of failed siege warfare, Odysseus and the Greek commanders have constructed a massive wooden horse as a deceptive gift, hiding elite warriors inside to infiltrate Troy's impenetrable walls and finally bring an end to the war” → Greek player gets “Wooden Horse” unit and some infantry in Northwestern Turkey. It is implied that they should use them to capture the city of Troy.

Turn 19 - “The Hittite core has descended into turmoil. Refugees establish Syro-Hittite kingdoms in the southeast. These Neo-Hittite states and their line of Great Kings would continue until 717 BCE, well into the Iron Age.” → Kuzi-Teshub and some Infantry spawn.

Select Units Descriptions (to get an idea)

- **King Tukulti-Ninurta I** (Assyria): Ruthless Assyrian conqueror who crushed Babylon, captured Kashtiliash IV, and had an epic poem composed boasting of his triumph. This represents one of the first known pieces of Akkadian epic poetry.
- **Pharaoh Ramesses II** (Egypt): Also known as Ozymandias, he was Egypt's longest-ruling warrior-pharaoh, famed for his war ambitions and for flooding the Nile Valley with colossal statues and temples proclaiming his eternal might.
- **Khepesh Swordsmen**: Shock troops equipped with the sickle-shaped khepesh blade.
- **Ramesside Chariots**: Fast two-horse Egyptian chariots crewed by a driver and elite archer.
- **Agamemnon** (Greece): Leader of a coalition of independent Greek kingdoms.
- **Menelaus** (Greece): King of Sparta and brother of Agamemnon. His wife Helen was abducted by Paris, sparking the Trojan War.
- **Odysseus** (Greece): After a decade-long voyage home from the Trojan War, fraught with divine wrath, mythical beasts, and perilous temptations, Odysseus returned in disguise to reclaim his kingdom and wife Penelope from the suitors who had overrun his palace.
- **Wanax Warriors** (Greece): Heavily armored retainers of the Mycenaean high king, clad in Dendra-style plate or scale armor.
- **Cassandra** (Troy): In Aeschylus' Orestia trilogy, she is a Trojan princess cursed by Apollo to utter true prophecies that no one would ever believe. Her warnings of Troy's fall went unheeded, and after the city's destruction, she was taken as Agamemnon's concubine.
- **Priam** (Troy): Aged king of Troy and father of fifty sons. Famously crossed enemy lines alone to ransom from Achilles the body of his son Hector. In the later Epic Cycle, he is slaughtered by Achilles' son Neoptolemus during the sack of Troy.
- **Hecuba** (Troy): Queen of Troy and mother of Hector, Paris, and Cassandra. In Euripides' tragedies, after watching her family being slaughtered in the city's fall, she is enslaved and awarded to Odysseus.
- **Paris** (Troy): Trojan prince who abducted Helen. The story of him killing Achilles with an arrow to the heel comes from later authors.
- **Clytemnestra**: Queen of Mycenae. Enraged by Agamemnon sacrificing their daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis to gain favorable winds for the Greek fleet sailing to Troy, she murdered him and his war-prize Cassandra upon his return from Troy.
- **Sherden Infantry** (Sea Peoples): Warriors of uncertain origin (possibly Sardinia or the eastern Mediterranean), distinguished by their iconic horned helmets with central disk.
- **Weshesh Raiders** (Sea Peoples): Fierce horned-helmet pirates who struck in swift ships and fought as swordsmen.
- **Denyen Slingers** (Sea Peoples): [High Crit] Sea Peoples skirmishers from the Aegean world, deadly with leather slings.
- **Maryannu Chariots** (Babylon): Noble chariot warriors in scale armour, driving two-horse chariots with driver and archer or javelinman.
- **Kuzi-Teshub** (Syria, Hittites): The first king of the Neo-Hittite era who ruled over Carchemish in the mid-12th century BCE.
- **Neo-Hittite Infantry** (Syria, Hittites): Spearmen of the Hittite successor states, armed with iron-tipped spears and round leather shields.