

Bruno Cathala

Five Tribes™



The rules of Five Tribes are quite simple, but each turn offers many possibilities. Clearly, there is a learning curve, and the first game may be difficult as one can feel overwhelmed by the numerous possibilities of moves available. In fact, you'll realize soon enough that trying to check all moves is a waste of time, as the really interesting ones are far less numerous than you initially thought.

The simple tips described in this guide will help you find the best moves.

Now this does not include any secret recipe to victory, but it will help you making the right decisions!

Paying the right price

The first thing to do when bidding for the turn order is knowing how much you can afford to spend in order to play first. The money you spend to go first plays an important part in the final result, as important (if not more) as the money or points that you will earn in your turn.

It is critical to analyze the different available moves properly (see below) to estimate how much is reasonable to pay for that turn.

In your first games, it can be very tempting not to pay at all and bid 0 on each turn. If you are playing against beginners that randomly drop their meeples and offer profitable moves to their opponents without notice, this can indeed be an interesting strategy. Yet it does not work with seasoned players and you will score less points against them if you stick to that strategy. If you only play in reaction to their moves, you cannot hope to achieve victory.

Using the Tribes



Viziers

Even if they do not have any special effect, Viziers can give many victory points at the end of the game. Remember that each Vizier is worth 1 point, and you will score 10 points per player that has less Viziers than you.

In a 4-player game, the player with the most Viziers usually scores more than 30 points, the second one more than 20, the third, more than 10, and the last one is left with almost nothing. Now if you know that there is generally less than 10 points between the first and the second player at the end of the game, you'll understand that it is critical to finish the game with the one more Vizier that will bring you victory over your opponents.

However it would be a mistake to focus on these meeples only. In Naqala, you'll need the support of several tribes. Spending too many turns to ensure the Vizier majority and nothing else is a clear path to defeat!



Elders

Elders are necessary to summon the powerful Djinn. They are worth some extra victory points, but their true value resides in their power.

It is always a good move to finish with Elders on a Sacred Place as this will allow you to take Elders AND to summon a Djinn in the same turn (thanks to the Tile action).

Such a move is even more interesting at the beginning of the game, because you will have more time to utilize the Djinn's profitable powers through the remainder of the game.

Last, but not least, if you go for an Elder-based strategy, know that you will need Slaves to activate your Djinn, which will require the Merchants (green meeples) for a trip to the market.



Builders

Builders allow you to make money. Since a gold coin is a victory coin, you'd better use them as much as possible. The first thing to do, as soon as the setup is finished, is analyzing the game board.

- ◆ Are there many Building tiles (blue-valued) in the same spot?
- ◆ Are there many Builders on these tiles?

If yes, then you have the opportunity to play very profitable moves. And if you manage to get some Slaves thanks to the Merchants (green meeples) and/or own the Djinn, Echidna, that doubles the amount of gold coins that you score when you perform a Builder action, then it's Christmas!



Merchants

The key here is analyzing the 9 Resource cards that are available at the beginning of the turn, and counting how many different Merchandise cards there are among the first cards. At the beginning of the game, targeting a Tile where there are two Merchants allows you to take 3 Resource cards. If that Tile is a Big Market, you may want to spend 6 Gold Coins to receive 2 extra cards. So in the end, you'd get 5 different cards in a single turn!



Assassins

Assassins have two functions:

1. Remove a Vizier or an Elder that belongs to an opponent.

A powerful option at the end of the game, because killing a Vizier may gain you a majority and thus give you 10 more points (which also makes for 10 less points for your opponent).

2. Remove a Meeple from the board, as long as it is in range of your Assassins (located on a Tile no farther away from your final Tile than 1 Tile per Assassin you just took).

At the very beginning of the game, check if there are two Assassins on one of the high-valued Tiles (15-12-10). If yes, you should try and bring a third Assassin here. This will allow you to kill the last meeple and take control of the Tile, placing one of your camels on it.

Later in the game, always keep an eye on lone Assassins. With an Assassin alone on its Tile, you can use the following technique:

A.

Starting position



B.

Move



C.

Tribe Action: Assassins

Remove the Builder on the Sacred Place
Take control of the Oasis (8) and of the Sacred Place (15)

Tile Action: Oasis

Place a Palm Tree on the Oasis (+3)



In the end, you've just scored 26 Victory Points!

With Assassins, you can choose a rush strategy. The objective is to take control of many tiles, placing as many camels as possible to end the game quickly.

Combining your actions

Always keep in mind that you will perform two actions during your turn

1. The Tribe Action
2. The Tile Action

When choosing a target Tile, choose one that allow you to use your Meeples instantly and get a nice bonus effect.

As we saw before, combining Elders and a Sacred Place or Merchants and a Big Market is always a good move.

Generally speaking, targeting a Tile where there are only Meeples of the same color allows you to perform the Tribe action, the Tile action AND gives you control of that Tile. Do not miss your chance when you see it!

Djinns may also play an important part. Always try to combine their effect with your move! Some of them reveal their power early in the game, others are very specific to a given situation -- make the best of it!

Dropping your Meeples

Now that you've read the previous paragraphs, you know how to properly analyze the game board. In game, on each turn, you will be able to see the Tile on which you want to finish your move. Now you need to learn how to optimize that move.

For that, ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ From which Tile should I start my move to reach this Tile?
- ◆ Which path should I follow?
- ◆ In what order should I drop the Meeples?

To analyze fast, count odd and even Tiles. Think of checkers: the board is a black and white checkers board. If you start your move from a Tile that has an odd number of meeples, then you will finish your move on a Tile of the opposite color. And if you start your move from a Tile that has an even number of Meeples, then you will finish your move on a Tile of the same color. It is as simple as that.



3 Meeple move

Also think about the order in which you want to drop the Meeples: you don't want to open profitable moves to your opponents after you.

In this regard, you should never:

- ◆ Accumulate Meeples of the same color on the same Tile ;
- ◆ Drop a lone Meeple on an empty Tile: a lone Meeple is simply too tempting as it offers the Tile control to an opponent. Sometimes, you don't have a choice though.

Tiles with 5 or more Meeples: the loop

When Meeples of various colors are accumulated on the same Tile, it becomes possible to take control of Tiles that were empty before your move. To do that, you need to make a loop. This is a crucial strategic element that can be very useful.



In that situation, you can drop the Meeples clockwise...



2 Meeple move

B.



You drop the Assassin in the first Tile, then the Merchant in the second Tile, the Builder in the third Tile, the Vizier in the starting Tile, and close your loop with the second Assassin (the fifth Meeple) that joins the first one.

C.



Such a move allows you to take control of two Tiles at once: the one with the Assassins, and the one of their victim (the Builder here).

Final tips

Now you know how to properly analyze the game board. In game, on each turn, you will be able to see the Tile on which you want to finish your move. Now you need to learn how to optimize that move.

To sum up what we covered in this Guide:

- ◆ Analyze the board at the beginning of each turn
- ◆ Estimate the reasonable amount of money that you can spend on your bid
- ◆ Be careful not to open profitable moves to the players after you
- ◆ If your opponents make a mistake, know how to use it in your advantage
- ◆ Make a good use of the powers of your Djinn

*This should put you on the path to victory!
Maqala is waiting for you!
Good luck...*

- Bruno Cathala

Credits

Game Design: Bruno Cathala

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