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PROGRAMME CULTURE 2007-2013

URBAN GAMES MODELS



Prepared by:

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ATHENS PLAYTHON

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6 models for big urban games

Introduction



As part of the HELIDRA Project, the Athens Plaython team, commissioned by PRISMA, hosted a series of educational games and workshops that took place in the neighbourhoods around Apostolou Pavlou in Athens, next to the Acropolis, focusing on the cross-European cultural heritage of medieval myths of dragons. Athens Plaython announced a competition, calling game designers from around the world to create games according to the brief specified by the HELIDRA proposal, i.e. inspired by the medieval history and legends of the heroes-guards of borders (Acrites). The prize for the competitors would be to actually play their games in Athens. 20 entries were received, from game designers originated from Greece, Europe and Australia. 6 proposals were approved, on the basis of their originality, compliance with the theme of the competition and feasibility of play-staging them in the selected area of Athens (around the Acropolis). These proposals were conceived, designed and led by:

- Two Danish groups
- One UK group
- Three Greek groups

Over 2000 Athenians of diverse backgrounds and ages participated in the events, which took place during the 14th and 15th September 2013. In specific players were as young 5 and as old as 75. They all participated actively in the games and commented about the novelty of playing together with people they hadn't met before.

Many of the players were immigrants living in the neighbourhood but also families and groups who came from many different locations around Athens to take part. We also designed accessible and inclusive games and playful interactions for people with disabilities that joined the festival.

The Games

1) Human Tower Defence: Acritic Heroes



Designers Names: Lau Korsgaard, Patrick Jarnfelt, Ida Toft, Amani Naseem from the Copenhagen Game Collective, Denmark

How many of you running the game, the day of the festival: 3

What age group is the game for? 9+

What's the min/max number of players that can play in a round? 8-30

Game Scenario, what is the story?

The Acritic heroes are defending the city from Ottoman invaders. The game is a struggle between hordes of Ottoman invaders against a few Acritic heroes. Each round, the Ottomans will get new tools of war, but the Acritics will gather more heroes - some with special abilities.

Game Setup: what do you need to play the game?

- 20 balls (that can be thrown at people, and potentially caught by the invaders)
- Chalk to draw a path, starting point and goal (a city) for the hordes + draw fixed positions for the Acritic heroes
- 1 Turban - or similar to make the Sultan recognizable
- Different equipment for the troops, e.g. 2-4 Shields, 2-4 Medic packs the medics can give to heal the wounded, 2 Medic bands to make medics recognizable.
- Different equipment for the heroes, e.g. exercise ball, different kinds of balls, a small box for standing higher.

Rules: how does the game work?

When the game starts all players but one plays the Ottoman horde, the last player is a lonely Acritic hero. In a round, the Ottomans have to run through a defined path to invade the city and the Acritic hero can only throw balls against the invaders. Whomever is hit by a ball joins the Acrites next round, but the Ottomans gets new specialised units such as the Janissaries who can heal other troops.

Goal: how does one win?

The Heroes win by repulsing the invaders. The Invaders win by surviving for 6 rounds and bringing the Sultan through the city gates. The Sultan is a special unit running with a big turban. Because of the shifting sides, winning is not that important, most players will in the end have played on both sides.

Any learning value you think your game enhanced;

The game uses historical names for troop units and heroes, providing a source of historical knowledge through experiential learning. The game makes sure not to portray the Acritics (Europeans) as good and the Ottomans (Muslims) as villains, but uses the historical conflict and lets the players play both sides. In the end you don't really know who to cheer for. This way we hope to promote greater cultural understanding and sensitivity.

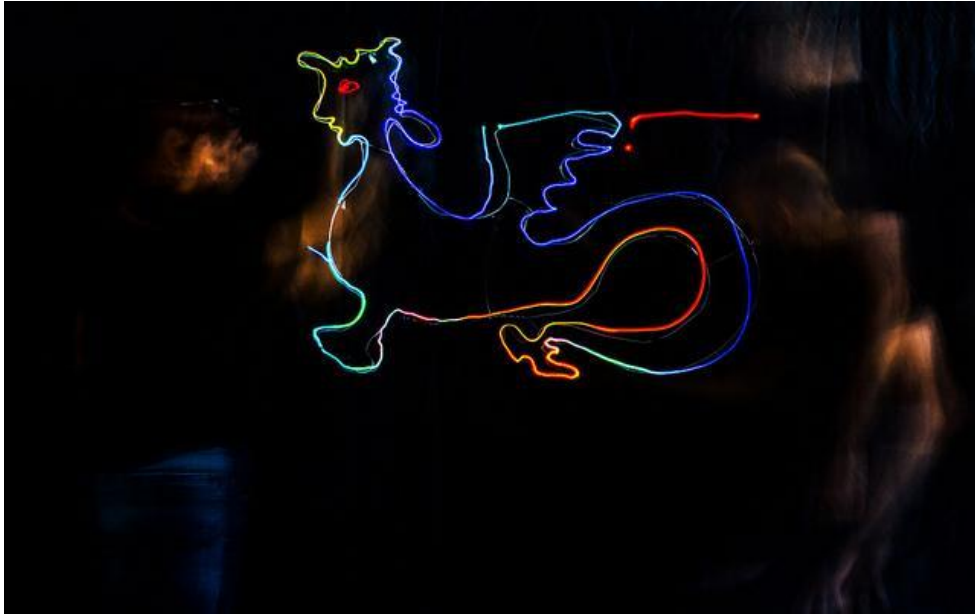
More documentation of the Game can be found here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cphgc/sets/72157636113182936/> and here:
<https://twitter.com/CphGC/status/379356820764377088/photo/1>

In addition attached is a pdf with card files.



2) Luminous Monsters Playful Workshop



Designer: Artemis Papageorgiou, Greece

How many of you running the workshop, the day of the festival; 5

What age group is the workshop for? 8+

What is the min/max number of players that can follow the workshop? 10-30

Workshop Scenario, what is the story?

In the context of the theatrical show Dragon organised by the Helidra project, we invite everyone to the Acropolis Museum to paint dragons and mythical monsters using the Athenian sky as our canvas. Participants will learn to use light-painting photography techniques, where by allowing more light through the shutter we can paint with light. We will design our monsters and dragons and then transfer them onto fabric, where we will photograph them with LED lights and dance figures. In the evening we will gather on the street and capture our monsters circulating around Acropolis!

Setup: what do you need to run the workshop?

A room, a DLR camera, a tripod, A3 white sheets and A1 black sheets of paper, pencils, 20m of wire, projection surface, a black fabric 1.5 x 1.5m and wall surface to mount on, a projector, a laptop, 5 big tables and chairs.

Rules: how does the workshop work?

The workshop leader starts by presenting the mythical monsters in the course of history from the Greek mythology up to the medieval dragon. He/she explores their presence inside the culture they were invented and focuses on their physical appearance. The workshop continues with the presentation of the light painting technique and its' possibilities. Then we visit relevant museum exhibits and then move on to the table area, where participants are handed illustrated parts of monsters and they are asked to invent their own imaginary, 'contemporary' monster, using the existing monster parts at will. Participants transfer

their drawings onto wire structures and then place them on a black backdrop where they are photographed with long exposure. Participants are invited to use different LED lights and improvise with the shape of their creation during the long exposure. If it is dark outside we transfer the creations outside and we 'paint with light' with the city as a backdrop.

Any learning value you think your workshop enhanced; i.e. know the history of the Akrites better, critical thinking and collaboration skills?

The workshop aimed in teaching participants about different types of monsters and their historical symbolism/ significance from the mythical monsters up to the medieval dragon. Participants learned about long exposure in cameras and how they can use light with it. They also learned how to work in teams to create their team monsters.

More documentation of the workshop can be found here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/athensplaython/sets/72157635631079884/with/9980661126/>



3) Guardians of the Frontier



Designers: The Larks, UK

How many of you running the game, the day of the festival? 2

What age group is the game for? Children 6+ are welcome, yet must be supervised.

What's the min/max number of players that can play in a round? 32

Game Scenario; what is the story?

Through blood sweat and tears, you and your fellow Stratioti (soldiers) have carved out a slice of territory in the Byzantine wilderness. But you need to hold on to it, because others are amassing and your borders are breached! You and your fellow Stradioti must protect your Empire from invasion. Teams compete to prove their elite defense and attack abilities to be declared Acrites (winners!) and worshipped accordingly.

Setup: what do you need to play the game?

➤ **Space:** Four teams are allocated four territories: these must be roughly equal in size and equal in distance from the base. There should be potential for teams to hide, not necessarily at all times. A crossroads works well as a base where the territories are the four surrounding 'blocks'. A moderately busy park can also work well. (An area of completely flat empty space wouldn't work well as there wouldn't be anywhere to hide which negates the 'Spy' role – anything else can work.) We normally do it outside but it could work indoors too.

➤ **Props:** Before the game we distribute a set of coloured flags through each territory. These are cable tied to street furniture. Players use small stickers to attack and defend territories, these are easily removable at the end of each round ready for the next. Flags are removed at the end of the game.

➤ **Volunteers:** We can set up with two people, but it is very useful to have a volunteer to help with this and for turning around the game at the end of each round. They are also very useful for translating.

Rules: how does the game work?

- Teams of 5-8 come together (teams should be equal in size).
- The first task is to create the Empire. Teams have 3 minutes to: think of a name of your Empire think up an inspiring motto for the Empire, and select an Emperor, who wears a suitable headdress.
- Teams introduce themselves.
- Emperor: they will stay back at base; they will manage their team, decide strategy, roles within the team, and generally be obeyed and adored.
- Territory: You will be given a territory to defend. Territories are equal in size and distance from base. Your territory is marked on your map. In each territory there are flags that can be taken by other teams. The aim of the game is to score points by attacking other team's flags whilst defending your own team's flags from others.
- Roles: Your Emperor will receive a set of cards which detail the different roles and the instructions for each role. Emperor allocates roles by distributing cards to team members. The roles are:
 1. *Hunters move in enemy blocks, and can tag enemy flags with a sticker of their own team colour.*
 2. *Defenders move in their own block, and can reclaim a lost flag by placing a sticker on top of a Hunter's, neutralising the threat.*
 3. *Spies can move anywhere, and can communicate information from the field back to the Emperor*
 4. *The Emperor can change a role at any point, providing they have enough cards. They must do this at base.*
- Communications: Emperor must keep up appearances at all times. They should not be seen on the phone at any time as they need to be available to be admired and generally fawned over at all times. Spies on the other hand are omnipresent and can use telephones, Twitter and any other means of communications they desire, as can other teams members.
- Time: Teams have 5 minutes to allocate roles and discuss your strategy. There will then be 20 minutes of playing time.

Goal: how does one win?

Scoring works as following; players get +1 points for every flag successfully taken / -1 for every flag lost / -1 for every team member not back at end of play. It is very important you are back before the countdown hits zero. Winners will be declared Acrites and will receive worship at the end of the game.

Any learning value you think your game enhanced?

The game structure is built around upon the strict hierarchies of the Byzantine Empire. Players in these roles deepen their understanding of how the power structures worked, how important and admired the Acrites were, and how difficult their job may have been.

In addition players play out a system of defence and attack utilising Byzantine power structures. This sees ideologies around defence and territory explored, parallels subtly drawn with current conflicts, and participants are reminded how far we have come to see a unified Europe, and reminded how much this is currently under question.

Finally players develop collaboration skills while playing the game. Even though teams compete to win, the game sees a great deal of collaboration. Teams must devise a strategy in a limited time frame, negotiate with one another and work together to solve problems.

More documentation of the game can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tvmpbrkcrazg5n7/nteDwzmZuw>



4) All for One and One for All



Designer: Themis Gkion, Flow, Greece

How many of you running the game, the day of the festival: 3

What age group is the game for? 12-99 years old. Accessible and adaptable for people with disabilities.

What is the min/max number of players that can play in a round? 3 players exactly.

Game Scenario; what is the story?

A simple but exciting game using ropes and obstacles. The three Acritic Guards join forces to protect the acritic villages from attacks by the bandit hordes. United, they can lift the battering ram to repel the bandits, siege the bandit camps and keep the villages safe. Played by teams of three players in open spaces. Average round lasts 5 minutes.

Game Setup: what do you need to play the game?

- A flat circular area with a diameter of around 10-15m (preferably outdoors) to act as the game field.
- 3 elevated anchoring points (height 2-4m) where ropes can be tied from, positioned around the game field forming an equilateral triangle. These anchoring points could be trees, columns, poles, hooks on walls or ceiling, etc.
- The rest of the necessary materials to run the game (chess pawns, ropes) can be transported in 2 boxes sized 60x40x40cm.
- Depending on the available budget we can build durable wooden chess pawns to replace the paper+plastic bottle prototypes.

Rules: how does the game work?

The field is a circle with diameter around 15m. The giant chess pawns (around 50cm high) are placed standing scattered towards the centre of the field. There are three kinds of pawns representing: the 5 acritic villages, the 5 bandit camps and the 5 bandits.

The Acritic guards start below each anchoring point. Each guard has the end of a rope attached around her torso. Each rope runs through the respective anchoring point and all three free ends are tied together on the battering ram. The guards have to keep the battering ram constantly hoisted by moving away from the anchoring points.

Their “daytime” goal is to carefully knock down all the bandits (giant chess pawns) one by one, without knocking down any camp or village. Once they are done with the bandits, “the night falls”. During the “night”, the guards have to knock down the bandit camps, while still protecting the acritic villages. Only one of the three guards faces the field at night, so she has to guide the other two in order to reach their collaborative goal.

Goal: how does one win?

The team of three wins collaboratively, by knocking down all the bandits and all the bandit camps, while the acritic villages remain standing. So the game runs until, all the bandits and all the bandit camps are knocked down. The team loses if all the villages are knocked down. Penalty points are applied for each bandit camp knocked down during daytime and each acritic village knocked down.

Any learning value you think your game enhanced; i.e. know the history of the Acrites better, critical thinking and collaboration skills?

All for One is a fast-paced 3D-guidance game, nurturing co-operation, direct communication and trust. It also cultivates spatial awareness and guidance skills, in an unusual pyramid coordinate system.

It highlights the history of the acritic villages being ravaged by bandit hordes and heroically protected by the acritic guards. The game has been tested with players of different age groups and disabilities and has been used as an accessible medium of cooperation between people with different abilities.



5) Human Frontier



Designers: Elina Roinioti, Marilena Agathou, Greece

How many of you running the game, the day of the festival 2

What age group is the game for? 15+

What's the min/max number of players that can play in a round? 10 Exactly

Game Scenario; what is the story?

Welcome to the Human Frontier, a preparatory academy for the future Acrites, the heroic guardians of the Byzantine Empire. Two of the best instructors will lead you through a simple thus difficult task that will determine if you have what it takes to become an Acritas. Be aware, your future as Acritas is tied up with the rest of the group.

Setup: what do you need to play the game?

A board 8x5 cm depicting the map of Byzantium, 10 adjusted belts with ropes

Rules: how does the game work?

The players form pairs and wear an adjusted set of belts. Each belt has ropes that allow each pair to be connected and thus be tied with another pair, forming a human chain.

Every couple steps into a designated area inside the game board and waits for the instructors to give his/her orders. The board is made of tiles, depicting the Byzantium borders. Some of the tiles (10) are marked with a symbol, illustrating the forts i.e. the positions that each future Acritas has to obtain in order to protect the empire.

Every time the instructor shouts "OUT", the players have to go and find their own fort in the board. But be aware! Each player has to occupy one position each time and all of them have to be careful not to leave any position/fort empty. In this case, the borders are perforated, leaving the opportunity to the enemies to

penetrate and thus failing to become an Acritas. Measuring the length of the rope on their adjusted belts will help them find their right position in regard to their partner but also to their respective neighbour. When the instructor shouts "IN" everybody have to return to their initial position, inside the designated area. When the couples find their own forts they tie themselves with their neighbours, aiming to create a human chain that will pass through all the forts, keeping the empire safe. If there is a couple that have problem to follow the orders of the instructors then the entire group gets a penalty. Count three penalties and the entire group gets suspended, loses their right to become Actites and the game ends.

Goal: how does one win?

This is a co-operative game where the group as a total can either win or lose. There is only one winning condition: find your right position in the map and with the help of the others, form the borders of Byzantium.

Any learning value you think your game enhanced;

The game promotes collaboration between players as well as space awareness. The game has been tested both with teenagers and older people and promotes both puzzle solving abilities as well as conversations regarding frontiers, wars, history and political stability in the past and in the present.



6) The Pyrite Battle



Designers: Jakob la Cour and Jesper Pedersen. Denmark

How many of you running the game, the day of the festival 1

What age group is the game for? +15

What's the min/max number of players that can play in a round? 30-300

Game Scenario; what is the story?

The epic re-enactment game of the intense battle between the The Acrites of The Pyrite Cube and The Eastern Men of Nature. A lost acritic song has been found in the Middle East telling a story of an intense battle on the day fought to protect a mysterious and enormous pyrite cube crystal. A pyrite crystal said to have godlike powers. The Epic Game is an advanced tag game ceremony that re-enact the pyrite battle in a fun and playful ceremonial fashion. The game force people to collaborate, be strategic and move fast as they either fight to get or protect the pyrite crystal. There are various play modes so fast runners, strategic minds and social intelligent have their job to do. The game also have special spectacular features such as the battle horse, the acritic song and the pyrite ceremony. The game is played in epic places where there is room for battle and good spots for spectators to watch as the battle unfold. The Pyrite Battle is a playful historic game about the intense battle between The Knights of The Pyrite Cube and The Eastern Men of Nature. A battle that sparked the tension around a cube formed crystal with enormous wisdom, in present time, known as Mr. Cube. Are you ready to decide the fate of the pyrite cube crystal?

Setup: what do you need to play the game?

A cube, plastic swords and big and epic space like squares, parks or similar with beautiful buildings and natural environment.

Rules: how does the game work?

The epic game is an advanced tag game ceremony that re-enact the pyrite battle in a fun and playful ceremonial fashion. The game force people to collaborate, be strategic and move fast as they either fight to get or protect the pyrite crystal. There are various play modes so fast runners, strategic minds and social intelligent have their job to do. The game also have special spectacular features such as the battle horse, the acritic song and the pyrite ceremony. The game is played in epic places where there is room for battle and good spots for spectators to watch as the battle unfold.

Goal: how does one win?

The team that acquires the Mystery Mr Cube is the winning team.

Any learning value you think your game enhanced;

The game uses as an inspiration historical and mythological symbols such as the Acrites the frontier men, Guards of the Byzantine Empire and the Cube symbolism, since the ancients often symbolized the logical/rational mind of human as a cube, in contrast to the spirit, signified by a sphere.

