

DUEL OF MELOCH

SCYTHE VS. EXPEDITIONS

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1-2 PLAYERS · 45 MINUTES · AGES 14+ · COMPETITIVE

The devious creature called Meloch was moments away from returning to Europa through Tarkovsky's portal before the expeditionary heroes thwarted its plan. With the glimpse of freedom came a burst of inspiration: Pit these legends against each other in head-to-head duels until only one remains. Meloch waited for the right moment to stretch its ethereal tendrils into reality, teleporting adventurers across space and time, leaving them to fend for their lives in a climactic final stand.

OVERVIEW AND GOAL

Duel of Meloch combines two existing games, Scythe and Expeditions. One player uses the Scythe rules and components (including a new faction and player mat found here); the other player uses the Expedition rules (including a new mech, character, and companion found here). The duel takes place in a tight space on a new double-sided map—only 10 locations and 2 lakes—so every turn is crucial.

All existing Scythe factions and player mats (along with most encounter cards) plus all existing Expeditions mechs, characters, and companions (along with most discovery cards) are compatible with Duel of Meloch. Likewise, the components in Duel of Meloch are compatible with Scythe and Expeditions.

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From Nikte's journal:

With great effort—and not without great losses—we stopped Dr. Tarkovsky from permanently opening the portal. Since then, however, I have felt the lurking presence of something sinister and ancient. I try not to think about it, but the anxiety does not disappear. At night I'm tormented by nightmares of a powerful being called Meloch. In every dream, Meloch promises I will find peace if I simply touch the cosmic artifact that we found in Tarkovsky's camp. I don't know how much longer I can resist...

COMPONENTS

SCYTHE PLAYER

1 rule summary guide



20 resource tokens (5 each of food, oil, metal, and wood)



3 Factory cards



60 combat cards (new design)



6 encounter cards



5 miniatures (4 mechs and 1 character)



31 wooden tokens (6 stars, 1 action token, 1 popularity token, 1 power token, 4 structures, 4 recruits, 8 workers, and 6 technology cubes)



1 faction mat



1 player mat



1 Power Dial



1 alliance token and 1 home base tile (these are not used in *Duel of Meloch*)



EXPEDITIONS PLAYER

1 rule summary guide



1 Power Dial (a new addition just for *Duel of Meloch*)



12 corruption tokens (guile: 4 each of 2-value & 3-value; power: 2 each of 2-value & 3-value)



There are more guile tokens (teal) than power tokens (orange) because power is also used for combat in *Duel of Meloch*.

15 workers (3 each of purple, green, red, yellow, and blue)



30 discovery cards (10 each of items, meteorites, and quests)



3 starting cards (1 each of mech, character, and companion)



1 mech miniature and 1 base snap



8 wooden tokens (4 stars [aka glory], 1 hero worker, 1 power token, 1 guile token, and 1 action token)



1 mech mat



GLOBAL COMPONENTS

1 double-sided rubber playmat (aka the “board”)



20 cardboard coins (\$1 × 10, \$3 × 4, \$5 × 3, \$10 × 2, and \$20 × 1)



9 map tokens (aka encounter tokens)



1 double-sided Triumph Track



10 Meloch cards



1 Tournament of Meloch sheet



1 Appendix



The solo mode components are listed in the Automa rulebook. Replacement parts can be requested on the form at stonemaiergames.com/replacement-parts.



SETUP



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SHARED COMPONENTS

- 1 Place the **playmat** (either side) on the table so the popularity/power track is facing the Scythe player.
- 2 Place the **resources, coins, and workers** in a supply near the board. It is fine to include additional coins and resource tokens from Scythe and Expeditions.
- 3 Randomize the **9 map tokens** and place 1 face down on each of the 6 indicated locations (icon overlapping with the location number). Set the remaining map tokens aside face down.
- 4 Randomize the **12 corruption tokens** and stack 2 face up on each of the 6 locations that have a dotted square box.
- 5 Place the **Triumph Track** (either side) near the board, with  edge facing the Scythe player.
- 6 Shuffle the **combat cards** and set the deck face down near the board. *Do not use the original combat cards from Scythe when playing Duel of Meloch.*
- 7 Shuffle the **Factory cards** and place 2 face down next to the board. Return the rest to the box. You may include Factory cards from Scythe.
- 8 Shuffle the **encounter cards** and place the deck face down near the board. You may include encounter cards from Scythe. There may be a few encounters that don't make sense in the context of the Duel; if one is drawn, discard it and redraw.
- 9 Shuffle the **discovery cards** and place 1 card face up on each lake and place the deck face down near the board. You may include discovery cards from Expeditions; if you do, whenever a quest for locations 11–20 is drawn, discard it and redraw.
- 10 Shuffle the **Meloch cards** () and place the deck face down nearby. Reveal a card and place it between the players with a random orientation. Neither player gains anything yet.

Duel of Meloch is not designed for Scythe's airships or the Expeditions corrupted mech. Leave these components in their respective boxes.



SCYTHE PLAYER



EXPEDITIONS PLAYER

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PLAYER COMPONENTS

IF YOU ARE THE SCYTHE PLAYER, sit on the side of the board with the popularity/power track oriented toward you. Select and set up any faction mat and any player mat with their corresponding tokens (including all 6 stars) and miniatures, Power Dial, and all starting components indicated on those mats (except objective cards). As always, start with 2 workers on the locations adjacent to your home base (11) (1 on each location). *Reference the included Rule Summary for the full Scythe: Duel of Meloch setup instructions.*

IF YOU ARE THE EXPEDITIONS PLAYER, sit on the other side of the board. Select and set up any mech (12) with its corresponding mat and card (from Gears of Corruption), any character/companion pair with their corresponding tokens, and a Power Dial. Gain all starting resources as indicated on the matching mech card (if you're playing with a mech originally from Expeditions but you don't have the mech cards from Gears of Corruption, start with 3 guile, 3 power, and 1 hero worker). **The Expeditions player takes the first turn.** *Reference the included Rule Summary for the full Expeditions: Duel of Meloch setup instructions.*

It is possible for the same character to duel against themselves. Why would Scythe's Anna fight Expedition's Anna? Meloch's scheme to teleport them across space and time has left them angry, confused, and in survival mode.

GAMEPLAY OVERVIEW

Duel of Meloch is a clash of Scythe versus Expeditions, just on a smaller map, with multiple ways to disrupt the other player, and without end-of-game scoring. The winner is the first player to place 4 stars on the new Triumph Track, where only 1 star can be placed on each category.

EXPERIENCE DISPARITY VARIANT: If there is a significant experience disparity between players (i.e., if one player has played dozens of games of Scythe and the other has never played Expeditions), the less experienced player can decrease their victory condition to 3 or 2 stars.

HOW TO PLAY

Aside from the following differences, the rules of Scythe and Expeditions apply to their respective players. Summary guides for each game that omit inapplicable rules are included in Duel of Meloch. Full rulebooks and rule videos are available at stonemaiergames.com.

EXPEDITIONS SPECIAL NOTES:

- There are no locations to reveal; instead, unexplored locations—**at which the Expeditions player must stop**—are indicated by map tokens. Whenever you gain a map token from a location (by moving there or via card abilities), first gain its secret bonus (your mech is considered to be on that new location when you gain the bonus). Do not add corruption to newly explored locations.
- Combat cards** () are a new Gather benefit and map token bonus. The function of these cards is described in the next section. Combat cards are kept face down near your mech mat, separated from your discovery cards (i.e., your hand and active row).
- A new icon () indicates that you can draw a combination of any 2 cards—combat or discovery—from their respective decks. Keep 1 and discard the other.
- A few of the original discovery cards (items, meteorites, and quests) mention directions (e.g., card 56 reads, “If every opponent is south of you, gain 2 power”). For these, compare your mech’s location to the Scythe character’s location. A location is south/north if any part of it is lower/higher than your location. North is up from your perspective.
- Some new discovery cards include one of two new phrases:
 - PEEK AT THE TOP 2 CARDS OF ANY DECK:** Choose either the combat deck or the discovery deck (not 1 from each). Only you see these cards.
 - ALL OPPONENTS FIRST DECREASE EACH TOKEN ON TRACKS BY 1:** The Scythe player must reduce their power and popularity by 1 each (if possible).
- If an ability says to **trash a card**, you may choose either a discovery card or a combat card. If an ability says to **discard a card**, it only applies to discovery cards (transfer a discovery card in hand to your active row without activating it).
- Each **quest card** has 2 locations where it can be solved.
- Your mech **cannot move through tunnels or onto lakes**, but may move across rivers. Ignore Factory and terrain icons on locations (they are for the Scythe player).
- You begin with a **hero worker**. It is all worker colors for all situations and abilities, and it counts toward the “6 workers” category on the Triumph Track. You cannot gain more hero workers, and if you trash your hero worker, you cannot regain it.

SCYTHE SPECIAL NOTES:

- Do **not** use **objective cards** or structure bonus tiles.
- Recruit Ongoing Bonuses** cannot be triggered by the Expeditions player.
- Ignore **Gather benefits and corruption** on locations (they are for the Expeditions player).
- Map tokens** are the same as encounter tokens. If your character gains a map, it results in an encounter card (ignore the bonus on the map token). If fully depleted, shuffle the encounter deck.
- Two benefits originally associated with Expeditions now apply to you when noted on combat cards, encounters, and the new faction.

REFRESH (🔄): Remove your action token from its current section on your player mat and place it on a different section. If this benefit is gained before taking a bottom-row action on your turn, you may proceed to take the bottom-row action of the new section.

SWEEP (🧹): Remove any number of face-up Expeditions cards from the board and place them in the sweep pile, then replace the chosen cards with new cards dealt face up from the deck. These cards do not benefit you, but sweeping will prevent the Expeditions player from gaining them. If the deck is ever empty, shuffle the sweep pile to form a new deck.

- Some new **encounter cards** include adjusting the opponent's tokens on tracks (i.e., power and guile on the Expeditions mech mat).

- If playing on the desert side of the map, note the rivers between locations 9/6 and 3/1.

FACTION-SPECIFIC NOTES:

ALBION: There is no end-of-game scoring for area control in Duel of Meloch, so Flag tokens only help Albion for their Rally ability.

CONSTANTINOPLE (NEW FACTION): See Appendix.

FENRIS: Influence tokens do cause the Expeditions mech's movement to end. Each player's coin total is continually reduced (for the coin goal on the Triumph Track) by the number of unplaced influence tokens in their supply.

POLANIA: You cannot force Expeditions workers to retreat, so the Camaraderie ability doesn't apply to Duel of Meloch.

SAXONY: Saxony can feasibly place all 4 stars for winning combat; they are all placed on combat victory categories of the Triumph Track (first open categories, then stack on categories claimed by either player).

TOGAWA: Most of Togawa's traps work as normal, except for the popularity trap, which has no effect on the Expeditions player.

VESNA: On the Jungle side of the map, we recommend that Vesna choose either Seaworthy or Submerge so she can access the area blocked by rivers.

After the war, the Great Sultanate, known mainly as Constantinople in the West, divided into the Southern and Northern Sultanate and lost its international imperial position. However, the Great Sultanate still has significant territories and influence, mainly in Asia and Africa. Trying to regain his former prestige and power, the Sultan sent a military expedition to the Balkans, near the Factory, to join the great race for Tesla's technology and wonders of this new era. The expedition is led by the Sultan's nephew, the renowned inventor and commander Admiral Evren Uthman.

Evren, even from his youngest years, was distinguished by his sharp mind and fascination with technology, engineering, and exploration. He watched the first walking machines presented by Tesla a few years ago in Constantinople with great fascination and envy. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Admiral of the Air Fleet of Constantinople, Evren convinced the Sultan to reform the army and to invest in new prototypes and blueprints from the Factory. His adventuring companion is the powerful Anatolian Shepherd, Acar, from a long line of highly intelligent and loyal canines that have accompanied his family for generations.

INTERACTIONS, COMBAT, AND COMBAT CARDS

The level of direct interaction in *Duel of Meloch* is much higher than in the original *Scythe* or *Expeditions* games due to the smaller board, the race to 4 stars (and only 1 star per category), and the increased emphasis on combat and disruption.

The *Scythe* player has the advantage in combat due to their ability to play 1 combat card for each of their combat units (character and mechs), which makes the *Expeditions* player wary of getting too close. There are a limited number of map tokens on the board, and some options on the new encounter cards will disrupt the *Expedition* player's plans.

The order of operations (when applicable) is combat, encounters/maps, then the *Factory* (if the *Scythe* player is on the *Factory* location).

FOR SCYTHE, if your combat unit (mech/character) moves into a territory containing the opposing mech, your movement ends. Workers may not move into a territory containing the opposing mech.

FOR EXPEDITIONS, if your mech moves into a territory containing an opposing combat unit, your movement ends. If there are only opposing workers on the territory, the workers remain and your movement may continue.

IN DUEL OF MELOCH, units sharing a location does not trigger combat. **The Expeditions player controls the location (the Scythe player's workers cannot trade, produce, build, deploy, or spend/gain resources there).**

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COMBAT

To initiate combat, either (a) the **Expeditions player** gains the Vanquish benefit on a location with a *Scythe* mech/character and chooses to Vanquish them instead of corruption or (b) the **Scythe player** ends a movement action with at least 1 mech/character on the *Expeditions* mech's location (whether or not that *Scythe* unit moved this turn) and chooses to engage in combat.

Combat proceeds as follows.

1. **SELECT POWER:** Combating players each select on their Power Dials the amount of their power they will spend (max 7). Optionally (secretly) add up to 1 combat card for your character and each of your mechs involved in the combat (i.e., max 1 for *Expeditions*).
2. **REVEAL:** Reveal Power Dials and combat cards, adding totals. The attacker applies the effects and adds the values of their combat card(s) first, followed by the defender.
3. **RESOLVE:** The player with higher total wins (the attacker wins ties, unless a combat card specifies otherwise). Discard combat cards and pay the power shown on your dial.

WINNER: Place a star on the Triumph Track (if the category is available; the *Expeditions* player places the combat star without needing to Boast).

LOSER: Retreat all units on that location to home base (if the *Scythe* player retreats, they leave resources behind). If the retreating player spent at least 1 power (on their dial or via a combat card), they draw 1 combat card.

COMBAT CARDS

Duel of Meloch features 8 different types of combat cards in a deck of 60; do **not** use the original Scythe combat cards.

Each of the new combat cards has multiple uses.

- **DISCARD DURING YOUR TURN TO GAIN A BENEFIT:** You may discard any number of combat cards during your turn (except during combat) to gain the benefit shown at the upper right.

EXAMPLE: If the Scythe player discards Element of Surprise, they refresh their action token by moving it to a different section of their player mat. If the Expeditions player discards Swarm Tactics, they gain any worker (red, green, blue, yellow, or purple); if the Scythe player gained this benefit, they would place the worker (if one is available on their player mat) on any territory they control or on their home base.

- **PLAY DURING COMBAT:** You may play up to 1 combat card per combat unit, tucking it secretly behind your Power Dial. When revealed, apply the effects and add the values shown at the upper left of each tucked combat card to your combat total.

EXAMPLE: If either player plays Swarm Tactics and there are a total of 4 units in combat—1 character, 2 workers, and 1 Expeditions mech—the total value of the card is 6. If either player plays Element of Surprise, they draw a combat card from the deck, add its upper-left value to the 1-value of Element of Surprise and their Power Dial value, and discard it without applying its effect.

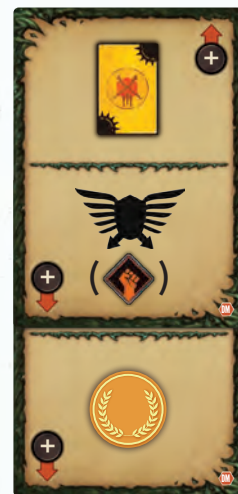


PLACING STARS, MELOCH CARDS, AND END OF GAME



The **Scythe** player places a star on an empty space on the Triumph track immediately when they meet its requirement printed on their side of the track. The **Expeditions** player must gain a Boast benefit in order to place a star on one completed requirement (except when winning combat, they place that star immediately without needing to Boast).

10 Whenever your opponent places their first, second, or third star, you draw a **Meloch** card. Orient it either way, then place it to cover half of the most recently placed card. You may gain all benefits facing you (on multiple cards); your opponent doesn't gain anything. In the example shown, you gain 1 power and 1 coin. If the *Scythe* player gains a worker as a *Meloch* card benefit, they would place the worker (if one is available on their player mat) on any territory they control or on their home base.



When a player places their 4th star on the Triumph Track, they instantly win.

CONTROL 7+ LOCATIONS



EDGE CASE: On side B of the Triumph Track, there is a very rare scenario in which a player could cause a stalemate by keeping all combat units on their home base (preventing the other player from getting their 4th star via combat). If this specific situation arises—if both players have 3 stars, only combat stars remain, and a player's combat units are all on their home base and have not moved onto territories for at least 2 turns—players may attack units on home bases for the rest of the game, by treating home bases as locations.

VARIANTS

These Duel of Meloch variants require components from Scythe or Expeditions.

- **SCYTHE VS. SCYTHE:** Each player uses a Scythe faction and player mat (and a randomly assigned home base and starting player), ignoring setup and rules for Expeditions. Both players compete for the same Triumph Track categories.

SHARING LOCATIONS: As in normal Scythe, if your combat unit (mech/character) moves into a territory containing an enemy combat unit, your movement ends and combat commences. If your combat unit moves into a territory containing only opposing workers, the workers retreat to their home base and you lose 1 popularity (if able) per retreated worker, then your movement ends.

NEW BENEFITS IN STANDARD SCYTHE GAMES:

- “All opponents decrease each token on tracks by 1”: Each opponent must reduce their popularity and power by 1 each (if possible).
- Sweep (🗑️) has no effect in Scythe-only games.

- **EXPEDITIONS VS. EXPEDITIONS:** Each player uses an Expeditions mech and a randomly assigned home base, ignoring setup and rules for Scythe. Use all available discovery cards, discarding quests for locations 11–20 when drawn/revealed. Both players compete for the same Triumph Track categories. Note that it is more difficult in this variant for a player to gain a star for 4 maps, but there are some discovery cards in Expeditions that provide a map token, so it isn’t impossible.

SHARING LOCATIONS AND COMBAT: You may only end your mech’s movement on the same location as the opponent if you are initiating combat that turn (i.e., Vanquish). Otherwise mechs cannot share locations.

NEW DISCOVERY CARDS IN STANDARD EXPEDITIONS GAMES:

- “Peek at the top 2 cards of any deck”: This refers to the discovery deck.
- “All opponents first decrease each token on tracks by 1”: Each opponent must reduce their power and guile by 1 each (if possible).

The components in Duel of Meloch can also be used to expand Scythe (faction, player mat, encounter cards, Factory cards, and combat cards) and Expeditions (mech, character, companion, and discovery cards; we recommend keeping the new corruption tokens and workers separate). However, the new board is designed only for the duel format (e.g., it lacks Scythe’s full popularity track and locations 11–20 for Expeditions).

TOURNAMENT OF MELOCH SHEET: If you own Scythe and/or Expeditions, there are dozens of combinations of factions & player mats and mechs & characters/companions. With those combinations, you can play one or more “Tournaments of Meloch” with Scythe vs. Expeditions in the first round and winners competing in the duel format in subsequent rounds (this may result in some games of Scythe vs. Scythe or Expeditions vs. Expeditions). We’ll offer the tournament sheet on our website for downloading and printing.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: While brainstorming expansion ideas for *Expeditions* in the summer of 2024, I was fascinated by the newly revealed 7 Wonders spinoff, *Duel for Middle-Earth* (and reminded, as a result, of our standalone 2-player game that doubles as an expansion, *Wingspan Asia*). A tight 2-player duel with asymmetry and direct interaction; how cool would it be to have something like that in the 1920+ world? After all, we know from our annual demographic survey that 33% of our audience are primarily 2-player gamers.

On a whim, I had the idea that Meloch—a devious fictional deity that Jakub had already shared with me as the main antagonist of *Expeditions*—would force the adventurers of *Expeditions* to fight against the heroes of *Scythe*, forming a new bridge between the two games (and also breaking my word that *Scythe* was complete; this is as big of a surprise to me as it is to you!). I couldn't stop thinking about the idea, and within a few days, I had it at the table. The initial test went surprisingly well. I discussed it with Jakub and my coworkers, and then the real work began. This is most likely our last visit to the 1920+ world, and I'm forever grateful that you've joined us for the journey over the last 10+ years.

Special thanks to Gheorghe Orbesteanu for designing some of the discovery cards, Thomas Tamblyn for the guile, corruption, meteor, and meld icon designs, and Skoll for the power icon. The original works have been modified and are licensed under creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/legalcode.

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Go to stonemaiergames.com/games/duel-of-meloch/rules-faq

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