

(to define the historical problem space)

5 Gameworld  
Elements

**Agents**

(non-player)  
(help & hinder)

**Action Choices**  
compete  
collaborate  
employ

**Resources**  
(acquired & spent)

**Action Choices**  
locate  
*exploit*  
spend

**Obstacles**

(block progress)

**Action Choices**  
dodge  
*exploit*

**Metrics**

(measure states  
& trigger events)

**Action Choices**  
*occupy*  
*contest*  
manage

**Tools**

(acquired & used  
for benefits)

**Action Choices**  
locate  
*exploit*  
spend

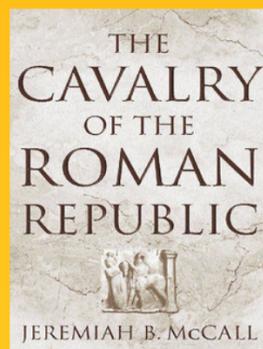
**Special Action-Choices**

*occupy; travel;*  
*explore; control;*  
*contest; exploit;*  
*develop; witness*

# Designing Historical Games with the Historical Problem Space Framework

Jeremiah McCall  
Cincinnati Country Day School  
jmc.hst@gmail.com  
gamingthepast.net  
@gamingthepast.bsky.social

# History, History Ed. & Historical Problem Spaces A Timeline



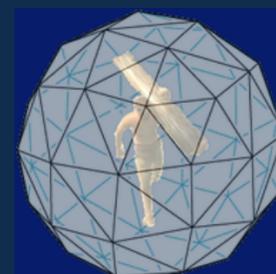
Ancient History  
History Education  
Simulation Games  
2000-2005



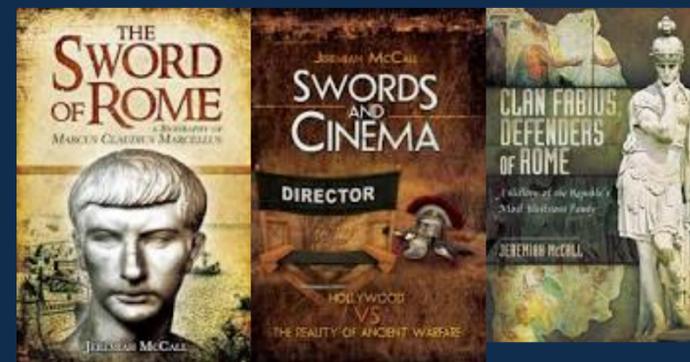
Games Learning  
& Society Talks  
2005-2013



Gaming the Past  
1<sup>st</sup> Edition 2011

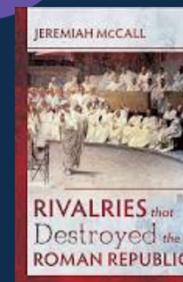


PlaythePast.org  
Essay  
3/2012



Stuff

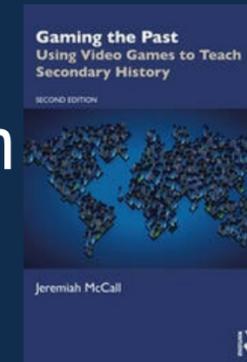
2012-2018



1<sup>st</sup> Full  
HPS Article  
2020



GTP  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
2023



Apply to Design  
2022-ish



DHG:PGE  
Routledge  
2026



# Genre conventions (shape the historical problem space)

Gameworld  
(contains the HPS)  
explicit and implicit



**GAME GOALS**  
primary & secondary)  
evaluatable  
or  
quantifiable  
outcomes  
(score)  
(win v. lose)

PLAYER  
AGENT

## 8 Spatial Action-Choices

**occupy; travel;**  
**explore; control;**  
**contest; exploit;**  
**develop; witness**



## 5 Gameworld Elements

**Obstacles**  
(block progress)

**Action Choices**  
dodge  
exploit

**Agents**  
(non-player)  
(help & hinder)

**Action Choices**  
compete  
collaborate  
employ

**Metrics**  
(measure states  
& trigger events)

**Action Choices**  
occupy  
contest  
manage

**Resources**  
(acquired & spent)

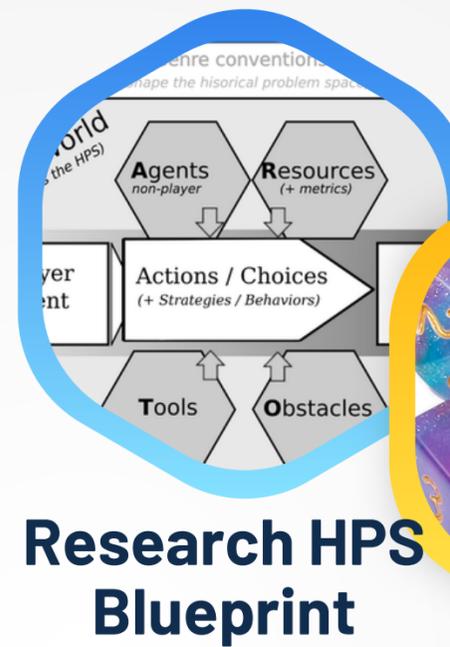
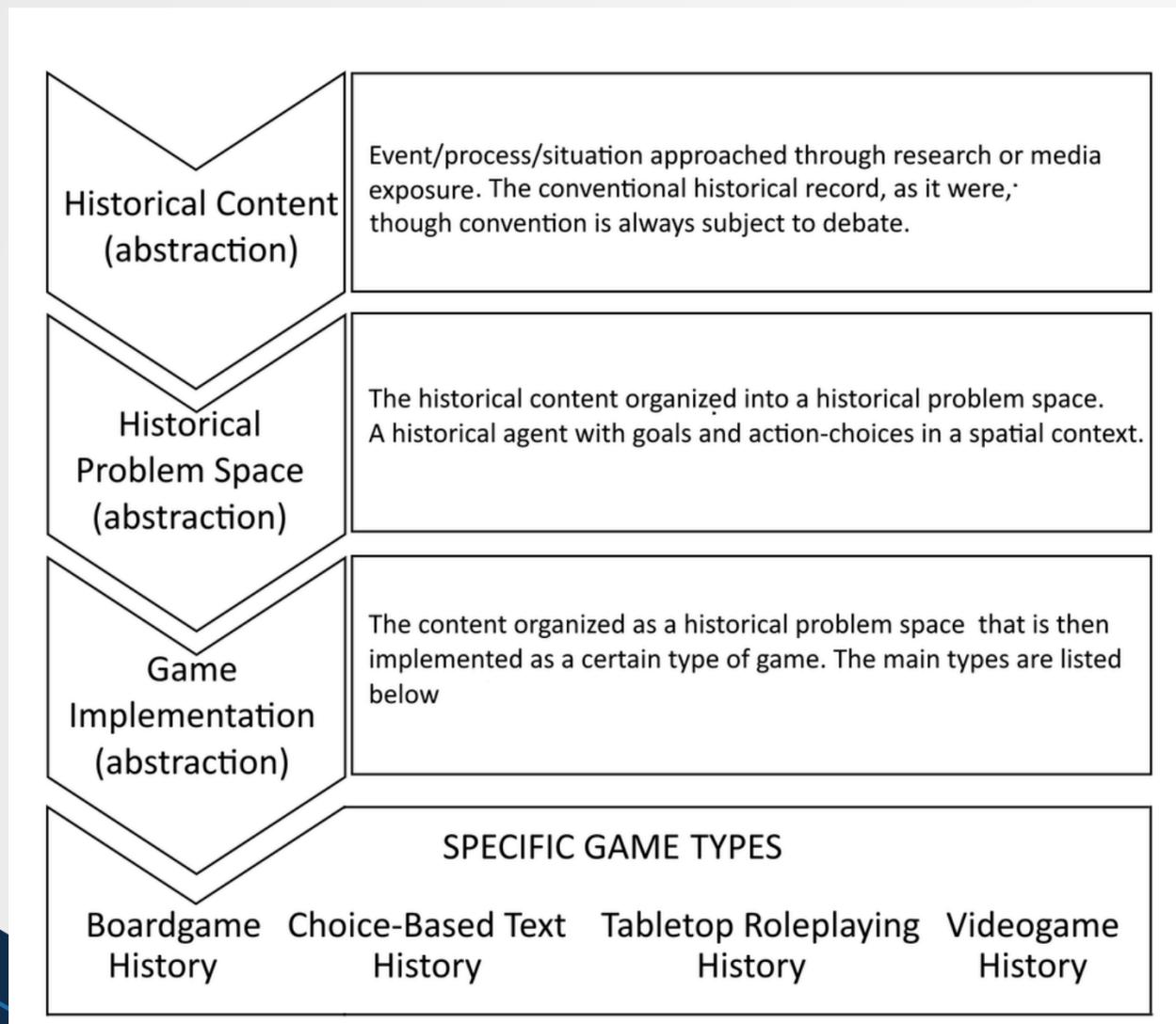
**Action Choices**  
locate  
exploit  
spend

**Tools**  
(acquired & used  
for benefits)

**Action Choices**  
locate  
exploit  
spend



# Modified Design Loop



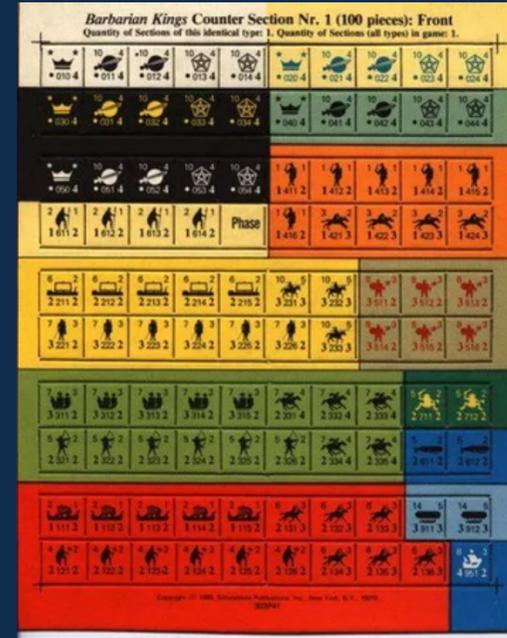
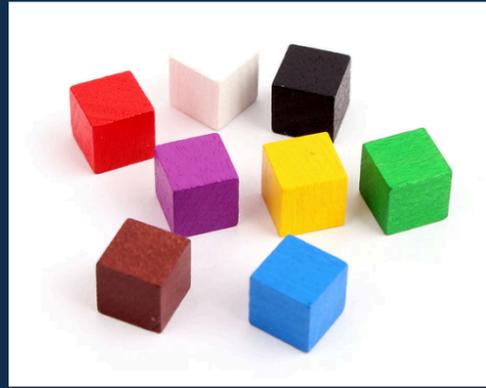
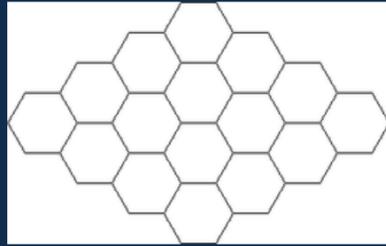
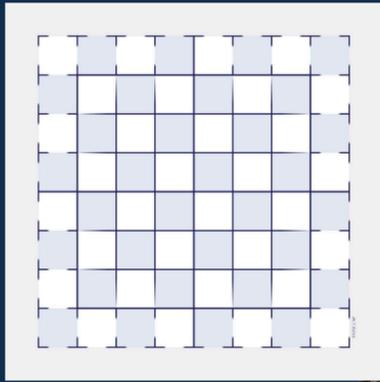
**Revise Prototype**



**Playtest & Evaluate**

Tip: start w/ gameworld space & mechanics

# HPS - platform & genre agnostic



## ROLL THROUGH THE AGES

### THE BRONZE AGE

**CITIES**

**DEVELOPMENTS**

Cost	Name	Pts	Effect
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	2	Reroll 1 die (after last roll)
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation	2	Drought has no effect
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	3	+1 food / food die
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Quarrying	3	+1 stone if collecting stone
15	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	3	Pestilence has no effect
20	<input type="checkbox"/> Coinage	4	Coin die results are worth 12
20	<input type="checkbox"/> Caravans	4	No need to discard goods
20	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion	6	Revolt affects opponents
30	<input type="checkbox"/> Granaries	6	Sell food for 4 coins each
30	<input type="checkbox"/> Masonry	6	+1 worker / worker die
40	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	6	Use stone for 3 workers each
50	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	8	Bonus pts: 1 / monument
60	<input type="checkbox"/> Empire	8	Bonus pts: 1 / city

**MONUMENTS**

**DISASTERS**

Cause	Result	Effect
No food	Famine	-1 pt (per city)
☠☠	None	No Effect
☠☠☠	Drought	-2 pts
☠☠☠☠	Pestilence	-3 pts (opponents)
☠☠☠☠☠	Invasion	-4 pts
☠☠☠☠☠+	Revolt	Lose all goods

**PLAYER'S NAME**

**ORDER OF PLAY**

1. Roll dice and collect goods and food
2. Feed cities and resolve disasters
3. Build cities and/or monuments
4. May buy a development
5. Discard goods in excess of 6

**DICE**

☠☠☠ 3 Food      ☠☠☠☠ 3 Workers  
 ☠☠☠☠ 1 Good      ☠☠☠☠☠ 2 Food or 2 Workers  
 ☠☠☠☠☠ 2 Goods and 1 Skull      ☠☠☠☠☠☠ 7 Coins

**DISASTERS**

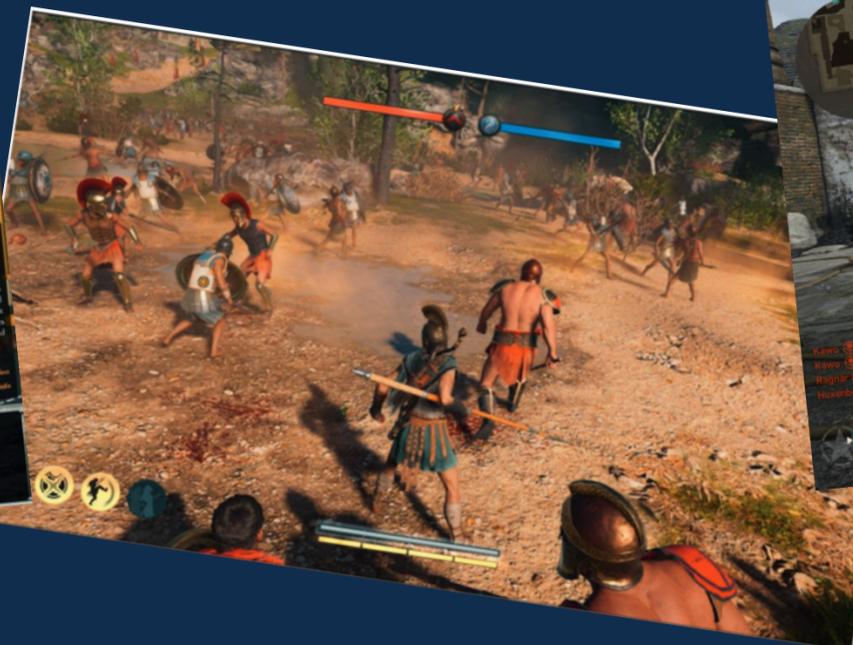
Game ends at the end of the round when:

- All monuments are collectively built or
- One player has 5 developments

Fill in scores and determine winner

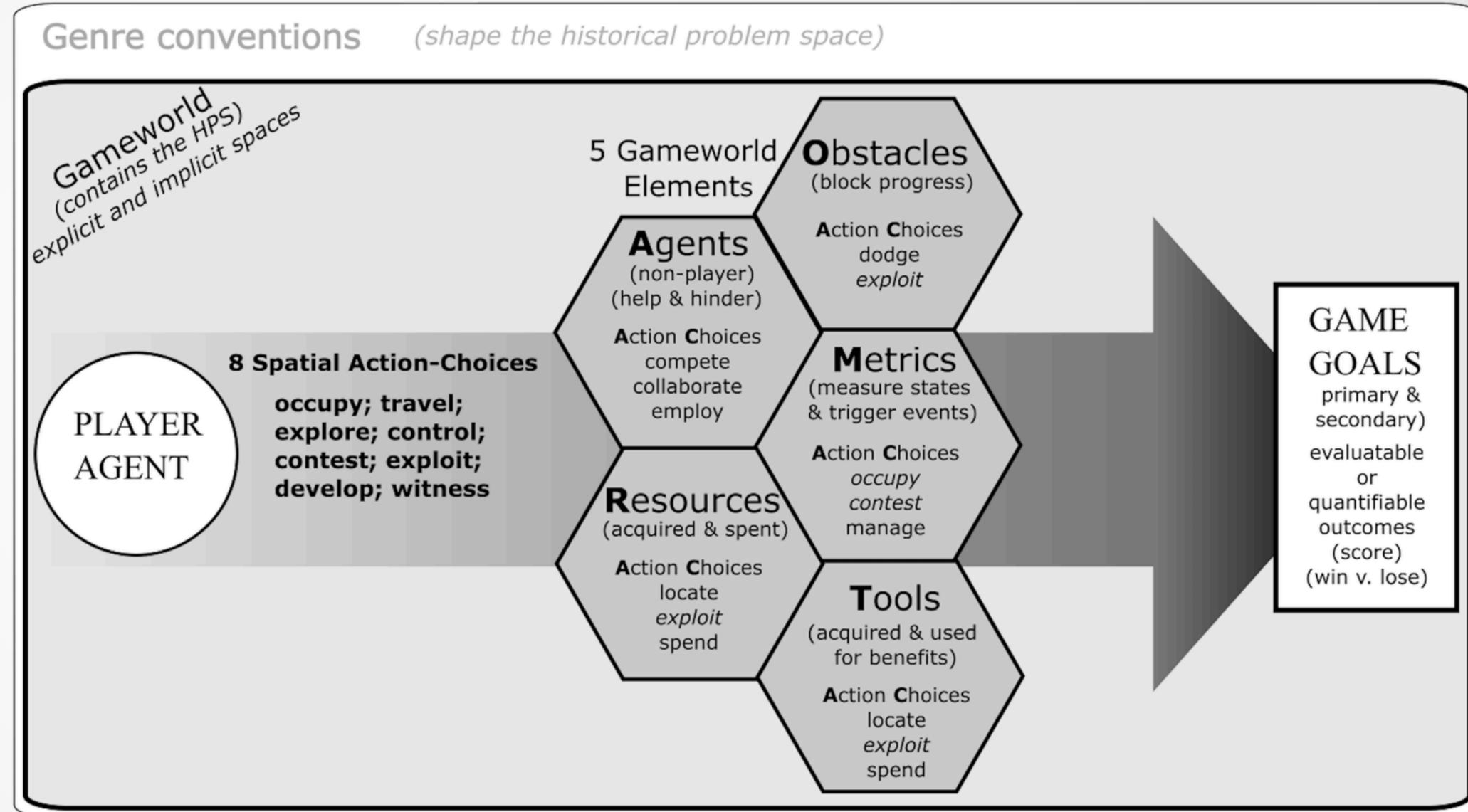
**SCORE**

<input type="text"/>	Developments
<input type="text"/>	+ Monuments
<input type="text"/>	+ Bonuses
<input type="text"/>	= Subtotal
<input type="text"/>	- Disasters
<input type="text"/>	= Total



# HPS Blueprint - Defensible Models, Analogous Action Choices, & Abstractions

What constitutes an  
analogous action-  
choice?



## Historically Defensible Problem Spaces