

The Scepter of Zavandor

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A game by Jens Drögemüller for 2-6 players based on an idea of Jim Hlavarti.

COMPONENTS

1 game board	24 diamonds
6 player boards	20 rubies
56 chits of magic dust (value 2)	8 cards of each type of concentrated energy
24 chits of magic dust (value 5)	12 sets of artifact cards (3 each)
20 chits of magic dust (value 10)	126 energy cards
28 opals	9 sentinels
28 sapphires	6 turn order cards (I, II, III, IV, V, VI)
24 emeralds	6 sets of colored wooden chips (8 each)

OBJECTIVE AND OVERVIEW

Each player represents a young magic student hoping to become an archmage. Players compete to accumulate the most victory points; the game ends following the game turn when the fifth sentinel has been auctioned. The player with the most victory points at the end of the game obtains the Scepter of Zavandor—winning the game!

SETUP

1. Each player receives a color of wooden chips/markers and 1 random player board
2. Place 2 opals and one sapphire on the spiral spaces for active gems on each player board.
3. Give each player a starting amount of magic dust (and cards, in the case of the Faerie character) as denoted on their player board.
4. Each player places their 8 colored markers thusly: 2 on the Game board (1 on the starting position the Victory Point Track at its edge, 1 on the 1st level of their character's starting Area of Knowledge, as noted on their character board) and 6 on their player board: 5 on the Knowledge Chip circles (numbered 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40) and one on the starting position on the hand limit track. The starting hand limit for each player is noted on each character board: the Elf and the Witch start on the number 4, the Druid and the Faerie on 5, and the Magician and the Kobold on number 6.
5. Determine how many artifact cards are needed. There are 12 types of them, in sets of 3, and each set falls into a specific group: A, B, C, or D (*Example: There are three artifacts of the Runestone type, and each falls into the group "A"*). The number of artifacts in use depends upon the number of players. Refer to the *Table 1* below:

Players	No. of each Artifact type used	No. of artifacts in use (total)
2	1	12
3-4	2	24
5-6	3	36

Table 1. Determining how many artifact cards to play with.

6. The artifacts being used are sorted and shuffled by letter, then placed on top of each other in following the sequence: D-C-B-A (D on the bottom), such that artifacts of type A are at the top. Draw as many artifact cards as players and place these cards face up next to the game board.
7. Sort the energy cards by type, shuffle each deck and place next to the game board, place the magic dust and concentrated energy cards next to the game board, and arrange the 9 sentinel cards circularly around the game board.
8. Place the turn order cards (numbered I-VI) near the board.

MECHANICS SUMMARY

Players gain and spend energy in order to acquire victory points, obtaining the Scepter of Zavandor, winning the game. They may gain income in the form of magic dust (the square cardboard chits) and cards and chips with various numerical values. This is the

“currency” used to acquire gems, enhance abilities in different areas of knowledge, and to bid on and acquire artifacts (enhancing players’ abilities) and sentinels (providing victory points).

Each player’s magic dust and concentrated energy cards should always be visible and kept next to their player board. Energy cards may be kept private. Energy cards, concentrated energy cards, and magic dust all count toward a player’s hand limit, which must be observed each turn.

Perhaps the most abstract concept of the game is that, whether on chips, chits, or cards—and regardless of what color a chip, chit or card is, or how, when or why it was acquired—all represent magic energy, which is the only currency in the game. Cards and chits may be exchanged for dust chits at any time. Magic dust may also be consolidated at any time (dust, however, cannot be turned into cards or concentrated energy cards).

Magic may commonly be forfeit to observe hand limits, or the lack of magic dust chits with a denomination of “1”.

GAME TURN SEQUENCE

Each game turn has 4 phases, all players, in turn order, and participate in each round:

Phase 1 Determine player order, refill artifacts

Phase 2 Gain magic energy

Phase 3 Spend magic energy (steps may be done in any order)

- 1 Enchant or disenchant gems
- 2 Attain levels of knowledge (only one action per turn—see below)
- 3 Acquire artifacts or sentinels

Phase 4 Reset

- 1 Observe hand limits
- 2 Receive victory points
- 3 Check victory conditions (5 or more sentinels)

Phase 1 Determine player order & refill artifacts If players are tied for victory points and gems (as is always the case the first turn of every game), players randomly draw the turn order cards. Otherwise, the player with the most victory points receives the turn order card I, the player with the second most victory points receives card II, and so on. In case of a tie, the player with more gem victory points will go first. The turn order will apply for each phase until the next game turn. If any artifacts were purchased on the last turn, replenish until the number on display is equal to the number of current players.

Phase 2 Gain magic energy In turn order sequence, each player gains magic energy according to their **active gems** (i.e., they cannot be in the pentagon), artifacts, and current level in the *Knowledge of Energy Flow* (see *Phase 3: Player Activities* below):

1. **Opals** (yellow and faint green color, mixed) produce magic dust. For each active opal on a player sheet, 2 units of magic dust are received; for 2 active opals, the yield is 5 units of magic dust; for 3 active opals, the reward is 10 units of magic dust. If a player has 4 active opals, they are worth 10 + 2 units of magic dust; 5 active opals are worth 10 + 5; etc. All players can enchant opals.
2. **Sapphires** (dark blue color) produce blue energy cards (values range from 3-7). All players can enchant sapphires.
3. **Emeralds** (deep green color) produce green energy cards (values range from 5-10). Enchanting emeralds requires the *Spellbook* artifact (see later).
4. **Diamonds** (steel blue color) produced white energy cards (values range from 8-12). Enchanting diamonds requires the *Elixir* artifact (see later).
5. **Rubies** (deep red color) produce red energy cards (values range from 13-17). Enchanting rubies requires achieving the highest level in the *Knowledge of Fire*, although the Druid can enchant 1 ruby at level 3 (see later).

For example, during the first turn, each player will receive 5 units of magic dust for the 2 opals and one blue energy card for the sapphire (the Faerie receives two additional blue cards due to her starting at level 1 in the *Knowledge of Energy Flow*—see *Phase 3: Player Activities* below). Any time a player would receive 4 energy cards of the same color, they must instead receive a concentrated energy chip and 2 units of magic dust are generated instead (energy cards already in hand do not count).

Phase 3 Spend magic energy Players can enchant or disenchant gems¹, improve knowledge, or try to acquire artifacts or sentinels—all using magic energy. Magic energy is spent (using cards, concentrated energy, or magic dust) for all of these activities. When disenchanting gems, magic energy is gained in the form of magic dust. Any change (from overpayment) is also given in units

¹ Though described as “buying” or “acquiring” gems (or, conversely, “selling” or “losing” gems), conceptually this is meant to indicate *enchanting* or *disenchanting* gems.

of magic dust. Change that cannot be provided is lost (e.g., a player is owed 3 units of magic dust, but it only comes in units of 2, so 2 units are provided and the remaining 1 unit is lost). If there is no magic dust available, it is also lost.

In turn order sequence, each player performs the following steps in any order they choose (note that all players may participate in others' artifact and/or sentinel auctions):

- *Enchant/disenchant gems* Acquire gems for energy or to return them to supply
- *Improve knowledge* Attain a level of knowledge in a given discipline
- *Bid for artifacts and sentinels* Start an auction for a sentinel or artifact (all players may participate in auctions)

Enchanting/disenchanted gems To gain magic energy from a gem, it must be enchanted. To *enchant* a gem is to acquire it from the general supply; to *disenchant* a gem is to return it to the general supply.

All players may enchant opals and sapphires at the beginning of the game. Enchanting emeralds requires the *Spellbook* artifact; enchanting diamonds requires the *Elixir* artifact; enchanting rubies requires *Knowledge of Fire* Level 4 (the *Druid* character can enchant a single ruby at level 3, as noted on that player card and on the playing board). The cost for enchanting gems decreases as the *Knowledge of Gems* level increases. Only five rubies may be enchanted by any player.

To enchant gems, a player pays their cost in magic energy cards, concentrated energy cards, magic dust, or any combination. The cost to enchant a gemstone is indicated by a player's current *Knowledge of Gemstones* level—a player references the chart on their player board (cross referencing with their current level as marked by their chip on the game board). Enchanted gems are taken from the general supply and placed on or near the player board—either as active gemstones in the spiral, as inactive gemstones in the pentagon, or in other sockets available in the *Magic Belt* or *Magic Wand* artifacts (see *Table 4*), or in the extra player board sockets made available via the *Knowledge of Accumulation* ability (see *Table 5*). There may only be five active gemstones in the spiral at one time. Active gemstones generate energy and victory points; inactive gemstones do not.

To disenchant gems, a player receives that half that gem's *current* cost, rounded down. Each disenchanted gem is resolved independently (i.e., two simultaneously disenchanted gems must each be resolved independently of the other—no rounding up!). This energy may be used for paying for other activities or collected in the form of magic dust.

The active player may freely activate and deactivate gems by moving them between the magic spiral and the pentagon. Gems may be deliberately deactivated to influence turn order.

Improve Knowledge Once per player per turn, magic energy may be spent to free knowledge markers or to improve knowledge. Knowledge can only be improved by exactly one level, in exactly one field of knowledge. Improving knowledge requires an available knowledge marker, either on a lower level of that field (on the game board), or on the player board in the pentagon (in the "inactive gemstones" area). Each successive level of a field of knowledge costs the number printed on it on the game board. A knowledge marker may be freed and moved to the board (to the first level) as one single action.

Attaining the first level in any field of knowledge (apart from each character's starting "free" field of knowledge) requires an available knowledge marker on their player board (in the pentagon). If no knowledge chip is available, one must be paid for first (from the five available on the player board). The number under each of the five knowledge markers on the player board indicates how much each costs. Only one chip is permitted in each field of knowledge.

Some fields of knowledge increase or decrease the hand limit (as indicated on the player board). If achieving the first level in a field that is denoted with a +/-1, move the chip on the hand limit row on the player board accordingly. The hand limit change only applies when the player first gains this field, not each time he increases his knowledge.

A player reaching level 4 in a given field of knowledge receives 2 victory points.

Bid for artifacts and sentinels At the beginning of each turn, there are as many artifact cards as players participating in the game. In addition, all sentinels that have not been yet auctioned are always available. The active player may start an auction of any face up artifact card or sentinel—but only one card may be up for auction at a time.

Bids are made in the current player order turn, beginning with the active player. A player who has passed cannot bid in the same auction again. The starting bid must be equal to or greater than the minimum bid value printed on the card; discounts and surcharges are not considered when bidding, but are assessed when a bid is successful and the player has to pay.

In turn order, the next players may raise the bid or pass. To make clear who is still in the auction, the turn order card of a player is temporarily put face down when passing. If no one bids, the active player must buy the artifact or sentinel for their opening bid.

Following the conclusion of an auction, the winner pays immediately, including the disenchantment of gems if needed to finalize the payment. The winning player may be subject to increased or decreased cost according to their turn order marker (each turn order markers I, II, V, and VI indicate this)—but such adjustments only count if, in **Phase 4** during the *previous* game turn, that player had the required number of victory points. Artifacts take effect immediately—but discounts only matter *after* they have been successfully bid on. The bid price is never given in consideration of applicable discounts or penalties. A player can buy several artifacts and/or sentinels per turn, and may possess duplicate artifacts (Exceptions: one *Magic Belt* and *Magic Wand* per player; see *Table 4*).

If a player places a bid higher than can be paid (including disenchanting all of their gems), the Curse of the Nine Arch Magicians hits them and they are expelled from the game. The auction is then cancelled. If an acquired artifact has a direct impact on the flow of the game (e.g., *The Cloak of Camouflage* destroys opponents' gems), effects apply prior to the next auction.

Phase 4 **Reset** At the end of each round of player turns, the stage is set for the next turn and endgame and victory conditions are checked. This is done in three simple steps:

- *Observe hand limits*
- *Count victory points*
- *Check victory conditions*

Observe hand limits Every player may keep only a certain number of cards after *Phase 3*. At the start of the game, all players have a hand limit between 4 and 6, since the starting field of knowledge may increase or decrease the hand limit by 1 (see *Table 5*). Using *Table 2* below as a reference, players must discard cards or dust of their choice until their hand limit is satisfied (chits of magic dust may be traded for larger dust denominations at any time)

Item	Counts toward Hand limit as
Energy cards	1 card
2 magic dust	1 card
5 magic dust	2 cards
10 magic dust	3 cards
Concentrated energy cards	3 cards

Table 2. Hand limit assessment

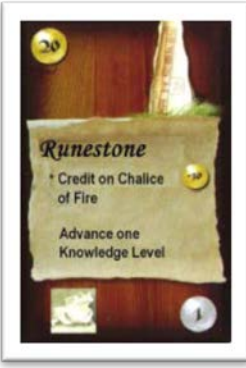
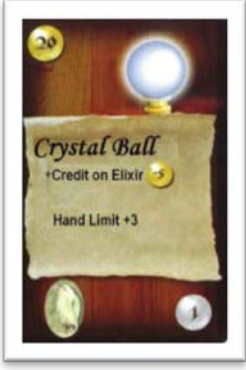
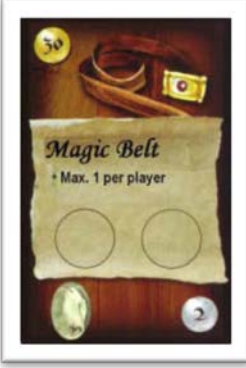
Count Victory Points All players check and adjust their victory points. Victory points from gems, attained levels of Knowledge, and sentinels are added together. Adjust the victory point markers for each player to depict the current *total* for each player—replacing the old count—they are not added to the previous total.

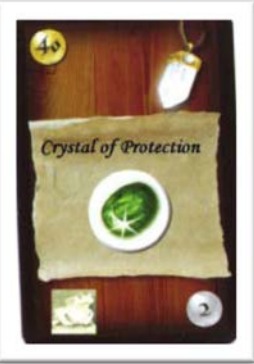
Check Victory Conditions If five or more sentinels have been acquired, the game ends and the player with the most victory points wins. If two or more players are tied for the most victory points, they are all winners and have to play another game to determine who is the true holder of the Scepter of Zavandor. Consult *Table 3* below for victory points generated by items.

Item	Victory Points
Active opal or sapphire	1
Active emerald or diamond	2
Active ruby	3
Knowledge level 5 (each)	2
Artifact	As printed
Sentinel	5+ bonus

Table 3. Victory point counts.

Table 4. List of artifacts. Note that unless otherwise mentioned, a player may possess more than one artifact of the same type; effects are cumulative. There are three of each type of artifact listed below for a grand total of up to 36 in the game.

Group	Artifact	Description	Minimum bid	Victory Points
A	 The card shows a parchment titled 'Spellbook' with a small book icon. Text on the card includes '+Credit on Cloak', '+enchanted', and '1' in a circle at the bottom right.	Spellbook A player with a <i>Spellbook</i> is able to enchant emeralds. Each spell book provides a discount of 15 magic energy units toward the <i>Shadow Cloak</i>.	20	1
A	 The card shows a parchment titled 'Runestone' with a small stone icon. Text on the card includes '+Credit on Chalice of Fire', 'Advance one Knowledge Level', and '1' in a circle at the bottom right.	Runestone A player acquiring a <i>Runestone</i> may immediately advance one wooden chip in one field of knowledge one level (without any further costs and in addition to any normal advance). Each <i>Runestone</i> provides a discount of 10 magic energy units toward the <i>Chalice of Fire</i>.	20	1
A	 The card shows a parchment titled 'Crystal Ball' with a small crystal ball icon. Text on the card includes '+Credit on Elixir', 'Hand Limit +3', and '1' in a circle at the bottom right.	Crystal Ball Each <i>Crystal Ball</i> increases the hand limit of the player by 3. Each <i>Crystal Ball</i> provides a discount of 5 energy units when acquiring the <i>Elixir</i> artifact.	20	1
B	 The card shows a parchment titled 'Magic Belt' with a small belt icon. Text on the card includes '+Max. 1 per player' and '2' in a circle at the bottom right.	Magic Belt A <i>Magic Belt</i> allows a player to have two more active gems. These gems are placed on the belt. <i>Note: A player may only have one Magic Belt.</i>	30	2

Group	Artifact	Description	Minimum bid	Victory Points
B	 Magic Mirror Move unused Knowledge Chip into pentagon Other players lose 1 gem	A player acquiring a <i>Magic Mirror</i> may immediately place an unused knowledge chip (normally the most expensive one) into the their pentagon. Additionally, all other players must return one of their active gems (their choice) to the general supply without compensation—these gems are lost and not kept on the players' pentagons.	40	2
B	 Crystal of Protection	The <i>Crystal of Protection</i> works like an additional active emerald for purposes of generating and collecting energy ONLY, giving the player one green energy card in phase 2. This may result in the player receiving a concentrated energy card. It does not count toward victory points.	40	2
B	 Elixir Credit from Crystal Ball • Enchantable One free	The <i>Elixir</i> allows its owner to enchant diamonds. A player acquiring an <i>Elixir</i> also receives 1 enchanted diamond with it for no additional cost. For each crystal ball he has, the player has to pay 5 energy units less when acquiring an <i>Elixir</i>.	60	2
C	 Mask of Charisma +1 free Knowledge Level • Sentinel Credit:	A player acquiring a <i>Mask of Charisma</i> artifact advances one knowledge marker in one field of knowledge by one level with no further costs and in addition to any normal advance. Each <i>Mask of Charisma</i> provides a discount of 20 energy units when acquiring any sentinel	50	3

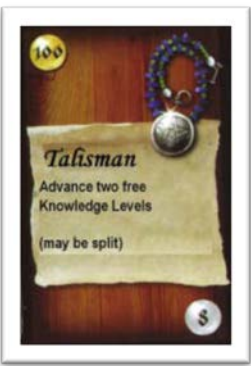
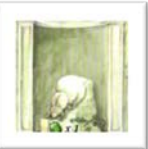
Group	Artifact	Description	Minimum bid	Victory Points
C	 The Magic Wand artifact card features a glowing wand and a parchment scroll. The scroll text reads: "Magic Wand", "+Max. 1 per player", and "+Hand Limit +3". A gold chip with the number 60 is in the top left, and a silver chip with the number 3 is in the bottom right.	Magic Wand A <i>Magic Wand</i> allows its owner to have two more active gems. The gems are placed on the wand. A wand also increases the player's hand limit by 3. <i>Note: A player may only have one Magic Wand.</i>	60	3
C	 The Chalice of Fire artifact card features a flaming chalice and a parchment scroll. The scroll text reads: "Chalice of Fire" and "+Credit from Runestone". A gold chip with the number 80 is in the top left, and a silver chip with the number 4 is in the bottom right.	Chalice of Fire The <i>Chalice of Fire</i> works like an additional active ruby for purposes of generating and collecting energy. This may result in the player receiving a concentrated energy card. For every <i>Runestone</i> artifact a player has when acquiring a <i>Chalice of Fire</i>, its cost is reduced by 10.	80	4
D	 The Shadow Cloak artifact card features a green cloak and a parchment scroll. The scroll text reads: "Shadow Cloak", "Credit from Spellbooks", "Move unused Knowledge Chip into pentagon", and "Other players lose 1 gem". A gold chip with the number 80 is in the top left, and a silver chip with the number 5 is in the bottom right.	Shadow Cloak a player acquiring a <i>Shadow Cloak</i> may place an unused knowledge chips into their pentagon. Additionally, all other players must return one of their active gems to the general supply without compensation—these gems are lost and not kept on the players' pentagons. For every <i>Spellbook</i> artifact a player has, the cost of acquiring a <i>Shadow Cloak</i> is reduced by 15 energy units.	80	5
D	 The Talisman artifact card features a necklace with a medallion and a parchment scroll. The scroll text reads: "Talisman", "Advance two free Knowledge Levels", and "(may be split)". A gold chip with the number 100 is in the top left, and a silver chip with the number 8 is in the bottom right.	Talisman A player acquiring a <i>Talisman</i> artifact may advance two levels in one field of knowledge or one level in two fields of knowledge (without any further costs and in addition to any normal advance).	100	8

Table 5. Fields of Knowledge.

Field	Description	Level Costs	Hand Limit	Character (starts game at Level 1 in this field)
Gems	This knowledge makes it easier to enchant gems by reducing their cost. The energy needed for enchanting is reduced by 10% per level (see the table on the players' boards). This also applies, however, to disenchanting. As soon as a player achieves at least the first level in this field, his hand limit is decreased by 1.	2 • 4 • 8 • 16	-1	Witch
Energy Flow	This knowledge provides the student with extra magic dust every turn. For level 2 in this field he receives an extra 2 units of magic dust, for level 3 an extra 5 units and on level 4 an extra 10 units. As soon as a player achieves at least the first level in this field, his hand limit is decreased by 1.	3 • 6 • 12 • 24	-1	Elf
Fire	This knowledge makes it possible to enchant rubies when a student achieves level 4 in this field. Lower levels have no effect; however the Druid is able to enchant exactly one ruby at level 3. No player may ever enchant more than 5 rubies at a time.	5 • 10 • 15 • 20	+0	Druid
9 Arch Mages	This knowledge provides the player with extra energy as soon as a new level in this field is achieved (but only once for each level). For level 1 the player receives two extra blue sapphire cards, for level 2 two green emerald cards, for level 3 two white diamond cards, and for level 4 two red ruby cards. However, this energy cannot be used in the same turn; therefore the cards are placed under the player's position number card until the start of the next turn. These cards do not count against the hand limit in this turn.	3 • 6 • 12 • 24	+0	Fairy
Artifacts	This knowledge makes the acquisition of artifacts and sentinels cheaper. For level 2 and 3, the player enjoys a discount of 5 energy units for artifacts, and 10 energy units for sentinels. For level 4, the discount is 10 for artifacts and 20 for sentinels. As soon as a player achieves at least the first level in this field, his hand limit is increased by 1.	2 • 4 • 8 • 16	+1	Mage
Accumulation	This knowledge allows the student to use more than 5 active gems. If he is on level 2 or 3, the player may activate one extra gem, on level 4 he may activate two extra gems. As soon as a player achieves at least the first level in this field, his hand limit is increased by 1.	2 • 4 • 8 • 16	+1	Kobold

These rules were modified from a set posted on Boardgamegeek.com by Galfridus, whose work was based on that of DeepstC and Jonathan Degann.

Table 6. Breakdown of Sentinels. *Note: All sentinels have a minimum bid value of 120.*

Card	Description	Maximum Theoretical Victory Points
	Phoenix 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each unique kind of active gem (maximum of 10)	$5 + 10 = 15$
	Owl 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each top level in a field of knowledge	$5 + (2 \times 6) = 17$
	Fox 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each active sapphire (maximum of 12)	$5 + 12 = 17$
	Toad 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each <i>Runestone</i> , <i>Crystal of Protection</i> , <i>Spellbook</i> , and <i>Elixir</i> artifact	$5 + (2 \times 12) = 29$
	Unicorn 5 victory points + 1 victory point for each active diamond	$5 + (1 \times 11) = 16$
	Tomcat 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each active opal	$5 + (2 \times 6) = 17$
	Scarab 5 victory points + 1 victory points for each active emerald	$5 + (1 \times 11) = 16$
	Raven 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each <i>Crystal Ball</i> , <i>Mask of Charisma</i> , <i>Magic Belt</i> , and <i>Magic Wand</i> artifact	$5 + (2 \times 8) = 21$
	Salamander 5 victory points + 2 victory points for each active ruby	$5 + (2 \times 5) = 15$