



ABBOTS OF BATTLE

Department:

English Language and Literature

Program:

PhD

Project type:

Collaborative project

Funded by:

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council (SSHRC), and
The Games Institute

Project co-researchers:

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SSHRC  CRSH

 DRAGEN Lab



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TOBEN SAMUEL RACICOT

Abbots of Battle is a boardgame designed to educate players on the everyday challenges of life in England during the late medieval period, which was heavily impacted by the Little Ice Age (LIA), beginning in the 14th century.

The game challenges players to gather and manage natural resources controlled by Battle Abbey, an existing Benedictine monastery located in the town of Battle, East Sussex, England. Playing as the Abbot (the male head of a monastery), players aim to complete resource gathering quests to reduce the Abbey's debts while competing with the game's randomized weather system.

Racicot designed the weather system to educate players on the dramatic weather changes caused by the LIA. Players place tokens on a map representing the terrain of East Sussex and produce resources to gain victory points.

Abbots of Battle was designed alongside *Towards a Clear Horizon* as part of the *Environments of Change* SSHRC Partnership Grant – a transdisciplinary collaboration which explores, from multiple perspectives, the environmental history of late medieval Sussex. The project aims to better understand the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature in the past and develop digital tools and resources that allow individuals to understand the complex and dynamic relationship between societies and natural worlds.

Interesting fact: Gameplay is limited to eight turns after which Richard the Conqueror arrives and settles the score! This references the famous 1066 Battling of Hastings that took place on the site of the Battle Abbey.



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