

A RIVER ACROSS EUROPE

RHEIN RIVER TRADE

COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTS ALONG THE RIVER RHEIN

After Railroad Revolution, this is the second game published in the last 12 months by Marco Canetta and Stefania Niccolini (husband and wife in the real life: they also designed Africa Park, The Doge Ship and Zhanguo). *Rhein River Trade* is about the transport of goods along this long river: very long barges travel all time along the canal aside the Rhein, but also roads and railroads are fully busy in this region which moving from the city of Basel, in Switzerland, crossing France and Germany to arrive in the Nederland and to the North Sea.

in river depicted in the center, together with roads, railroads and air paths that start from Basel (CH) and touch another 11 cities, most of which are Germans, but including Strasbourg (F), Rotterdam (NL) and London (UK). Each city is served by different transport facilities, so specific icons are printed on the map to help the players to identify which ones are allowed in each city: a white "wake" connects the four airports: Basel, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and London.

The box also contains 14 mats for the differ-

satisfy, a series of cardboard round tokens used to "reserve" the vehicles, a handful of colored wooden miniatures (barges, trains and airplanes), two "truck" tiles per player, some wooden discs to mark the time and a handful of colored cubes (the containers for the goods). See picture 2

The players select "contracts" of goods to pick up in Basel and to deliver in different cities: they also need to rent the right vehicles at the right price to load and to transport "in time" their containers to the selected destination.

Each player has a personal mat, two trucks tiles, 15 wooden cubes on his color (the containers) and a disk to keep track of the money on the map: everybody starts with 20 "coins".

Beside the board nine "vehicles" mats in three colors are placed (white, red and black: one each for airplanes, trains and barges): how many of each type and color depends on the number of players. Each mat has a space where the "reservation" tokens are initially stored: white air token on the white air mat, and so on.

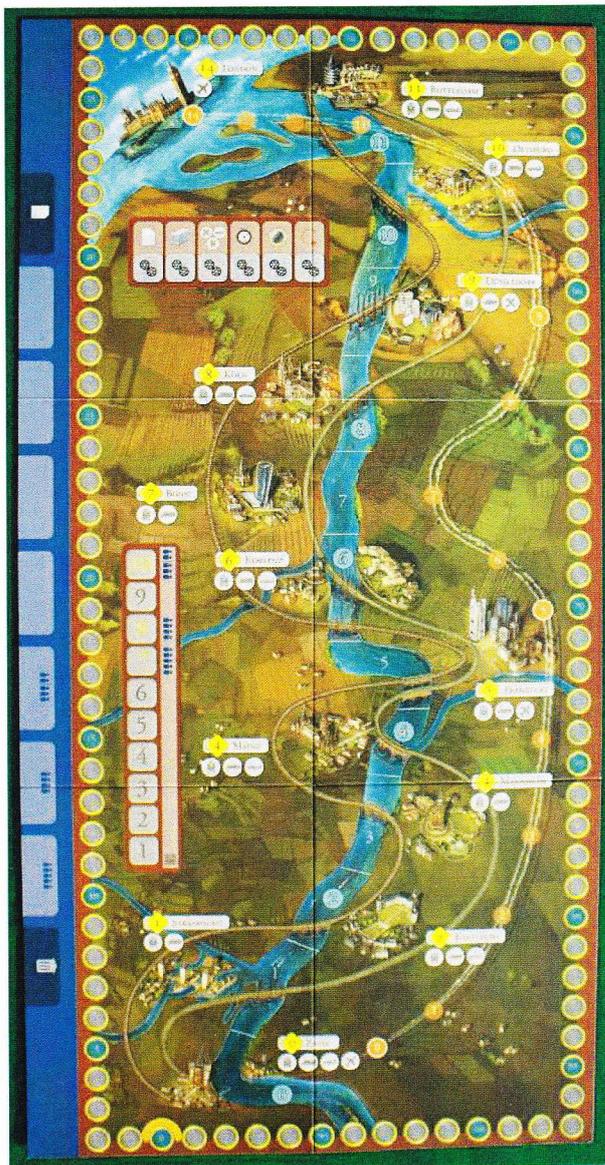
There are also two "special tiles" to place on two specific tracks on the board to follow the "turns" of the game (1 to 10) and the "phases" of each turn (6). A game may last from a minimum of 7 turns (with five players) to a maximum of 12 (in two or three).

The winner will be the player with most money at the game's end: money can be earned renting the vehicles with the lower cost and selling the goods at the higher price possible, always respecting the delivery time.

At the beginning of each turn two "Contract" cards per player are turned on the table. See picture 3.

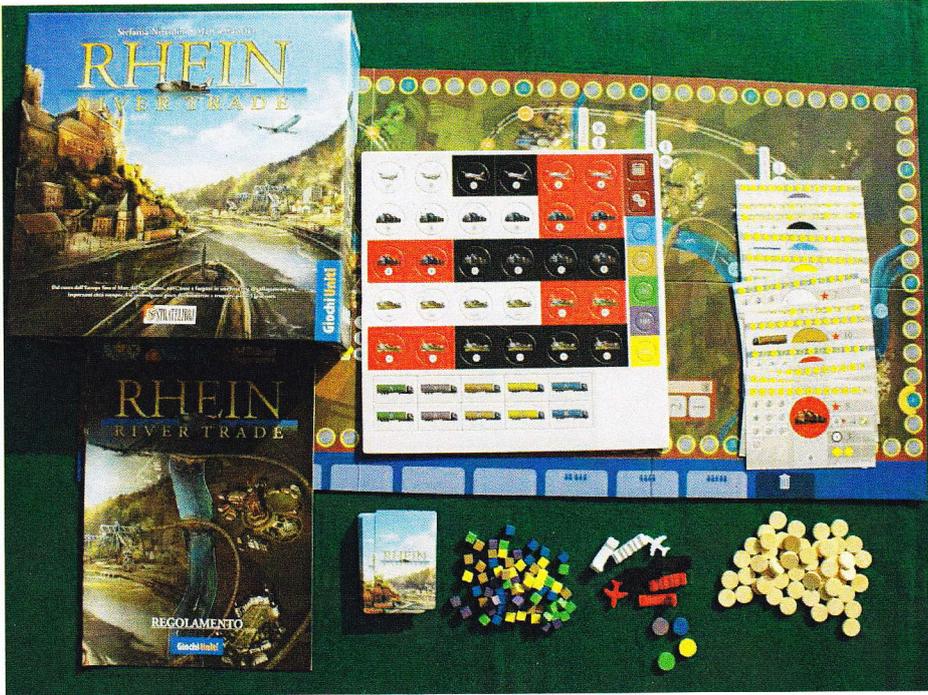
They show a NUMBER that corresponds to the city to deliver, three possible sale COMBINATIONS, the maximum DELIVERY TIME for goods to that city and the penalty (money) that the player must pay for late delivery. Each player (in reverse order from the poorer to the richest) select a card and place it face up on the table: then "time" tokens are put on that card. The exact quantity depends on the delivery time of the Contract (3 tokens if you must deliver in 3 turns, etc.).

Now the players need to load their goods on the different available vehicles: each mat shows the cities that the vehicle may reach (there is a list of numbers on top of the mat) and has a specific load capacity (numbered



The square box of the game contains a long and thin board (400x800 mm) with the Rhe-

ent vehicles (barges, trains and airplanes), a deck of cards with the "orders" (contracts) to



cases printed on the sheet: it may vary from a minimum of 6 containers on the white airplane to a maximum of 14 containers for the black barge. See picture 4.

On the right of the mat are printed the "initiative" number of that vehicle (from 2 to 9) used to determine who go first; the cost to rent the vehicle (from 1 to 12 coins); the movement allowance (2 to 9 cases) and the number of possible deliveries (1 or 2) for each trip.

The WHITE vehicles cost more than all the others, but they are the fastest and the first to move in each turn. Of course, they also have the lowest load capacity. The white airplane, for example, has initiative "1" (first to move), costs 12 coins, has a speed of 9 and may load up to 6 containers (resumed values: 1/12/9/6): the train is 4/6/4/9 and the barge is 7/5/4/10. The red vehicles are the best balance between speed and cost (the airplane is 2/10/7/7, the train 5/4/3/10 and the barge 8/3/3/12) while the black ones are the cheapest and slower (airplane 3/8/5/8, train 6/2/2/11 and barge 9/1/2/14).

In reverse turn order each player looks at his contracts and try to calculate costs, distances and necessary time: then he selects a vehicle and load on it "X" of his containers, paying 1 gold for each of them. It is important to know that each vehicle may leave Basel only if it is charged with a minimum number of containers (as printed on the mat) and that it may be loaded with containers of different players.

After having loaded the players have the opportunity to take one "reservation" token

for the loaded vehicles, paying its renting cost: then they place those tokens on the cities where they must unload the goods (as printed on their Contracts). Of course, it will be non-sense to load containers in a vehicle that cannot stop on a certain city (remember: every city can be served by some vehicles, but not all): Bonn, for example, may be reached by train or by road, so it will be stupid to load a barge or an airplane; London can be reached only by air; for Rotterdam all the vehicles are ok with the exclusion of the airplane; etc.

For each vehicle ready to leave Basel a wooden miniature of that type and color is placed on the board. The trucks do not have specific tokens as they are "personal" and each player owns two truck tiles: they do not need to be reserved and they may be loaded in any city which already has cubes of the owning player. He simply takes 1-2 cubes from the city and places them on the truck's tile

Now the vehicles can be moved following the initiative order: first the white airplane (if it has been rented, of course) which have initiative "1"; then the red one, and so on down to the black barge (with initiative 9) and, finally, to the trucks (which have initiative 10). Each vehicle is moved using its total allowance until he reaches the first city with a reservation token of that type and color: here it is unloaded. If the vehicle carries also containers of another player and there is a second reservation in a following city part of the load remain on the vehicle which may continue his trip (but only if the mat says that it is allowed to have a second delivery). Once that a vehicle has been com-

pletely unloaded the token is sent back to the reserve in Basel.

The last operation that players may do is to SELL their containers in the city/ies where they were delivered: they have just to show their "contracts" to gain the sum offered by the "combination" that was implemented. Usually each "contract" has THREE different combinations of cubes and rewards (but 13 of them only have two) and each city on the map is named on a certain number of contracts: Strasbourg, Mannheim, Bonn and London are named three times; Karlsruhe and Rotterdam four times and the others (Frankfurt, Koblenz, Köln, Mainz and Düsseldorf) five times.

Obviously the more a city is close to Basel, the less will be the reward: to bring four containers in Strasbourg (city Nr. 1) may be rewarded with 10 coins, but bringing the same number of containers to Koblenz (city Nr. 6) will earn 14 coins and to Rotterdam (city Nr. 11) up to 23 coins. The game does not use "physic" coins, but the players have to move up and down the round disc of the Coin track on the map.

At the end of the turn the contracts still face up on the table are discarded and one "Time" token is also taken out from each contract still to be delivered: if a player does not deliver before ending this reserve of time tokens the "contract" is broken and the player lose the amount of money printed on that card.



The players finally have to pay 1 gold for each container unloaded in some cities and not yet sold (but those still on board of a vehicle are safe). Then, a new turn starts, and players repeat the same operations once again.

After the last turn, final verifications must be done: the players must pay the usual "tax" of 1 coin per container delivered and unsold, the penalty for each contract not delivered, etc. Then the player remaining with the higher value on the coin track wins the game.

Pietro Cremona

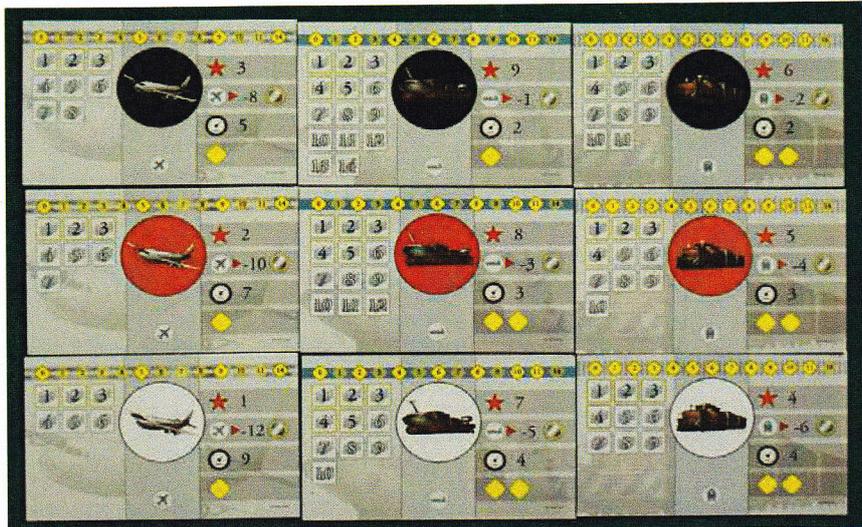
A very good game on transport logistics for all types of players, provided they do not mind some planning ahead and keeping an eye on their opponents!

Rhein River Trade is not a complex game and therefore can also be played with the all family, probably with the initial help of an expert player to explain how to use the different opportunities. The length of the game is reasonable (max 90 minutes, but after 3-4 game we were able to finish it in 60-70 minutes) and there is enough interactivity between the players: we never experimented paralysis analysis in this game.

The turn order is important to avoid missing the right vehicles: sometimes it may happen that you are too late and all the necessary vehicles are already gone (i.e. when you need to serve a river/train city and there are no more barges or train available). Sometimes, it will also be really frustrating to find that all the possible cases of a vehicle are already charged with the containers of your opponents and you are obliged to find another possibility, usually with higher renting costs. These are a good reason to keep at least one "easy" contract" always in hand in order to be able to load and ship some containers, even if your benefit will be very low (but your cash flow remain active!). Of course, the inverse is also true: If you have the opportunity (and the money) to load a lot of containers ... do it: your opponents will be obliged to reduce their shipping or spend more money to rent another vehicle.

The second consideration that we may do is about the transport "time": before renting a vehicle, it is a good habit to analyze your "Contract" cards in detail to verify how many TURNS it will take to make a delivery. This will define the "speed" (cases per turn) that the selected vehicle needs and also the number of containers that you should load to maximize your benefit.

When two or more players loaded the same vehicle, there will be a sort of "diplomatic"



phase between them: in effect, if one player pays the renting cost all the others will travel ... free of charge. Sometimes the first player will try to "pass" in order to see if the others are pressed enough to feel obliged to pay the renting cost (especially if they absolutely need some money because their cash flow is too low). When a vehicle arrives in a city with a "reservation" must stop and ALL the players may unload their containers (sometimes they will have the same destination) so why not trying to travel for free?

I suggest alternating "Contracts" with long and short distance deliveries, especially on the first turns, in order to maintain a constant flow of money: you get paid quickly with the short distance delivery while your main load is underway to reach a distant city (and therefore a better income). All the players start the game with 20 coins (a good quantity indeed) and it seems interesting to immediately rent the quicker (but costlier) vehicles, loading a lot of containers, etc. But before running in this way you have to consider that you also need some money for the following turn: if the selected vehicle does not deliver at the end of the present turn you risk have a very low cash flow and probably you will not be able to operate in the following turn, waiting for the "good but long" contract to be delivered. Losing a turn in this way obviously means that your opponents will gain an important advantage.

Towards the end of the game it is necessary really high attention to select ONLY "contracts" that you are certain to deliver: otherwise you are throwing your money from the window. This seems a very stupid suggestion (I know !!!) but, believe me, in the first 3-4 games some players discovered at the last minute that their programs were ... wrong: they were not able to rent the right vehicle because it was no more available (it was rented by the opponents) or they re-

mained with some undelivered containers on board.

Even if *Rhein River Trade* is not a complex game it is necessary some concentration and to program part of your strategy in advance: I think that it is OK also for casual gamers or young players but not for people that wants to play without using his brain ...

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: S. Niccolini, M. Canetta

Artist: M. Barbati, M. Paganessi

Price: ca. 45 Euro

Publisher: Giochi Uniti 2017

www.giochiuniti.it

PLAYERS:
2-5

AGE:
12+

TIME:
120+

BEWERTUNG

Trade, logistics
Users: With friends
Version: it
Rules: en it jp
In-game text: no

Comments:

Planning ahead is necessary * Reasonable playing time * Good interaction among players * Good rules

Compares to:

Other editions:

Arflight (jp), Devir Americas (en)

