

turn. A player who is attacked must dismantle his tower down to the piece of the number rolled by the attacker.

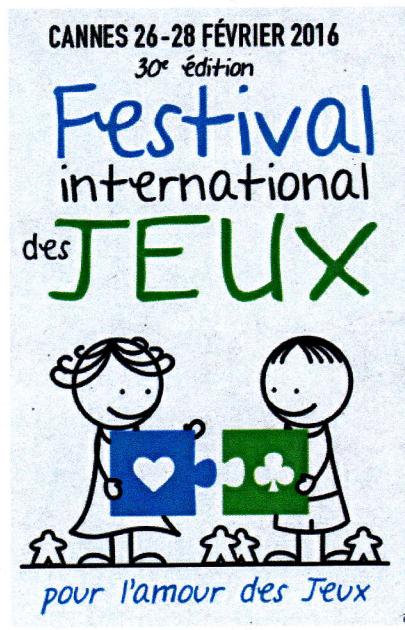


For the fourth time on show in Cannes and nearly unchanged - you are still playing a confrontation of two fleets in the game of



**Yohoho** by Philippe Matharel, you must either bring your own admiral to the opposing base line or capture the opposing admiral.

This brings us to the end of our report, we say good bye to Cannes - it was nice and interesting as usual and we look forward to next year! Festival des Jeux - we will be back!



## LIGHTNING-FAST CONQUEST

# EIGHT MINUTE EMPIRE

WHO WILL BE KING QUICKEST?

Nun ... 8 Minuten ... mmm ... um ehrlich zu sein, wir haben es nie geschafft, eine Partie "Eight Minute Empire" so schnell zu beenden, aber nach mehreren Spielen waren wir bei knapp 15 + 20 Minuten!!! Die Frage ist eine andere: Was kann man von so einem „minimalistischen“ Spiel erwarten? Bevor Sie weiterlesen, denken Sie bitte daran, dass ich Strategiespiele und Konfliktsimulationen liebe, und mich daher ein Spiel von 2-3 Stunden, nicht Well ... 8 minutes ... mmm ... to be honest we never succeeded in completing a game of "Eight Minute Empire" in such a short span of time, but after a couple of games we were very close to 15-20 minutes!!! The question is different: what may we expect from a "minimalist" game like this? Before reading on please remember that I like very much strategy games and wargames, so I am not scared by a title that lasts 2-3 hours if the pleasure of playing it is enough to hook my friends and me to the table. So after having played NATIONS or TROUGH THE AGES or even the old but good CIVILIZATION we were at least a little cautious when we decided to test this new game!

Opening the small box (I used the Italian version published by Da Vinci) you find a very small double sided map (275 x 210 mm) with two different "worlds": face "A" shows 4 Continents and face "B" 5 Continents of different dimensions. Each Continent is divided in REGIONS from a minimum of TWO and a maximum of THIRTEEN. The players (up to five) receive 14 Armies (colored wooden cubes) and 3 Cities (colored wooden discs), together with a certain amount of coins: 8 coins with 5 players and down to 14 coins in a 2 player game. The money never come back in any way: once you have finish it you simply have to select actions where you do not have to spend.

Finally we get also 10 round markers (used as "goods" for a variant of the game) and 42 cards that are the real "motor" of the game. Each card has three different kinds of information: on top of the card there is one (sometimes two) symbol: Tree, Carrot, Anvil, Coal and Ruby. In the middle are printed the Victory Points (VP) that the players get at the end of the game if they have "n" cards with that symbol. The bottom of the card shows the immediate action that it gives to the player who bought it (see below).

### OK, LET US BECOME KINGS

Every side of the board has a starting region where the players place 3 Armies of their color. SIX cards are placed "on sale" above the board

and the game starts with an auction: the player with the highest bid goes first or decides who goes first on the initial turn. The winners lose his coins forever while the other players get back their bet: as we already know all the money spent is lost forever, so nobody usually bets more than 1-2 coins and this only when ~~one~~ very interesting cards is on display.

The FIRST player now must take a card and execute the action depicted on the bottom. As explained before there are 6 CARDS always available above the board: the leftmost card is free and you may take it without spending any coin; the second and third cards will cost 1 coin; the fourth and fifth cards will cost 2 coins

Pietro Cremona

easy to learn and quick to play is a nice „appetizer“ before a more complex game.

and the right most one will cost 3 coins. Again I stress that you start with 8 coins only (in a five players game) and you will not get any extra money, so players should be careful, in the first turns, to purchase cards that cost 2-3 coins as they risk to arrive to the final rounds without money and therefore they (very likely) will lose the game.

Of course you select the card looking at two different possibilities: (A) you have to create new armies and move them in order to conquer different regions in different Continents and (B) you have to collect cards with the same symbol in order to get as much as possible VP at the end of the game. It may happens that those two "possibilities" may be satisfied purchasing a particular card: if so go on without hesitation, but most of the times you have to make a choice and ... think about it. This is the main reason for which I do not believe that you may finish a game in just 8 minutes!

Once you get a card you have to execute the related action, i.e. one of the following:

- Placing new Armies on the starting region or in one of your cities, if you already built them: the number of cubes depicted on the card tells you how many new armies you get. In total this action is depicted on 13 cards that will offer from 1 to 3 new Armies.

- Moving your Armies by land: again the number of "moves" depends on the number of cubes printed on the card. You may move "X" Armies from one region to another adjacent or you may move one Army for a number of regions that matches the number of cubes or any combination of the two possibilities. In to-

tal there are 10 cards, allowing to move from 2 to 6 Armies by land.

- Moving your Armies in a combination of land and sea, with the same rules of the preceding point. Note that a "sea move" is simply a transfer from a region of a Continent to another of a different Continent connected by a dotted blue line that cross a sea. In total 9 cards allowing you to move from 2 to 4 Armies.

- Build a City: You may place one of your cities (disc) in a region where you have at least one Army. There are only 4 cards with this symbol.

- Build OR move Armies: with these 4 cards allows you may decide to move "X" Armies OR to bring "X" Armies on the field ("X" means 2 to 4 Armies for each option)

- Destroy an Army AND Build one of your own: just one card. You may pick up any cube from the board and place it on the related player's reserve AND take in one of your own cubes. An interesting action towards the end of the game to try to gain control of a Continent. Otherwise it is of little interest.

- Destroy and Army OR build City: again just one card. This is very similar to the one above, but more interesting even on the first turns as it allows you to place a Town on the board and use it to bring new armies in play but if you think, as I did on my first game, that you will always select the "build a city" instead of destroying an enemy Army ... it is because you still do not know how to make points (VP).

Again this will be a very important move in the very last turn of the game.

Anyway once you used your card to perform an action you will keep it in your hand: you will get VP at the game's end.

#### HOW TO WIN

The game lasts 7 rounds: as soon as ALL players have 7 cards in their hand the game stops immediately and the winner must be found. There are two different calculations:

(1) - VP gained on the field

- For each REGION where you have a majority you get 1 VP. Armies and Cities are counted for each color and the player with the higher total wins. Ties do not assign VP.

- For each CONTINENT that you control you gain 1 VP. You control a Continent if you control a majority of Regions. Again ties do not assign VP.

(2) - VP gained with the cards

Each player shows the cards of his hand and place them on the table divided by symbols: then you look in the middle of a card of each to find the VP gain for that symbol. Finally and you add up the VP of all your cards to get a grand total.

It is important to know that all symbols have a different number of cards and therefore each symbol assign different VP:

- Carrots: there are 10 cards (one of which has 2 carrots) and you gain 1 VP if you collected 3

cards, 2 VP for 5 cards, 3 VP for 7 cards and 5 VP for 8 cards

- Anvil; there are 9 cards (one of which has 2 carrots) and you gain 1 VP if you collected 2 cards, 2 VP for 4 cards, 3 VP for 6 cards and 5 VP for 7 cards

- Trees; there are 8 cards and you gain 1 VP if you collected 2 cards, 2 VP for 4 cards, 3 VP for 5 cards and 5 VP for 6 cards

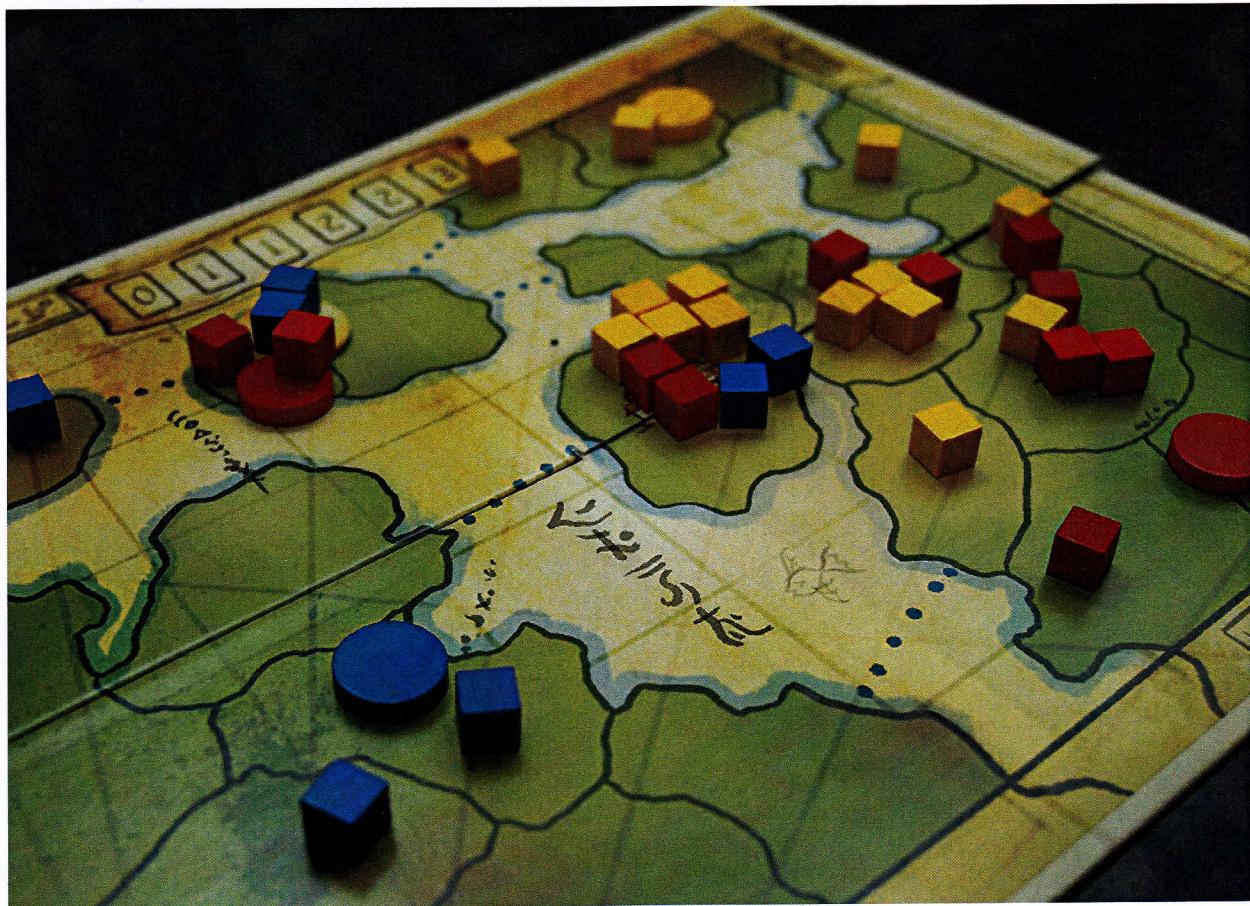
- Coal; there are 7 cards and you gain 1 VP if you collected 2 cards, 2 VP for 3 cards, 3 VP for 4 cards and 5 VP for 5 cards

- Rubies; there are 5 cards and you gain 1 VP if you collected 1 card, 2 VP for 2 cards, 3 VP for 3 cards and 5 VP for 4 cards

There are also 3 JOLLY cards in the deck: they show all symbols and you may assign each of them to a collection in order to increase the VP benefit, if possible.

And that's all: of course the pleasure of the game is all on the speed that you use to "invade" new regions without forgetting to increase your armies in order to defend the treated regions. Be cautious in spending your coins in the first two rounds and try to get as many armies as possible that you will move in the following 2-3 turns. In the last 2 turns you have to consolidate your conquests and use a central reserve of armies to reinforce regions where the enemies try to get a majority.

The coins that you save at the end of the game are completely useless so in the last two crucial



turns you may spend even all your money to purchase the most costly cards if they are important for your strategy.

An average game will end assigning 3-6 VP from the board and 3-5 VP from the cards: so if you were lucky enough to get the rarest cards early in the game (let's say, for example, that you got 3 Coal and 2 Ruby that already grant you 4 VP) you have now to concentrate on the "field" in order to rise your VP with the Regions. Avoid to collect 1-2 cards only of Carrots or 1 card only of Anvil, Coal or Trees because they will not give you any VP.

Try to keep your Armies moving toward the farthest regions of the outer Continents because there you may get a good number of VP with just one Army per Region and ... yes sometimes destroying ONE single enemy Army may give you at least 2 VP (one for the Region and one for the control of that Continent).

#### CONCLUSION

Ok, after 20 minutes do you feel a bigger or more powerful King? Not really: I still prefer playing Nations or Through the Ages or Civilization but while I am waiting for my usual game companions I will be happy to spend this time doing little conquests with Eight Minute Empire. ☐

Pietro Cremona

#### INFORMATION

**Designer:** Ryan Laukat  
**Artist:** Ryan Laukat  
**Price:** ca.  
**Publisher:** dV Giochi 2014  
[www.dvgiochi.com](http://www.dvgiochi.com)

**PLAYERS:**  
2-5  
**AGE:**  
10+  
**TIME:**  
20+

#### EVALUATION

Area control  
Users: With friends  
Version: it  
Rules: en it pl  
In-game text: no

**Comments:**  
8 minutes is the minimum time \* Usually it takes a bit longer \* Cute idea \* Nice filler game

**Compares to:**  
Basically all games on area occupation, first game of this kind as regards to playing time

**Other editions:**  
Red Raven, 999 Games, Schwerkraft Verlag, Bard Centrum Gier and others



My rating:  
★ ★ ★  
★ ★ ★

WILD WEST ALONG THE RAILTRACK

# COLT EXPRESS

## RAIDING A TRAIN

Robo Rally and Colt Express - What do they have in common? Nothing, at least at first glance, but that is far off the mark, because the movement mechanisms of both games are quite similar. But, first, let's take a step back. After opening the box and some thirty minutes of assembling the very pretty three-dimensional trains and the engine we have a 100% pure Wild West game that features a train robbery. Each of the two to six players (I would recommend a minimum of four players, though) chooses one bandit character - each of them has his own individual special abilities, takes 10 action cards of the corresponding color, six cartridge cards and - already - one booty tile, worth 250 \$. Each player places his bandit figurine onto the train. The engine and a number of cars equal to the number of players are provided with the booty tiles depicted on them (money bags from 250 to 500 \$ and a few gems of value 500 \$). The Marshal is placed, together with a cash box worth 1000\$, into the engine. One of the three Station Cards (for the last round) and four out of seven Rounds Cards are randomly drawn and readied, which results in a game of five rounds. One round in the game: Each player draws six cards from his face-down stack of ten action cards. Those cards among other things - give him the movement and action options for his bandit for the current round. The goal of the bandits is of course to collect as many booty tiles of the highest possible value as they can and, in addition, to shoot at the other players to restrict them in their options to act and move. The cards offer several different options to move on the train, for instance in the train one step forward or backwards, on the roof the train one can even move over up to three cars. You can climb from inside the train up onto the roof and the other way round. With the Hit Card you can land a punch on a bandit on the same case so that he is moved one car forward and also drops a booty tile at the spot where he was punched. With the Fire Card (shot with a pistol) you fire at shot at the bandit nearest to you, in the train with a range of one car, on the roof at any range. The bandit you targeted immediately receives a cartridge card for his decks, which can restrict his options in the following turns as is completely useless. By the way, the player who did fire most shots will receive an additional bonus of 1000 \$ at the end of the game. I do most emphatically recom-

mend to reduce this bonus via an in-house rule to 500 \$, as otherwise all will idiotically keep firing off their pistols quite randomly. With the Robbery Card you can pick up one of the coveted booty tiles, albeit only if available, from the location where you are situated. With the Marshal Card the Marshal figurine moves either one step forward or backwards, at the discretion of the player who used the card, and thus relinquishes

Gert Stöckl

A very prettily designed game with a 3D train engine and train cars, well suited for friends or families as well as experienced players.

the valuable money box (obviously back then Marshals were not the brightest kids on the block if the moved away from what they should have protected, but it might be mainly the fault of the game mechanism. Should your bandit, by any chance, move into the location of the Marshal or the Marshal move onto a location with bandits, all bandits instantly take flight onto the train roof and are handed a neutral cartridge card. This cartridge card has the same effects as a cartridge card of another player. Contrary to Robo Rally that I mentioned at the beginning you do not play all of the three to five actions of a round secretly, that is face down, but usually only one or two, marked by a tunnel symbol on the Rounds Card. All cards are placed in turn either face-up or face-down on one common stack. This stack is turned over at the end of the round and resolved card by card. If you played a move forward/ move backwards card you decide at this point in which direction your bandit moves and how far. Which means, that actions of other players are only partially calculable and you cannot always count on the fact that, for instance, in case of only one booty tile at a location it does not make much sense to play the Robbery Card if you are second on this location. It might be better to use a Hit Card against the bandit and then to pick up the dropped booty with the Robbery Card.

Oh yes, in Colt Express that rather over-worked silly saying of "first of all, things will turn out different from, secondly, how you think they will work out" proves to be rather true, after all. The more players are involved the more chaotic it all gets, because more actions are played and the memorizing of the openly played cards gets more and