History of Amsterdam

This game takes you back to 17th century Amsterdam when the city flourished as a center for world trade. The time track follows the actual history of Amsterdam during that period as the city first flourished and rose in importance and power, the later declined as others grew to replace the Dutch as the most successful merchants in the world. The dates on the time track represent important historical incidents that affected Amsterdam during this period. The events are selected to bring this alive for the players as they play. The more significant events are:

1579 The Union of Utrecht is established, marking the beginning of the Dutch state.
1585 The Spanish conquer Antwerp, leading many merchants to move to Amsterdam.
1588 England defeats the Spanish Armada with the help of the Dutch fleet.
1596/97 Failed attempt by Jacob van Heemskerk and Willem Barents to find a northern sea route to India.
1597 Return of 3 of the 4 from their first voyage to the Dutch East Indies.
1600 The population of Amsterdam reaches 50,000 due to its growth as a trading center.
1602 The United East Indies Company is founded.
1609 The Amsterdam Exchange Bank is founded.
1609/21 The 12-year Armistice with Spain opens the Mediterranean to Amsterdam shipping.
1611 The stock market is opened over the Amstel, boosting business in Amsterdam.
1613 The city is extended in area, adding much needed space for the growing city.
1619 Jan Pietersz Coen sacks Jakarta and moves the United East Indies Company to this strategic location on the main shipping lanes.
1621 The Patent West Indies Company if founded to trade with Africa and the Americas.
1624 The Dutch transfer their China trading operations from Fukien to Formosa under pressure from the Chinese military.
1625 Colonists in North America buy Manhattan Island and found New Amsterdam.
1628 Admiral Piet Heyn succeeds in capturing the Spanish silver fleet, netting over 180,000 pounds of gold and silver.
1632 Rembrandt moves his studio to Amsterdam.
1636/37 Runaway speculative trading in tulip bulbs ruins many businessmen.
c. 1640 Despite an Armistice with the Portuguese, the Dutch continue to blockade the Bay of Manila to stop the Portuguese from trading in the area.
1641 The United East Indies Company is given the exclusive right to trade with Japan.
1652/54 The first English War concludes with the Dutch being excluded from trade with England and its American colonies.
1656 Rembrandt is bankrupt, due in part to the Dutch loss of the First English War.
1662 Chinese pirates oust the Dutch from Formosa.
1664 An English fleet sails to New Amsterdam and takes over the city.
1665 The population of Amsterdam reaches 50,000 due to the influx of immigrants.
1666 Another expansion of the canal rings gives Amsterdam much needed space.

The author and publisher thank the many test players for their help in the development of this game. We especially want to thank Iain Adams, Nicholas Blackwell, Chris Bowyer, John Christian, Dave Farquhar, Ross Inglis, Kevin Jacklin, Chris Lawson, Ivan Towlson and all the gamers at BayCon.

If you have comments, questions, or suggestions, please write: Rio Grande Games, PO Box 1033, Placitas, NM 87043 or RioGames@aol.com or visit our web site at www.riograndegames.com.

Merchants of Amsterdam

a game by Reiner Knizia

This game takes you back to 17th century Amsterdam when the city flourished as a center for world trade. Ships from Amsterdam sailed the seven seas and returned home bringing valuable goods from all over the world, where they sold the goods profitably. The proliferation of these goods and profits brought many people to Amsterdam, expanding the city exponentially. The success of the merchants of Amsterdam encouraged the growth of the arts as well and brought the world artists like Rembrandt. Against this background, each player takes the role of one of the powerful merchant families. Each tries to increase their profits through investments in the commodity market, building warehouses in Amsterdam, and opening trade offices in the colonies. The mayor wields special powers, but the office changes hands constantly. Thus, players should make good use of those powers when they have them.

Contents

- game board
- auction clock
- 120 tokens in 5 colors, 24 for each player
- 84 cards
- 3 disks (mayor, auction, discard)
- time passage figure
- money (20 @ 10,000, 20 @ 20,000, 15 @ 50,000, 30 @ 100,000 and 12 @ 500,000)
- 5 credit markers
- rule booklet

Overview

In the middle of the board are the four central districts of old Amsterdam: Grachten, Nieuwe Zijde, Oude Zijde and Lastage. Surrounding old Amsterdam is a map of the world featuring the four regions that are important to the game: the Americas, Africa, East Indies and Far East. Each area has trade offices. Along the bottom of the board is the commodity market with separate tracks for each of the four important commodities: sugar, gemstones, spices, and silk.



sugar



gemstones



spice



silk

Along the other three sides of the board is the time track, starting in 1579 and ending in 1666. The important events that occurred in Amsterdam during this time are shown by symbols on the time track. Each player has a supply of tokens to place on the commodity market, in the four districts of Amsterdam, and the on the trade offices in the colonies.
The cards determine where the players may place their tokens. There are cards for the commodity market, the districts of Amsterdam, and the trade offices in the colonies.
Players take turns in clockwise order. On a player's turn, he is the mayor and takes the three disks.

These disks are:

the mayor disk



use the card yourself

the auction disk



auction the card

the discard disk



discard the card

The mayor turns over the top card from the card deck. He must decide what to do with it: keep it for himself, auction it, or discard it. He places the card on the disk that corresponds to his decision. Then he draws a second card, decides which of the remaining two disks to place it on and places it there. Finally, he draws a third card and places it on the remaining disk. When all three disks have a card, the disk actions are executed.
First the card on the discard disk is discarded. Then the mayor executes the action on the card on the mayor disk, placing or moving one or more of his tokens on the board. Finally, the card on the auction disk is auctioned using the auction clock. The winner of the auction pays for the cards and then executes the action on the card, placing or moving one or more of his tokens on the board.

The card deck also has cards picturing a sand clock. When the mayor draws a sand clock card, he moves the time passage figure forward one space on the time track. The spaces on the time track can have several meanings. Some spaces allow all players to open a trade office in a colony, others allow all players to build a warehouse in Amsterdam, and some spaces allow all players to add or move their tokens on the commodity market. There are also scoring spaces for Amsterdam, the commodity market, and the trade offices in the colonies. When the time passage figure moves to one of the scoring spaces, the players with the best positions in the area being scored earn money from the bank. At the end of the game, the player with the most money is the winner.

Preparation

Place the board in the middle of the table. Place the time passage figure on the first space of the time track (1579). Choose one player to be the banker who manages the money and the credit markers. He gives each player 400,000 guilders from the bank as starting capital. Shuffle all cards and place them face down next to the board. The players choose a starting player. The starting player takes all three disks and the auction clock. He places the disks before himself with the auction clock to the side. The starting player is player 1, his left neighbor is player 2, and so on around the table. Each player chooses a color and takes the 24 tokens in that color. With fewer than five players, put the unused tokens back in the box. The players each place three of their tokens on the spaces marked with their player number.



player 2 places three of his tokens

Playing the game

The starting player starts and players continue in clockwise order. On a player's turn, he is the mayor. He takes the three disks and places them before him on the table. He draws the top card and places it on one of the three disks. Then he draws further cards and places them on disks until each disk has a card. To make the right decisions, players need to understand the value and importance of each card.



commodity



commodity card for more than three players

Each player may have one token on each track of the commodity market. With a commodity card, the player is allowed three moves on the commodity market. The moves may be to place or move tokens. Each move is one space forward on the track. When a player places a token on a commodity market track, he places it in the first space (past the commodity symbol). The player may not use all three moves on the same track of the commodity market, but may otherwise move his commodity tokens in any combination he chooses. When a token reaches the last space on a commodity track, it must stop and move no further forward.

Special rule for three players: there are six commodity cards that have a picture of three players with a red "X". When playing with only three players and the mayor draws one of these cards, he immediately discards it and draws another card. When playing with four or five players, when the mayor draws this card, he places it on one of the three disks.
Example: the purple player has one token each on the sugar and spice tracks. He takes a commodity card and moves the spice token two spaces forward and places a token on the first space of the silk track for his three moves.



With a trade office card, a player may open a trade office by placing one of his tokens on an empty trade office space on the board. The player may only place his token where the card indicates the token may be placed. Some cards show one region, but all commodities. With such a card, the player must place a token in the region indicated, but may choose to place it on any empty commodity space. Others show all regions, but only one commodity. With this card, the player may place a token in any region, but must place it on an empty space of the commodity indicated.
If all possible spaces are filled with tokens, the player may not place a token and loses the action of the card. When a player uses a trade office card to place a token on a trade office space, he moves his corresponding commodity token on the commodity market one space forward. If the player has no token on the corresponding track, he places one in the first space on that track.



The player chooses a trade office card for the "Americas". The card offers all four commodities. The player opens a trade office in the Americas and places or moves his token on the corresponding market track.



The player chooses a trade office card for silk. The card offers all four colonial areas. The player opens a trade office in the Americas and places or moves his token on the corresponding market track.

Amsterdam cards

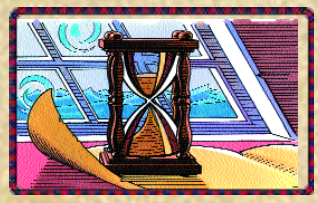
With an Amsterdam card, a player may build a warehouse on an empty space in Amsterdam. Some cards show just one district, but all commodities and others show two districts, but only one commodity. The player must build the warehouse (place his token) in the district or districts shown on the card. If there are no empty spaces in the district(s) shown on the card, the player places no token and gets no value from the card. When a player builds a house, he also moves his token (or places his token if he has none there) on the track in the commodity market that corresponds to the commodity shown on the card. If all commodities are shown, he chooses which commodity token to move.



The player may build a warehouse in either Grachten or Oude and move his gemstone token on the commodity market one space forward. If he has no gemstone token, he places one of his tokens on the first gemstone space.



The player may build a warehouse in Lastage and move one of his commodity tokens on the commodity market one space forward. If he has no token on the track he chooses, he places one of his tokens on the first space on the track.



sand clock cards

When the mayor draws a sand clock card, he immediately moves the time passage figure one space forward along the time track. If the space the figure moves to indicates an event (see "Time Track" below), the event is immediately executed. After moving the figure and executing the event, if any, the mayor discards the sand clock card. The mayor then draws another card to place on an empty disk! Sand clock cards are never placed on the disks!

After the mayor has placed a card on each of the three disks, he dispenses with the cards in the order shown below based on which disk he placed them.

discard disk

First he discards the card on the discard disk.

mayor disk

Then the mayor executes the action shown on the card he placed on the mayor disk. He pays nothing to execute this action! He places one of his tokens in Amsterdam or in the colonies and/or places or moves his tokens on the commodity market as indicated by the card. Then, he discards the card.

auction disk

The mayor starts the auction for the card on the auction disk. The player who wins the auction pays the bank the amount he bid and then may execute the action indicated on the card. He places one of his tokens in Amsterdam or in the colonies and/or places or moves his tokens on the commodity market as indicated by the card. Then, he discards the card.

The auction (a traditional Dutch auction)

The mayor begins the auction for the card on the auction disk. He carefully moves the pointer on the auction clock clockwise to the "start" position and places the auction clock within easy reach of all players. All players, including the mayor, may participate in the auction. He gives the players time to prepare for the auction (he decides how much time) and then starts the clock by gently pushing the knob in the center of the clock.
As the pointer on the auction clock moves slowly counter-clockwise around the clock, it passes over steadily decreasing prices. Any player may stop the clock by gently pushing on the knob in the center of the clock. The player who stops the clock pays the bank the price shown under the pointer when the clock is stopped (e.g. 90,000 guilders for a bid of 90). If the pointer stops on the line between two prices, the player pays the higher price.
When the pointer reaches 50, it jumps to "start" and stops, ending the auction with no winner. The mayor discards the card and no player executes the action on the card!
If a player stops the clock before it moves below 200, he doubles the cost of the auction for all players. The mayor restarts the clock at "start". All players may bid in the doubled auction, but will pay double the amount shown on the clock when it stops. If the pointer reaches 100 before any player stops the clock, the player who doubled the auction, buys the card for 200,000 guilders.
If a player stops the clock, but does not have the money to pay, the mayor restarts the auction at "start". The player who misbid may not bid in the restarted auction.

End of the player's turn

When the auction ends and the card (if bought) has been executed, the player's turn ends. The mayor's term of office ends and he passes the three disks to his left neighbor, who becomes the new mayor. The new mayor draws cards, puts them on the disks, and so on.

Time Track

When the mayor draws a card with a sand clock, he immediately moves the time passage figure one space forward on the time track. Most, but not all, spaces have a symbol beneath the date. When the mayor moves the figure to a space with a symbol, the event represented by the symbol takes place immediately. The events are described below. When the event affects all players, it starts with the player to the left of the mayor and continues clockwise around the table, affecting the mayor last.



400: This is the starting space. Each player receives 400,000 guilders from the bank.



Ship: Ships bring goods from the colonies. Each player may move one of his tokens on the commodity market one space forward or may place one of his tokens on the starting space of a track where he has no tokens.



Globe: Each player may open a trade office by placing one of his tokens on an empty space in the colony of his choice. As each trade office space has a commodity shown on it, he then advances his token on the corresponding track on the commodity market. If he has no token on the track, he places his token on the first space on the track.



Amsterdam coat of arms: Each player builds a warehouse in Amsterdam by placing one of his tokens on an empty space in Amsterdam.



Credit note: Each player may borrow 120,000 from the bank. Players who borrow 120,000 must also take a credit marker to mark the loan. At the end of the game, players with credit markers must pay the bank 200,000 guilders.



Each player loses a warehouse: Each player must remove one of his tokens from Amsterdam. Each player chooses which of his tokens to remove.



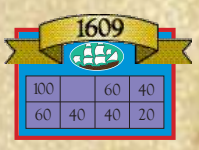
Each player loses a trade office: Each player must remove one of his trade offices. Each player chooses which of his trade offices to remove.



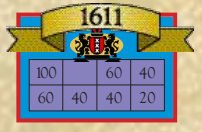
Ship wreck: Each player moves one of his tokens on the commodity market one space backward. If the token is on the first space, he removes it.



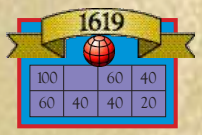
Commodity market leaders lose one space: On each commodity market track, the player whose token has moved furthest must move his token one space backward. If two or more players have reached the farthest space, they all move one space backward.



Scoring the commodity market: There are three commodity market scoring spaces on the board. These are the intermediate scoring opportunities for the players in leading positions on the commodity market (see below).



Scoring warehouses in Amsterdam: There are two warehouse scoring spaces on the board. These are the intermediate scoring opportunities for players in leading positions in the warehouses (see below).



Scoring the trade offices in the colonies: There are two trade office scoring spaces on the board. These are the intermediate scoring opportunities for the players in leading positions in the in the colonies (see below).

Final scoring: The last space on the time track is the space for the final scoring. The commodity market, the warehouses in Amsterdam, and the trade offices are all scored. This final scoring often determines the winner of the game.

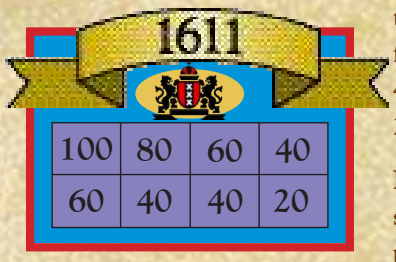
There are no symbols and, therefore, no events in 1585, 1596, 1597, 1600 and 1665.

EARNING MONEY

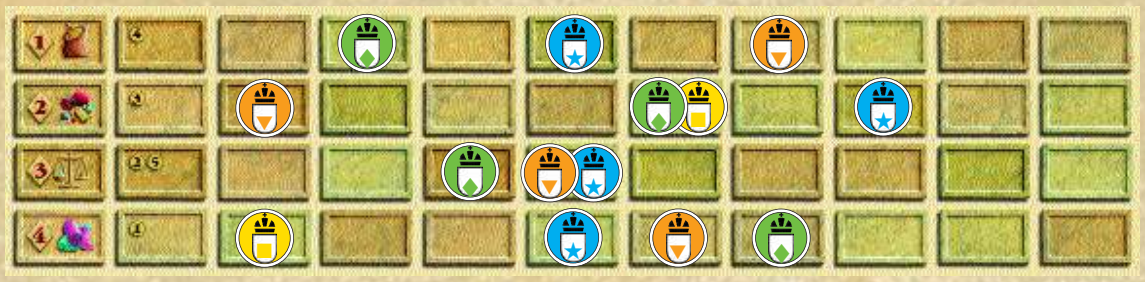
Whenever the time passage figure reaches one of the scoring spaces, the players earn money. There are three areas scored during the game: commodity market, warehouses in Amsterdam, and trade offices in the colonies, and the final scoring at the end of the game, which scores all three areas at once. In each area scored, there are four things scored: four commodities in the market, four districts in Amsterdam, and four regions in the colonies. When scoring an area, the players first rank the things in the area. In the market, the commodity with a player token the furthest to the right has the highest rank, the commodity with a player token that is next furthest right is second and so on. Only the furthest right token in each track is considered. Thus, a single commodity cannot be ranked twice. In Amsterdam, the district with the most warehouses (tokens) has the highest rank, the district with the second most is second and so on. In the colonies, the region with the most trade offices (tokens) has the highest rank, the region with the second most is second, and so on. If there is a tie, the number on the commodity track, district, or region breaks the tie (e.g. sugar =1, gemstones =2, spice =3, and silk =4). Within each rank, only the players with the most and second most (in the market, the right-most and second right-most) tokens earn money. The earnings are shown in the table in the scoring space. The players with the most tokens in the first rank earn the amounts shown in the first column of the table: the winner gets the top amount and the second player gets the bottom amount. The players with the most tokens in the second rank, earn the amounts shown in the second column and so on.

example: Scoring warehouses in Amsterdam.

First, the players count the number of tokens in each district. In the district with the most tokens, the player with the most tokens earns 100,000 guilders and the player with the second most earns 60,000. In the district with the second most tokens, the player with the most tokens earns 80,000 and the player with the second most tokens earns 40,000. In the district with the third most tokens, the player with the most tokens earns 60,000 and the player with the second most tokens earns 40,000. In the district with the fourth most tokens, the player with the most tokens earns 40,000 and the player with the second most tokens earns 20,000.



If only one player has tokens in a track, district, or region, he scores first and no player earns the second place money. When players tie, they share the earnings: if two or more tie for first, the amounts for first and second are added, divided by the number tied, the result is rounded down to the nearest 10,000, and paid to each tied player. The second place player gets nothing. If two or more players ties for second, the amount for second is divided by the number tied, rounded down to the nearest 10,000, and paid to the tied players.



example

The gemstone market has the furthest right player token. Thus, gemstones have the highest rank and the blue player earns 100,000 guilders. On this track, green and yellow are tied for second and each earns 30,000 guilders (60,000/2 = 30,000).
Sugar and silk are tied with the second right-most player tokens. As sugar has the lower number (1 vs. 4), sugar has the second rank. Orange earns 80,000 and blue earns 40,000. As silk has the third rank, green earns 60,000 and orange earns 40,000.
This leaves spice as the fourth rank. As blue and orange are tied for first, they share the amounts for first and second: 40,000 + 20,000 = 60,000/2 = 30,000 guilders.

Special rule for Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, to determine the first and second player in each district, players count their largest warehouse groups not just their warehouses. To be a group, the warehouses in the group must be orthogonally adjacent to each other. Single warehouses are part of the group, but are counted for total tokens in the districts. Only a player's largest group in a district is counted.



example:

Nieuwe Zijde and Oude Zijde each have 5 player tokens. As Nieuwe Zijde has the lower number (1 vs 2), it is the first rank. Orange has the largest warehouse group (4) in the district and earns 100,000 guilders. Blue is second (1) and earns 60,000. Oude Zijde is the second ranked district. Blue has the largest warehouse group (4) there and earns 80,000. Orange is second (1) and earns 40,000. Grachten has the third-most tokens. Orange and yellow are tied for largest warehouse group (2) and share the amounts for first and second: 60,000 + 40,000) = 100,000/ 2 = 50,000 each. Finally, Lastage has the fourth rank. Green earns 40,000 as the first and only player in the district, even though he has only one warehouse there.

Bonuses

Players can earn the following bonuses:

- When a player has tokens on all four tracks of the commodity market and each has moved to the second space or farther, the player may build a warehouse in Amsterdam for free.
- When a player has at least one trade office in each of the four regions, he receives 100,000 guilders from the bank.
- When a player has at least one warehouse in each district in Amsterdam, he receives 100,000 guilders from the bank.
- The districts in Amsterdam are connected by bridges. When a player builds a warehouse across the bridge from where he already has a warehouse, he receives 40,000 guilders from the bank.

When a player moves or removes one of his tokens and no longer qualifies for a bonus he earlier received, he must return the bonus he received. When a player must return a warehouse, he may choose any of his warehouses in Amsterdam to return; he need not remember the warehouse added and return that one. If a player must return money and does not have enough to return the amount required, he must take out a 120,000 loan, take a credit marker, and repay 200,000 at the end of the game.

Game end

The number of cards guarantees that each player will have the same number of turns. The game ends at the end of the turn when the time passage figure reaches the space marked 1665. The figure is then moved to the space marked 1666. This is the final scoring space and the players collect money based on the table on that space for the commodity market, the warehouses in Amsterdam, and the trade offices in the colonies. The players count their money and subtract 200,000 for each credit marker. The player with the most money is the winner!

It is possible that the last card in the deck is a sand clock card. In this case, the player drawing it does not take a turn as there will be no action cards left and this would be an extra turn for that player. If several sand clock cards are on the bottom, the player draws them one at a time so that any events that occur are executed as he moves the time passage figure.

The game in review

- The players take turns in clockwise order as the mayor of Amsterdam.
- The mayor places three cards on the three disks. When he draws a sand clock card, he moves the time passage figure one space forward on the time track. If the space indicates an event, it occurs immediately.
- Based on the disks, one card is discarded, one is executed by the mayor, and the third is auctioned and executed by the player who buys it.
- There are several scoring spaces on the time track: commodity market, warehouses in Amsterdam, and trade offices in the colonies. On these spaces, players earn money.
- The game ends when the time passage figure reaches 1665 (all cards have been drawn). The figure is moved to 1666 and the players earn money in the final scoring.
- The player with the most money is the winner.