

INTRIGUE

A game of strategy and diplomacy in the world of Velteran

SYNOPSIS

Intrigue is a game for 4-6 players, each of whom controls an empire. The object of the game is to build the most powerful empire. While this may involve some military conflict, the world of Velteran is dominated by diplomacy, and most empires take their shape based on negotiations and agreements.

The game pieces consist of a map divided into 51 regions, separated by various oceans and mountain ranges. There is also a bag of tiles, divided into empire tiles and special tiles. Prior to a game of 4 or 5 players, the empire tiles that do not correspond to a player should be removed.

Players and Empires

Each player chooses one of the six empires, shown on the right. During the course of the game, the empires will expand over Velteran, claiming regions by placing their tiles on them. A contiguous stretch of regions controlled by the same empire is referred to as a “kingdom”.

Each kingdom has a “strength”, normally equal to the number of contiguous regions involved. Certain regions are marked with a -1 or +1, either of which modifies the strength of any kingdom that contains such a region. Certain tiles can also modify a kingdom's strength. Thus, in the map shown below, the kingdom has a strength of 3: four regions minus one penalty for The Great Steppe.

These strengths are compared whenever any kingdom tries to claim an adjacent region already occupied by another empire. If the kingdom wishing *annex* the region has a higher strength, they may do so, discarding the original tile and placing their own. (Even if this placement causes their own strength to drop.) If the strengths of the two kingdoms are tied, neither may annex regions from the other.

At the end of the game, each player receives a score equal to the number of regions in their empire, plus the number of regions in their largest kingdom (or one of their largest kingdoms, if tied). Strength bonuses and penalties are not counted in this final score. The player with the highest resulting score wins the game.

The Six Empires



GOLD



IRON



TIN



SILVER



LEAD



OIL



STANDARD PLAY

The game board is set up with three tiles, picked from the bag, on the I, II, and III spots. The III spot is always the “active tile”, and pertains to whichever player's turn it is. This may be (1) their own empire tile, (2) another player's empire tile, or (3) a special tile. Play proceeds in a circle.

If the active tile is *the player's own empire tile*, they can place it on any unoccupied region of the board that they choose. They can also place it on an occupied region adjacent to one of their own kingdoms, if that kingdom is capable of annexing the region, as described above, and discard the previous empire tile on that region.

If the active tile is *a different player's empire tile*, then the player must engage in “diplomacy”. After discussion, they must propose a placement for the tile to any other player (possibly, but not necessarily, the player whose empire tile is the active tile). This placement can involve an annexation from an existing kingdom belonging to the same empire as the tile. If the player they have chosen to ask agrees with this placement, it occurs (regardless of the wishes of the player whose empire tile is concerned). If the diplomacy is refused, the current player's turn is lost, and the tile in question remains the active tile.

It is the intention of this game that diplomatic proposals can and should be negotiated, but that it should be clear whether or not a given proposal is “official”. For some groups of players, this may present an issue that has to be addressed legalistically. If that is the case, the phrase “[Name], I propose” is binding, and cannot be followed by any conditions or further discussions.

If the active tile is a *special tile*, specific rules must be followed according to the tile in question, which are listed below. No special tiles require diplomacy. For all special tiles, the effects of the tile *must* be enacted, even if it is not in the interest of the player to do so.

At the end of the turn, the active tile is either placed on the board (or discarded), unless a player's diplomacy has been rejected. If the active tile is placed on the board (or discarded), the next two tiles are each promoted, and a third tile is drawn from the bag to fill the I spot. When tiles are discarded, they are removed from play—they do not go back into the draw pile.

Special Tiles



YOURSELF *The player receiving this tile may go through the bag to find one of their own empire tiles, if one is left, and place it on any unoccupied region, or any region they are able to annex.*



MOVE *The player receiving this tile must move any other player's empire tile to an adjacent region, if possible. It is permissible to use this move to annex a region, if possible.*



MOVE YOURSELF *As per “move”, but the player must move one of their own empire tiles, if possible.*



ASSASSINATION *The player receiving this tile must remove any one empire tile from the board, of their choosing.*



HEROICS *The player receiving this tile may place one of their own empire tiles, as per “yourself”. However, in this instance, uniquely, they are not bound by the respective strength of the kingdoms, and they can annex a region in a kingdom with a higher strength than their own.*



FORTIFICATIONS *This tile must be placed on any one region, where it remains for the rest of the game. It confers a +1 strength bonus to any kingdom including that region. If placed on a region subject to hazards, it also annuls that region from hazards.*



SCORCHED EARTH *This tile must be placed on any one region, where it remains for the rest of the game. It confers a -1 strength penalty to any kingdom including that region. It also makes the region subject to hazards.*



HAZARD *The player receiving this tile loses their turn. Meanwhile, all empire tiles located on the “hazard” regions are discarded, as are any empire tiles located on regions containing a “scorched earth” tile.*

ENDGAME

The game is over when every region is occupied, or every tile has been drawn, whichever comes first. The winner is the player with the highest score, as described above: each occupied region counts once, and each region in the largest single kingdom of each empire counts double.