Johannes Schmidauer-König

Catherine

The Cities of the Tsarina

Object of the Game

It is the year 1762. Recently, after a coup d'état, Catherine the Great was proclaimed the new tsarina when Peter III had to abdicate. You take on the roles of counselors and try to win Catherine's favor, so that she will appoint you as the most important person of trust to be at her side at the end of the game. The possibilities are many: You can focus on the expansion of the empire, opt for a martial orientation, engage in the booming trade in goods, or set your mind on the arts. By the end, Catherine will decide who impressed her the most…

Game Materials

110 game cards

1 gameboard

102 project cards

8 order cards

48 residences
(12 in each of the 4 player colors)

4 favor markers

4 victory-point markers

4 50-/100-markers

6 joker tiles

48 goods tiles
(12 in each of the four kinds:
iron, food, caviar, and fur)

Before the first game, remove the 50-/100-markers, the joker tiles, and the goods tiles from the punch-out sheet.

Set-up of the Game

The illustrations below show you the example of a set-up for the game with three players.

1 Put the **gameboard** on the table.

2 Sort the **goods tiles** according to their kinds. Several cities on the gameboard depict a good; put as many of the respective goods tiles as there are players next to these cities. In the two- or three-player game, put the remaining goods tiles back into the box.

3 Keep the joker tiles handy next to the gameboard (except for the two-player game; in this case, put them back into the box).

4 Each player chooses one color and takes the corresponding 12 residences, the victory-point marker, the favor marker, and the 50-/100-marker.

   a. Put your **victory-point marker** on space "0" of the victory-point track.

   b. Put your **favor marker** on the bottom space of the favor track.

   c. Put your **50-/100-marker** next to the gameboard.

action row

activation row

5 Shuffle the order cards; each player draws one of them. Put the order you have drawn in front of you, face up.

7 All players simultaneously choose 3 of their 6 cards and put the cards face up in front of them in one row. This is your **action row**. Leave some space below it for the **activation row**. Keep your other 3 cards as hand cards. The action row and the activation row together form your **display**.

6 Shuffle the **project cards** (simply called "cards" from now on) and deal **6 cards** to each player. The remaining cards are put out ready as a face-down draw pile. Leave some space next to the draw pile for a discard pile.

8 Put the remaining order, residences, favor markers, 50-/100-markers, and goods tiles back into the box; they will not be needed in this game.

Overview

In this game, you try to generate as many victory points as possible by cleverly activating actions on the project cards, acquiring cannons, collecting books, building residences, and accumulating goods.

Each round, you play 1 card into your action row and 1 card into your activation row. With this, you activate 1 card in the action row and may carry out this card's action and bonus.

In this context, each card is significant in several respects:

The upper area of the card can depict goods ◆ 🛡 ◆ ◆, cannons 🔫 and/or books 📖. All these symbols on cards in your **action row** are considered your **possession**. Symbols on cards in your activation row are not considered your possession!

Cards that allow you to build a residence don't show any symbols but, instead, 3 city names.

action →

bonus →

The bottom part of the card shows 2 effects: an **action** and, below it, a **bonus** (on most cards). Depending on the action, the effect can be triggered once or several times; the bonus, however, can be redeemed only once. The actions and bonuses are explained in detail from p. 7 on.

Course of the Game

The game is played over 3 decades. Each decade consists of **4 rounds**. At the end of each decade, an interim scoring takes place. After the third interim scoring, there is a final scoring.

Each round consists of 5 phases.

Players can carry out the phases simultaneously; there is no fixed order of play.

A **Draw 2 cards**

All players draw 2 cards from the draw pile and take them into their hand. These cards are never counted toward your limit of hand cards (see p. 6).

If the draw pile is ever depleted, shuffle the discard pile and put it out as the new draw pile.

B **Play 2 cards into your display**

Now all players add exactly 2 cards face down to their own display. These don't necessarily have to be the cards you have drawn in phase A.

This is done in the following way:

• Lay out one of your hand cards to the right of your own action row.
• Lay out another one of your hand cards **below** a card of your own action row (i.e., into the activation row) in a position where you don't have any other card yet. This doesn't have to be below the card you just connected to the action row!

See to it that the color of the card you just placed in the activation row matches the card above it in the action row. This is important for phase D (see p. 4)! However, it is not mandatory.

C **Reveal the cards played**

Now all players simultaneously reveal the two cards they have played.

D **Carry out the action**

Then all players carry out the action and the bonus of that **card** in their action row **below which they have just revealed the card in their activation row**. You may use the bonus only if you have also carried out the action. (An action with a black arrow is considered "carried out" if you have used the effect at least once.) *The action of the card in the activation row is NOT carried out!*

> **IMPORTANT!** Only if the colors of these two cards match may you also carry out the action in the upper action row. If they don't match, you have to pass on the action; instead, you draw 1 card from the draw pile. You may also voluntarily skip the action in order to draw 1 card instead.

Players can carry out the actions simultaneously; there is no fixed order of play.
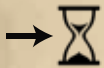
You find more about the different effects of action cards from p. 6 on.
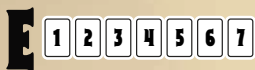
E `1 2 3 4 5 6 7` **Check for the end of the decade**
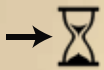
Once there are **7 cards in each player's action row**, the decade ends at the end of the current round, and an interim scoring takes place. Otherwise, another round begins with phase A.

Interim Scoring

At the end of each decade, i.e., after 4 rounds, a brief interim scoring takes place. Conduct the following steps in the order listed below:

Cannon scoring

Count the **cannons** on the cards in **your action row** (not in the activation row!) and compare this to the numbers your two neighbors have. For every neighbor who owns fewer cannons than you do, you earn 4 victory points. In case of a tie, you and your neighbor both earn 2 victory points.

In the two-player game, these points are awarded only once.

Book scoring

Count the **books** on the cards in **your action row** (not in the activation row!).

First, players check who owns the **most** books. Each player with the most books may build a **residence in any city** (and possibly take a goods tile from there; see "Residences" on p. 7).

Then, players check who has the **fewest** books in their possession. This player (or these players) cannot get a reward in this phase. (If all players have the same number of books in their possession, they all may build a residence.)

All the others – those who own neither the most nor the fewest books – receive a joker tile.

Example: Monica owns 4 books, Christina and Peter own 2 books each, Marcus owns 1 book. Monica may build a residence in a city of her choice; Christina and Peter both receive a joker tile. If Marcus had owned 2 books, he would have been tied for last place, along with Peter and Christina, and they would all have gone away empty-handed (and nobody would have received a joker tile).

> At the end of the game, you can use joker tiles to replace any good for your own order (but during the game, they do not count as a good of your choice in your possession!).

Victory points for residences

Now count your residences on the gameboard and score the according number of victory points. For each residence in cities marked with points (those with a `1` symbol), you earn 1 additional victory point.

Victory points on the favor track

You score victory points depending on the position of your favor marker on the favor track. The victory points you get are shown in the second column of the favor track.

Clear up the display

Then put on the discard pile the 4 cards in your action row below which you have a card in your activation row (consequently, there will be 3 cards left in your action row!) and, after that, put all 4 cards in your activation row on the discard pile.

Draw new cards or do the final scoring

At the end of the first and the second decade scorings, you draw 2 cards. For these cards, you need to consider the limit of hand cards (see p. 6): If you exceed this limit, you will not draw the respective cards but earn 1 victory point each instead.

At the end of the third interim scoring, the final scoring takes place.

After the first and the second interim scorings, you begin a new decade.

Final Scoring

After you have conducted the third interim scoring at the end of a decade, the final scoring takes place. To this end, execute the following steps.

Leftover hand cards

For every hand card you have left over, you score 1 victory point.

Scoring for orders

Your orders depict 7 goods tiles. Now check how many of these goods tiles you own. A joker tile (that you could get through the book scorings) counts as any kind of goods tile.

For 5/6/7 of the goods tiles depicted that you have in your possession, you score 5/8/12 victory points.

Keep in mind that the goods on cards in your action row do not count for your orders!

Scoring for contiguous residences

Now count the largest number of contiguous residences in your color on the gameboard. Residences are considered contiguous if they are connected with one another by a road.

not contiguous
contiguous

Multiply this number by the multiplier value determined by the position of your favor marker on the favor track, and score that many victory points.

Example: Maria has built 8 residences; one of these is not connected with the others. Her multiplier on the favor track is 3. Consequently, she scores 7 x 3 = 21 victory points.
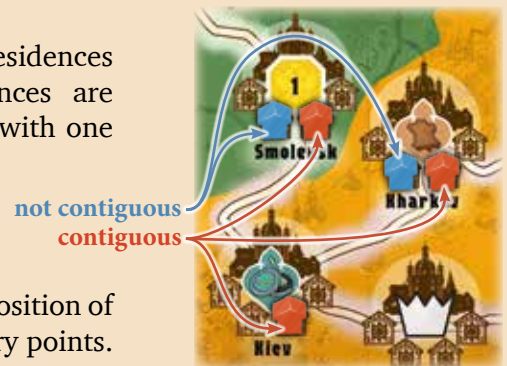
The player who now has the most victory points wins the game!

Additional Rules

Limit of hand cards

At the beginning of the game, you have a hand card limit of **3 cards**. During the course of the game, you can increase your hand card limit by moving your favor marker up on the favor track.

If you were allowed to draw cards during phase D of your turn (i.e., through an action or a bonus) or thanks to bonus cards at the end of an interim scoring, **but this would exceed your hand card limit, you don't draw these cards; instead, you score 1 victory point for every card you have not drawn.**

Important: The **2 cards that you draw during phase A** of a round **never** count **among your card limit**. That means you draw these 2 cards even if this appeared to exceed your limit (the reason being that you will have to play 2 cards right after that).

Example: Your hand card limit is 6. Currently, you have 4 cards in your hand. An action allows you to draw 3 cards. You draw 2 cards and score 1 victory point for the one card that "goes to waste."

The favor track

The favor track is important for several factors that determine your game.

Depending on the position of your favor marker, you need to observe the **hand card limit** max. indicated there, the **yield of victory points** + (that is generated only at the end of a decade), and the **connection multiplier** at the final scoring.

Some actions allow you to advance your favor marker on the favor track. These effects are marked with the ♛ symbol.

For each ♛, you may move your favor marker 1 space up.

If your favor marker is on the top space of the favor track and you were allowed to move it further, this move goes to waste; instead, you score 1 victory point for every forfeited step.

Effects of action cards

Each card is divided into 2 areas.

The upper area shows **3 cities**, **goods**, **cannons** and/or **books**.

Once you have played and revealed a card in your **action row**, all symbols depicted on this card count for you – even if they haven't been activated!

However, the symbols on cards in your <u>activation row</u> do not count!

The bottom area shows an action that you carry out in phase D, if you have just played a card into the activation row below it, and a bonus that you can use only if you have also carried out the corresponding action.

The following rule applies to all effects: If the costs consist of cards, you have to discard these cards. If they consist of goods, cannons or books, you need only to own these; you never give them up (not even goods tiles!).

Earning victory points

Every time you earn victory points, you advance your victory-point marker the according number of spaces on the victory-point track. If your marker arrives at space "0" again, you take the 50-/100-marker and put it in front of you, with the "50" side facing up; if you manage to arrive there another time, you turn it over onto its "100" side.

Overview of the Actions and Bonuses

Some **actions** show a black arrow. The number in such an arrow determines how many times you may carry out the action. If there is no number in the arrow, you may carry out this action as often as you want. If an action does not show any arrow, you carry out the action exactly once.
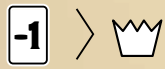
You may never use the effect of a **bonus** more than once. To do so, you need to have carried out the action before and also to meet the condition shown to the left of the arrow.

Residences

Many actions enable you to build a residence 🏠.

If a card shows the 🏠 symbol, you may take a residence from your supply and build it in a city. For this, the following rules apply:

- If not stated otherwise, you have to place the residence in one of the three cities indicated in the upper area of the card.
- You may not build a residence in a city that already contains one of your residences (however, it is irrelevant whether this city already contains residences of other players).
- In the rare case that you don't have any residences left in your supply, you may not build a residence; instead, you draw 1 new card from the pile.

After you have placed a residence in a city that has one or more goods tiles, you take one of these and put it in front of you. This good will never be "spent" – at each action, it counts for you as one good of the respective kind.

If the city where you build a residence shows a 👑 symbol, you immediately advance your favor marker 1 space on the favor track.

If the city where you build a residence shows a **1**, you score 1 additional victory point at each interim scoring (but not immediately!).

Further actions: In the following, the actions – along with their bonuses – are explained in detail.

Markets show only an action and no bonus. You may draw 1 card for each of the two goods depicted if they are in your possession. So, if you own 3 iron and 2 food, for example, you are allowed to draw 5 cards for the market shown here.

Your „possessions" consist of all the goods in the upper area of the cards in your action row and of your goods tiles.

As an action, you may discard 3 cards from your hand in order to score 10 victory points. If all 3 cards that you discard during this action show the same color, you advance your favor marker 1 space, as a bonus.
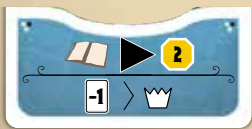
As an action, you score 2 victory points for each book in your possession. As a bonus, you may discard 1 card in order to advance your favor marker 1 space.

As an action, you may discard 1 card in order to advance your favor marker 2 spaces. As a bonus, you may discard 1 additional card in order to advance that marker 1 additional space.

As an action, you draw 1 card for each book in your possession. If you own at least 3 cannons, you may, as a bonus, advance your favor marker 1 space.

As an action, you draw 2 cards. If you own at least 3 books, you may, as a bonus, advance your favor marker 2 spaces.

For each set of 4 different goods in your possession, you score 4 victory points (all the goods shown on the cards in your action row as well as your goods tiles count for that). As a bonus, you may discard 1 card in order to advance your favor marker 1 space.

As an action, you may discard 2 cards and build a residence in the region of the color of the activated card – you can choose among all six cities in the color of the activated card. As a bonus, you may advance your favor marker 1 space, provided you own the depicted good at least twice.

As an action, you score 3 victory points. As a bonus, you may discard 1 card in order to score 4 additional victory points.
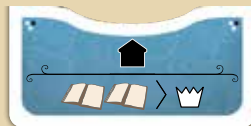
As an action, you score 3 victory points. As a bonus, you may advance your favor marker 1 space, provided you own the depicted goods at least once.
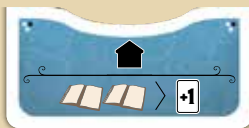
As an action, you may build 1 residence in one of the three cities indicated in the upper area of the card. As a bonus, you may draw 1 card, provided you own the goods or books depicted.

As an action, you may build 1 residence in one of the three cities indicated in the upper area of the card. As a bonus, you score 2 victory points, provided you own the goods or books depicted.

As an action, you may build 1 residence in one of the three cities indicated in the upper area of the card. As a bonus, you may advance your favor marker 1 space, provided you own the goods or books depicted, or discard 1 card.

As an action, you may build 1 residence in one of the three cities indicated in the upper area of the card. As a bonus, you may discard 2 cards in order to score 1 victory point for each residence that you have built so far in the **region of the color of this card**.

Imprint