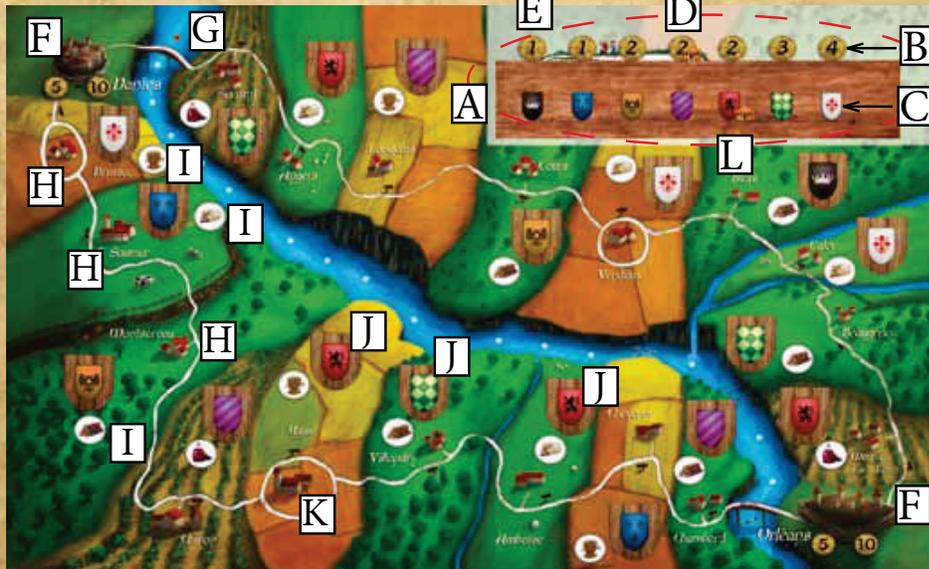


La Loire

by Emanuele Ornella

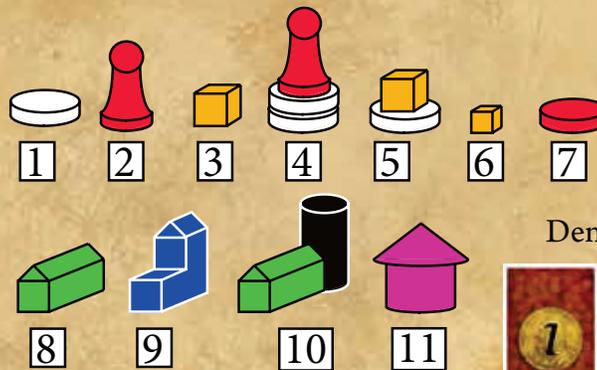
In 1477, the French king Louis XI created the royal mail service. Within a century it evolved into a complex postal and merchandise delivery system. Several post offices, warehouses, and a delivery network based not only on carriages and horses, but also on fluvial boats quickly arose.

The main stream of commerce and information flowed through the Loire Valley, located in Central France and the middle stretch of the Loire River. It was a period of development and wealth for the villages and cities that bordered this body of water.

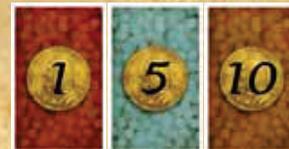


- A: the Market
- B: Market buy prices
- C: Market Tiles
- D: Circus position check for movement
- E: Circus new colour position
- F: Nantes & Orleans
- G: initial position for Boats on the Loire river
- H: Villages
- I: Goods on Villages
- J: Shield tiles on Villages
- K: Initial Village for the Circus
- L: Initial Market Tile for the Circus

- 1: Horse token
- 2: Merchant token
- 3: Messenger token
- 4: Stack with 2 horses and 1 red Merchant
- 5: Stack with 1 horse and 1 yellow Messenger
- 6: Message token
- 7: Boat token
- 8: Farm
- 9: Monastery
- 10: Castle (formed by 1 Farm and 1 tower)
- 11: Circus



Denier Cards



Good Cards: Wood, Grain, Cheese, Wine, Beer



Selling price



Symbols

- : victory points at the end of the game
- : moves the Boat 1 space on the Loire
- : Message card
- : Horse
- : Merchant and / or Messenger

Character Card



Building Card



- Name of the card
- Victory Points
- Cost
- Picture
- Who can use the ability
- Description of the special ability

PREPARATION

Place the board on the table.

Place the Shield tiles randomly in the villages on the blank wooden spaces on the board. If 2 consecutive Shields have the same color, exchange one with another Shield tile so that no two adjacent shields have the same color.

Randomly place the Market shield tiles in the Market, one tile per space, so that the side with only a shield is face up. Place the Circus token in the village of Ussé and flip over the Market shield tile with the corresponding color so that the Circus is visible.

Place one Horse token on each of the following Villages (place the unused horses back on the box):

- for 1 or 2 players: Montsoreau, Ussé, Amboise, Langeais, Vendôme and Talcy.
- for 3 or 4 players: Saumur, Chinon, Villandry, Cheverny, Angers, Tours, Blois and Beaugency.

Card Setup:

Group the cards by type:

- Message cards: separate the message cards according to their level. Messages with 1 Denier on their back are level 1, cards with 2 Deniers are level 2, etc. Shuffle the four decks (separately) and place them face down.

- Denier cards: group the Denier cards according to their value.

- Goods cards: group cards according to the type of good.

- Base Building cards: the Farm, Abbey, Castle, Circus, Nantes and Orléans cards are reference cards, there is just one card for all players and these cards are not owned by anyone.

- Palace Building cards: there are 4 different Palace Buildings each for Nantes and Orléans. Place the Nantes and Orléans palace cards in separate rows.

- Character cards: there are 2 identical cards for each character (except for the 5 unique Blue ones). In a 3 or 4 player game, all cards are used. In a 1 or 2 player game, only 1 card for each character is used (place the unused cards back in the box).

There are some exceptions. Use a number of Banker, Apprentice, Helper and Mayor cards equal to the number of players. (Example: 3 Banker, 3 Apprentice, 3 Helper, and 3 Mayor cards in a 3 player game).

Always use all 5 of the Blue Character cards regardless of the number of players.

Each card must be placed face up and visible on the table (identical cards can be overlapped). You can group same colored cards together in a row to save space.

Each player chooses a color and takes all of the tokens. Place 1 message token (small cube) on the Apprentice card and the other on top of the Helper card.

Place the Boat (circle token) on the first space (red point) on the Loire River (close to Nantes).

Each player takes 4 Horse tokens, places their Merchant on top of 2 Horses in Nantes, and places their Messenger on top of 2 Horses in Orléans.

Each player gets 7 Deniers and draws 1 Level 1 Message card. Denier cards and undelivered Message cards are kept face up and visible to all players.

The player who last took a boat ride on the Loire river will start the game.

TURN

The active player moves the Merchant and the Messenger tokens in any order that he wishes.

This movement is mandatory and the move must be at least one location. Immediately following each movement, one action may be performed. This action is not mandatory, and depends on the location the token stopped to. Actions are always performed after the movement.

MOVEMENT

The Merchant/Messenger moves exactly a number of locations equal to the number of Horses on their stack plus one. Nantes, Orléans, and the Villages are all locations (for a total of 20 locations on the board).

Before the movement, a player can remove any number of Horses from the stack, reducing the movement. These Horses remain on the location.

You may add one new Horse to the stack if there are any tokens available on the Merchant or the Messenger's starting location [exception Scout]. However, you are not allowed to add more than one per turn [exception Squire].

The Merchant/Messenger token moves together with the Horse tokens: in other words, the entire stack moves.

This movement is mandatory and the minimum number of spaces is 1 location: this is the case when the Merchant/Messenger has no Horse tokens.

The direction of the movement cannot be changed if the Merchant/Messenger is on a Village. There are road signs on either side of the villages to help you to remember which direction your character is moving. It is helpful to place your stack on the side of the road with the appropriate arrow sign.

If the Merchant/Messenger starts their movement in Nantes or in Orléans, they may leave in either direction. They must continue in this direction until they reach the next city (Orléans or Nantes). Note that you must have the exact number of movement points to stop in Nantes or Orléans, you may not stop early and you must follow all other movement rules [exception City Guard].



2 red Shield Tiles are adjacent: swap one with another Shield



Setup of Message tokens (small cubes) in 3 players



Initial Merchants and Messengers for a 3 player game



Based on the little arrows on the road place the stack on one side or the other to indicate the direction

ACTIONS

The action the Merchant/Messenger can perform after the movement depends on the location that they stop in. Actions are never mandatory.

	Merchant 	Messenger 
Empty Village	Buy 1 good.	Deliver 1 Message (Level 1, 2, or 3).
Nantes or Orléans	Sell Goods & Build 1 Building & Ship on the Loire.	Buy 1 Message (Level 1, 2, or 3). Deliver 1 Level 4 Message.
Circus	Buy 1 Good with a discount of 1 Denier & Hire 1 character.	Hire 1 Character.
Village with Farm	Buy 1 Good with a discount of 1 Denier. The Farm's owner gains 1 point on the Loire river.	The owner can buy 1 Message (Level 1, 2, or 3).
Village with Monastery	Buy 1 Good with a discount of 1 Denier OR the owner can buy 1 Beer. The Farm's owner gains 1 point on the Loire river.	The owner can buy 1 Level 4 Message.
Village with Castle	Buy 1 Good with a discount of 2 Deniers. The Castle's owner gains 1 point on the Loire river.	The owner can buy 2 Messages (Level 1, 2, or 3).

ACTION: Buy 1 Good

Who: Merchant. Where: on a Village.

When the Merchant stops on a Village, the player can immediately buy one Good. The available good for that village is depicted on the location.

The cost is set by the corresponding shields location in the market.

The player pays Deniers to the supply and takes the Goods Card from the supply.

Acquired Goods cards are placed on the table face up and visible to everyone.

Important: players are only allowed to carry 1 Beer, 1 Wine, 1 Cheese [exception Dairyman], and 1 Grain [exception Grain Farmer]. There is no limit to the number of Wood cards that players can carry.

The supply of goods cards is limited: if the supply runs out of a specific good, then that good cannot be purchased.

Only one good can be purchased per turn [exception Lumberjack].

ACTION: Sell goods

Who: Merchant. Where: on Nantes or on Orléans.

When a Merchant stops on Nantes or on Orléans, the player can immediately sell purchased Goods. Goods cards are put back into the supply. The selling price is indicated on the Goods card. Deniers are taken from the supply.

It is not mandatory to sell all of your goods; players can sell some or none.

ACTION: Ship on the Loire River

Who: Merchant. Where: in Nantes or Orléans.

A player can pay 6 Deniers to move their boat forward 1 space on the Loire River (this is worth 1 point); or they can pay 10 Deniers to move their boat 2 spaces on the river (2 points).

You are not allowed to take this action multiple times in one turn. For example you cannot pay 16 Deniers to move your Boat $(1+2) = 3$ spaces.

When a player's Boat reaches the final position, the end of the game is triggered (see End of the game). A Boat cannot move past this point.

ACTION: Buy 1 Good in a Village with a Farm

Who: Merchant. Where: in a Village with a Farm.

The same rules apply as in an empty Village, but the cost of the Good is 1 Denier less for any Merchant. This discount applies to all players, not only to the owner of the farm.

If any merchant buys goods from a Village with a Farm, the owner of the farm gains 1 point on the river (and moves their boat 1 space forward).

If the owner of the farm buys from their own farm, they will get a discount of 1 Denier for the Good and 1 point on the river.

The price of a product can be zero, but it cannot go lower than that. A player's boat on the Loire River is moved ahead 1 space even if the purchase price is zero. Only 1 Good can be purchased per turn.

ACTION: Buy 1 Good in a Village with a Castle

Who: Merchant. Where: in a Village with a Castle.

The same rules apply as in an empty Village, but the purchase discount is 2 Deniers. The owner of the castle gets 1 point if a good is purchased. The price of a product can be zero, but not lower. Only 1 Good can be purchased per turn.

ACTION: Buy 1 Good in a Village with Monastery

Who: Merchant. Where: in a Village with a Monastery.

The Monastery is the only location where Beer can be purchased. The cost of Beer is double the normal market price for that location. Only the player who owns the Monastery can purchase beer from that location.

If the owner of the Monastery purchases beer, they still gain 1 point (space) on the river.

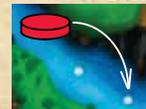
As an alternative the player may still purchase the product associated with that location (even if you do not own the Monastery) with a discount of 1 Denier. The Monastery owner's boat is moved forward 1 space. The owner of the Monastery must choose if they are buying Beer or the normal Good.

Only 1 Good can be purchased per turn.



The red Merchant stops in Saumur and buys Cheese for 1 Denier.

The red Merchant stops in Nantes and sells 1 Wood and 1 Cheese gaining $2+5 = 7$ Deniers



The red player pays 10 Deniers and moves his Boat token 2 spaces ahead on the Loire river



The red Merchant stops in Saumur and buys Cheese for free (1 on the Market -1 for the discount of Farm). The Yellow player gains 1 point on the Loire river.



In Saumur there is the red Monastery. The player can buy Cheese for free (1 - 1 Denier) or Beer for $2 \times 1 = 2$ Deniers. Then the red Boat will move 1 space.

ACTION: Buy 1 Good in Village with the Circus

Who: Merchant. Where: in a Village with the Circus.

The Circus gives an additional discount of 1 Denier to the final purchase price. All other discounts apply.

For example, if the Merchant purchases a good in a village with a Farm and a Circus, there is a discount of 2. With a Circus and a Castle, the discount is 3. If a player purchases beer from the monastery, the Denier is subtracted after doubling the market price. All other rules apply. The price of a product can be zero, but not lower. Only 1 Good can be purchased.

MARKET CHANGE

The market is adjusted every time that a good is purchased. The market shield tile corresponding to the location where the good was purchased is moved to the far right of the market. The new cost for goods in that location is now 4 Deniers. All other shields are shifted to the left. For example if a Good was purchased in a Village with Blue Shield, the Blue Tile Market is moved on the far right position. All other Market Tiles (Yellow, Purple, Red, Green and White) are moved one position to the left.

CIRCUS MOVEMENT

When the market is adjusted, all market shield tiles move. All shield tiles are double-sided. One side only shows the shield, the other side has the shield and a picture of the circus. This indicates that the Circus token is currently located in a village with that shield's color. Only one market shield tile at a time will be flipped circus side up.

If after a market adjustment, the tile with the Circus is on the central space of the Market (aligned with the circus depicted on the board), the Circus token will change locations. This location must have the same Shield color as the Market shield tile on the first (far left) position of the Market. There will normally be several locations with this Shield color. The active player decides where to place the Circus. After moving the circus token, flip the two Market shield tiles to reflect the current location of the Circus.

ACTION: Buy a Building

Who: Merchant. Where: in Nantes or Orléans.

Players can only build 1 Building per turn [exception Economus].

Farm. The player pays 4 Deniers + 1 Wood card and places one Farm token on any empty Village (a village with no other buildings, the circus is not a building). Important: There are two roads on the board, on either side of the river. The difference, between those two roads, in the number of buildings that a player owns cannot be greater than 1 [exception the Mensor]. For example, If a player has 1 building on one of the roads, a new Farm must be place on an empty village on the other road. A third Farm could be built in any location.

Monastery. The player pays 4 Deniers + 2 woods. A player must have already built a Farm in this location. The farm token is replaced by a Monastery token and returned to the player.

Castle. The player pays 6 Deniers + 1 wood. A player must have already built a Farm in this location. A Tower token is placed next to the Farm token: the two tokens now form a Castle. The number of Towers is limited, so this action is not possible if all of the Towers have been built.

Note: Farm, Monastery and Castle tokens are placed on the board, while the cards are only a reference and are not owned by any player.

Palace Building. The player pays 4 Deniers and takes 1 Palace Building card of his choice wich he does not own yet. No token is placed, but the card is taken by the player. The Palace Building card will start taking effect at the beginning of the next turn, and only effects Orléans or Nantes

ACTION: Hire a Character

Who: Merchant or Messenger. Where: in a Village with the Circus.

When the Merchant or the Messenger stops in a location with the Circus, the player can hire a Character. This is the only way to obtain a Character card [exception Palatium Balivi].

The player can only hire 1 Character per turn, even if both the Merchant and the Messenger stop at the Circus on the same turn. A player cannot hire two identical characters. The cost of the character is indicated on the card.

The player pays Deniers to the supply and places the Character card in front of him, face up and visible to all players. The effect of the Character begins immediately and the effect remains for the entire game. Characters cards are limited, if a character card is exhausted, it cannot be hired any more.

ACTION: Buy a Message

Who: Messenger. Where: Nantes, Orléans, in a Village with a Farm, Castle, or Monastery.

Only the Messenger can acquire messages. This is possible in Nantes and Orléans, or in a Village where the player owns a Farm, a Castle, or a Monastery. You cannot acquire a Message from an opponent's Farm, Castle or Monastery. A level 1 Message costs 1 Denier, a level 2 costs 2 Deniers, a level 3 costs 3 Deniers and an Abbey's Message costs 4. You can only acquire an Abbey's Message in a Monastery that you own.

Only 1 message card can be bought per turn [exception Post Office and Vassallus], with the exception of the Castle, where it is possible to buy 2 messages in the same turn (can be the same or different levels).

The player draws the first Message card from the deck of the chosen level [exception Ducal Palace, Spy] and places it face up and visible: the card is only flipped over after the message has been delivered.

There is a limit of 2 non-delivered messages per player [exception Mayor]. If a player already has 2 Messages, he must deliver at least one before acquiring a new one. You are allowed to start the delivery of a second message before you complete the delivery of the first. A Message can be bought even if it is not yet possible to deliver it. For example a Message level 2 can be bought even if the player does not yet own the Apprentice (but of course, it cannot be delivered).

ACTION: Deliver a Message

Who: Messenger. Where: it is indicated on the Message.

All delivered Messages are put face down and are scored at the end of the game. Victory Points are indicated on the Message Card.

Level 1 Message: must be delivered to a specific Village. To deliver a message, the Messenger must stop on the indicated Village.



A Level 1 Message (only for level 1) is also worth Deniers. These are immediately taken at the time of delivery. The amount of Deniers is shown by the Market shield tile corresponding to the Village where the Message was delivered.

Level 2 Message: must be delivered to 2 Villages. The color of the Shields on the card indicate the destinations. The order of the shields on the card is irrelevant; the player can choose which village to deliver to first. Normally there are some choices: the same colored shield is on more than one Village.

A Message level 2 can only be delivered if the player has the red Apprentice card. The player's Message token (small cube) comes with this card.

When the Messenger stops on a Village with a shield displayed on the Level 2 Message, the Message token is placed on that Village to indicate that the first target was reached. When the Messenger stops on the second Village corresponding to the second shield, the Level 2 Message is delivered, the card is flipped over, and the Message token is taken back into the player's hand.

Level 3 Message. The same rules of a Level 2 Message apply, but the player must have both the red Apprentice and the Helper cards. The player will have 2 Message tokens (small cubes) which are placed on the first two Villages on the message. The Message is delivered when the third Village is reached: the Message tokens are taken back and the Message card flipped face down.

The player may only deliver 1 Message per turn. A single Message token can only be used for 1 Message delivery at a time. A player can decide to take back a Message token at any time from a village to use for another Message card delivery. If they do this, they will have to repeat the previous delivery. Also, a player cannot start a new delivery on the same turn that they finished a prior delivery.

Level 4 Message: Abbey's Message. An Abbey's message can only be purchased by a player at a Monastery that they built. The delivery target will either be Orléans or Nantes. Only one Abbey's Message can be carried at a time, and it counts towards the limit of 2 total messages. The player does not need an Apprentice or a Helper character to deliver an Abbey's Message.

NANTES and ORLÉANS Deniers LIMITATION

When the Merchant is moving out of Nantes or Orléans a player must have between 5 and 10 Deniers.

If a player has less than 5 Deniers when their Merchant is in Nantes or Orléans, neither the Merchant nor the Messenger can move or take any actions. The player receives 1 Denier from the supply and the turn is over. This is repeated until the player reaches 5 Deniers.

If a player has more than 10 Deniers when his Merchant moves out of Nantes or Orléans, he must discard the extra Deniers [exception the Banker]. This is checked before a player moves their Merchant; they may have already moved their Messenger at this point. This limitation does not apply to the Messenger.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends when one of the two conditions is reached:

- One player's Boat has reached a specified position on the river: 20 in 1 or 2 players, 17 in 3 players, 15 in 4 players.
- One player has delivered a specified number of Messages: 15 in 1 player, 12 in 2 players, 10 in 3 players, 8 in 4 players.

When one of these two conditions is reached, each player, except the player who triggered the end of the game, has 1 additional turn and then the game is over.

WINNER

The winner is the player with the most points. Points are earned from:

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) the Boat on the Loire river: each space is worth 1 point | d) points indicated on hired Characters |
| b) points on the delivered Message Cards, as indicated on the card | e) special points for owned Blue Characters |
| c) undelivered Message Cards are worth 1 point each | f) points indicated by built Palace Building Cards |

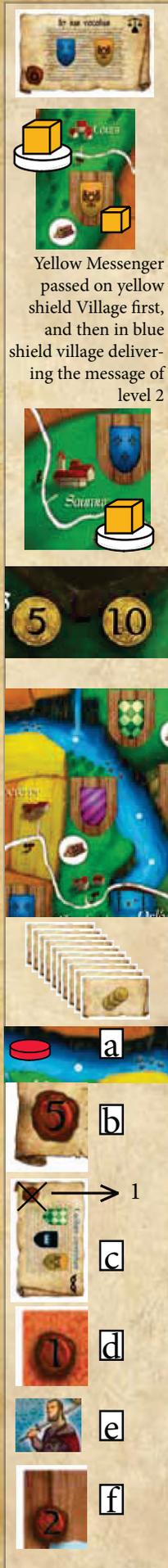
In the event of a tie, the player among the tied players with the most Castles wins. If there is still a tie, the player with the most buildings (including Palace Building cards, Monastery and Farms) wins.

CASUAL GAME: easier version of the game for casual players.

No cards are used (keep the Base Building cards for reference). The Circus token is not used and the Market Shield Tiles are all flipped to their non-Circus side. Each player starts with both of their Message tokens (small cubes) and can deliver Messages of any level. However a player cannot deliver more Messages of level 2 than of level 1, and no more level 3 than of level 2. For example if a player has delivered 1 Level 1 Message and 1 Level 2 Message, he can deliver a Level 1 or a Level 3 Message but not a Level 2 Message. Only when a second Level 1 is delivered can a second Level 2 be delivered, and so on. Level 4 Messages can be delivered as usual without any dependency with other level's Messages. The rest of the rules are the same.

SOLO GAME: if you are really alone and cannot resist playing this game.

Setup is the same as in the 2 player game. The game will last for maximum 60 turns. The game can also end if your boat reaches 20 points on the river (the same as in a 2 player game) or if you deliver 15 messages. To count the number of turns, use the 3 unused boat tokens. At the end of the turn move one of the boats from its starting position until it reaches position number 20. Then start to move the second boat until it reaches position number 20, and then move the third boat. When the third boat reaches position number 20 on the Loire River, the game ends because 60 turns have been completed.



CHARACTER CARDS

Wood, Grain, Cheese, Wine Merchant: each specified Goods card which is sold pays out 1 additional Denier.	Dairyman, Grain Farmer: the player has no limit on carrying Cheese or Grain.	Lumberjack: the player can buy 2 Wood cards in the same turn for the same price. Only 1 VP is earned if purchased from a location with a building.
Banker: the Merchant can leave Nantes or Orléans with up to 15 Deniers (instead of 10).	Lady-in-waiting: the player can hire up to 2 characters in the same turn. The second one costs 2 Denier more than usual. The second character may be bought right after the first. Also applies to Palatium Balivi.	Witch: each time a character is hired, it costs 1 Denier less (yellow characters are free). The Witch's cost is not discounted.
Magister Artium: each time a building is bought, it costs 1 Denier less.	Economus: the player can buy up to 2 buildings in the same turn. The second one costs 1 Denier more than usual.	Patronus: a cost of exactly 1 Wood for the Farm, Castle and Monastery can be replaced with 2 Deniers.
Mensor: a player can place a new Farm on any road, even if on the other road there are fewer buildings.	Squire: the player normally can only take 1 Horse in the stack before moving. With this he can take 1 or 2 (from the location where the stack is). With Blacksmith: 1 of the horses may be bought from any location.	Scout: the maximum number of Horses in a stack is increased to 3 (instead of the normal 2).
Blacksmith: the player can pay 1 (and only one) Denier per turn to take 1 Horse from any location (normally can only from the location where the stack is). This still counts to the number of Horses that can be taken each turn by a Merchant or Messenger.	Jester: Merchant or Messenger can end their movement early (they must move at least 1 space) if they stop in the location with the Circus.	City Guard: Merchant or Messenger can end their movement early (they must move at least 1 space) if they stop in Nantes or Orléans.
Mayor: the usual limit to the number of Messages not yet delivered that is possible to have is 2. With the Mayor this limit is 4. Maximum: 1 Abbey's Message.	Vassallus: whenever a Messenger can buy a Message card, an additional one (level 1 to 3) can be bought (not in the Monastery). With Post Office and Mayor: 3rd Message costs the normal price.	Spy: normally the first Message card of the deck (on the selected level) is drawn. With the Spy the player can draw 3 cards, select 1 and place the other 2 on the bottom of the deck. With Castle, Post Office or Vassallus: draw 1 out of 3 several times.
Apprentice: when a player buys the Apprentice, he also gets 1 Message token (small cube) and from now on can deliver Level 2 Message Cards. Precondition for the Helper.	Helper: this can be bought only after the Apprentice. The player gets 1 Message token (small cube) and from now on can deliver Level 3 Message Cards.	Lover, General, Philosopher, Judge, and Provost: for each of his delivered Message cards of the type indicated on the card, the player gains 2 additional points.

PALACE BUILDING CARDS

Remember: the effect of a Palace Building card takes effect only the turn after it was bought. Each Building may be owned only once in Nantes and once in Orléans.

Ducal Palace: normally the first Message card of the deck is drawn. With this palace, the player can search through the entire deck (of the selected level) and choose one card. The entire deck is then reshuffled. With Post Office and/or Vassallus: useable multiple times, different levels allowed.	Post Office: when the Messenger stops in Nantes or Orléans, a second Message can be bought for 1 Denier less (level 1 messages are free). The limit of 2 Message cards must be respected.
Palatium Balivi: in addition to his regular action (before or after), the Merchant or the Messenger can hire a red character card when in Nantes or Orléans. Can be used only once per turn. With Lady-in-waiting: up to 2 red Character cards allowed.	Bank: Gain 3 Deniers each time the Merchant and/or the Messenger stops in Nantes or Orléans (6 Deniers per turn possible). If the turn ended because the Merchant was on a City with less than 5 Deniers, the Bank doesn't pay.

CREDITS

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