ANDROMEDA

for 3-5 players, aged 10 and up; length: 60 minutes
by Alan R. Moon

The Planetary Union of the Andromeda galaxy wants wealthy traders from Earth to invest in their economy. To control such investments, they have allocated three orbiting economic centres above each of their most important planets for development by Earth interests. This keeps the humans off their planets and also creates competition among the traders interested in such development. The Planetary Union hopes this competition will bring them even more money for these investments. To keep the humans from conspiring amongst themselves to divide up the economic centres with secret agreements, the Planetary Union requires that all trades be done under their watchful eyes. They also have spies probing for secret negotiations away from the trading table.

Contents:

84 Planet cards (12 each of 7 planets)
16 Bonus credit cards (6 silver, 4 gold, 4 platinum, 2 diamond)
10 Transport cards (2 each of 5 colours)
1 game board
130 Stations (26 of each of 5 colours)
1 planet ring randomising device

Preparation:

Place the board in the middle of the table and the planet ring randomising device next to the board.

Separate the cards by type: 84 planet cards, 16 bonus credit cards and 10 transport cards.

Further separate the 16 bonus credit cards by commodity and put them in four piles face up beside the board. Shuffle the 84 planet cards thoroughly.

Each player selects a colour, takes the 26 stations and 2 transport cards in that colour, and puts them before him on the table.

Each player places one of his stations on the first space of spaceship development and another station on the first space of technology development. Each player places more of his stations based on the number of players:

3 players

Each player places 4 stations on Earth and 2 stations on each of the seven planets. The oldest player deals 6 planet cards face up to each player. The players place 1 station on the planet shown on each of their 6 cards. Each player has placed all 26 of his stations on the board.

4 players

Each player places 4 stations on Earth and 1 station on each of the seven planets. The oldest player deals 9 planet cards face up to each player. The players place 1 station on the planet shown on each of their 9 cards. Each player has placed 22 of his 26 stations on the board. The players put their 4 extra stations back into the box; they are not used in the 4-player game.

5 players

Each player places 4 stations on Earth and 1 station on each of the seven planets. The oldest player deals 6 planet cards face up to each player. The players place 1 station on the planet shown on each of their 6 cards. Each player has placed 19 of his 26 stations on the board. The players put their 7 extra stations back into the box; they are not used in the 5-player game.

The oldest player shuffles all 84 planet cards, deals 9 to each player face down, and puts the remaining cards face down next to the board. This is the planet card supply and the discard pile is next to it.

The players pick up their 9 card starting hands. They keep their hands secret from the other players. The oldest player is the first starting player, but the players will take turns as the starting player.

The Board

The board shows Earth and the seven most important planets of the Andromeda galaxy. Each planet has three economic centres in orbit. Each economic centre has a number representing its value. Earth has no satellites. During the game, players may move stations between the 7 planets and Earth, but not between the planets. At the end of the game, each station on Earth is worth 1 point.

On the upper left is an area for tracking the players' spaceship development. The larger the spaceship, the more planet cards the player may have. On the lower right of the board is an area for tracking the players' technical development (technology level). Higher technical development gives a player more options during his turn. At the end of the game, each player receives the points indicated (0, 1, 3 or 6) for the highest level of technical development he reached.

The Cards

Planet Cards

There are 12 cards for each of the 7 planets. Each card has a large symbol of the planet it represents in the centre and 4 smaller symbols in the corners. Players collect sets of planet cards during the game. The more cards in a set, the more valuable the set. However, a player may never play a set of more than seven cards, including jokers.

Bonus Credit Cards

There are four different bonus credit cards: silver (2 points), gold (3 points), platinum (4 points) and diamond (5 points). The white number is the card's point value. At the end of the game, this is the number of points a player receives if he still holds the card in his hand. The number displayed on the orange graphic is the number of true planet cards a player must play in the action phase to earn that bonus credit card. The number of bonus credit cards supplied in the game is the maximum available.

When a player plays a true set of planet cards (no jokers) to perform an action, he may take, as a bonus, a bonus credit card. The player puts the card in his hand and it counts as one card toward his hand maximum. There is no limit (other than hand maximum) to the number of bonus credit cards a player may have in his hand. Each kind requires an exact number of planet cards to be played:
- silver - exactly 4 cards of the same planet;
- gold - exactly 5 cards of the same planet;
- platinum - exactly 6 cards of the same planet; and
- diamond - exactly 7 cards of the same planet.

A player may only take a bonus credit card if one is available of the type he has earned. He may not, for example, downgrade to a gold credit card if he earned a platinum and no platinum is available. In this case, he gets no bonus credit card.

Bonus credit cards may be used anytime as jokers to represent any planet card when playing sets of planet cards for actions, including later actions in the turn the bonus credit card is acquired. For example, if a player plays 3 ringed planets, a silver bonus credit card and a gold bonus credit card, he can execute an action that requires 5 ringed planets. He cannot, however, acquire a silver bonus credit card as some of the ringed planets were jokers.

Transport Cards

Each player has two transport cards. He keeps them face up on the table, discarding them as he uses them. They allow a player to move his stations in a special way. They are not part of a player's hand and may not be traded.

The Goal of the Game

The players are traders from Earth. They compete to establish economic centres above the seven most important planets of the Andromeda galaxy. As traders, the players move stations to the planets, increase the size of spaceships, develop technology, and attempt to establish economic centres in orbit above the planets. The player who has the most points in economic centres, bonus credit cards, technology level, and stations on Earth at the end of the game is the winner.

Playing the Game

The game is organised into rounds. Each round has four phases and one player as the starting player. After all players have completed their actions in the fourth phase, the round ends. The next round begins immediately with the player to the left of the current starting player as the new starting player.

The card phase: The starting player deals planet cards to each player to fill each player's hand to its allowed maximum.

The transport phase: The players may play a transport card and move some of their stations.

The trading phase: The starting player offers 2, 3 or 4 (only with level 2 technology) planet cards to trade as do the other players. The players then trade sets of cards.

The action phase: The starting player executes three actions and the other players each execute two actions, all in clockwise order.

The Card Phase

The position of a player's station in the area of spaceship development indicates how many planet cards the player may have in his hand: 9, 10, 11 or 13 cards. At the beginning of a round, the starting player deals cards from the card supply, face down, to each player to fill his hand to the number of cards he is allowed based on his spaceship level. When the card supply is exhausted, the starting player shuffles the discard pile and turns it face down to become the card supply.

Tip: At the beginning of a round, each player tells the starting player how many cards he needs to fill his hand. The starting player then deals the cards face down, one or two at a time, to each player clockwise around the table. He continues around the table, skipping players when they have reached their maximum, until each player has the number of cards he is allowed.

The Transport Phase

Beginning with the starting player and moving clockwise once around the table, each player may play one of his transport cards or pass. When a player plays a transport card, he may make one of the two moves described below. After making the move, the player returns the used transport card to the box; it is out of the game. A player is allowed only two transport moves in the game.

1) The player moves two of his stations from earth to any ONE of the seven planets.

Tip: The player may want to choose a planet that matches cards in his hand. He will be able to use those cards in the action phase to add even more stations to the planet or attempt to establish an economic centre there.

2) The player moves ALL his stations from any ONE planet to Earth.

Tip: At the end of the game, each station on Earth is worth one point. Thus, a player with several stations on a planet with no available economic centres may want to use this to move these "useless" stations to Earth to get those points.

The Trading Phase

All players must participate in the trading phase, until they have no legal cards to trade (see below). Other than offering cards, the players may not communicate with each other regarding the trades, during or prior to the phase. The starting player begins the phase, which is conducted as follows:

The starting player selects one of the planet or bonus credit cards in his hand and places it face up on the table before him. This is the first card in the trade set he offers to the other players.

Each of the other players selects a planet or bonus credit card from his hand and places it face down on the table before him. The cards must be different from the card offered by the starting player. When all have selected a card, they simultaneously turn them over.

The starting player selects a second card from his hand and places it face up next to his first trade card. He may choose any card he wants. He now has two cards in his trade set.

Each of the other players selects a second card from his hand and places it face down on the table next to his first trade card. The new cards may not match either of the cards offered by the starting player. When all have selected a card, they simultaneously turn them over.

The starting player now chooses to trade (see F, below), or add a third card to his trade set. If he adds a third card, he selects any card from his hand. Each of the other players must select a third card, using the rules for choosing their second cards.

The starting player must trade his trade set with another player. He selects the player he wants to trade with, hands that player his set of trade cards, takes the set of cards that player offered, and places them in his hand. The starting player's part of the trading phase is completed.

The player that the starting player traded with now has a choice: he can add the cards he received from the starting player to his hand or leave them on the table as his trade set for trading with the other players.

The next trading player is the first player clockwise from the starting player who still has a trade set before him. That player may pick up his trade set and put the cards back in his hand, ending his part of the trading phase, or he may trade cards. If he decides to trade, he proceeds like the starting player did.

The trading phase continues, clockwise, until there are less than two players with cards left to trade. When this occurs, the trading ends. A player with trading cards still on the table puts them back in his hand.

The starting player must always trade. The other players must leave their trade sets on the table until they are involved in a trade or become the trading player.

In the unlikely situation that a player does not have a legal card in his hand to offer for trade (all his cards match the cards the starting player has offered for trade), he is excused from trading this round. First, he shows the other players his hand to prove he has no legal trade card. He then picks up any cards he has already offered for trade and puts them back in his hand. He does not participate further in the trading this round. Of course, if he was mistaken and the other players find legal cards in his hand, he must choose one of those to offer in trade.

Bonus credit cards may be offered for trade in the same way as planet cards. It is most likely that they are offered when the player has no other legal card to offer. If the starting player offers a bonus credit card, the other players may not, subsequently, offer the same bonus credit card.

Tip: By looking at the board, you may be able to determine which planet cards the starting player wants. If you are interested in the cards he offers, you should offer what he wants.

The Action Phase

There are five possible actions a player may execute in this phase. The starting player begins and may execute three actions. The other players follow in clockwise order and may execute two each. Each player completes his allowed actions before the following player begins his. A player may execute the actions in any order and may repeat actions if he chooses.

Trade Planet Cards

The player discards one or two of the cards in his hand face up to the discard pile, draws the same number of cards from the card supply, and adds them to his hand.

Move Stations to Planets

To increase his presence on a planet and, thereby, improve his chances to establish an economic centre there, a player may play a set of three to seven cards of the same planet to move stations from Earth to that planet. The number of stations moved is the number of cards played divided by two (rounded down). Bonus credit cards may be used as jokers to increase the number of cards of the desired planet. However, at least one of the cards in the set must be of the desired planet. The player may move fewer stations than the cards allow, including none.

The player discards the planet cards played face up on the discard pile and returns any bonus credit cards in the set to the appropriate pile next to the board.

Establish an Economic Centre

A player can attempt to establish an economic centre in the orbit of a planet if he has at least one station on the planet.

First, the player plays a set of three to seven cards of the desired planet and takes the planet ring randomising device. The number of cards played is divided by two (rounded down) to determine the number of attempts the player may make to establish the economic centre.

Then he places the planet ring over all stations on the planet. Stations on the economic centres already established are not included. The player places his thumb over the gate in the ring (look for the arrow on top) and mixes the stations under the ring without lifting it from the board. He positions the ring with the gate facing away from him so he cannot see the stations inside the planet ring. He removes his thumb from the gate and slowly slides the planet ring across the board until one station, of any colour, exits the ring through the gate. The player should move the ring carefully so as not to disturb the other stations on the board.

If the station drawn from the ring belongs to the player moving the ring, he places the station on the most valuable available economic centre orbiting that planet and ends the action. Once established, a station may not be moved off an economic centre. Only one station may occupy each economic centre.

If the station drawn from the ring belongs to another player, the player moves the station to Earth. If he has more attempts, he slides the ring across the board as before until another station exits the ring. This station is handled as before.

When the player successfully establishes an economic centre or uses all his allowed attempts, this action ends. He returns the planet ring to its position next to the board and puts all stations still under the ring back on the planet (as they may have been moved off the planet as he slid the planet ring across the board).

When all three economic centres have been established on a planet, the cards for that planet remain in the game. A set of these cards may still be used by a player to improve his technology or to increase the size of his spaceship. A true set could also be played to move no stations to the planet, but to acquire a bonus credit card.

Tip: With careful planning and trading, a player will be able to increase his chances for success when attempting to establish an economic centre. For example, a player has 2 stations on a planet and each of his three opponents has 1. He uses a transport card as his first action to add 2 stations to the planet, giving him 4. As his next action, he plays 7 cards for the planet and gets 4 attempts (he is at technology level 4), to establish an economic centre, thus guaranteeing success.

Spaceship Development

All players begin the game with a station in the first level of the spaceship development area of the board. This level allows the player to have 9 cards in his hand each round. Players may play sets of planet cards to increase their spaceship level as shown below:
   • from level 1 to 2: 3 cards of the same planet
   • from level 2 to 3: 4 cards of the same planet
   • from level 3 to 4: 6 cards of the same planet

Level two allows the player to have 10 cards in his hand. Level three allows the player to have 11 cards in his hand. Finally, level four allows the player to have 13 cards in his hand.

Notice: Players may not skip levels, but may buy more than one level in a turn. Players may use bonus credit cards as jokers when making sets of planets, but at least one card in the set must be a planet.

Technology

All players begin the game with a station in the first level of the technology development area of the board. This level is the basic technology level in the game.

For a set of three cards of the same planet, a player may move his technology station from level 1 to 2. Level 2 allows the player, when he is the starting player, to trade up to four cards instead of three. If he does, the others must each offer a fourth card as well, regardless of their technology level. The rules for the fourth cards are the same as for the third.

For a set of four of the same planet, a player may move his technology station from level 2 to 3. Level three allows the player to trade one, two, or three planet cards when using the "trade planet cards" action.

For a set of five of the same planet, a player may move his technology station from level 3 to 4. Level four allows the player to round up, instead of down, when determining how many attempts he is allowed to establish an economic centre. For example, for a set of 5 planet cards, a player would get 3 attempts ($5/2 = 3$) to establish an economic centre instead of the 2 attempts ($5/2 = 2$) he would get with basic technology.

Note: Players may not skip levels, but may buy more than one level in a turn, using separate actions for each, of course. Players may use bonus credit cards as jokers when making sets of planets, but at least one card in the set must be a real planet card. The technology levels are cumulative; a player at the third technology level has the capabilities of the first, second and third levels.

Tip: Remember that higher technology levels not only give players more capabilities during the game, but also are worth points at the end of the game.

Game End & Scoring

The game ends when all three economic centres have been established on three of the seven planets. The game does not end immediately, but is played to the end of the current round, giving all players the chance to finish their turns.

Each player adds the following to get his score:
• the values of all his economic centres,
• 1 point for each station on Earth,
• the value of his highest technology level and
• the values of the bonus credit cards in his hand.

The player with the most points wins. If two or more players tie, the player among them with the highest technology wins. If there is still a tie, the player among those still tied with the highest ship level is the winner.