

Avignon: A Clash of Popes

A Tug-of-War Game for 2 Players by John duBois

Introduction

The year is 1378, and your rightful claim to the papacy has been challenged by a usurper. You must gain influence among the congregation in order to secure your legitimacy and the Throne of Saint Peter.

Components

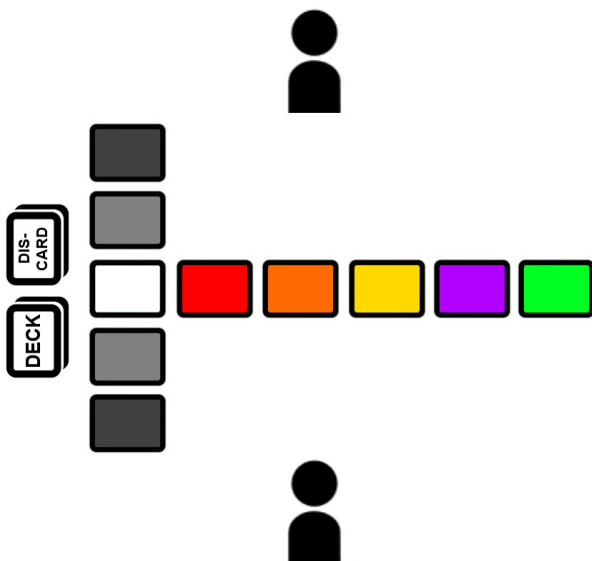
12 Character Cards, 5 Reference Cards

Setup

Between the two players, set up the Reference Cards in a column so that the Center Row card is in the middle, the Influence 1 cards are adjacent to the Center Row card along the long edge, and the Influence 2 cards are adjacent to the Influence 1 cards along the other long edge.

Shuffle the Character Cards. Draw five cards and place them face up in a row between the two players next to the Center Row card. Place the remaining cards face-down in a deck, leaving space for a discard pile.

At the end of setup, the play area should look similar to the below:



Choose a player to go first. The first player may only take one Action on his or her first turn.

Game Terms:

The game rules and reference cards use two key terms that it is helpful to know before playing:

When an Action instructs the active player to **Push** a card, the active player takes one card and moves it one orthogonal space toward his or her opponent.

When an Action instructs the active player to **Pull** a card, the active player takes one card and moves it one orthogonal space toward himself or herself.

Turn Sequence:

Each player, on a normal turn, takes exactly two of the following Actions. Players must take two different Actions on their turns.

- **BESEECH:** Pull one Character Card one space.
- **CHASTISE:** Push one Character Card one space.
- **EXCOMMUNICATE:** Choose one Character Card and place it in the Discard Pile. Draw a Character Card and place it in the exact position the removed card occupied. If the deck is empty, shuffle all discarded cards to form a new deck.
- **PETITION:** Use a unique **PETITION** maneuver of one Character Card on the board.

Players may not take Actions that, at the end of their turn, have completely reversed the previous player's turn.

If any action causes a card to move off the edge of the board, that card is added to the Congregation of the player it is closest to (see Scoring below).

After the active player takes his or her actions, it is the other player's turn.

Scoring

If an Action causes a Character Card to move off the edge of the board, that tile is added to the Congregation of the player it is closest to.

When adding a character to his or her Congregation, a player sets the card aside on his or her side of the play area, then draws a card and places it in the center row of the same column the removed tile was in.

Cards in a player's Congregation are out of play and cannot be affected by Actions. Adding a card to a player's Congregation does not cost an Action.

Ending the Game

The game ends when one player has three Character Cards in his or her Congregation. That player wins the game.

Alternately, the Noble has two other conditions under which the game could end; these conditions supercede the rule above.

If two players would win the game at the same time, the player who took the game's final Action wins.

Characters

The following six characters can be influenced in *Avignon*:
Each character appears on two Character Cards.

BISHOP

The Bishop has the greatest risk in the battle between Popes. While a Pope may have difficulty removing a Cardinal who backed his rival, removing a Bishop is much easier. A petitioned Bishop acts to help both rivals in order to stay in both Popes' good graces.



PETITION: Pull this Tile. Your rival may Pull one other Tile.

KNIGHT



The Knight is eager to back a winning candidate, but his brash manner intimidates others in the congregation. In addition, he is nothing without the financial support of his Noble, and the candidate who forces the Knight to oppose his Noble fights a losing battle.

PETITION: Push two other Tiles, then Pull this Tile twice.

CARDINAL



The Cardinal is second in influence only to the Pope in the Catholic Church. He is very effective at swaying members of the congregation, but it takes extra effort to petition him. His influence makes him particularly susceptible to the manipulations of the Inquisitor.

PETITION: Push this Tile, then Pull all other Tiles. Skip your next action.

NOBLE

The Noble cannot be bothered by petitions from feuding Popes. His wealth makes him an asset and a liability as part of a congregation – he can position his Knight to stab his enemy in the back, but he is offended if asked to join the same congregation as a Peasant.



PETITION: None.

INQUISITOR

The Inquisitor manipulates other members of the congregation, blackmailing them into supporting the rival of his choice. His threats are especially dire to the Cardinal, who has the most influence to lose if exposed.



PETITION: Push this Tile, then Pull any other Tile OR Pull Cardinal twice.

PEASANT



Even the lowly Peasant is important to the true servant of God. A Pope who petitions the meekest of the congregation gains a moral victory, which is worthwhile as long that Pope does not also wish to benefit from the Noble's financial support.

PETITION: Your rival must Push one Tile.

Special thanks to Ingo Laubvogel for supporting the Jack Basel Memorial Fund Auction 2014 with his bid on the prototypes for this game.

Avignon is a part of the UnPub Program.
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