

Introduction

In 2008 publisher Hans im Glück celebrates its 25th anniversary. During this time Bernd Brunnhofer and his staff have proven that economic success and top-notch games can accompany each other. We have taken this as an opportunity to devote the fourth spielbox almanac after author Reiner Knizia and the Games "Carcassonne" and "Die Siedler von Catan" now to publisher Hans im Glück.

The autumn novelties included, the game forge in Munich lists 92 published titles of which 22 are add-ons. Not overwhelming for 25 years, but too many to talk about all of them. Everyone who wants to know more can find hints in the ludography with the issues of spielbox containing a review of the respective games.

In this almanac, we present six of the key games from 25 years of spielbox once again in detail in the form of revised reviews. With portraits of the makers and background info for example on the graphics and the editorial process involved with Hans im Glück games, we try to shed some light upon the secret of the publisher's success. It's probably the way the CEO and his team test the ideas offered, refine and realize them. Hardly any other editorial department is better at recognizing raw diamonds and cutting them to their full beauty than Hans im Glück.

But read for yourself. Have fun with the Hans im Glück Almanac!

Matthias Hardel

From Pensionopolis to the publishers' mount Olympus

What do Arnold Schwarzenegger, Manfred Deix and Bernd Brunnhofer have in common? Right, all three grew up at about the same time in the Austrian city of Graz and are now probably its three best known sons. It's remarkable what diverse characters the leisurely capital of the region Styria (Steiermark) has produced, a city which used to be ridiculed as "Pensionopolis" in the days of the monarchs. Because Schwarzenegger, now governor of California, has fallen from grace in his hometown due to his enthusiasm for the death penalty, the former Arnold Schwarzenegger stadium where the soccer club Sturm Graz teaches its opponents what fear is now lacks a proper name. Maybe this is an opportunity for a Bernd Brunnhofer or even Hans im Glück stadium?

In the sheltered youth of the adolescent Styrian, only little indicated the rise to the all-powerful Hans im Glück boss. After matriculation, his parents pushed for an education as a village teacher which Bernd dutifully finished. Back then, a very short education made it possible to teach at one of the many one-room schools in Austria. This meant life in a village, certainly not everybody's cup of tea. All this for an extremely low payment which only a vivid imagination could connect to the publisher's present appearance in finest Italian yarn.

As a consequence, the excursion into a teacher's life was ended after a very brief period of time by studies of sociology in Munich. This had to be financed by taxi driving and other casual jobs, but the eventful life of a student after the movement of 68 was bound to offer more than a village in the Alps. The studies were finished successfully after 15 semesters, opinions being divided what was responsible for the long duration: the nightly cab driving or Munich's college life. The graduation in his pocket, the young sociologist began to teach at a college for public officials and additionally worked at an institute for industrial medicine.

At the same time with all these professional activities, Bernd got involved in a chess club where he met Karl-Heinz Schmiel. During this time also the interest in board games grew, leading to the usual consequence: the desire to develop and publish one's own games, which in turn led to the founding of the publishing company Hans im Glück. In the beginning of the 80s, events started happening very fast: continuing the work at the college would have demanded a PhD, an effort which didn't really seem justified considering insecure chances to find employment. Aside from that, the "Styrian pig-head" (according to his wife who ought to know) had the glorious idea to issue the ministry of justice an ultimatum regarding him teaching at the college. It wasn't even about money but about the free choice of the means of transportation to the college outside Munich.

Because the contract at the college expired and the ministry surprisingly let the ultimatum lapse away, our sociologist suddenly had 100% of his work time at his disposal for publishing, which nevertheless came in very useful. First a short apprenticeship as a silk screen printer was completed. The only problem was the residence permit which wasn't easy to obtain for a foreigner without regular occupation. At that time Austria was still far from joining the European Union. So marriage was targeted as a solution, an institution frowned upon by the '68 movement. An indirect outcome of this action was son Moritz, being looked after by his father for two or three days per week during the first years of his life. This somewhat slowed the young publisher's vigour but never stopped it entirely.

Loss but spare time

In 1983 "Dodge City" was introduced as the first Hans im Glück game at the first gamers' days in Essen. The 150 hand-made copies were sold within an hour which caused a certain financial loss, but it was a successful and encouraging debut for both publishers. Moreover the fast sell-off allowed them to enjoy the rest of the event in a carefree mood, getting to know the spirit of optimism and departure in the German game landscape. Back then they didn't know that these would be the last relaxed days on the fair in Essen for both of them.

The division of responsibilities in the company was obvious: Bernd Brunnhofer worked more in the business itself while Karl-Heinz Schmiel, who kept his former occupation, invested more money. Yet there were tensions because the former pushed for professional production, naturally meaning higher risk, while the latter wanted to continue manufacturing friends' ideas in very small, hand-made editions. In 1987 they parted on not entirely amicable terms when Bernd acquired the rights for "Rock Island" without his partner's agreement. But soon the private differences were overcome; shortly afterwards both successfully negotiated with Mattel for licensed editions of their common games.

1988 however was the year of economic crisis because mistakes were made in the production of the novelties "PS" and "Affenbande", leading to a financial bottleneck. A loan of the Ossenbrunner family, friends of the publishers, helped conquer these problems.

"Maestro", presented at the first appearance of Hans im Glück in Nuremberg, brought about the turning point in 1989. Probably the discussion if this game by Rudi Hoffmann ought to have been chosen as "Game of the Year" instead of "Café International" also contributed to the fact that one year later, a small publisher was able to adorn itself with the coveted title for the first time, for Klaus Teuber's "Drunter & drüber". Subsequently the company developed from a one-man firm to a small enterprise with several employees, and also the appearance of the CEO underwent a certain amount of change – not just from a Volkswagen Passat to Jaguar to Maserati.

Christian Klein

Review

Debut with a rip-off?

Brunnhofer and Schmiel had already played together regularly for a long time when they started publishing as a team. At their meetings a game often came on the table the rules of which needed interpretation, a quarrel flaring up over and over again. In order to answer all questions one and for all, the two hotheads decided to produce an edited version of their own – and to market it. With the well-known consequences. Here first the original review from spielbox 4/1983, followed by a closer look at "Der Pate" a.k.a. "The Godfather Game" a.k.a. "Le Jeu du Parrain".

Nobody shall claim German game inventors shy away from the questions of today's time. Here a topic is taken up which preys on all our minds: "Dodge City", the game from the squatter scene by Wild West.

Available squatters include cowboys, bandits, sheriffs, gunmen and the ladies. As expected, a squatter's life in "Dodge City" is different from one in Germany.

The players need to occupy two or three of the seven old buildings on the board as quickly as possible. Houses are divided into 30-80 fields, depending on their size. Four or five of these fields are marked with symbols which have to be connected with an uninterrupted chain of one's own representatives. The first player managing this is awarded the house.

The wrangling for the houses proceeds in innings with four rounds each. In the first round the marshal is elected who starts the game and derives a small advantage from that. In the second and third round people are bought and distributed among the houses. In the final round conflicts of opinions and interests are decided with weapons.

Electing the marshal, distributing people and fighting take place with the help of fight cards. Every player receives four at the beginning of each inning – one for each turn. The fight cards are of different strength and need to be utilized in a clever and economical way. One can deal a high card already in the first round to become marshal by all means. But what use is this in the last round, when exactly this high card is missing in the fighting, resulting in the loss of three people?

Yet these are not the only nuts Dodge City gives us to crack. Also financial problems must be solved. It's in no way meaningless if a player's group consists of sheriffs, bandits or gunmen. The people bought in the second and third round all have different prices. The basic western equipment of a lady for example is three times as expensive as a cowboy's equipment. The reason why the west is not exclusively populated by cheap cowboys lies in another peculiarity of "Dodge City".

Monoculture required

A house can only be occupied by one kind of people. When a player has started to occupy the bank with ladies for example, all other players have to send ladies to the bank as well. But on the other hand there are also more victory points for a house occupied with expensive personnel.

"Dodge City" is an astonishing work. Its elements are rather primitive forms of familiar economy and card games, the squatting reminds a little of "Twixt". Glued together with a couple of individual ideas, the result is – what a miracle – a totally new and distinctly original game. But the most wondrous aspect is that this game doesn't come from one of the established publishers but is a pure amateur edition. And it stands comparison in terms of equipment as well as regarding its ideas.

We're curious about the next Hans im Glück game.

Eberhard von Staden

Editorial work from the beginning

At first sight the parallels are striking. Control of city quarters is achieved by placing one's own and removing the opponents' pieces. Only one sort of piece is allowed per quarter. Their type determines costs and revenue. Cards decide who may place what. Without a doubt, "Dodge City" is based on "Der Pate", a game published in 1971 under the title "Le Jeu du Parrain" in France. But there is no doubt either that the base frame has experienced more than just cosmetic changes.

One problem was the abysmal set of rules it included. At a time without e-mail and web forums, one had to rely on self-help interpreting them. But the rules of placing and taking were a different issue.

Author Jody Porter himself had heavily borrowed from somewhere else, from "Go". Control of the eight city quarters was fought out in eight matches of "Go" on a small board. "Go"'s way of pieces being taken and areas being marked off isn't really one of the simplest game mechanisms. On top of that it's time-consuming because "Go" ignoramuses always use more pieces than necessary to take over an area.

Without further ado, Brunnhofer and Schmiel threw "Go" completely over board and introduced a duel system which enabled players to get rid of others' pieces again. But first and foremost they eliminated the "from hand to mouth" element which used to hopelessly expose players to coincidence. Instead of drawing one card for each upcoming round which had to be dealt, they granted everybody four cards per round. Only the decision which card to use for the marshal, first / second placing or duel phase made "Dodge City" what it is – a decidedly good game also according to today's measures, even given that the often crass effect of the event cards annoys some people.

Their set of rules may have been longer than that of "Der Pate", but the young publishers solved the initial problem with instructions unambiguous even to hotheads.

"Dodge City" is no rip-off but the first example of knowledgeable, extensive editorial work that should become the future trademark of the company.

Matthias Hardel

An election game?

In the disciplines game duration and complexity, “Die Macher” probably holds the German record since its first publication. In addition to that, the original edition of 1986 also deserves a fair play award for the uncompromising anti-marketing declaration “for 4 players”. Here is the review of the newer edition from spielbox 3/1998.

Yes, it's election year in Bavaria, but this shouldn't tempt anyone to consider “Die Macher” an election game or even one that won't be worth anything on the day after. Some political party may cease to exist, but “Die Macher” will prevail, promise.

It's a hard game already at first glance, in purely outward sense, one you like to take in your hand and think: gosh. A whole lot in there. And that's how it is. A wealth of material, everything very attractive, solid, built to last, and on top of course the instructions, a brochure with 24 pages in seven chapters with subsections, a booklet like some in Kalle Schmiel's work. Caution, reading matter!

But don't worry about it. Already the short description conveys a good impression, the structure is consequent and logical, illustrations are where they should be and help; and furthermore each of the three to five “makers” receives a sheet with an overview of a round's progress which proves to be very useful during the four hour game, virtually as a cosset.

Four hours? Yes, indeed. So is it a freak game, only for the tough guys? No, not at all. “Die Macher” is for everyone, as far as they can sit that long and occupy themselves with only one matter.

But for now let's clear the table, the layout needs its space. Four state boards form a kind of parliament next to a federal board and a field for deposited material. The colours of the various dice, rectangles, tiles and cards correspond to up to five parties. (Footnote for the politically interested: it is not a must to choose one's own favourite party, one can win with the FDP, too, for example.)

Everybody owns five cards (plus three in hand) which are the party's program – a “yes” or “no” or “more” or “less” regarding different topics. Later on, this program will need to be aligned with the “people's opinion” in the separate states and also with the “federal opinion” on the federal board; this is a prerequisite for a good score. (Footnote for ideologists: if you think you always have to leverage your private opinion, you'll look very old very quickly. This is a strategic game, not a propaganda event.)

Six rounds now pass following a constant pattern. We purchase a starting player by auction, adjust the program according to the people's opinion in the current state, send members of a shadow cabinet to the states for a fee in order for them to gather votes (depending on their power and their price) or to change the “trend” for one's own party or the opposition.

We buy “media pieces” and can influence the opinion with them; we build coalitions with another party if the programs allow it; we organize election events (placing pieces) and maybe purchase polls in an auction the results of which aren't always comforting.

Not just money is short

We do all this with great care, constantly pondering if an expense is paying off because money and some materials are short most of the time; and of course we also do it to win the election. The latter requires the combination of the number of campaign events, trend and consensus with the people's opinion to reach the highest possible value – which grants mandates, in some states more, in others fewer. And this in turn grants money.

That's not all; but it's the core. In general one thing is connected with the other and all with everything anyway. Election winners for example may place “media pieces” on the federal board which score significantly in the end, and they also may change the federal opinion, and the party's base plays an important role as well, and there are risky party donations and advantages / disadvantages of coalitions.

Surprising turn?

On the way to victory, there are numerous promising possibilities of setting top priorities (no-one can win all elections anyway). Negotiations are recommended in some cases, surprises should be expected.

Seldom it will be decided already in the beginning who'll have the power in the federation and in general – even in the last, seventh round the tide can turn (which by the way might be a small reason for criticism as the last election's winner can still radically change the important federal opinion). Player neglecting only one area, the mandates, the media, the base, will face the consequences.

Four hours, seven rounds, same pattern? No, it's never monotonous, but always makes for exciting puzzling, calculating and estimating, loosened up by bluffing and political joking. The winner rejoices of course, but even more so because it's the result of long work. Players who've lost are also glad: about the fact that hardly any other game is constructed so perfectly and simulates reality in such a seamless way. Participation was everything. Sounds much too Olympic? But that's how it is. Politician's honor.

Michael Knopf

The publisher's co-founder Karl-Heinz Schmiel

Back on board in the engine room

Inhabitants of southern Germany often are a tough act to follow in the northern states because of their outlandish interpretation of our native language. Therefore many Southerners were delighted to welcome the Saxonians on board in 1990, as they do even funnier things to German. In this regard, Karl-Heinz Schmiel is de facto doubly "handicapped" because he was born in Saxony and moved to Bavaria as a child. There he has integrated himself completely and even excels at dancing the Schuhplattler.

Karl-Heinz Schmiel's career progressed as little directly as his history with publisher Hans im Glück. He started out studying as electrical engineer and afterwards working as an IT employee for Siemens. Because this job didn't really appeal to him, he simultaneously completed a training to be an educator. As such he switched from Siemens to the Harthof children's house, an institution which looks after kids in the "Bronx" of Munich, where he's been working with interruptions until today.

Even as a child, Schmiel showed interest in games of all kinds and – when there was time next to dancing and playing trombone – was involved in a chess club in Munich where he met someone like-minded, Bernd Brunnhofer. At first both considered the "game of kings" to be the only real deal, as many chess fans do, but soon had to revise this opinion. Infected by the board game virus, they started developing their own games and finally producing them with their own publishing company. Yet Karl-Heinz Schmiel knew he'd only pursue this as a hobby since he enjoys his profession as an educator a lot. This subsequently led to tension with friend Brunnhofer who saw his future in publishing. So it came to an abrupt separation in 1987, also leading to a private breakup which luckily only lasted for a few weeks. Today, possible tensions are still eased at the playing table where both develop unusual ambition even during actually insignificant games.

The story's irony is that Karl-Heinz Schmiel – at least for some time – devoted himself full-time to game making for his company Moskito. Meanwhile he is again working as an educator, Moskito cooperating with other publishers such as Heidelberger or Hans im Glück, where next to his re-edited "Die Macher" also the newly developed "Attila" were released. As a paid employee for Hans im Glück, he is also responsible for sifting the prototypes sent in and their testing.

Christian Klein

The graphics of Hans im Glück Games

Also visuals sell the game

Deep red is the box. The glance falls through a cutout reminding of the clubs symbol on cards, into a sparsely lit, smoke-filled room. Bearded blokes are gathered around a table, soldiers, cowboys, outlaws, not recognizable in detail. All are very focused in their actions but seem very suspicious. They are playing, at least for now. Will the situation stay this peaceful?

The line drawing gracing the cover of the first Hans im Glück game, “Dodge City”, and therefore the first graphic business card of the young publisher, creates rough Wild West mood right away. Bernd Brunnhofer isn't more than a passable draftsman. That's why he rather limited himself to his copying and pasting skills. Which didn't prevent him from making a visually convincing appearance together with his partner Karl-Heinz Schmiel.

Here draws the boss

The playing material is rather functional but not entirely without decoration, continuing the Western ambience with stylistic confidence and few details. And the frame of the board offers a real Brunnhofer to be admired.

Already back in 1983, with then extremely humble means, Hans im Glück always strived for making special games and giving them as “round” a finish as possible. The design, combining game mechanism and topic, both is supposed to go hand in hand, allowing a unique game experience. Certainly, this aim was not always achieved, but there are many Hans im Glück games which are graphically remarkable, at some of which we are going to take a closer look here.

“Dodge City” wasn't the only game where the publisher's co-founder was also the graphic artist. But Brunnhofer didn't want to expand his abilities in this area. Knowing very well that his strengths were in other fields, he left the design to others as soon as possible.

Graphics during the first years of the at best half-professional publisher swayed between Eastern bloc, children's book and comic style. A certain struggle with the production means was noticeable, but at the same time also the desire to get better. Of “Tiere im Wald” and its advancement “Wildwechsel”, there are three existing editions which literally show the publisher fighting its way up on the ladder of professionalism.

In 1990, “1835” had already reached the penultimate stage. The compact, well filled box was ahead of its time graphics-wise. At least in one important aspect. Even if the look of the playing material cannot really be called spectacular, this is in large parts due to the Tresham original. One probably wanted to avoid doubts about what it is, as there were only three official “1829” descendants. But for “1835” the roadmap, the cards and the layouts were designed on the computer without exception, which was something special back then. A clean, tidy work, focused on serving the game. The visionary element was on the cover. Four numbers, made of iron, as rail pieces, impossibly bent and partly rotated in space – something unheard of. At least not seen on a game box. Nowadays every rickety PC from the discounter can run 3D programs, but at that time there weren't many computers in Germany that could do such things. Desktop publishing was still in its infancy, Apple machines slowly moving into graphic studios and printing offices. People who were up to more in this area bought a Silicon Graphics workstation, like the one that stood at Zeilbeck & Natzeck Design in Munich (the work of whom will be mentioned later). Not more than four numbers, a date from the time of industrial revolution clad in rails, the topic encapsulated in the shortest form possible. Unfortunately one didn't trust the subject 100 per cent and – unnecessarily – supported it with the wheel of a locomotive.

Three ways, three boys

Immediately afterwards “Drunter & Drüber” followed. Three playful “golden boys” in the making met: Brunnhofer, Teuber and Vohwinkel.

Vohwinkel had made his diploma as graphics designer in the same year and made a blitz debut with his first job.

Vohwinkel's illustration may still be a little awkward in many parts, but even then he demonstrated the characteristics distinguishing his work until today: rich detail, a distinctive feeling for textures, graphic metaphors serving the game, and funny noses.

Simpletons as a topic are of course an invitation to let loose, even urges a designer to interlace a fair amount of graphic nonsense. The street network for example starts at a parking-garage-like stable, the river rises from the waterworks, and the buildings are more crooked than any anthroposophical architect could ever imagine. And then the latrines! According to legend, cows used to stand on the spots Teuber had intended for the (construction-hindering) voting. The option of simply building on the animals seemed too brutal to all involved for a family game though. It was Vohwinkel who came up with the idea of the latrines. The need to vote for or against them, especially in such an active citizenship, just makes sense to everyone.

Also the idea of using the length of the "Jaaa" ("yeees") or "Nee" ("noo") to measure the level of agreement or rejection shows how much this trio of publisher, author and graphic designer enjoy playing. This had quality, atmosphere and wit. It brought game mechanism and subject as close to each other as it's only rarely the case. With the "Game of the Year" award, the means available increased. Now experiments regarding content and graphics were possible and were risked.

Huge letters, jazzy areas, a jet bursting out of the box in comic style. The next game looked as if the publisher had signed Roy Lichtenstein. But one didn't go as far as commissioning the doyen of pop art in person. Nevertheless it was astounding how much art "Modern Art" actually offered. "Modern art has to polarize", the publisher thought and demanded a design which wouldn't leave people indifferent. Viewing screens, layouts and money clearly mirror the 80s which had just ended at that time, today it seems retro. But the artworks we encounter are now as fresh and astounding as before. Once again the Zeilbeck & Natzeck Design Company from Munich was responsible, and once again they tickled plenty out of their computers. In order to provide the art market with something to speculate, five artistic styles were emulated:

- the liquid metal style of Lite Metal reminds of the movie "Terminator 2 – Judgment Day" which had shown the amazed audience a year before what can be morphed back and forth;
- Karl Gitter's grid style conducts itself like a kind of candy-coloured motherboard Mondrian;
- Christin P.'s pointillism prefers pictures in the spirit of women's magazines;
- Yoko lets it all hang out in the Lichtenstein sense – motors, rotors and jet engines produce decibel-strong vocabulary;
- Krypto mixes all sorts of unreadable things in various layers.

The result was full of allusions, ironic and different from everything one had known in the games segment until then. Although a professional clearly recognizes the graphic filter used in at least three of the styles, the artists are very diverse and every card has its individual design. The costs for the graphics were accordingly high – the "Game of the Year" award offered the chance to give the game a more than adequate look. During the game fair in 1992, some of the cards were transformed into artwork-sized posters at the booth of Hans im Glück. A young couple stopped in front of them, and she said to him: "That's totally ugly!" Publisher Brunnhofer heard this and felt confirmed: modern art has to polarize.

Further editions replaced the jet on the cover with a vintage car by the way.

Scraping at the clouds

The next highlight was situated in the American metropolis only by its name. Strangely enough, "Manhattan" even takes place in Sao Paolo, Hong Kong, Sydney, Cairo and Frankfurt, and not just in different quarters of a city. Aside from that, subject and material once again had exceedingly suitable designs. For the first time especially manufactured plastic parts (in pastel colours, according to the ambience) were employed, forming an attractive skyscraper scene within 45 minutes. From a purely graphic view, the whole succeeded only partially. The board can be well classified as a neatly arranged tastelessness, creating a collage of cheesy vastness in an unconvincing way and baking it together in garish colours. The cards and the box on the other hand proved that computer time had been gainfully invested in the rendering of very tall buildings. Skyscrapers stretching themselves towards the beholder, the title bulging between the rooftops – sheer perspective! The cards displayed numerous excerpts of New York's fleeing streets, too. Of course the charm of such depictions has dwindled with the years, after we've been taken on many flights through urban canyons by Neo, Spider-Man and other heroes of cinema, but back in the days they did impress. The sprouting oversaturation with computer generated 3D images probably contributed to the fact that the "Game of the Year" 1994 was the last title by Hans im Glück which was designed with this technique.

In 1995 the team grew by a graphic artist whose drawing style has had great influence in the games market ever since. In the case of "El Grande", it wasn't the first time Doris Matthäus dipped feather and brush into colour for this publisher. She had already illustrated Hans im Glück's likewise short and unsuccessful excursion into the area of children's games, "Story" and "Am Fuße des Kilimandscharo". In terms of the amount of material and complexity of the correlations, "El Grande" was of a particular calibre. One year before she had acquired the necessary know-how for such a project in her own publishing company, Spiele von Doris & Frank, with "Fugger, Welser, Medici". It possessed a similar historic setting, one that complied with Matthäus's graphic style. On one hand precise in its playing mechanics, on the other hand in love with details, the style exudes a certain homely softness which contributes a lot to the appeal for a large audience.

The greatest achievement and reason for the good playability is the board. "The ideal balance between the empty and the full board", the publisher raves. Despite many pretty small things on the historic map, lucidity is always warranted. Which is a must in the face of constantly changing majorities, evaluating of possible losses, actions and victory points. The game's layout, located in

Portugal, is a small stroke of genius in itself. In a few symbols the game structure is displayed with its action and rating sequence, enormously increasing clarity as well as significantly facilitating the re-entry.

Beside the seductive plywood part named Castillo as icing on the equipment's cake, Brunnhofer attributes a large portion of the success to the cover, attesting it a classical-enigmatic composition. The two central figures, king and intriguer, are joined in a group but look slightly absently in different directions, as if fixating different remote targets. In the background a sepia-coloured landscape flows into the dramatically churning evening sky. A sensation during its first presentation, "El Grande" still hasn't lost any of its effect.

Doris Matthäus proved that "El Grande" was no nine day wonder for example two years later with "Euphrat & Tigris" (1997). She manages to embed Reiner Knizia's majority system into a historic setting in such a way that its abstract structure takes a back seat.

Matthäus's part in the publisher's hitherto biggest success, "Carcassonne", is not to underestimate either. Her style exactly matches the tone of the game between informal lightness and tactical depth. Nobody associates her drawing style with exaggerated complexity, with conflict or even strain. The entire design relieves the potential buyer of shyness, flatters his eye until the playing value finally speaks for itself.

Since 1998 the jury "Spiel des Jahres" (Game of the Year) doesn't award a special prize in the category "beautiful game" any more. By this it acknowledges the development that the design standard in board games has reached such a high level that it seems impossible to elevate a single project. Publisher Hans im Glück has contributed to this development and steadily furthered it on its own. There are numerous titles in its program turning a game concept into marvellous illustrations, even if it's become harder and harder to stand out from the competition. I don't want to conclude without mentioning some other syntheses of arts and styles of design which have added substantially to the unique reputation Hans im Glück enjoys in the scene.

Accessories as synthesis of the arts

One mention has to be the Japan design of "Samurai" by Franz Vohwinkel, a full-scale success from cover to the view screens and the high gloss polished pieces. In "Rasende Roboter" the same designer indulges in his preference for rust and metal things, chipped lacquer and dents, which on other occasions he can pursue during his work for fantasy role playing games or "Magic" cards. Remarkable is also the way his cover of "Amun Re" combines statues, pyramids, priests and a sun in the centre to a blazing red dream of Egypt.

Or Marcus Gschwendner's sparkling clean design of the "Macher" reprint. While the bored backbenchers blow into their toy windmills, the fraction's leader cracks the whip; genetically modified tomatoes can be stacked in squares; the A in the logo reaches its hands up in the air, certain of victory.

Or "Medina" with its extra amount of wood and its rather unspectacular graphic design. But the way the desert city grows on the initially empty board from the different pieces creates a very distinctive attraction. This was only possible because the wood manufacturer Seidenstücker and the publisher spent a long time tweaking all parts.

Or the wonderful "Attika" by the Casasola brothers Marcel-André and Manuel with a sun-flooded, beaming antique city on the box. The material is decorated with ornaments (also to make things easier for colour-blind players), tiles are adorned with pretty depictions of buildings, there are layout boards with a short overview and brief, elegant and richly illustrated rules on just four pages in tasteful typography. A real treat to the player's eye.

Or Oliver Freudenreich's symbol spectacle in "Goa", making Rüdiger Dorn's rule-studded work playable and covering all with a velvety "graphic feel".

Or the small gallery of French illustrators from "Ohne Furcht und Tadel", among them Julien Delval who would later work for Days of Wonder. Due to the success Delval was commissioned to outfit the similarly chaotic "Kabale & Liebe" with his relaxed pastel paintings. In every one of his pictures one feels the French tradition of comic artistry, in the longingly suspiring Julia just like in the shady assassin prowling through the darkness with a dagger under his coat.

Or the boards by Michael Menzel, elaborated with the digital brush in enormous detail. One ought to study them with a magnifying glass, in "Hazienda" for example, but as well in "Thurn und Taxis" and the current hit "Stone Age".

Or the miniature artworks by Harald Lieske, gentle whispers of brush strokes in gouache. In "Wikinger", "Ming Dynasty" and "Die hängenden Gärten", the colour structure is nearly palpable with the finger.

Or... or... or...

Over the years, Hans im Glück has published much where good playability and good looks find together. The primary reason for this may be the person of Bernd Brunnhofer, himself a great artist in the craft of game making.

Christof Tisch

Art Cologne? Art Munich!

„Modern Art“ unites the strong idea of a high-class author with creative editorial optimization and superb design in a congenial way, the result being an absolute highlight of the publisher. State of the art is still Hans im Glück's original: Neither the US edition by Mayfair nor the Brazilian one by Odyssea Jogos nor the Scandinavian by Lautapelit are able to hold a candle to it. Here is the review from spielbox 6/1992, written directly after its publication. More on “Modern Art” on page 9 and in the article on the editorial work of Hans im Glück.

MODERN ART is an auction game revolving around modern works of art. Depending on the number of participants (between three and five), each player receives between eight and ten pictures from an overall amount of 70 objects, created by six different artists. Furthermore everyone is equipped with 100,000 DM worth of starting capital to be increased in four auction rounds. Finally one also gets a visual cover to store one's own money chips behind.

The works of art – all of them computer graphics especially produced for MODERN ART by the way – bear the artist's name and a symbol. There are five different symbols, each standing for an auction method.

--- The bidding procedure is normal, i.e. a mess. Due to the smallest sort of chips, the bids have to be made in steps of at least 1,000. Other than in most other auction games, the vendor is allowed to join the auction as well.

--- Everyone bids in turn with exactly one offer per person, starting left of the vendor. This method strongly favours the seller because he “sits in the sleeve” and can outbid everyone else – if he likes.

--- Everybody takes up a concealed amount. Then all uncover simultaneously. The highest bidder gets the deal.

--- The seller names a fixed price. Every player clockwise says if he accepts the price. The first one striking receives the card. If no-one wants to take it, the seller has to buy it himself.

--- This latter option is actually no further way of auctioning, but another card of the same artists is simply added and both are auctioned together in the second card's way. If the active player doesn't add a card himself, maybe because he doesn't have any of the same artist, another player may enter and auction off both cards; this is a clear advantage because two cards yield a higher profit than one. A guideline during all auctions: the profit flows in the vendor's box as long as he doesn't win the object himself. In this case he pays the bank.

Such an auction round lasts until five cards of one single artist lie on the table; the fifth card causing the end is not distributed. Then the rating is done. The three most successful artists bring their owners money. If there are pictures of more than three artists, buyers of the least sought ones go empty. In the case of a picture tie – pretty frequent on the following positions –, the artist's location on the board decides. The further to the left, the better. In exchange, the others possess more cards, balancing the chances to some extent.

The rating itself is conceivably simple: the artist with the most works sold receives a chip with 30,000, the next one 20,000, the third 10,000. Each buyer is credited accordingly for each picture of these artists. Clever art dealers can reap considerable sums!

After the rating all played cards are removed from the game, but depending on the number of players, everyone is also given three to six new cards. The next auction round complies with the now familiar scheme. The only difference is the rating: once again, only this round's three most successful artists are rated, but their value is the result of all obtained chips so far, e.g. 50,000 for the second if he has already been the winner before. Rounds 3 and 4 proceed accordingly, but the fourth round doesn't hand out any more chips. One has to make do with those remaining from the previous turns.

The auction rounds' duration may vary between two and twenty rating cards.

When they aren't bidding, vendors become richer and richer. In our – admittedly still few – playing rounds, our average barely exceeded 300,000 in the end. Not only because of this, the bids keep

increasing in the course of a party, but also due to the pictures getting more valuable from round to round as their previous quotations are included – yet with the uncertainty if the artist is rated at all. But one can plan with one's own cards for the long term e.g. by holding back an artist to gather all the higher profits with him later on.

Just as decisive is which sorts of auctions are offered because the willingness of the fellow players to offer a lot of money increases with the chance of generating high earnings of course.

In the end nevertheless, the player with the most money wins – no matter if this has been garnered with the help of a beautiful collection or only with good sales. As the last round provides the largest profits, MODERN ART stays exciting until the end.

Dissent only regarding the graphics

All in all, my impression of this game after the first parties is excellent. Due to the auctions running, it is very interactive, often not easy to overview, but because of that also better suited for bluffing and surprising coups. There was some serious dissent if one should like the graphics or not, but that's how it is with art: nobody pleases everyone. If Reiner Knizia has still more ideas like this one in store he will soon belong to the great among the authors.

Something always goes wrong

At the game fair 1992 publisher Hans im Glück was only present with one freshly produced novelty, as almost every year. Possibly too fresh this time. Already on the first day a number of customers came to the booth to report that "Modern Art"'s play money had literally melted away in their hands. At first one tried to explain this with sweaty fingers induced by stress during the game, but it soon became obvious that it was a production flaw. The manufacturer had used glue for the money sheets which would have required more time to dry. The way it was, handling the money made parts fall off on the backside. All money sheets had to be printed anew and the unsold games repacked. Everyone who had gotten one of the first copies received a replacement on inquiry.

Portrait

Judge and editor Dieter Hornung

Game testing as limit experience

Observant readers of a typical set of Hans im Glück instructions have in any case already noticed his name, in the list of test players. Often he is even singled out from this group because of his special merits, mainly in more demanding games. Who is this grey eminence of the publisher, a kind of Richelieu? Hardly likely, him being someone who rather represents the philosophy "Hans im Glück, c'est moi" but knows how to surround himself with competent counsellors. And Dieter Hornung is certainly one of the most important game editors. So it's about time to get him from out of the shadow.

Dieter Hornung's link to Hans im Glück dates back to 1983. Following the first game fair in Essen which delighted its participants, the board gaming club "Die Spuiratzen" organized a similar event in Munich, and the publisher enthusiastically joined. Jo Weigand, chairman at that time, told Brunnhofer and Schmiel about two game-crazed jurists, among them one Dieter Hornung. Contact was established quickly, and since then the now retired judge of the social court in Munich has been testing all prototypes of Hans im Glück and Moskito almost every week.

Because Hornung is a game freak of the first generation owning one of the most interesting game collections of Munich, he is equipped with valuable knowledge and virtually unsurpassable experience on this area. Naturally he is most interested in the freak games, mass articles usually don't go down particularly well.

Hornung's profession entails that the judge mostly considers his verdict on games to be final, too, knowing no higher instances. Therefore the relationship with the Styrian publisher who also develops pretty firm views hasn't always been free from tensions. But both managed to create a very constructive atmosphere with benefits for both sides. Meanwhile Dieter Hornung has somewhat departed from the purism of the initial years and takes pleasure in commercially successful games, too, such as "Carcassonne", as long as they reach a certain standard. His value to Hans im Glück is estimated so highly that he contractually participates in successes like a "Game of the Year" award.

Under oxygen deprivation to subtle balance

Next to his qualities as judge and player, Dieter Hornung is first and foremost a patriotic Bavarian. This may seem a little strange to someone not born in this somewhat weird state at the border of the Alps; especially if one knows that Hornung isn't very close to the CSU which acts like the Bavarian unity party. For one thing, this patriotism manifests itself in a profound knowledge of history which is why he also wrote a historic introduction for Schmiel's "Lieber bayrisch sterben". For another thing, he equipped his sons with the old Bavarian names Quirin and Severin, making sure they wouldn't have an overly easy start into life beyond Bavaria.

Despite a certainly impeccable activity as a judge, Dieter Hornung's actual destination is without a doubt the testing and developing of prototypes. His trick is a special chamber, also known as "smoking cellar". It's probably Orwell's room 101 for non-smokers. The ceiling feels like four feet high, the test person practically immured by precious games. Here Munich's high-performance smokers gather alongside Dieter Hornung with pipe, creating an atmosphere where the counterpart can only be guessed behind a wall of smog. It is generally known that the human mind is able to perform special things under extreme conditions, and this cellar is a life-threatening situation for sure. Compared to an evening there, the ascent of Mt. Everest without oxygen seems like a casual walk in the woods. Hornung's spiritual predecessors have used such exceptional situations in deserts or on mountain ranges to found religions. As the world-wide market for religions has reached a certain degree of saturation but the same doesn't apply for games, the cellar is used for the latter. People who've ever wondered where the unusual ideas and the subtle balance in Hans im Glück games come from find an answer here: Under complete oxygen deprivation the testers fall into an almost rush-like state, making game testing possible on an otherwise unachievable level.

Christian Klein

Editorial work at Hans im Glück

In the polishing department

No game reaches the printer the way the author has submitted it. This is not much different from literature. Everyone knows John Irving, but who knows his editor? Or even his German translator whose job it is to give the text class in our language? The cultural business needs its stars, in the case of games the authors. This shall gladly stay that way, but it's worthwhile to take a look at the share others sometimes have in it.

Editorial work is a back-breaking job, at Hans im Glück even more than somewhere else. It's no secret that complex material gets its chance there, too. So the meanwhile hundreds of prototypes arriving each year also include more complicated ones. Even simple game ideas are hard to judge in their unprocessed state, but that's the first step. At only four publications per year, most is sifted out already after reading the instructions because not everything can be tested, and certainly not a hundred times. It does happen that games are played one hundred times at Hans im Glück before they're published. But this is way past the stage of deciding whether an idea is good or not. At the beginning hardly two matches take place in the same constellation regarding number and types of players as well as strategic approaches. As soon as the weak points are identified, changes are made and tested, discarded and tested again. Until the time comes of having to write the rules or to postpone the project by one fair.

The author is involved in all this of course, wherever possible. The first version of "Drunter & Drüber" for example was appealing. But it became apparent too quickly who was pursuing which goal – and promptly being torpedoed by the other players. After that Bernd Brunnhofer tweaked a version more acceptable to him. Klaus Teuber did like this one, but not in every aspect, which is why he got to work on his own part again. He had the idea with the latrines (even if these still had another name back then), implementing all the bluffing and tactical finesse which should later on distinguish the game. As a consequence Brunnhofer wanted to remove his "freak variation", but Klaus Teuber insisted on keeping it.

Occasionally development results in separate ramifications, each one of them market-ready like in the case of "El Grande" the variations "Korntal" (where Wolfgang Kramer lives) and "Munich". The latter

was developed by Hans im Glück and later published as “König & Intrigant”. Dieter Hornung had been particularly committed in this process, and it almost led to a personal break-up with him when Bernd Brunnhofer in the presence of Wolfgang Kramer (and Jo Weigand) went for the less demanding but more colourful and accessible “Korntal” variation – not least because it would have better chances to win a “Game of the Year” award...

Sometimes more indeed is more

From time to time a submitted game works flawlessly the way it is; nevertheless an additional level would suit it. One example for this was “Modern Art”. Reiner Knizia’s submission was limited to collecting cards on the way of various auctioning methods. Added was the topic of value increases when an artist belongs to the most popular ones a few times in a row, mainly conceived by Dieter Hornung, providing the game with significantly more depth.

Very often the art is in omitting things, like in the case of “Müll + Money”. Its author, Dr. Jürgen Strohm, had submitted a highly complicated opus lasting several hours. One can guess his original concern devoting oneself to the enclosed “experimental simulation variation”. As all testers will confirm, the original did have its appeal but had to be transformed into a market-ready game first.

Sid Sackson’s creation was based on “Property” from the book “Spiele anders als andere” (“play differently from others”), published by Hugendubel. And it could be processed to market readiness, as Sven Kübler did for Piatnik. There the game was published as “New York”. In the editorial department of Hans im Glück where the game had been lying before, the editing involved so many ideas – most notably by Andreas Seyfarth – that the result was more or less by accident an independent work, at best inspired by Sid Sackson, which even garnered the laurels as “Game of the Year” under the name “Manhattan”.

In order to compare “director’s cuts” and “theatre versions” of games, there are numerous possibilities today. At authors’ meetings like the ones in Göttingen, Haar or Berlin everyone can examine ideas in their original state and test them. The SPIEL in Essen shows some in earlier project stages. Concerning Hans im Glück one doesn’t even have to travel to visualize the process of developments. With “Tiere im Wald” and “Wildwechsel”, two stages of a game were published by the same company. Also Richard Breese’s original “Kingdom” can be compared to the edition “Morgenland” very well. And Günter Cornett later published “Canaletto” more or less in the form he had initially submitted as “Le Jardin” under his own label. Looks as if he liked his own version better.

There are authors, too, who entirely decline an editorial treatment of their games. It’s understandable that Rudolf Ross belonged to this small flock – once bitten, twice shy. His author game, published the way he intended by Hans im Glück as “PS”; had been botched up as “Rivalen der Piste” before. Publisher Bayerwald hadn’t recognized that the dice mechanism conceived by Ross doesn’t really work with a reduced number of tracks or rounds.

So far almost only in-depth editing has been discussed because the fine-tuning and balancing of a basically well-performing game is rather unspectacular but nonetheless a fair amount of labour. “Sankt Petersburg” for example worked right from the start as a prototype called “Artefax”. Yet I took two more years until all card values, discounts and special attributes were perfectly coordinated and author as well as publisher were finally satisfied with the result.

To a great extent the fact that Hans im Glück has been capable of such a profound work of developing for 25 years is certainly owed to Bernd Brunnhofer himself and his staff. But one mustn’t underestimate the share of the troop of creative volunteers surrounding the publisher either. People mentioned at the end of a set of Hans im Glück’s instructions over the years – and there are quite a few of them – haven’t just “played along” but have made a significant contribution to the final result. Take a closer look, many of the names under “for many testing rounds, comments and suggestions, author and publisher thank” might seem familiar to you.

Matthias Hardel

Published by others

Some games edited by Hans im Glück were in the end published by another company. Here an incomplete list:

[...]

* In the end published with significant changes from the prototype

** Kosmos had the prototype first, hesitated for a long time, but finally accepted, which is why Hans im Glück didn’t get a chance.

Something always goes wrong

It’s part of an editorial department’s business risk that working on a game doesn’t always lead to a marketable result. In this case the investment was in vain. Even more regrettable if this investment

didn't only consist of time. That's what happened with a per se very nice idea involving willows and wells running dry. It was about building fences which determined the owner of a parcel of land. Soon the wells turned into cows inhabiting the parcels via dice sum – the more the better, as long as a certain number wasn't exceeded which made the entire parcel worthless because eaten empty. While the development was still in progress the playing material of "Morgenland" had to be commissioned. Because he didn't want to lower his price, the manufacturer from the city of Kaufbeuren had the idea of combining two orders to minimize the high tool costs. No sooner said than done: the pieces for the willow game were included in the commission, decreasing the price of the "Morgenland" treasure pieces by remarkable two thirds. Theoretically. Since then Hans im Glück's basement has been storing sacks with 15,000 bags, 30 cows each – rather pretty cows by the way. The willow game didn't materialize, but we haven't seen the end of the matter yet, maybe there'll be a suitable idea.

Review

El Grande

More than just beautiful

After the jury "Spiel des Jahres" had awarded "Die Siedler von Catan", also more complex games were eligible for a short time. Today an "El Grande" would be unthinkable as a winner, would be fobbed off with a special prize "complex game" at best. And this although publisher Bernd Brunnhofer had deliberately opted for the "easier" of both finished game versions in order to have a chance. And "El Grande" even offered room for more, as the add-on "Großinquisitor und Kolonien" showed. Here the original review from spielbox 6/95.

The exterior, i.e. the game with its setup on the table, made many curious for the content. It's truly a feast for the eyes regarding the graphics by Doris Matthäus and the carefully selected material. But caution: is it maybe just a beautiful game? Certainly not.

"El Grande" is intended for two to five players. During about one and a half hours they try to become as influential as possible in the nine regions on the board. In order to do that, they need to cleverly distribute one "Grand" (larger wooden dice) and up to 30 Caballeros (smaller blocks) in such a way that they yield the most points at the end of the third, sixth and ninth round as well as in some special ratings. A rating index of each region determines how many there are. In general: players who have placed the most Caballeros receive more points than the second or perhaps third runner-up. The rest gets nothing. And if one's own Grand or the king figure is located in the region where one has the most influence, the ratings grant two additional points each.

45 beautifully drawn action cards in unusual square format are segmented into five different classes. The bigger the influence of such a card is, the more Caballeros are depicted on it. Before or after performing this action, the small wooden cubes representing the Caballeros may be distributed among the regions from one's personal inventory (called "Hof" / "court" in the game), further increasing the influence.

The action cards are dealt according to the power card played. The person with the highest value (everyone has 13 cards with numeric values between 1 and 13) may choose one of the five open action cards first, followed by the players with the next values in sequence. After each round new action cards are uncovered, used power cards are removed from the game.

Bidding for the auction cards presents one with a dilemma. A particularly valuable auction card will probably only go for a power card of relatively high numeric value. But power cards for their part are decisive for the replenishment of Caballeros. The higher a power card, the fewer Caballeros can be taken from the box (called "province") to the court for future use. A low power card, the 1 for example, allows for six new Caballeros to distribute among the regions with the help of the action cards, whereas the 12 or 13 don't grant any Caballeros at all.

Gathering strength for the next round

Having played the lowest card is an advantage as it permits to play a power card first during the next round. The same number is taboo for the others in this round. If one has memorized the opposition's

remaining cards and owns high-value power cards as well, this means free choice among the five action cards on display.

The single rounds pass in a similar fashion: reading the brief text on the action cards, playing the individually suitable power card and receiving in turn one of the action cards. The newly acquired pieces are – depending on the tactic – placed immediately or maybe only after performing one of the various actions: One's own or another player's Caballeros travel from one region into another, perhaps even to leave the board and return to the court. Or His Majesty himself, the king, relocates his throne to another area, thus bestowing two bonus points on the most influential player in the rating. The point yield can change for a particular region, too. In this case corresponding markers are placed on the rating index. Very popular are those action cards which directly lead to a special rating for a singular region or several areas.

Players who don't want to send their Caballeros to one of the regions can also throw them into a plywood tower, the Castillo. At least three times – with some special action cards also more often – the tower lifts its secret and discloses the Caballeros it includes. At first the tower is rated like a normal region. Then the Castillo Caballeros can additionally be distributed on the regions. Every player secretly chooses their target region with a round disc. So the tower doesn't just give additional points which can decide the game but will significantly change the power in the regions, too. Yet one should memorize how many Caballeros have been thrown in by oneself and by the opposition because peeking is not allowed during the game.

Following this excerpt from the rules, readers will recognize that the game as a whole is pretty complex, but by no means overloaded and not hard to understand for players with a little practice. Describing all further subtleties, particularly the meaning of the various action cards, would go beyond the scope of this review. The twelve-page instructions are well structured and clear, furnished with many illustrations and examples, leaving no question unanswered.

In "El Grande" luck and tactics balance each other, the mechanisms intertwine smoothly. But the possibility of planning actions in advance decreases with the number of players. "El Grande" unfolds its full strategic appeal in games with two players: it really conveys the impression of two grandees sitting opposite each other, waiting for the other to make a mistake. Great! Regardless of the number of players, the situation on the board always requires full attention. Local majorities are juxtaposed with the effects of action cards. One evaluates and decides for the right action, increasing one's own or decreasing the competition's influence. The entire game is that simple.

Cumbersome beginning

Players getting themselves into the struggle for power in historical Spain are entertained well for one and a half hours. Only reading the action cards may be a bit cumbersome at the beginning and hamper the flow. The game runs more fluently after two or three matches when the meaning doesn't need to be looked up any more. Two scales provide better oversight: one deals with the individual rounds, the other – running all around the board – shows who's currently at what position. The game's functionality is well thought out, its equipment splendid without being overstuffed. I personally find only the wooden Castillo a tad too showy and clunky. So much material has its price of course. During the SPIEL '95 in Essen, "El Grande" was available at the special fair discount of 80 DM [today about 40 Euros, editor's note]. Afterwards it's supposed to go for ten DM more. No matter if the discount was responsible, at the fair "El Grande" sold like hotcakes.

Edwin Ruschitzka

Comments on 25 years of Hans im Glück

Early on course

This publisher bears its name with good reason, one should think. Every couple of years, out of a clear blue sky, the critics' award suddenly drops in with its sale guarantee, and everything else comes out all right in the end. But this isn't quite correct because Hans from the fairytale "Hans in Luck" is not *lucky* but *happy* – despite his economical failure. The critics' award may be a matter of luck, too, but it's possible to improve one's own chances for the happy coincidence to actually occur. Apart from that, a publisher like Hans im Glück cannot exist merely on the "game of the year" ("Spiel des Jahres"),

not even on several prizes. Because the period between the happy events needs to be bridged as well.

While a “game of the year” sells six-digit numbers, Hans im Glück usually works in the four-digit area. Such a budget cannot sustain a regular staff, even if it doesn’t exceed the size of a cycle ball team without substitute. When it hit him again in 1996 after 1991 and 1994, Bernd Brunnhofer commented dryly: “Nice rhythm, one should keep it!” Which wasn’t accomplished entirely. Prior to “Carcassonne”, the reserves built up in good times had almost depleted. But “Carcassonne” turned the tide because Klaus-Jürgen Wrede’s laid-back stroke of genius might achieve the status of a long-term classic which would mean *steady* annual sale quantities in the five- or six-digit area. Only publishers with a classic in their programme, be it “Scrabble”, “Mensch ärgere dich nicht”, “Memory”, “Kniffel” or especially “Monopoly”, can afford to make games without worries – if the classic is maintained and cared for.

Some fans may be annoyed by the rabbit-like multiplication of “Carcassonne”-esque titles as they occupy space in the game range more “interesting” publications lose. Such fans should think about the fact that the games they’re interested in depend on the wake of names like “Carcassonne”.

The playing depth of the titles found under the pig rider logo is only subject to rather minor fluctuations. The games from the first five years staked out a corridor the publisher is still moving in today. Let’s take a quick look behind.

It began with “Dodge City”, the precisely accurate revision of an unsatisfying original. The result did pack a punch but – unlike the source – could also be played in a visceral way. Entirely different was “Tiere im Wald”, an astonishingly hard tactics game considering its cute looks.

Open for extensions

Already in 1985 the first add-on: “Dippi Totale” was born out of the wish for variety from the slightly outworn “Diplomacy” and likewise met the demand for more tactical possibilities. The rare object consisted of a world map and 24 hand-sawn airplane squadron pieces, not to forget the instructions, with eight pages almost as extensive as Parker’s “original”.

Like “Dodge City” before and most of its successors, “Greyhounds” was controlled by cards. Unusual for the time then but by far not as surprising as the asymmetrical layout of the complete game. Opinions differed – and still differ – if the accountant who has to confront three betting people has better or worse chances. In any case a variation enclosed with later editions makes the accountant’s life a bit easier by allowing him to be more flexible in the setting of quotas. Three players were able to play “Greyhounds” thanks to an ownerless dog, running along as a dummy – obviously an early fit of marketing thinking. Something the following game did not exhibit.

Selling a game for exactly four people was already difficult enough, as every dealer who carried “Die Macher” back then can confirm. And aside from the toughest fans, all customers were scared off by its four hour duration. Later “Die Macher” got company with “1835”, but that was the upper end of the demand spectrum.

In the lower end not much happened either apart from the unsuccessful attempt to reach younger players with “Story” and “Am Fluss des Kilimandscharo”. Something as simple as “Affenbande” remained an exception. The latter wasn’t the children’s game it seemed like but rather something for gamblers: smart and quick, characterized by bluffing and instinctive feeling.

Although “Die Macher” and “Affenbande” weren’t distinctive for future projects, “Dodge City”, “Tiere im Wald” and “Greyhounds” pointed the publisher’s way. Quite deliberately.

“I don’t want to make games people will still talk about in 100 years, but practicable ones with weight – substantial fare for a large audience”, the publisher says. With this he refers to the current state but simultaneously characterizes all 25 years. Brunnhofer’s credo actually coincides with the one of the jury “Spiel des Jahres”, so it’s almost wondrous that so far Hans im Glück has won the main prize only five times.

A look at its failures tells more about the publisher than its five big awards. The precise content of this list is open to dispute, but it’s supposed to consist of titles that had what it takes yet weren’t really able to score with critics or fans. Having published games like “Canaletto”, “El Caballero”, “Morgenland”, “Müll + Money”, “Magellan”, “Attika”, “Hazienda”, “Taluva”, “Ming Dynastie” or “Oregon” is indeed honourable. Every single one of them inventive and of very good or great playing value, they went down nevertheless.

Unintentional milestones

“Die Macher”, “Euphrat & Tigris”, “Goa”, “Sankt Petersburg” and “Wikinger” should have secured their place in collective memory. Acknowledged delicacies people will probably still talk about in 100 years, against the publisher’s will – if in a century anyone except for historians will still talk about board

games at all. Provided that this will be the case, one can expect a steady stream of insiders' tips and delicacies, with "Dominion" and "Palais Royal" the first ones already visible on the horizon.

Matthias Hardel

Authors from 25 years

If there's anyone who complies with the boss's taste more than the boss himself, it's probably Reiner Knizia, uncontested frontrunner in terms of publications.

Listed are all authors with more than one publication at Hans im Glück, entries with the same number in alphabetical order. Add-ons were not taken into account. Altogether, 25 years included publications by 44 authors.

Volker Weitzel

The first of the Mohicans

Since the beginnings as subtenant in Winfried "Vino" Seiler's "Zabelwerkstatt", Hans im Glück did their own manufacturing. But eventually the games weren't made by hand anymore, the delivery was outsourced in 1988, and with the first "Spiel des Jahres" award the distribution was transferred to a partner. Yet the administrative efforts constantly increased, not just due to the 100 prototypes that needed to be sifted through every year after "Drunter & Drüber". It simply was time for an Indian to join the chieftain.

Born 1958 in Darmstadt, Volker Weitzel was struck by the passion for playing games at a very early age. This however less means board games and rather sports activities in general. In his youth hardly any sports discipline is safe from him, very much to his parents' chagrin. After he has finished high school despite every objection he goes to Marburg to bring German medieval literature up to speed.

In his parents' house Weitzel had only been made familiar with three games: "Elfer raus", "Monopoly" and "Kniffel". He never touched any of them after moving out. Being a rookie game-wise, he had the luck of living under one roof with a well-known American game collector.

After finishing his studies, he is offered a part-time job at the German game archive (Deutsches Spiele-Archiv) which in theory goes fine with his dissertation. He accepts. As a consequence Weitzel spends the whole day at the archive, abandoning the dissertation (until this day, science has been waiting in vain for "The history of board games in the literature of the High Middle Ages"). Of course he hasn't played all of the 10,000 games in the archive during his five years, but he did get to know the most important ones.

For private reasons Volker Weitzel moves to Munich in 1992. Hans im Glück doesn't offer him a job, but with the words "I'm the right man for you" he is hired anyway. From this time until he leaves the company in 2000 he's "maid-of-all-work" for administration, bookkeeping, dates, author and press contacts, production and fair planning, play tests, licensing and fee accounting, website contents and so forth.

And today? Besides working as a marketing and distribution manager at a software company in Mannheim developing the market leader among the branch solutions for steel and metal construction, he – of course! – still has a game circle. And not just current novelties are played but finally also titles one had wanted to play again for a long time.

Respect the peasants!

More than seven years have passed since our unforgotten colleague Michael Knopf reviewed "Carcassonne". When he wrote it he neither knew that he was dealing with a future "Spiel des Jahres"

winner nor that it would sell millions of copies and be available in over 50 countries. While the basic game definitely appealed to the reviewer, already his verdict on the first add-on (meanwhile called "Wirtshäuser und Kathedralen") resonated with the question if this wasn't a bit too much of a good thing. Unfortunately we cannot get his commentary on currently 15 "Carcassonne" games and extensions – without a doubt it would have been as witty as it would have been sophisticated. Here are now both original texts from spielbox 2/2001 and 2/2002.

Of course it's pretty useless to judge games for their realism, as they are only games, bearing some title and employing something – anything – as their subject. When it's about CATAN or MORGENLAND for example, the deal is clear: it only exists within the game, or it is so common or abstract that it doesn't matter anyway. And CARCASSONNE?

Carcassonne does exist, it's a city in Southern France, located on the Canal du Midi, and even belongs to the most attractive things the Middle Ages have left in Europe: fortified old town district, elevated on a hill, narrow alleys full of tourists and restaurants with not very inventive menus – oh, well, but the city itself is very beautiful indeed. People who have visited it, arrive at home and find it there as a game, are almost instantly halfway back on vacation because with "CARCASSONNE" on the label, it's got to be in there as well, doesn't it?

But it's just a subject, any subject, and further down the road it doesn't matter; at least the walls of the city possess a certain similarity to the original, and the green of the meadows looks like the green often found in France, too. We are responsible for the rest anyways, utilizing 72 cards to create a landscape which looks different every time but always consists of meadows with pathways and crossings, with monasteries and towns, smaller and larger ones, complete and unfinished ones. Here and there our vassals stand around on the field – if they occupy a good position, we gain points. That's all, that is CARCASSONNE. Luckily neither tourists nor restaurants are involved.

Is there any need to explain it in greater detail? The game has been on the market since Essen 2000, just half a year ago, and yet one is under the impression as if it had always been there or at least for a longer period of time. To say it in the suggestive language of the marketing: the market has already been penetrated pretty well, one is expected to know CARCASSONNE and does so, no matter if freak or family player – and one is expected to like it and does so. Serious state of emergency: a basically very simple, spontaneously accessible game not even the toughest can blame for plainness or lack of sophistication.

This probably comes from the connection of simple processes with excitement, of manageable rules with enough mental depth; from the fact that decisions are possible and important but not necessarily devastating when someone makes a mistake; from regular, small experiences of success and a strong element of luck which slows down the notorious workers among the players a bit. CARCASSONNE, to sum it up, offers enough weight to serve professionals as legitimate amusement and is at the same time easy enough to help beginners understand the fascination of playing games.

But nevertheless here's a summary for novices. 72 cards, as has been said, which result in kind of a variable puzzle, showing fragments of landscapes or cities. The cards can be attached to each other in many different ways – only that every new piece has to fit with at least one side to an existing piece on the table. Meadow to meadow, street to street, town district to town district, with the real difficulty of filling a gap with several connections. When we've placed a card (drawn covered), we may leave one of our vassals on it who adopts the respective identity: knights in the city, looters on the street, peasants on the meadow, monks in the monastery; but that's not what it depends upon. Important is that only one little man is allowed to stand in each landscape category.

He'll stand there until something's finished, street, city or monastery – then his owner gains points and the little man back because he has only seven of them and can't do much when all are on the way. The number of points is determined by the size of the finished item: street long? City large? Monastery surrounded by a lot of land? Only the peasant can afford not to care about the dimension of the meadow, his turn doesn't take place before the final valuation. Then, points are distributed for every completed city which is supplied by its own farmers, i.e. which is surrounded by meadows we are sitting on. This procedure proved to be a little confusing in the first rule; better explanations are to be found in future editions.

Just like in real life, the peasants' lobby must not be underestimated: who deploys them doesn't get them back, but in the end they strike hard and can gather enough points to cause turbulences on the valuation board. Moreover, because now and then two meadows become one, changing the majority relations among the suppliers, a general rule applies: respect the peasants!

Otherwise the course of the game depends on the rational use of the vassals regarding the developments of the landscape and on managing them efficiently, for example to close a large and potentially wealthy city prematurely if otherwise the little man is missing. Besides, all planning stands

under the premise that the right card will eventually come one's way – the most awesome metropolis doesn't help if it remains unfinished and doesn't win many points in the end.

It's plain to see that under these circumstances playing one on one is the most demanding tactical variation: more cards per person mean more possibilities and less coincidence, less can happen between two turns, goals are more achievable. With three or four builders on the other hand, they have to live from hand to mouth and take what they get. But that doesn't matter or harm the appeal. By the way, it doesn't matter either that CARCASSONNE has the reputation of being kind of an "ENTDECKER light". Firstly, ENTDECKER is good, and secondly, that's only true in a very theoretical way.

Michael Knopf

Hardly noticeable

It is perhaps a noble gesture and certainly a clever one by publisher Hans im Glück to present its devoted customers with a gift now and then. Here a couple of cards for EL GRANDE, there a package with tiles for CARCASSONNE, each ready to be fetched during the fair at the booth, in sight of the newest products – this doesn't hurt anyone and the visitors are happy about receiving this friendly gift. So far, so nice.

One usually doesn't look a gift horse too deeply in the mouth, which is why it doesn't matter much that DER FLUSS for example - the first and free minimum add-on - doesn't extend or even change CARCASSONNE more than perhaps a green tablecloth below the game landscape would. It's mainly an optical variation where a river consisting of twelve tiles meanders through the parts of the city. It doesn't influence the game, the only difference being a peasant we can place on the shores in the hope of finding a lucrative meadow there in the future. This neither harms nor is of use to anyone, but because it's free of charge, it doesn't really matter. Someone who has it may be happy, and someone who doesn't won't miss anything either.

Self-confident

The add-on on the other hand, in fact and with much self-confidence titled DIE ERWEITERUNG ("The Add-On"), must be estimated with different measures – after all it also adds ten Euros to the deficit in one's game budget, costing almost as much as CARCASSONNE itself. In return the package includes 18 landscape cards and six point cards as well as six slightly grown vassals and additional eight little ones for a sixth player, which of course doesn't say anything and is only a tight calculation: more important than the relation between material and price is always the potential gain of playing fun.

In this matter, it unfortunately doesn't look too good. Let's leave out the possibility of now also playing with six people which isn't advisable anyway because of the coincidence factor which increases in direct proportion to the number of participants; and let's also ignore the point cards which display a score of more than 50 or 100 – they are useful but don't justify a purchase on their own.

What remains are the new landscapes and the taller figures which could be distinguished from the smaller ones much more easily if they were a little "more taller", so to speak. But unfortunately they are only a bit taller.

As peasants of course, as knights or highwaymen or whatever, these little tall ones have the double amount of power and count as two in the rating. Yet this is only helpful if an area is occupied by competing people, i.e. mainly on meadows and sometimes in cities, which means not that often at all. The moderately risky question arises if it's advisable sooner or later or not at all to place the double man – this might pay off eventually or not. So far, so exciting.

A new version of risk is also included with the taverns and cathedrals. The first double the value of a street, the latter the one of a city. But woe if city or streets are not finished by the end, because in this case they don't count at all. This add-on doesn't drive the pulse into health endangering regions, it's quite nice, well, but nobody had really missed or urgently hoped for it.

The rest is decoration, in terms of playing content. Other arrangements of city fragments and meadows on single tiles, monasteries separating streets, some of this, a bit of that, basically filling material, and people who don't know the original version very well might not even notice such supplements. Their add-on value tends towards non-perceptible, achieving mainly what the entire additional box does: CARCASSONNE takes more time, quite some time, because more tiles have to be included in the construction, and the table has to be larger, and the peasant rating is even harder to overlook than before. Someone who loves the game so much that he doesn't want it to end might consider this a gain.

A really great achievement on the other side is the design of the tiles' backsides – in this regard, the add-on finds to itself and wonderfully fulfils its purpose to keep CARCASSONNE in the discussion by dispersing little irritations among the people so that nobody shall forget which wondrous game the publisher has in its program. A slightly brighter print than in the basic version was enough, and behold: scandal!

The questions posed by that are great – does it matter that during drawing it's impossible to overlook if an old or new tile follows? And if it does, how do we avoid it, with the help of a cloth bag or with closed eyes? Or with a separate stack? With fixed drawing order? Or doesn't it make a difference at all because we then have the choice and know the outcome in advance? But wouldn't that be unfair? Oh dear, perhaps one should ask editor Bernd Brunnhofer if he doesn't want to take a brush and do a repaint?

Involuntary advantage

The advantage of the recognizable backsides can't be denied either: it's wonderfully simple to sort the tiles after the game; a mark on the front would have served this purpose as well, but without making noise. Now at the latest they are put into a bag which even fits into the old box – and the box is so full there's no room for any further add-on. But this doesn't mean that it was at least needed to displace air.

Michael Knopf

Something always goes wrong

In the publisher's cabin at SPIEL '07, every press visitor received a "Carcassonne" add-on "Abtei und Bürgermeister" and could participate in a little error hunt. Some saw it right away, others didn't notice it at all: the "Carcassonne" logo had been forgotten on one side of the box. The boss remained calm – quite contrary to the pair of authors whose names were disfigured on the "Thurn und Taxis" box of "Glanz und Gloria" in an unforgivable manner.

Something always goes wrong

During the production of "Carcassonne" hardly any disasters occurred apart from the blunder made at the very beginning. The problem was irreparable because it concerned the backside of the tiles. Nobody had suspected "Carcassonne" to become such an overwhelming success with a whole series of add-ons, so the back of the tiles was designed in a rather subtle grey pattern instead of wild colours. But deviations in the colour shades are easier to spot the less pronounced the pattern is. Every printer faces an almost unsolvable problem when he needs to match the exact brightness of a purely grey surface. A flaw that hasn't prevented the add-ons from being successful. Anyhow the value of the insight which tiles don't come from the basic game decreases with the growing number of tiles coming from various extensions.

The editorial treatment of Carcassonne

Small vital steps to success

When Klaus-Jürgen Wrede's "Carcassonne" landed on the desk of Hans im Glück, the game largely looked the way it looks now. Already the first test together with Dirk Geilenkeuser revealed to Bernd Brunnhofer: there's something to it. Further rounds quickly showed that some fine tuning would be necessary though. Brunnhofer more or less single-handedly finished the prototype in time for the SPIEL '00. But it didn't cross his mind then that "the classic" every publisher dreams of was born.

From the beginning there were 72 tiles, also showing the three known elements: city, meadow and street. It's no coincidence that the number three is practically a constant feature in later versions but rather due to the fact that more elements would exceedingly limit the placement options.

The original "Carcassonne" however possessed a type of tiles that today doesn't exist anymore: empty meadow. Because testers mostly pulled long faces when they drew a virtually empty tile, the cloisters were introduced – anything but boring in terms of point potential.

Wrede had equipped the players with ten pieces each. This had good reason because once they were placed one didn't get them back until the final rating. The alternative of rating and getting back the

pieces as soon as a structure can't be expanded any further requires fewer figures. Fortunate for the production costs, but much more than that, because intermediate ratings in loose sequence create many small arches of tension, something the game greatly benefits from. Thus even small structures have their appeal, releasing the meanwhile rare pieces back into the game. The inventory management we now perform during every match vitally contributes to the "Carcassonne" system's appeal.

Like today's version, also Wrede's original only allowed entering on the tile just placed. From the get-go, the author had focused on the present. Nobody was forced to remember one's own turns or even who had added which tile. But Wrede permitted the use of one or two (!) pieces also in such places where there was already a claim for a structure. Which leads to the crucial difference between prototype and final product. It was for example possible to place one's tiles directly next to a city segment where there already was a knight, and to insert one or two of one's own knights. This caused attrition warfare resulting in one player getting all the points for a city, street or meadow while all other participants got nothing.

The award-winning final state entirely lacks simple wrangling for majority. In fact – apart from the right tiles, mind you! – subtle dexterity is necessary to overturn established majorities. Instead of always focusing in the most valuable structures, the game involves many locations at the same time. It is due to its special character that with the expansion of one's own structures one has to extend the ones of the other players, too, without being able to directly act as a parasite – no matter how much one would want to.

We're not going to speculate here whether "Carcassonne" would have started such a triumph in its original form. It's a fact that an excellent prototype and congenial editing have come together for an exceptional game.

Matthias Hardel

A heart for aspiring authors

Klaus-Jürgen Wrede published his first game at Hans im Glück – something he isn't alone with:
[...]

The coachman knows the way

The jury "Spiel des Jahres" (game of the year) found "Thurn und Taxis" like a football on the penalty spot, ready to score. And it did. Nevertheless the game didn't find as many players among royal-affine yellow press readers as one had hoped. Although it may not seem like that to us, the instructions were obviously a hurdle hard to clear for customers not too familiar with board games. Here is the original review from spielbox 2/2006.

If there wasn't the reputation of both publisher and author – this game would quickly be at risk of being misjudged as a plain travel game located in Southern Germany. Because a short summary sounds unspectacular and an error of judgment – also after a short trial – cannot be ruled out, a review here is a particularly ideal medium to clarify things.

On a historical map, a network of paths connects 22 cities of today's Southern Germany and neighbouring states. The spelling of "Carlsruhe" or "Baiern" is no mistake but points into the past when the Thurn und Taxis family established a network of mail coach stations in the 17th century. Next to a set of cards featuring three mentions of each city, the game includes 20 coach stations which up to four players can place in the cities. One can place these houses after laying a route with at least three city cards.

On the string of pearls

The open layout comprises six uncovered cards next to the path network. One turn is relatively short: a player takes one card, lays one card out, uses the special right of an office bearer and can possibly finish the current route.

The first card to be laid out as the beginning of a route is not subject to any limits. Unlike the following cards! Each of them has to be connected to the left or right end of the growing row of cards and must

always show an adjacent city. Several turns result in a row of cities, one after another like pearls on a string, for example Carlsruhe – Stuttgart – Ingolstadt – Munich.

Whoever wants to start a new route has to have finished the current one in the previous turn.

Placing houses is allowed while finishing a route, but by no means automatically in every city. Provided that one isn't already represented at the spot in question, one may place either a house in every city of the state that is a part of the route network or a house in every state. Therefore state affiliation is of greatest importance. Bayern, the largest state by far, consists of eight cities, some others like Hohenzollern only of one, while Switzerland possesses two and Baden three. Concentrating on one area pays off. Players represented in states like Baden, Bayern or Württemberg / Hohenzollern with one station in every city receive the highest bonus tile available for it. But diversification is rewarded, too, because installing at least one station in each state outside of Bayern is worth up to six points. Additionally the first players to build a route of at least five elements earn further victory points.

Moreover one is awarded with the coach card of the next higher value (worth up to three points) if the route includes at least three (first coach) to seven (fifth coach) cities.

As soon as a player has purchased his / her fifth coach or placed all houses, the game ends with the closure of the ongoing round. The player responsible for the end receives another victory point. For the rating everyone adds his / her collected points, unused houses causing one minus point each.

Easy access

So far the function of the office bearers hasn't been explained. Their number was reduced from nine to four during the game's development. In order to make use of a person's support, the active player only declares which person it involves. The postmaster permits taking up two city cards instead of one while the "postillon" entitles a player to lay out two cards at once. If one is unsatisfied with the open offer of the six cards one can use the bailiff (Amtmann) to exchange all these cards. Finally the wainwright (Wagner) facilitates the purchase of a coach even if the route is actually too short by one or two stations.

While access is easy thanks to the straightforward rules, novices lack the feeling for the right decisions. But this doesn't matter much later because the rules of this consistent game have been memorized until people play it the second time.

The necessary considerations are less easy to overview: should one use a short route for the rating and do without coach and long route points in order to secure area bonuses? Is it better to place one's houses in three Bavarian cities or one each in Tyrol, Bayern and Salzburg? Everything has its advantages and disadvantages, it's never irrelevant which direction a mail coach takes. Of course one should always get hold of a coach card and avoid building routes through cities where one already owns mail stations if possible. An optimal turn achieving everything at once is pretty much never accomplished, something needs to be given up practically every time. Especially the conditions under which houses may be placed are an elegant trick, comparable to the placement of pieces in "Carcassonne". It's often such rather inconspicuous rules that create high playing quality.

Sometimes the current situation tempts to change or entirely abandon former plans. For example one may preventively secure Pilsen, the only city bordering Lodz, to be prepared for a future route. But miscalculations are punished by the point system. Players rating areas or long routes later than the others receive less or – in an extreme case – no points at all. One needs to stay on top of things in order to set the right priorities.

The bonus rewards are carefully balanced, so a search for definite strategies to victory is in vain. There isn't even a recognizable advantage or disadvantage for the beginning: while the players with a later turn can react to the triggering of the game's end during the last round, the player with the first turn has an earlier chance for a bonus instead.

Due to the constructive approach of the simultaneously developing route networks, all players have their sense of achievement. Only the point penalty caused by the time limit creates a footrace and thus competitive pressure. So "Thurn und Taxis" is in no way free from viciousness. The existing routes together with the stations already built offer plenty of clues about who urgently needs which card. Therefore players like to remove such cards before the successor can take them, keeping them if possible in their hand until the stack is shuffled once more.

Gambling is possible if desired

The factor of luck is not insignificant. When the last Bavarian city needed doesn't seem to want to appear, it's almost exasperating. And players who hope for the layout and therefore don't finish a route although they don't hold a card for its continuation: they risk having to discard all their already placed cards of a route in the following round. "How many times has Sigmaringen been laid out so far, and

who's got it on their hands?" someone might ask who has laid out Zurich and only holds Ulm in his / her hand. With a good memory and thoughts on probability one can gamble for the right card and avoid cancelling one's mail coach tour most of the time.

In games with two players, bonus tiles for the areas only differ by one point, moderately changing the game's strategies without doing any harm to the quality. On the contrary, I even like "Thurn und Taxis" with two or three players a little better than with all four participants.

The graphics have turned out very well. The board is clearly and beautifully designed, all cities show easily recognizable churches and landmarks. The condition to build routes between adjacent cities increasingly sharpens perception where which city is located, contributing an additional learning effect in geography, so players who have to read all descriptions upside down soon aren't handicapped by this anymore.

"Thurn und Taxis" is not a difficult freak game but at the same time appeals to frequent players. Clever and challenging weighing is needed again and again without requiring brooding over things because the options are manageable. The lightness of the process is fascinating. The uncertainty if one gets at the desired card creates enormous tension, masterfully held up by the constant presence of intermediate aims. And players who haven't achieved victory despite their skilful planning of routes demand the chance to get even all the more, telling themselves to take coaches in every rating this time, not to waste cards on it, occupy Passau early on, not to start in the West and so on.

This is a sophisticated, in every respect round composition without rival in its genre.

Christwart Conrad

Average spielbox marks

[...]

Rounded to the first digit after the comma. In brackets: number of marks involved.

Less and more at the same time

"Glanz und Gloria" took an unusual step, just as if it wanted to reach the yellow press audience at the next try. The first "Thurn und Taxis" add-on didn't complicate the original game but rather offered a simpler rule alternative next to the geographical set. Yet "Alle Wege führen nach Rom" meanwhile also caters for people who can never get enough adjusting screws.

As a counterpart to Baiern (Bavaria), the geographical alternative of Northern Germany offers a two-part Prussia. The free trade cities of Frankfurt, Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck – neither states nor parts of the states surrounding them – prove a bit awkward during the placement of houses but come up with their own bonus tiles. So far, so familiar.

A completely different matter are the office bearers because the wainwright (Wagner) is missing. This rationalization also includes all coach cards. On the backside of each North German city card there are one, two or three horses instead. Whoever takes a card can either add it openly to his / her route or use it undisclosed as coach horse(s). The number of coach horses limits the route length to between three and eight cities. Luckily the coach everyone receives instead of his / her headquarters at the start is equipped with two horses. Other than their congeners, these don't have to be discarded after the end of a round, so one doesn't always fall back to zero.

A welcome breathing pause is based on the necessity of using some city cards together with horses when nothing suitable has shown up to continue a longer route. It happens only very rarely that one has to shed one's whole setup in frustration. Because players don't need to continually work their way up with coaches, a tedious and not quite uncomplicated duty disappears, and so does the *raison d'être* for the wainwright. But if you miss him you can also play on the new board by the old rules without problems.

Game within the game

"Glanz und Gloria" doesn't work without the basic game because houses and the original set of rules are not included. This material doesn't have to be bought twice, but it's not possible to purchase the north instead of the south. And regarding "Alle Wege führen nach Rom", it doesn't make sense either.

“Die Audienz”, the larger of both variations in the package, extends the game towards the south, although not in the familiar way.

Five coaches in the colours of the five states are on their way to Rome, each occupied by one envoy of every player. Whenever a coach arrives in Rome, the tile-shaped passengers visit the adequate papal clerk and are placed on the corresponding audience field on the bottom on the board. Envoys that are already there are removed from the game. In the end every tile on an audience field yields one to five victory points depending on its rank.

Obviously every player strives to have the coach with his high-ranking envoys arrive in Rome as late as possible to prevent them from being displaced. Timing is required because the coach is not supposed to be still on its way when the game ends. The coaches are moved by one field for each city on which no house is placed while finishing a round. Moving southwards is an obligation but nobody is forced to choose the shortest way.

Without question this part of the add-on is beautifully done, but it can be considered doubtful if it pays off to base the coordination of one’s route on who moves which coach towards Rome at what time. Because the envoys are hidden in the coaches and thus invisible until they arrive in Rome, it’s hard to guess who acts according to a plan anyway, if a player is bluffing or has simply forgotten the location of his cardinal and his altar boy.

Unimposing

The punch sheet is largely taken up by the material for “In Amt und Würden”. 26 chips show one office person each. Players making use of an office person receive a chip. As soon as no office bearers are left which happens faster with the wainwright (4) than with the postmaster or postillion (8), every player has to submit one to four different chips, which – depending on the number – enables them to get a city card, a victory point chip or the right to place a house. Thanks to small overview slabs, one neither needs to memorize this bonus scaling nor to look it up in the instructions.

Although the variation seems rather unimposing and runs alongside every player turn despite the additional move, it is still challenging. Inserting a house for four chips which would be hard to place in the traditional way must not be underestimated, especially in the middle of a game. For this, one gladly puts one’s preference for certain office persons on the back burner in favour of a more balanced utilization.

With its fortunate relation between effort and effect, “In Amt und Würden” reminds of “Kurier der Fürstin”. In this add-on (supplement in spielbox 5/2006), every first house in a city earns one telegram (Depesche). Every two telegrams (or just one if the player currently owns the courier piece) allow securing the services of another office person in one’s turn.

Whereas it’s been common practice among publishers for years to keep at least their award-winning games in the discussion with add-ons, opinions on their reasonableness generally differ. The views range from “always with everything” to “only pure”. The material offered for “Thurn und Taxis” doesn’t aim to convince extremists of one belief or the other. Yet they do give reason to get a terrific game which has already been around for some time back on the table. In the case of “Glanz und Gloria” even a “light” version that is not one iota less good than the original.

Matthias Hardel

Die neuen Hütten / the new huts: Add-on for Stone Age

General rules

The new building tiles are shuffled with the existing ones. Option for 4 players: 6 buildings are put back into the box without revealing them. Games with 3 players remove 13 buildings, games with 2 players 20.

The remaining buildings are piled in stacks of 7 on the game board.

Holzstätte / Wooden hut

This building grants the player one wood unit in each round at the beginning of the second stage. He/she additionally receives 3 victory points with the purchase.

Lehmhütte / Clay hut

This building grants the player one clay brick in each round at the beginning of the second stage. He/she additionally receives 4 victory points with the purchase.

Steinhütte / Stone hut

This building grants the player one stone in each round at the beginning of the second stage. He/she additionally receives 5 victory points with the purchase.

Kindergarten

With the purchase of this building, the player instantly receives one additional person on his/her tableau as a one-time bonus. He/she additionally receives 5 victory points with the purchase.

Werkstatt / Workshop

The player instantly receives one tool as a one-time bonus. He/she additionally receives 5 victory points with the purchase.

Gewächshaus / Greenhouse

With the purchase of this building, the player instantly advances one step on the food scale as a one-time bonus. He/she additionally receives 5 victory points.

**Die Kultstätte / the cult site:
Add-on for Carcassonne**

The 5 landscape tiles "Kultstätte" (cult site) are shuffled with the remaining landscape cards. The cult site is used and rated just like a monastery. When a player puts a follower on the cult site, this follower is called "heretic".

Using the cult site

A cult site must not be placed directly next to several monasteries. A monastery must not be placed directly next to several cult sites.

When a player puts a cult site directly (horizontally, vertically or diagonally) next to another player's monastery and places a heretic on it, the heretic challenges the monk. The same applies when a monk is placed directly next to another player's cult site. Challenging one's own monk or heretic is also allowed.

Players placing a tile with a cult site are also allowed to put a follower on the meadow, street or into the city instead of the cult site.

The challenge

A challenge is about finishing one's own building first. The player finishing his/her building first receives 9 points, the other receives nothing. Both followers return to their owners.

If a challenge is not solved until the end of the game, both players receive the usual points like in the case of the monastery.

The staff of Hans im Glück

Down to earth

For small publishers, shrinking back to normal size after the boom of „Spiel des Jahres“ (game of the year) has subsided is tough. Hans im Glück did not become the victim of a bloated apparatus, also because they entrusted partners with the personnel-intensive distribution. When it was the same with Fun Connection soon after the release of "Drunter & drüber", a congenial partner was found in Blatz (Schmidt Spiele). This allowed running the show with two full-time employees. Here is some (self-written) information on Dirk Geilenkeuser, Georg "Schorsch" Wild and newcomer Moritz Brunnhofer.

Dirk Geilenkeuser was born 1973 in Bergisch-Gladbach but moved to Würzburg at the age of three. There he and his two older siblings early made the acquaintance of games like "Sagaland" and "Scotland Yard", but also of classics like chess or particularly skat. In 1985 he found a copy of spielbox in a small library – and from there fate took its course. He subscribed to the magazine and ordered older issues. Every article was absorbed, building the first basis for the ensuing career. Games were bought at flea markets at a good price. At the beginning of his studies, Dirk founded the "Würzburger Spielerlei" with friends, the first open game club in Würzburg. Game reviews in the "Schmidt" city magazine led to a visit of the Toy Fair Nuremberg in 1995 where he sat at Volker Weitzel's table during the first Goldsieber evening. This and many other fortunate coincidences resulted in full-time employment at Hans im Glück after finishing business studies in 1998, at first with the focus on author contacts. From 2000 on, when Volker Weitzel left the publisher, Dirk was responsible for all office work, since 2002 supported by Georg Wild. Today he mainly manages the organization of all the publisher's parts. This ranges from the accounting for authors to communicating with foreign partners and writing game rules. Even after ten years the work is still a plum job which perhaps would never have become reality without discovering spielbox.

Schorsch Wild writes about himself: After my fluent entrance I've been a full-time staff member of Hans im Glück for about five years. Unfortunately I can't really be much more precise. Already during my professional turmoil which included geriatric care, one of the then very hip internet start-up companies and heaps of typical student jobs, I also landed – due to my personal turmoil – in the game testing circle around Dieter Hornung.

After that the enormous success of "Carcassonne" opened the publisher's doors to me (thanks Klaus-Jürgen!) because this success not only led to all kinds of banks driving trucks full of money to the publisher but also to all sorts of people unloading trucks full of work. One day Dirk asked me if I could do some of this work in exchange for some of the money.

At this time the professional turmoil had abated in favour of studying social pedagogy. After this study's maximum duration I couldn't delay the graduation any longer and (rather unsuccessfully) applied in youth work. Luckily Dirk asked me again if I couldn't do even more work (for even more money).

I would have been foolish if I had said no to that. This was about the time the fluent entrance started via mini and part-time job which meanwhile has become a full-time employment, giving me a dream job, the occasion to visit cities (outside the working hours) and ride a (hair style damaging) motorbike.

Moritz Brunnhofer about himself: As my parents' only son, in a way I grew into playing. I played games together with my father early on, and he almost never let me win. He taught me to play fair right from the start because otherwise no victory is a gain.

Nevertheless my way to Hans im Glück wasn't exactly linear. Not having to serve in the military, I had some time after school I spent very productively in Munich's nightlife. Then, after I had worked in the amusement segment for not very imaginative all-inclusive tourists on Crete for a few months and in the end also established Hans im Glück games there, I flew back and moved into my own apartment. With much interest but little zest I started studying physical technology which captivated me for two whole semesters. Subsequently I attended a school for project and event management. Of course college life needed an adequate amount of free space as well. After a promising but fruitless search for internship in Munich's event scene I dropped by at Hans im Glück again. And lo, I immediately liked it. Not completely inexperienced, I quickly found my way and can now participate in a very productive fashion.